

MINISTERUL EDUCAȚIEI ȘI CERCETĂRII
UNIVERSITATEA „DUNĂREA DE JOS” GALAȚI
FACULTATEA DE LITERE
CENTRUL DE CERCETARE
COMUNICARE INTERCULTURALĂ ȘI LITERATURĂ

COMMUNICATION INTERCULTURELLE ET LITTÉRATURE

NR. 4 (16)

Octombrie-noiembrie-decembrie

REPREZENTĂRI LITERARE ALE FEMINITĂȚII ȘI MODELE COMPORTAMENTALE REFLECTATE IN PLAN SOCIAL

Coordonatori-editori:

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Editura Europlus

2011

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Telefon: +40-236-460476

Fax: +40-236-460476

ISSN : 1844-6965

Communication interculturelle et littérature

Cod CNCISIS 489 / 2010

Abonamentele se fac la sediul redacției, Str. Domnească, nr. 111, Galați, cod 800001, prin mandat poștal pe numele Simona Antofi.

Prețurile la abonamente sunt: 3 luni – 30 lei; 6 luni - 60 lei ; 12 luni – 120 lei.

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Prezentul volum cuprinde o selecție a lucrărilor Colocviului Internațional *Reprezentări literare ale feminității și modele comportamentale reflectate în plan social*, desfășurate în perioada 11-12 noiembrie, 2011, sub egida Centrului de cercetare *Comunicare interculturală și literatură*. Volumul a fost publicat cu sprijinul financiar al **Autorității Naționale pentru Cercetare Științifică (ANCS)** - Contract de finanțare nr. 178M / 3.10.2011.

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**Literatură și interculturalitate /
Littérature et interculturalité**

Les héroïnes de Fatou Keita : un modèle de détermination

Aboua Kouassi Florence

Université de Cocody -Côte d'Ivoire

Abstract: *In spite of their late entry in the national literary life, the women writers of the Ivory Coast did not remain in margin of the social and political changes. Fatou Keita does not escape this reality so much its novels testify to its time and its company. In this realistic painting of the company, she focusses on the woman. Its heroines appear as rebellious women who try to leave the yoke in which they were placed.*

Key words: *feminine literature, african woman determination, literary history, Ivory Coast*

Introduction

Les romancières ivoiriennes apparaissent sur la scène littéraire en 1976 sous la plume de Simone Kaya avec *Les danseuses d'Impé-Eya* [1] soit seize ans après les indépendances et vingt ans après la naissance du premier roman ivoirien. La scolarisation de la jeune fille dans les sociétés traditionnelles africaines a, de tout temps, suscité réticence et inquiétude et l'explication de ce retard considérable de la gente féminine [2] se trouve dans la scolarisation tardive des jeunes filles. Le destin de la jeune fille était fixé à la maison ; elle devrait donc apprendre à tenir son statut de future épouse et mère. C'était donc jeter de l'argent par la fenêtre en scolarisant la jeune fille pendant que les parents s'endetteraient volontiers pour un garçon.

Les propos de Gnaoulé Oupoh, à ce sujet, ne témoignent que trop largement des raisons de la présence littéraire insuffisante des femmes :

Ce décalage de plus d'une décennie entre la scolarisation des garçons et des filles, en Côte d'Ivoire, ne sera pas sans incidence sur l'entrée des femmes sur la scène littéraire ivoirienne... [3]

En marge de ce problème d'ordre social, il convient de noter également le manque de volonté politique des autorités coloniales, préoccupées qu'elles étaient à former sommairement des agents susceptibles d'asseoir leur hégémonie. Denise Bouche l'a parfaitement révélé en ces termes :

En Côte d'Ivoire, la situation était plus claire : les autorités ne prétendaient même pas s'intéresser à l'éducation des filles. [4]

L'intervention de la femme ivoirienne dans le domaine littéraire, qui s'opère avec le roman, n'est en réalité pas un acte isolé mais la résultante de l'évolution de l'histoire mondiale. Suite à la lutte des femmes au plan international [5], pour mettre fin à la discrimination à leur égard, 1975 est proclamée comme l'année internationale de la femme ; c'est dans la foulée que naît, en effet, le premier roman d'écriture féminine, *Les danseuses d'Impé-Eya* de Kaya Simone.

On constate, après cette première œuvre, de réels progrès dans les productions des écrivaines ivoiriennes tant du point de vue quantitatif que qualitatif. La présence des femmes dans tous les genres littéraires et à toutes les étapes d'évolution de la littérature ivoirienne en est, si besoin est, la preuve. Elles abordent aussi une panoplie de thèmes touchant le culturel, le social, le politique et nombreuses sont celles qui ont une renommée internationale.

Enseignante au département d'anglais de l'université de Cocody en Côte d'Ivoire, plusieurs fois primée pour sa production dans le domaine de la littérature enfantine[6], c'est en 1998 que Fatou Keita fait son entrée dans le paysage romanesque avec *Rebelle*. Ce roman reçoit un accueil très favorable : il est au programme des enseignements dans le secondaire en Côte d'Ivoire et a été traduit en Allemand. En 2006, elle publie son second roman intitulé *Et l'aube se leva*.

Toute la prose de Fatou Keïta dépeint avec réalisme les problèmes sociaux et politiques de son temps, des sociétés traditionnelle et moderne, en soulevant des thèmes pertinents d'actualité comme l'excision, le mariage forcé, le racisme, les criardes inégalités sociales, les coups d'Etat, la pédophilie, le phénomène des enfants de la rue, etc.

Quelle place occupe la femme dans la prose romanesque de Fatou Keïta serait-on ici tenter de s'interroger ? Quelle peinture nous offre t-elle spécifiquement des femmes africaines dans ces romans ? Comment ses héroïnes sont-elles parvenues à leur but, quels enseignements pour la gente féminine ? Ce sont autant de questions qui guideront cette étude articulée autour de deux axes essentiels que sont la représentation de la femme et les héroïnes comme agents de changement.

1. Représentation de la femme dans la prose de Fatou Keïta

1. 1. Panorama des personnages féminins

Ce tableau vise à faire ressortir les femmes africaines qui figurent nommément dans les deux romans, *Rebelle* et *Et l'aube se leva*.

Malimouna et Shina

Ce sont respectivement les personnages principaux de *Rebelle* et de *Et l'aube se leva*.

Dans *Rebelle*, l'auteur présente une jeune adolescente et la fait croître en stature et en maturité. D'analphabète, la fillette indocile est devenue une intellectuelle modèle tant pour les hommes que pour les femmes. Quant à Shina, elle est présentée comme une jeune fille d'origine bourgeoise qui vient de terminer brillamment ses études d'interprétariat à vingt trois ans. Ayant évoluées dans des univers différents, elles ont toutefois subit toutes deux, selon le temps et l'espace, le mariage forcé ou le mariage arrangé. C'est à l'âge de quatorze ans que Malimouna est donnée en mariage à un vieil homme déjà polygame. Shina, de son côté, se souvient que

Georges Bonca, son père, avait arrangé ce mariage. Son gendre serait le neveu du Président, avait-il décidé. Il avait multiplié les invitations à la famille du jeune homme dont il chantait les louanges à tout propos. Il avait encouragé Shina à sortir avec celui qu'il considérait comme le meilleur parti pour elle. (Et l'aube se leva, pp. 42-43)

Sous une pression psychologique et pour ne pas couvrir de honte ses parents, elle s'était engagée dans ce mariage qui ne fut pas long feu avant de se solder par un divorce. Celui de Malimouna s'est terminé par une fuite après avoir assommé son mari.

Matou et Ginette

Ce sont les mères de Malimouna et Shina. Matou est une villageoise intègre, vertueuse et qui observe une morale traditionnelle, sans un autre rôle que ceux traditionnellement dévolus aux femmes. Elle partage avec Ginette le statut de femme délaissée par leur mari au profit d'une autre.

Les cercles d'amies

Trois personnages féminins occupent la place d'amie dans la vie de Malimouna suivant chacun des espaces où elle a évolué. Au village, à Borirouni, c'est avec son amie d'enfance, Sanita, qu'elle apprend à articuler et écrire des mots français. Elle se liera ensuite d'amitié en France avec Fanta, une jeune malienne débarquée en France pour la première fois. Très ancrée dans la tradition, son amitié avec Malimouna sera de courte durée quand elle apprend que cette dernière n'a pas subit l'excision. Elle prend alors ses distances à cause de la remise en cause des pratiques ancestrales par son amie. A son retour au pays, c'est Laura, sa collègue, qui devient très vite son amie et même sa confidente.

Deux autres femmes ont joué ce rôle dans la vie de Shina à deux périodes très distinctes de sa vie. Son amie d'enfance est Célia : issues du même milieu social, elles font les mêmes études ; Célia partagera tous les moments de la vie de celle qui était devenue sa soeur jusqu'à la prise de conscience de Shina des clivages sociaux et surtout son désir de contribuer personnellement à les bannir ou tout au moins à les atténuer. Par exemple, face à la détermination de Shina à s'occuper d'Eloé, un enfant de la rue, Celia se montrait très hostile.

Elle ne comprenait pas que si elle arrivait à sortir Eloé de la misère, ce serait un délinquant de moins dans les rues de Transville. (Et l'aube se leva, p.106).

Dès lors, la place de meilleure amie sera occupée par Ramatoulaye, une enseignante à l'université rencontrée par un concours de circonstances malheureuses. Shina découvrira à son contact les vraies réalités de l'université : des syndicats rivaux d'étudiants qui s'y affrontent à la machette, la précarité des conditions de travail, les mouvements de grève des enseignants passés sous silence par le gouvernement. Célia et Ramatoulaye ne se font pas concurrence pour cette place privilégiée. C'est plutôt Célia qui n'accepte pas la présence de celle qu'elle a surnommée, avec un mépris à peine voilé, « la paysanne de prof ».

Loin de l'ébranler, Shina ne regrettait pas la fin de cette amitié mais s'interrogeait sur ses réels fondements en ces termes :

Leur statut les rapprochait, mais partageaient-elles vraiment les mêmes convictions ? Shina en doutait désormais tant le chemin de leur destin réciproque semblait diverger. Cet univers, le sien, lui semblait tellement étranger à présent. Trop d'égoïsme le caractérisait, trop de frivolité, trop de gaspillage...La vie trop facile au centre d'une misère au quotidien. (Et l'aube se leva, pp. 262-263)

1. 2. Groupes sociaux féminins

De la galerie des personnages féminins, deux catégories s'imposent à l'évidence. Il ressort deux grands ensembles : celles qui acceptent docilement leur sort et celles qui essaient d'en sortir en menant des luttes.

Les battantes

Il s'agit incontestablement des héroïnes Malimouna et Shina. Ce sont aussi des femmes, faibles et écrasées d'une façon ou d'une autre, qui mènent avec courage leur combat ; La situation de Malimouna est plus criarde et plus visible mais Shina n'en n'est pas moins victime. Au prix d'efforts personnels, elles parviennent à faire face aux vicissitudes qui se présentent sur leur chemin.

Fillette indocile, Malimouna s'est battue contre les tares de la société. Toute sa vie n'a été que rébellion et bataille : de l'excision à la violence physique en passant par le mariage forcé, le racisme, la polygamie, tous ces maux qui avilissent la femme. Analphabète, elle a compris que l'instruction était le passeport pour la réalisation de ses rêves de venir en aide aux femmes en détresse.

Elle prenait des cours du soir ; elle savait à présent lire et améliorait tous les jours sa culture générale. Elle travaillait d'arrache-pied et apprenait ses leçons tout en tressant celles qui étaient devenues ses clientes régulières. (Rebelle, p.19)

Malimouna s'inscrira ensuite à l'Institut Des Sciences sociales d'où elle sortira pour intégrer le Centre de Guidance Féminin.

Issue d'une riche famille, Shina découvre, dans sa volonté de venir en aide à un enfant de la rue, la misère dans laquelle croupit la majorité de la population. Ayant grandi dans un cocon douillet, elle n'avait jamais eu l'occasion de découvrir l'ampleur du drame social qui se jouait sous ses yeux. S'engage alors un combat personnel contre les criardes inégalités qui se cristallisent dans la lutte contre le phénomène des enfants de la rue.

Les victimes

Elles acceptent leur situation de femme maltraitée, abandonnée, assujettie, battue avec résignation et en subissent de façon plus marquée les conséquences. Les victimes se déclinent en femmes traditionnelles, abandonnées ou en maîtresses.

Les traditionnelles

Fanta est le prototype de la femme africaine soumise. Mariée depuis son Mali natal à un homme qu'elle n'avait jamais vu, elle s'est très vite adaptée à sa vie d'épouse telle que schématisée par la tradition au risque de mettre en péril sa propre santé. Son mari s'opposait à une planification des grossesses perçues selon la tradition comme la volonté de Dieu. Elle n'avait aucun moment de répit dans l'emploi du temps si chargé ainsi détaillé :

Fanta passait le plus clair de son, temps entre les couches, les tétées, la vaisselle, la cuisine et la lessive...La nuit, elle était constamment réveillée par les pleurs des bébés. Elle aurait pu se reposer quelques instants entre midi et deux heures, mais à ce moment-là, le mari se réveillait et accomplissait son devoir conjugal. (Rebelle p.93)

Les femmes abandonnées

Matou, mère de Malimouna a été abandonnée par son mari sous prétexte qu'elle ne lui donnait pas de garçon. Et ce nouveau statut lui enlève, dans la société traditionnelle, toute prérogative dans l'organisation du mariage de sa fille comme l'atteste ce passage :

Normalement, toutes les cérémonies auraient dû se dérouler chez elle, la mère de la mariée mais, répudiée, elle n'existait plus. (Rebelle, p.32)

Dans la société moderne que nous présente Keïta, Ginette Bonca subit le même sort en vivant dans l'ombre de son volage de mari, isolée à l'étage supérieur de leur triplex.

Elle avait là cinq pièces à elle toute seule, largement assez pour qu'il ne la croise pas sur son chemin. (Et l'aube se leva, p.92)

C'est le compromis que son époux a bien voulu lui concéder devant le refus de cette dernière de lui accorder le divorce mais surtout

parce qu'il comprit que le divorce prononcé, il devrait partager sa fortune en deux parts égales avec son ex-femme, puisque marié sous le régime de la communauté de biens. Il aurait pu, bien entendu, bénéficier en tant que ministre, de l'aide de son ami le juge Clonne, mais Ginette avait également, de son côté, des relations haut placées. La bagarre risquait d'être rude. Il semblait finalement plus simple de laisser les choses en l'état. (Et l'aube se leva, p.92)

Même si les deux tableaux semblent différents, la frustration demeure la même. Malgré les efforts de Ginette pour récupérer son mari, la panoplie de ces techniques allant de la chirurgie esthétique aux régimes en passant par le renouvellement de sa garde robe, les soins qu'elle mettait à ses coquetteries, Georges Bonca restait de marbre. Même cloué au lit et contraint dans ces conditions de tolérer la présence de la mère de ses enfants, il demeura totalement indifférent à celle qui avait pourtant fermé les yeux sur toutes ses incartades.

Lorsqu'elle lui mit la main sur le front, il se crispa, comme effleuré par quelque chose de répugnant. Elle n'en prit pas ombrage, la maladie le rendait hargneux. (Et l'aube se leva, p.134)

Les maîtresses

Dans la première œuvre, c'est Laura qui se retrouve avec ce statut bien malgré elle. En effet, elle était en ménage avec un homme qu'elle croyait célibataire et s'était même fiancée

avec lui alors que ce dernier avait une famille vivant en France. Quand elle découvre la vraie face de son amoureux, elle portait déjà sa grossesse mais leurs relations se détériorent.

Plus rien n'alla entre eux dès lors qu'elle sut qu'il était engagé ailleurs. Elle se mit à le détester. Elle s'en voulait de n'avoir pas vraiment cherché à connaître tout de sa vie. (Rebelle, p.206)

Aussi décida t-elle de garder son enfant et de se séparer de son faux amoureux même si la société voit d'un mauvais œil une femme qui vit sans compagnon.

Dans le second récit par contre, c'est volontairement que Rosine Yoman est devenue la maîtresse de Georges Bonca qui avait alors voulu divorcer. Cette maîtresse, qui vivait dans l'opulence, entretenait une autre relation avec Franck, son fiancé. Contaminée par de VIH-SIDA, comme Georges Bonca, elle mourut car elle ne supportait pas la trithérapie.

En somme, il ressort de cette représentation que quelle que soit la classe sociale à laquelle elle appartient, la femme semble vouée au même sort, confrontée à divers obstacles à son épanouissement.

2. Des héroïnes, agents de changement

2. 1. La lutte contre l'excision

Malgré des obstacles lourds à soulever, les femmes en lutte réalisent quelques exploits. Elles ne sont pas des destinatrices passives mais des actrices des changements souhaités dans la société.

Dans *Rebelle*, c'est une fillette qui confiait naïvement à sa mère ne pas vouloir subir l'épreuve de l'excision. De ce refus spontané et personnel, naît une volonté farouche de lutter contre ce mal féminin. Usant de ruse, la petite Malimouna y échappe et prend en main sa vie pour ne plus être une victime et surtout venir en aide aux femmes. Face au chapelet d'obstacles qui se dressent sur son chemin, Malimouna prend la fuite, consciente qu'elle n'avait pas les moyens d'y faire face. Ainsi, elle ne trouve pour solution que la fuite pour se libérer du mariage qu'on l'a obligée à consentir, de ses deux patrons blancs, du racisme et de la violence physique.

Le modèle de détermination qu'elle présente se perçoit surtout dans le processus personnel de son instruction, l'analphabétisme étant le véritable handicap le plus insurmontable pour cette analphabète qui n'avait jamais mis les pieds dans une école. Malimouna s'organisa entre menus travaux, coiffure, plonge, ménages, lui permettant dignement de subvenir à ses besoins et assurer ses frais de scolarité à l'Institut d'Etudes Sociales. Avec abnégation, enthousiasme, elle assistait aux cours. Le directeur de l'école, M. Blain avait remarqué cette étudiante exceptionnelle.

Il s'en voulait de n'avoir pas pris plus de renseignements concernant cette étudiante dont le sérieux contrastait avec la paresse affichée de nombreux candidats qui, pour la plupart, ne semblaient pas savoir pourquoi il étaient là. Lorsqu'il apprit qu'elle faisait des ménages après l'école pour subvenir à ses besoins et payer ses cours, il décida, après avoir consulté son conseil d'administration, de lui accorder une réduction sur ses frais de scolarité. (Rebelle, p.98)

Elle travailla d'arrache-pied pour combler ses lacunes afin de se mettre au service de ses sœurs, consciente de la difficulté de sa mission. Elle anticipait sur les moyens à mettre en œuvre.

Le premier objectif qu'elle se fixerait serait - et elle en mesurait par avance la difficulté - de faire comprendre à ses protégées que la solution à leur problème passait par leur instruction. Instruction qui, au bout du compte, les aiderait à mieux s'en sortir financièrement, et donc à être moins dépendantes de leurs compagnon. (Rebelle, p.105-106)

Le témoignage que Malimouna donne de sa propre vie participe davantage de la prise de conscience des femmes encore réticentes à ses messages, parce qu'il met à nu l'inutilité de cette pratique. Les femmes africaines éprouvent un énorme besoin d'expression, à partir de leur expérience personnelle et de leur sensibilité et non pas, comme c'est souvent le cas, de manière théorique. Se dessinent en filigrane les besoins d'expression et de partage de la femme.

Le dernier tableau de la lutte assure la victoire de Malimouna. Ce sont les femmes qu'elle a formées et sensibilisées qui se sont mobilisées pour la tirer une fois pour de bon, officiellement, de l'engrenage d'une tradition rétrograde. L'auteur prend le parti de rendre ridicules les détenteurs des traditions rétrogrades en organisant un véritable « meeting de soutien » à Malimouna dans leur bastion le plus incontestable, le village.

2. 2. La lutte contre le phénomène des enfants de la rue

Shina avait pris la décision motivée par un sentiment aussi noble que l'amour, d'aider Eloé à sortir de la rue, « *elle aiderait Eloé quoiqu'il lui en coûtât* » (*Et l'aube se leva*, p.106) Les obstacles à ce projet se résument essentiellement en l'attitude de certains proches de Shina comme Célia et le véreux oncle d'Eloé d'une part et d'autre part, en la difficulté de réinsertion sociale d'un enfant de la rue.

Shina avait fait le choix de ne plus évoquer de sujets relatifs à Eloé avec ses proches réticents et pris le pari de verser chaque mois le manque à gagner qu'occasionnerait le départ d'Eloé de la rue, d'où il lui ramenait de l'argent.

Enfant de la rue, Eloé y a passé pratiquement toute sa vie, avec une mère mendicante. A peine fut-il né qu'elle l'amena dans la rue comme le révèle ce passage :

A peine âgé de deux jours et déjà, sa mère, assise auprès de lui, l'exposait aux regards des passants qui, de temps à autre, jetaient une pièce dans la petite écuelle placée devant la couchette de fortune. Shina fut à la fois attendrie et horrifiée de voir un si petit être respirer l'air pollué de la ville. (Rebelle p.38)

Le départ définitif d'Eloé vers la rue s'est fait de manière progressive. Il alternait d'abord séjour dans le foyer, celui de son oncle qui l'a récupéré après le décès de sa mère, et dans les rues. Quand la maison de ce dernier a été emportée dans un éboulement pendant une pluie diluvienne, Eloé n'avait plus d'alternative. Il s'est donc facilement adapté d'autant plus qu'il y travaillait déjà et y avait des amis.

Ayant grandi sans être accompagné, ni protégé, ce n'est pas sans difficulté que Shina va l'aider à s'organiser et intégrer la vie sociale : apprendre à s'exprimer correctement abandonnant les mots de la rue, faire ses exercices, éviter tout ce qui pourrait le ramener dans la rue. Les bénéfices de l'action de Shina se résument en termes de satisfaction pour Shina d'avoir réussi à socialiser quelque peu un enfant, en le scolarisant dans une des prestigieuses écoles de Transville.

L'action est en définitive une base solide sur laquelle peuvent s'appuyer les femmes et les organisations de femmes pour améliorer la société. Il se dégage une sympathie pour ces femmes, ces héroïnes car elles sont encore nombreuses les femmes africaines à subir leur sort en victimes résignées sans aucune défense.

Conclusion

Au terme de cette étude, l'on peut retenir que dans l'ensemble les personnages féminins dans l'œuvre de Fatou Keïta apparaissent comme marquées par la dépendance à l'égard de la tradition, des frustrations et des préjugés.

Mais l'emblème d'une telle critique se cristallise dans les personnages principaux, tributaires de la fonction de la femme traditionnelle et moderne, avec respectivement

Malimouna et Shina. Les héroïnes se présentent comme de femmes fortes de caractère, des rebelles contre la condition féminine qui ont su braver avec force et courage tous les obstacles. Elles optent toutes les deux pour un changement des mentalités et s'en donnent les moyens de lutter contre les conformismes sociaux. Le dénominateur commun et le plus révélateur, qui est à l'origine des actions des personnages principaux, demeure toujours la détermination, le levain de leur quête.

Parce que femme, Fatou Keïta a su décrire avec une finesse psychologique que seule une femme peut le faire pour ce qui est des problèmes singulièrement féminins. De plus, le fait que les deux productions romanesques soient adressées à des femmes n'est certes pas fortuit et ne fait que corroborer le fait que se dessine sous la plume de Fatou Keïta une vision nouvelle d'une classe de femmes déterminées à braver les obstacles, les difficultés, les vicissitudes pour le bien être de toute la société.

Et pourtant, nombreux sont les historiens, les psychologues, les mouvements féministes et les écrivains qui ont tous depuis des siècles attiré l'attention sur le déséquilibre entre le statut social de la femme par rapport à celui de son semblable masculin. Le choix de l'exaltation du courage de la femme par la romancière, est motivé par la volonté de porter un regard lucide et réaliste sur l'évolution de la place des femmes dans les sociétés africaines. Elles ont un droit entier à participer comme partenaires égales à tous les aspects de la vie : sociale, culturelle, éducative, politique, économique, administrative et pour jouer ce rôle omniprésent et fondamental, elles doivent avoir le droit à l'éducation d'abord et ensuite participer à l'appliquer à toutes les composantes de la société.

Cet article ne saurait se conclure sans que soit sollicité un engagement politique de haut niveau dans cette optique. L'exemple de Shina devra, en effet, s'inscrire dans une démarche plus globale qui donne les moyens aux enfants de remplacer les préoccupations de survie quotidienne par un projet de vie.

Notes

[1] Kaya, Simone, *Les danseuses d'impé-Eya*, Abidjan, Inades, 1976, 127p.

[2] Ce sont les pères de la Congrégation des Missions africaines de Lyon qui se sont préoccupés du problème, au début du siècle dernier. En 1932, année de naissance de la littérature ivoirienne, sur l'effectif global des élèves qui était de 6722 élèves, on dénombrait seulement 627 jeunes filles et l'EPS de Bingerville était à sa douzième promotion.

[3] Gnaoulé, Oupoh, *La littérature ivoirienne*, Paris - Abidjan, Karthala -CEDA, 2000.

[4] Bouche, Dénise, *L'enseignement dans les territoires françaises de l'Afrique occidentale de 1817 à 1920 ; mission civilisatrice ou formation d'une élite ?* Éditions champion, Paris, 1975, p.766.

[5] En France par exemple, le Mouvement de libération des femmes (MLF), mouvement féministe français a fédéré dans les années soixante-dix les différents groupes de femmes militant pour une redéfinition des rapports entre les sexes au sein de la société.

[6] En 1994, elle obtient le Premier prix pour le concours de littérature africaine pour enfants de l'ACCT (l'Agence de la Francophonie) avec *Le Petit Garçon Bleu* et la Mention spéciale du Jury pour *La Voleuse de Sourires* (NEI 1997). *Le Petit Garçon Bleu* obtient également la Mention Honorable au Prix UNESCO 1997 de littérature pour enfants au service de la tolérance. La même année ce livre reçoit le Prix d'Excellence de la République de Côte d'Ivoire pour la Culture. Il est traduit en anglais et en allemand.

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Sensitivité et sexualité chez Duras dans *L'Amant*

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Abstract: *Write to Marguerite Duras is a style's exercise. It is a solemn appeal to the fusion of the arts through the medium of language, great unifying disparate elements of the field of art since antiquity. The lover is one of those literary creations where the photo was joined this theory as the absolute picture exists only in the mind of the narrator. Thus begins another year, that of memory and remembrance on the one hand and the gaze of the other. In our article, we will e optical arsenal in the novel after talking about the genesis of the story, pure product of the ekphrasis.*

Key words: *photography, ekphrasis, look, lover, love*

Introduction

L'histoire littéraire nous informe que *L'Amant* devait s'appeler *La Photographie absolue*. Pas de correspondance entre les deux choix. Pour le retenu, il ne coïncide pas avec le thème puisqu'il n'est pas au centre de la narration, occupé par la narratrice dans un récit homo-auto-diégétique rappelant les récits à la première personne, catégorisant les autobiographies. Pour le rejeté, il peut être justifié dans la mesure où le récit tourne autour d'une photographie qui n'a pas été prise mais aurait dû l'être. Cette photographie, à l'état théorique, débouche sur l'impossible de la représentation, est prise comme thème diégétique, dirigeant la narration dans une sorte de labyrinthe spéculaire, où cette photo est obsessionnellement revenante avec, à chaque fois, un effort considérable de changement de point de vue et de fixation d'éléments constitutifs de cette image absolue dans une sorte de récupération du refoulé. Cette image mise en exergue est doublement regardée, focalisée, par la narratrice et par le lecteur. Celui de la narratrice est animé par la volonté de souvenir qui remonte le temps mais aussi l'espace, dans la mesure où le fait de recourir à une image pour aborder le passé serait une tentative de spatialiser, d'aplatir le récit alors qu'ordinairement le récit est avant tout question d'un itinéraire plutôt temporel. L'image installe l'histoire dans un temps retrouvé : celui de l'enfance. Elle est le premier pas pour entamer un bilan de parcours, d'existence. Cependant, ce souvenir, au lieu d'être imprimé sur du papier, il est plutôt imprimé dans une mémoire qui se cherche un passé à raconter avec le souci rendre compte du « détail [qui] tend à prendre une allure visuelle insistante. »¹ Dans cet article, nous examinerons la photographie absolue en tant qu'image virtuelle actualisée par le verbe. Puis, nous détaillerons les types des regards dans le roman pour dégager les différentes fonctions des yeux allant du voyeurisme au synesthésique puisqu'il remplacera la parole.

1. De l'image absolue

Habituellement, la réminiscence passe par la reconnaissance mais aussi par un regard intérieur. De là le recours aux verbes comme voir et penser : « Je pense souvent à cette image que je suis seule à voir encore et dont je n'ai jamais parlé... »² Et c'est ainsi que commence le roman. C'est une image prise comme stimulus de la narration. Elle rappelle à l'ordre le souvenir de ce qui était mais aussi de ce qui n'était pas, sinon de ce qui aurait dû être. Le regard prend explicitement une valeur temporelle dirigée vers le passé pour visualiser une image qui déclenchera le récit d'événements. Pourtant, il faut s'arrêter pour dire qu'ici ni le regard, ni le souvenir ne vont montrer sur un mode rétinien une photo exprimant inextricablement un « ça a été », mais seulement elles vont essayer de capter imaginativement et imaginativement, sur un mode pseudo-iconique, un instantané gravé dans la mémoire du personnage-narrateur. L'image en fait, de par son statut inexistant est une pure imagination. C'est un rêve qu'on actualise avec tout le temps un effort soutenu pour le vivre et le survivre. Ainsi la narratrice échappe à la mortification photographique. Cette idée est une reprise de la

perspective deleuzienne du possible développant le concept du virtuel faisant partie du réel « comme structure de la réalité [tout en restant...] derrière tout actuel comme une tension dynamique qui engendre la production d'autres actualités. »³

C'est l'*ekphrasis* définie comme étant « '' un discours descriptif qui fait voir clairement l'objet que l'on montre '' »⁴ L'*ekphrasis* chez Duras dépasse le cadre restrictif de voir dans le sens de percevoir pour aller vers des actions plus cognitives que sensibles : imaginer le « ça a été » barthésien, penser et voyager dans le temps. C'est une image unique dont la lecture doit être unique. Pas d'extrapolation, pas d'interprétation hors de ce que la narratrice nous livre, nous fait voir. C'est un semblant, et ce en un double sens : d'une part, elle ne nous donne que l'apparence verbale de l'objet et non pas sa nature iconique (la photographie elle-même), d'autre part ce qu'elle nous donne à voir, sinon à lire, n'existe nulle part hormis dans la tête du personnage-narrateur qui, exploitant une projection en arrière nous transporte dans son passé. En effet cette image est aussi vision dans le sens d'une fabrication de l'esprit, mettant sous les yeux des lecteurs une expérience perceptive d'un événement ou d'un personnage structurant l'espace qui le contient. C'est une invitation au lecteur à la participation imaginaire dans la figuration : « *J'appellerai figuration cet aspect générateur du roman émanant du visuel.* »⁵

Photographier chez Duras est non seulement une représentation fidèle de ce que l'œil mécanique enregistre à l'aide de la lumière, mais elle serait aussi l'œuvre d'une vision de l'imaginaire ne laissant pas au lecteur le temps d'une découverte tabulaire du contenu de l'image ; ceci est laissé à la narratrice dont dépend le lecteur. C'est une volonté durassienne de changer un peu soit-il la définition même de la photographie qui « *n'est pas une délégation du représenté, c'en est la constitution.* »⁶ Loin de se substituer à la chose ou à la fille du bac, la photo pénètre au cœur de l'objet, dont elle précipite le déploiement dans le sens où les effets de réminiscence font que la photographie s'apparente à l'image d'un revenant pour toujours présent, toujours revenant avec son cortège d'ombres et de reflets. Cette situation ressemblerait à une expérience phénoménologique que le personnage-narrateur est entrain de nous révéler dans le sens photographique du terme. Ainsi, « *nous ne sortons jamais de l'immédiat et expliciter cet immédiat revient simplement à le vivre.* »⁷ et pour le vivre, la première étape passe par la perception.

On a voulu lire dans *L'Amant* un roman exceptionnel de par sa construction et son projet. Ce qui est, évidemment, le cas. Mais il faudrait avouer que donner à lire n'est pas donner à voir, compris comme une dénégation du regard au profit du pouvoir de la vision, et non le recours au geste de voir. *L'Amant* répond à la question de représentation figurée dans l'œuvre romanesque : Comment « être dedans » ou plutôt comment être à la fois dedans et dehors, c'est l'enjeu de cette expérience à laquelle Duras fait participer la photographie pour exprimer cet « entêtement du référent à être toujours là »⁸ En installant son récit dans une lumière de réminiscence montre que son écriture n'est animée que par le dessein de tourner en lieu d'apparition du disparu originellement en avouant à l'instar de Barthes que « ça a été [tel que je le vois] »⁹. Elle a procédé par « épuisement, exténuation de la représentation [en] épous[ant] deux modalités : manifester le non-représentable, et annuler la dimension visuelle du représentable. »¹⁰

2. De la révélation

« *Avant, elle a été une robe de ma mère. Un jour elle ne l'a plus mise parce qu'elle la trouvait trop claire, elle me l'a donnée.* »¹¹

Toucher, palper, serrer contre soi, restent le fantasme que provoque la vue de la chair entrevue sous la robe. Au fait, la robe claire est une chambre claire, elle laisse entrer la lumière et montrer les trésors qui se cachent sous cette robe transparente. Le regard *auto* ou *sui*-porté est

commandé par « l'appétit de l'œil chez celui qui regarde »¹² guidé lui aussi par une pulsion invoquant un désir enfoui, tu, condamné à vivre le silence du corps avant l'avènement de l'amant chinois, et l'éclatement du corps. Comme dans un appareil photographique la robe transparente joue le rôle d'un tissu ; d'un rideau qui au moment de déclenchement il se dresse pour laisser la lumière entrer et toucher la pellicule, ici le corps de la jeune fille.

Le premier message de la photo de la petite fille est moins de représenter l'objet (fonction descriptive) que de l'authentifier dans son être, comme elle était et comme elle deviendra par la suite une fois que son vœu est exhaussé s'agissant de la rencontre d'un soupirant, fût-ce un chinois, pour fuir le quotidien dans lequel sa mère l'enfonçait. La photo participe dans le récit non comme un élément ornemental mais « comme mode d'énonciation »¹³, comme une feintise de nature perceptive. Duras semble être à la trace de Merleau-Ponty en intégrant dans son écriture un « idéalisme qui se fonde sur la conviction de posséder le monde intellectuellement, [... et] un réalisme fondé sur l'idée qu'on puisse atteindre le fait pur [absolu dans le sens durassien], sans en changer intellectuellement la nature. »¹⁴ C'est une invitation au regard (« regardez-moi ») à l'admiration, à la comparaison. Respectant la fonction originelle de la photographie, le personnage-narrateur fait écho à Barthes qui explique que « la photographie n'est jamais qu'un chant alterné de "Voyez", "vois", "Voici" ; elle pointe du doigt un certain vis-à-vis, et ne peut sortir de ce langage déictique. »¹⁵ : « Sur le bac, regardez-moi, je les ai encore. »¹⁶

Le regard est défini par Lacan comme étant un processus d'infiltration de la chose vue à travers les couches de la conscience : « dans notre rapport aux choses, tel qu'il est constitué par la voie de la vision, et ordonné dans les figures de la représentation, quelque chose glisse, passe, se transmet d'étage en étage, pour y être toujours à quelque degré éludé – c'est ça qui s'appelle le regard. »¹⁷ En effet, le regard fusionnel et le regard du désir dominant la scène perceptive du roman donnant ainsi une dimension érotique au texte. Cette définition fait écho à celle de l'épreuve photographique qui est, elle aussi, contact entre des faisceaux lumineux et une planche de contact, dans une chambre noire, et dont le résultat, après traitement chimique, donnera une image.

2.1. Le regard du désir

Avec le recul, spatial et temporel, l'objet photographié, n'est plus perçu comme chose extérieure, mais comme objet intérieur entrant dans une communication sous-jacente, dans un pseudo-dialogue avec celui qui voit, regarde, ou drée cette vision. Le regard s'adjuge le personnage ou la chose regardée jusqu'à la fusion. Il semblerait qu'avec cette fusion par le regard, la fonction de reconnaissance de l'autre ne se limite pas à une simple opération de conjonction. Celle-ci est commandée par « l'appétit de l'œil chez celui qui regarde. »¹⁸, guidé lui aussi, par une pulsion invoquant un désir enfoui. La première conjonction était réflexive du fait de l'existence même de la photographie absolue. La narratrice, en se visionnant, est entrée en communion avec son passé par la souvenance, cette capacité humaine de remonter le temps : « je me reconnais [...] où je m'enchanté »¹⁹ La reconnaissance est totale puisque ce regard n'a d'objet que lui-même. Duras va introduire la photographie dans une ère de l'absolu, sans début ni fin. Elle s'ouvre sur le temps dans sa totalité dans son immensité ontologique, sans intention d'achèvement, et sans intention d'archivage. La photographie va faire de l'espace l'englobant un moyen de le prendre à témoin de cette métamorphose que va connaître la fille dans son être et dans son corps. Elle sera, par la force des choses, contrainte à jouer le rôle d'une image qui se donne à voir, à contempler. Elle entrera en conséquence dans le domaine public, n'ayant plus droit sur son corps, déjà ouvert à toutes les tentations du désir et de l'amour-passion, fulgurant, fugace et inintelligible : « Soudain, je me vois comme une autre, comme une autre serait vue, au dehors, mise à la disposition de tous les regards, mise dans la circulation des villes. »²⁰

La période d'avant la connaissance de l'amant correspondrait à une période de latence ou d'incubation, mais aussi de refoulement. La métamorphose a tellement touché la fille qu'elle veut s'essayer à tous les plaisirs et les désirs. D'ailleurs, Lagonelle, sa compagne de l'internat, lui fait un tel effet qu'elle meurt de désir pour elle aussi : « je voudrais manger les seins d'Hélène Lagonelle comme lui mange les seins de moi dans la chambre de la ville chinoise où je vais chaque soir approfondir la connaissance de Dieu. Etre dévorée de ces seins de fleur de farine que sont les siens... »²¹

De l'amour phallique auquel elle s'essaye avec son amant, l'enfant veut s'essayer à un amour plat où la pénétration n'existe pas. De la figuration du « jet d'eau » : « les figurations comme le jet d'eau, le jaillissement, et dans cet ensemble, l'écriture "masturbatoire" sont évidemment, d'une façon primaire, des figurations à identification masculine »²² on passe à la figuration de la colline bombée tournant « les seins en site d'altérité »²³ pour s'attaquer à une figuration féminine, où le corps ne se donne pas à avoir du fait que l'enfant n'est toujours que la première phase de ses fantasmes : le souhait et le rêve. Ce fantasme est nourri par une obsession que le voyeurisme, que la vie en pensionnat exaltent, ne se concrétisera jamais. Le regard seul, dans une espèce de pénétration à distance, entre en contact avec l'objet désiré par l'intermédiaire de ce que se donne à voir le plus, de ce qui sort du corps comme s'il s'agissait d'un relief : les seins, dont les mérites ont été décrits comme suit : « rien n'est plus extraordinaire que cette rotondité extérieure des seins portés, cette extériorité tendue vers les mains. Même le corps de petit coolie de mon petit frère disparaît face à cette splendeur. Les corps des hommes ont des formes avares, internées... »²⁴

Homosexualité et inceste flagrants. Deux formes d'amour interdits sinon tabous. L'homosexualité est une forme plate d'amour sans pénétration. Pourtant les seins de H.L., ce relief de son corps, est pris dans le sens d'un phallus, centre de plaisir et de vie. C'est un corps sublimé sous une robe qui laisse aux yeux le plaisir de le parcourir comme une image, de le contempler, d'avoir un orgasme sans pénétration. « Le jet d'eau » phallique et « les collines bombées » féminines riment ensemble !

2.2. Le regard unilatéral ou la parole omise

Chez Duras, le regard entretient des rapports complexes avec la parole. Il possède sa propre autonomie face à la voix. Tantôt le regard, accentué par le toucher prend la place de la fonction oratoire entre les personnages, et possède une puissance expressive plus grande ; tantôt il vient simplement renforcer une déclaration qui vient d'être énoncée, comme un sens en complète un autre : « Nous nous regardons. Il embrasse mon corps. Il me demande pourquoi je suis venue. Je dis que je devais le faire, que c'en était comme d'une obligation. »²⁵

S'il est vrai que « la photographie "se colle" à son objet »²⁶ il l'est aussi vrai avec l'amour charnel entre les deux corps. La photo, en fait, participe à cet hymne de l'amour que chante, mais aussi crie Duras dans son roman : « On laisse le dire se faire, quand on laisse le corps faire et chercher et trouver et prendre ce qu'il veut, et là tout est bon. »²⁷ L'objet de désir regardé n'est plus perçu comme chose extérieure, la conscience visuelle du sujet regardant n'est plus une conscience de saisie, mais une conscience englobante, fusionnelle. Le sujet du regard et l'objet perçu ne font qu'un. Dans d'autres cas, le toucher supplante et le regard et la parole à la fois. Les gestes du plaisir ont des résonances qui vont bien au-delà d'une passagère satisfaction sensuelle et qui sont réponse, ou essai de réponse à l'insatisfaction profonde de l'être. Dans une fusion corporelle où la vue n'a pas de droit de cité puisque le rapprochement des corps, dans certaines mesures, aveugle : « Elle ne le regarde pas. Elle le touche. Elle touche la douceur du sexe, de la peau, elle caresse la couleur dorée, l'inconnue nouveauté »²⁸.

Dans cette fusion charnelle la fonction de reconnaissance par le regard est omise ; elle s'est transformée en fonction d'appropriation et de possession par le toucher. Le regard est comme perturbé par l'intimité. Le regard grossissant, vu le rapprochement des corps, empêche paradoxalement le regard qui demande un peu de recul. Le regard devient toucher pour entrer plus en contact avec l'autre demandeur d'amour. Le regard n'est plus total chez Duras que s'il est accompagné du toucher. Il donne raison à une réticence de la parole de la part de la fille. L'absence de l'oralité donne plus d'importance aux signes visuels qui deviennent en conséquence une émission d'un appel silencieux, voire d'une invocation à l'objet du désir. En effet, le pouvoir secret que Lagonelle recèle se confond avec le magnétisme attractif qui se dégage de tout son être. Elle est fruits frais prêts à être consommée (és) : « Le corps d'Hélène Lagonelle est lourd, encore innocent, la douceur de sa peau est telle, celle de certains fruits, elle est au bord de ne pas être perçue, illusoire un peu, c'est trop... ces formes de fleur de farine, elle les porte sans savoir aucun, elle montre ces choses pour les mains les pétrir, pour la bouche les manger, sans les retenir, sans connaissances d'elles, sans connaissances de leur fabuleux pouvoir. »²⁹

La narratrice accueille l'amour, le graal qu'elle découvre une fois qu'elle pénètre l'automobile du chinois. Il est maintenant un réceptacle en situation d'attente et de recherche permanente d'amour en tant qu'acte et non comme sentiment. Elle aime l'amour en tant que tel, et cette expérience est aussi visuelle : « Je lui dis que j'aime l'idée qu'il ait beaucoup de femmes, celle d'être parmi ces femmes ; confondue. Il comprend ce que je viens de dire. Le regard altéré tout à coup, faux, pris dans le mal, la mort. »³⁰ La narratrice est un être de regard, son appétit passe par là. Elle est un appareil photographique voulant prendre un cliché, une image. Elle veut regarder d loin ce qu'elle ne peut faire quand son corps s'entremêle avec le corps de son amant et qu'elle est aveuglé par l'amour. Le recul permet le toucher visuel.

Il semble que l'enfant détient un secret de la vie et d'en être tellement convaincue, c'est pourquoi elle continue d' « aimer l'amour » la conduisant à une maturité profonde : « ... il dit qu'il sait déjà que lui je le tromperai et aussi que je tromperai tous les hommes avec qui je serai. »³¹ La visualisation devient vision et prend l'allure d'un fait prospectif, voire prophétique puisque la fille, devenue femme, va jouir de son corps sans se soucier de quoi que ce soit. La chair se dématérialise et devient le lieu d'une expérience comprise « capacité infinie de variation : l'expérience est la variation de l'essence. »³²

2.3. Le non-regard et la parole tue

La non acceptation méthodique du chinois dans le cercle de la famille est fait avéré. Lui adresser la parole relève de l'exploit. La communication passe alors par le silence dans une situation qui rappelle de loin l'absurde. Le Chinois est pour les membres de la famille dans un rapport métonymique avec son argent : on ne le voit guère, on ne le considère point, en revanche on apprécie ses cadeaux et sa fortune :

« Lui les deux premières fois, il se jette à l'eau, il essaye d'aborder le récit de ses exploits à Paris, mais en vain. C'est comme s'il n'avait pas parlé, comme si on n'avait pas entendu. Sa tentative sombre dans le silence. [...] Mes frères ne lui adresseront jamais la parole. C'est comme s'il n'était pas assez dense pour être perçu, vu entendu par eux. Cela parce qu'il est à mes pieds, qu'il est posé en principe que je ne l'aime pas, que je suis avec lui pour l'argent, que je ne peux pas l'aimer, que c'est impossible, qu'il pourrait tout supporter de moi sans être jamais au bout de cet amour... La façon qu'a ce frère aîné de se taire et d'ignorer l'existence de mon amant procède d'une telle conviction qu'elle en est exemplaire. »³³

Le Chinois entame au sein de la famille une initiation à la douleur sans souffrance avouée. Il est sans profondeur, plat et manque de volume :

« Non seulement on ne se parle mais on ne se regarde pas. Du moment qu'on est vu, on ne peut pas regarder. Regarder, c'est avoir un mouvement de curiosité vers, envers, c'est déchoir. Aucune personne regardée ne vaut le regard sur elle. Il est toujours déshonorant. Le mot conversation est banni. »³⁴

La parole est tue. Le silence règne en maître. Les corps en situation de face-à-face remplacent tout supplément à la communication, du moment qu'on est vu et qu'on voit. La vue entretient donc un rapport exclusif à la parole.

Conclusion

Duras a réussi dans *L'Amant* à donner au regard un nouveau sens. Regarder n'est plus conjugué au réel et à l'actuel, il est celui qui vole au dessus pour toucher le virtuel, qui par la magie du verbe, se concrétise. Du semblant on passe à l'avéré, du relatif à l'absolu, du photographique à l'onirique. D'autre part, le regard participe à l'éducation sexuelle et sensitive de la narratrice qui s'essaye à l'amour dans ses deux versants, physique (actuel) et visuel (virtuel), plat (homosexuel) et phallique (hétérosexuel). Enfin, le regard participe à la communication qui ne passe plus par l'oralité.

Notes

- [1] Bal, Mieke, *Images littéraires, ou comment lire visuellement Proust*, Montréal, XYZ, 1997, p.177.
- [2] Duras, Marguerite, *L'Amant*, Paris, Minuit, 1984, p. 9.
- [3] De Waelhens, *Une philosophie de l'ambiguïté. L'existentialisme de Merleau-Ponty*, Louvain, PUL, 1967, p. 178.
- [4] Constantini Michel (Alain Billault cité in), « Ecrire l'image, reedit-on », in *Littérature*, n° 100, 1995, p. 35
- [5] Bal, Mieke, Op. cit., p.11.
- [6] J-L Schaffer J.L., *Scénographie d'un tableau*, Paris, Seuil, Coll. Tel quel, Fac-Lettres, 1969, p. 193
- [7] De Waelhens, Op.Cit., 386.
- [8] Barthes, Roland, *La Chambre claire, Notes sur la photographie*, Paris, Seuil, Cahiers du cinéma, 1980, p. 17
- [9] Barthes, Op. Cit., p.120.
- [10] Bajomée, Danielle, *Duras ou la douleur*, Bruxelles, De Boeck Université et Editions universitaires, Coll. Culture et Communication, Série Littérature.1989, p. 165.
- [11] Duras, Op.Cit, p. 18.
- [12] Lacan, *Le Séminaire*, livre XI, Seuil, Paris, 1973, p. 105.
- [13] Bal, Mieke, Op. Cit., p. 24.
- [14] De Waelhens, Op. Cit., pp. 19-20.
- [15] Barthes, Roland, Op. Cit., p. 16.
- [16] Duras, Op.cit., p. 24.
- [17] Lacan, Op.cit., p. 70.
- [18] Ibid, p. 105.
- [19] Duras, Op.Cit., p. 9.
- [20] Ibid, p. 20.
- [21] Ibid, p. 92.
- [22] Bal Mieke, Op.Cit., p. 96.
- [23] Ibid, p. 104.
- [24] Duras, p. 89.
- [25] Ibid, p 51.
- [26] Bal, Op.Cit., p. 148.
- [27] Duras, p. 54.
- [28] Ibid, 50.
- [29] Duras, p. 92.
- [30] Ibid, p. 54.
- [31] Ibid, p. 54.
- [32] De Waelhens, Op.cit., p. 43.
- [33] Duras, p. 64.
- [34] Ibid, p. 69.

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La perspective de la féminité dans la poésie pour enfants chez Elena Farago et Otilia Cazimir

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Abstract: *Looking back, we can speak of a female lyrical journey starting in the nineteenth century - Matilda Cugler-Poni, Veronica Micle, Maria Cunțan, Julia Hasdeu, Elena Văcărescu, Elena Farago, Alice Calugaru, Claudia Millian, Otilia Cazimir, Nina Cassian, Maria Banus, etc. Ana Blandiana - of an active presence in local poetry, deep sensitivity, a wide horizon of knowledge. In this article, our goal is to analyze Elena Farago and Otilia Cazimir works that embodies admirable the concept of femininity, through a complex and vigorous literary creation, a poetry of great sensitivity, from the erotic, the poetry of nature, the poetry of social and intellectualist attitude to literature for children. In their works, we find a diversity of influences that go beyond European literature, we identify that "style of soul", unique ways of creative femininity. Are significant not only the visions of the writers about the idea of femininity, but also their image reflected in the consciousness of contemporaries and posterity.*

Keywords: *poetry, femininity, moral, melancholy, tenderness, eroticism.*

Si nous remontons au XIX-ème siècle, nous pouvons parler d'un itinéraire lyrique féminin – Matilda Cugler-Poni, Veronica Micle, Maria Cunțan, Iulia Hasdeu, Elena Văcărescu, Elena Farago, Alice Călugăru, Claudia Millian, Otilia Cazimir, Nina Cassian, Maria Banuș, Ana Blandiana, etc. – d'une présence active dans la poésie autochtone, d'une sensibilité profonde, d'un large horizon de connaissance de l'âge infantile.

«Vestale infatigable du feu sacré» dans l'opinion de Perpessicius, Elena Farago incarne admirablement le concept de féminité. Issue dans une époque où la poésie féminine ne connaissait que l'écriture mineure de Maria Cunțan, Elena Farago, poète d'une grande sensibilité, s'est fait remarquer par une création complexe et vigoureuse, à partir de la poésie de la poésie intimiste à la poésie de la nature, de la poésie d'attitude sociale et intellectualiste à la littérature pour enfants et aux traductions. «Une poète accomplie et typiquement féminine»[1], qui a exploité le sentiment de l'amour, avec de la musicalité et une clarté de l'imagerie, même avec des implications sociales, avec des méthodes «semănătoriste» comme toile de fond, pour une formule lyrique de médiation entre le traditionalisme et le modernisme d'expression symboliste.

Le premier volume de poèmes, intitulé *Vers* (1906), accueilli chaleureusement par la critique, montre une lyrique délicate, incarnant admirablement le concept de féminité avec des sonorités à peine murmurées, avec de la discrétion et de l'émotivité dans les sentiments, dans un éros marqué de tensions et d'attentes, avec une sincérité chaleureuse et non dissimulée.

Dans le cycle *Mars – Décembre 1907*, la mission de la poète change, elle passe de la simple poésie intime et vaporeuse qui interprétait mal son âme délicate à la poésie sociale embrassant chaleureusement les souffrances humaines, sans être une philippique directe contre la société bourgeoise capitaliste.

Après les volumes de vers *Murmures de l'ombre* (1908), *Du secret des anciens carrefours* (1913), *Les murmures du soir* (1920), *Poèmes choisis* (1924), *Je n'ai pas fléchi mes genoux* (1926), *Poèmes* (1937, 1957) et les traductions *Don du don*, *Traductions libres*, *Réminiscences* (1921), avec un prix décerné par l'Académie Roumaine, louée par la quasi-totalité de la critique de l'époque Elena Farago devenait l'une des figures représentatives de la poésie roumaine.

Le volume *Murmures de l'ombre* combine les éléments sociaux avec la poésie de la nature et de l'éros. C'est un volume des sensations, des vécus où nous découvrons l'enfance tourmentée par les tristesses et les nostalgies, par les souffrances résignées et les silences intériorisés.

Le volume *Je n'ai pas fléchi mes genoux* annonce une conscience artistique où les compromis sont bannis, une pureté d'âme et une tenue des idées de valeur, un orgueil tempéré pour exprimer le triomphe de l'espoir.

Reconnue comme une «remarquable poète de l'amour pudique» [3] qui a gardé la sincérité et la tendresse féminine, Elena Farago est passée de la poésie amoureuse à la méditation ponctuée par la philosophie, pour ouvrir un sourire sur la littérature d'enfants, tout en restant «la femme à l'art doux, possédée par la joie et la souffrance, couverte jusqu'en dessus des yeux par le voile». C. D. Papastate observe que la poésie d'Elena Farago «est vraiment parfaite, (...) non pas dans le sens qu'on donne au terme l'écoulement du temps ou à l'assurance d'arrêté d'une critique verbale, mais dans celui plus large et plus humain de la personnalité entière» [4].

«On a dit de Lamartine qu'il est la poésie elle-même. La formule s'applique à Elena Farago aussi.» E. Lovinescu [5] souligne, dans ce jugement, l'élément dominant de la poésie d'Elena Farago: la vie intime présente dans l'oeuvre poétique. C. D. Papastate remarque que la poésie intimiste n'est tout de même pas déprimante, mais pleine de douceur profondément humaine, enveloppée dans l'émotion, trahissant ainsi «une subtile sensibilité féminine» [6], avec de nouvelles résonances poétiques.

Le symbolisme de la poète consiste précisément dans la musicalité intérieure, dans son hermétisme, dans une retenue de la confession – causée par la pudicité – spécifiquement féminine. La lyrique intimiste est due à sa sensibilité délicate, discrète, féminine. L'amour chanté par Elena Farago est pareil à l'amour des troubadours, un idéal, un amour inassouvi, résigné. Il n'est pas un amour passionné, ni un cri de bonheur, d'exaltation, mais un amour plein de dignité, il devient presque stoïcien, se spiritualise et prend des nuances éthiques. Considérée comme «la plus pathétique et la plus personnelle poète de sa génération littéraire» [7], Elena Farago complète la poésie intime, sentimentale avec la poésie de la nature – «la nature état d'âme» de Stendhal.

Avec un début sous le signe de l'amour discret, nuancé avec des éléments philosophiques et sociaux, la poésie d'Elena Farago devait faire un long et prolongé repos dans le monde des enfants auxquels elle dédie les plus belles pages. Les volumes *Pour enfants* I et II et *Aux enfants* (1913), *De la besace de Père Hoel* (1920), *Bobocica*, *Ne pleurons pas* (1921), *Le journal d'un matou* (1924), *Dans un nid de cigogne* (1925), *Il a heurté un oeuf de bois*, *Une nuit de Noël* (1943), *4 insectes enchantées* (1944), *Le plugușor des jouets* (1944), *Ne mens pas, ne vole pas* (1944) sont dédiés à l'univers infantile. Dans la littérature pour enfants d'Elena Farago, C. D. Papastate [8] remarque deux éléments essentiels desquels a émergé et s'est cristallisé, premièrement l'amour pour ses propres enfants et deuxièmement l'amour pour tous les enfants qu'elle a aimés aussi passionnément que les siens.

Le cycle *Autour du berceau* représente une étape, un chapitre de la création, où l'enfant devient un idéal et les scènes intimes de la vie viennent esquisser son profile. La poésie apparaît comme un tableau, une ébauche où la poétesse glisse le frisson discret de la maternité, de l'amour maternel. G. Călinescu [9] remarque l'originalité des poésies de ce cycle où la poète «chante la maternité et où, dans le rythme traînant de la berceuse, la mère prie avec un sincère égoïsme pour que de toutes les prières n'atteignent le ciel que la sienne, ou bien elle se contente modestement de la seule existence de l'enfant quelles que soient ses qualités»: *Si je fléchis humblement mes genoux, / Et je joins mes mains / Je ne pense pas qu'il soit, mon Père, / Ni le plus juste ni le meilleur... // Et je ne prie pas que Vous lui donniez des grâces, / Ni même sage tant soit peu... / Il me suffirait de le voir s'élever / Ni trop beau ni trop laid; // Et je ne le voudrais pas trop rangé, / Ni trop fou non plus; / Ni trop soumis obéir, / Mais ne pas rire de ce que je viens lui dire. // Et surtout je voudrais qu'il sente / Dans tout conflit de son vécu, / Que son ami le plus fidèle, à jamais / Ce ne sera que moi...*

De l'autre catégorie émerge l'amour pour les enfants, de par le soin avec lequel elle leur transmet des enseignements et des exemples pour la vie. A partir de la simple observation de la vie quotidienne, Elena Farago crée de petites poésies ou des histoires passionnantes par leur musicalité, mais surtout par leur pouvoir d'adaptation à la capacité de compréhension des enfants. Elle leur adresse, par des vers d'une grande candeur, délicatesse et tendresse, des messages éducatifs, elle les fait partager des expériences de vie. Les poèmes pour enfants, compréhensifs et intégratifs, relèvent de la fonction éthique de l'art, de son pouvoir de modèle moral et sont eux aussi écrits avec une tristesse mélancolique, avec de la largeur et de la générosité d'âme. Doués de tout l'univers affectif, sentimental, caractériel humain, les animaux (surtout chiots, chats, souris, poulets et insectes) imitent la «grande vie».

Elena Farago introduit, dans la poésie pour enfants, une touche de sensibilité féminine, maternelle [10]. *Nous pouvons voir ses créations du point de vue de l'orpheline*, de la femme et de la mère. Les poésies de l'univers infantile s'adressent au fond enfantin de sentiments, traitent des problèmes variés spécifiques à l'âge tendre. Avec de l'émotion, elle recourt à la compréhension et à la générosité devant la souffrance, elle poursuit la formation de caractères positifs, elle prend de l'attitude contre les habitudes et les compétences négatives, qu'elle condamne.

Des poèmes inclus dans le volume *Dans le sac de Père Noël*, remonte une tendresse discrète, jaissant du thème développé et de la musicalité du vers. Avec un puissant caractère éducatif, la poétesse ne poursuit pas seulement le divertissement des enfants, mais aussi l'éducation, la correction de certaines habitudes. Tout aussi intéressants sont les problèmes qu'elle pose dans le volume *Dans un nid d'hirondelle*. Les histoires ont des thèmes qui se ressemblent. Dans ce sens l'histoire *Ne mens pas, ne vole pas* est très suggestive. Par des moyens simples, mais attirants, Elena Farago illustre l'idée de bonté, d'humanité, de bon sens, d'aide, en édifiant un système de pensée qui culmine avec la vision de la société future, fondée sur le travail, l'honnêteté et le respect des valeurs.

Selon C. D. Papastate, l'élément dominant de la littérature pour enfants, comme d'ailleurs de toute l'oeuvre d'Elena Farago, est le lyrisme servi par la féminité, la naïveté et la simplicité du jeu. La poète s'approche avec une grande compréhension de l'âme enfantine et l'oeuvre poétique est le résultat d'un appel intérieur, d'amour et de sensibilité artistique. Les volumes d'Elena Farago sont les échos d'une enfance tourmentée de tristesses et de nostalgies, de souffrances résignées et de silences intériorisés qui acquiert ainsi de la profondeur, de la gravité et du trisme. Ils annoncent une conscience artistique sans compromis, une pureté de l'esprit et un constant niveau élevé des idées. Ils révèlent aussi un orgueil tempéré de celle qui a recherché la beauté et a glorifié la vérité par sa poésie humaniste et par sa poésie pour enfants, la valeur morale et esthétique.

Poète, prosateur, publiciste, traducteur, Otilia Cazimir s'est dévouée à la poésie (60 volumes) et a reçu de nombreux prix littéraires (le prix de l'Académie Roumaine, le prix «Femina Vie Heureuse» – 1927, le Prix National pour la Littérature - 1937). Ses volumes, de source biographique, sont de véritables «confessions sentimentales glissées dans de petits pastels», qui gardent des échos symbolistes relevant la même délicatesse dans la perception de la nature et de l'âme de l'enfant, avec des touches d'humour gentil.

Elle a débuté avec le volume *Lumières et ombres* (1923) pour lequel on lui a reconnu des affinités avec Alice Călugăru en ce qui concerne le talent exceptionnel, la forme concentrée, la capacité d'obtenir un «maximum d'effet artistique», qualités rares de la poésie féminine: «la sobriété en expression est dans l'art une vertu féminine tellement rare». [11] Le volume suivant, *Papillons de nuit* (1926), qui l'a consacrée, a reçu le prix de l'Académie Roumaine et le prix «Femina Vie heureuse». Dans les volumes de vers *Lumières et ombres* (1923), *Papillons de nuit* (1926), *Lampyres – Chroniques fantaisistes et humoristes* (1930), *Chant de trésor* (1930), *Poésies* (1939) et de prose *De l'obscurité* (1928), *Le jardin des*

souvenirs (1929), *Dans la bourgade entre les vignes* (1914) les thèmes majeurs sont l'amour et la nature, la confession sentimentale, pour qu'après la guerre elle se concentre sur la méditation sur l'existence et le destin humain, sur l'évolution sociale et morale de ses contemporains.

On a affirmé que la poésie d'Otilia Cazimir était une «réplique féminine» à la poésie de George Topârceanu. [12] «Poète – disait Otilia Cazimir dans une interview – sonne encore désuet, romanesque. Écrivain – oui! J'ai d'ailleurs écrit cinq volumes de prose» [13]

La première critique pertinente de la poésie d'Otilia Cazimir appartient à Garabet Ibrăileanu qui a souligné le réalisme psychologique, le lyrisme, l'inclusion de la sensibilité dans les faits, le «psychologisme objectivé», la pureté et la discrétion du sentiment, l'évitement du miniaturisme sentimental par l'usage de l'humour, la puissance de l'expression, la maîtrise parfaite de la technique poétique. Le critique a mis en évidence le mérite de la poète «d'amener dans la poésie roumaine la sensibilité typiquement féminine». [14]

Avec le volume *Lampyres – Chroniques fantaisistes et humoristes*, le registre thématique et sentimental de la poétesse s'élargit considérablement. Le volume *Chant de trésor* s'ouvre par une *Préface*, dans laquelle nous voyons une tentative de définition de la poésie qui devenait un prétexte pour la pensée, pour la confession morale et existentielle. Șerban Cioculescu croit que le style d'Otilia Cazimir est «comme celui de sa littérature, féminin, avec une chaleur affective le cas échéant, sans affecter la masculinité comme la plupart des écrivains femmes bucarestoises particulièrement celles formées sur le modèle de Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu» [15].

Nous remarquons une attitude féminine, une capacité descriptive avec une fonction précise, qui accentue le mouvement spirituel et les significations des couleurs dépassent les correspondances habituelles, interfèrent, se complètent. Dans la poésie des saisons, les éléments de la nature sont *sélectés de façon féminine et exprimés de façon féminine* [16] avec de la sensibilité. Dans la poésie érotique, E. Lovinescu reconnaît «une sorte de *captatio*, de tentation, de rêve irréalisé ou même irréalisable»; «je ne connais rien de plus noble qu'une femme poète, (...) elle a une double signification tout en étant poète et poétique». [17] G. Sanda [18], en la comparant à tous les écrivains, de Sapho à Arghezi, qui comprenaient l'amour comme un *égoïsme à deux*, avec des interrogations et des doutes amers, constate chez Otilia Cazimir le refus du souvenir livresque d'autres amours.

Je ne suis pas l'arrière-nièce de Manon, / Ni Juliette, ni Desdémone, / Je ne suis pas Vénère, ni Madone, - / Ni Emma Bovary, ni Mignon... // J'en ai de chacune héritage / Parfois une qualité ou un défaut: / Mais moi je les hais toutes profondément. / Non que je convoite l'immortalité. // La raison de ma haine, tu la connais, toi: / Même si depuis des siècles elles n'y sont plus, / et que tu les connais sauf par leur nom, / Tu les aime toutes, - sauf moi... (Haine, Lumières et ombres).

Sentimentale, Otilia Cazimir était inégalée dans ses investigations psychologiques et les implications sociales causées par l'amour dans la vie des héros. L'amour est compris comme une nécessité élémentaire, permanente, aspiration éternellement inassouvie, éphémère et inaccessible. Nous ne trouvons pas de «méditations» sur l'amour, elle ne met pas au centre de son existence l'amour, mais la vie au centre de l'amour. La visualisation a été considérée comme «l'essentiel de la féminité en l'occurrence de la création littéraire parce que du point de vue psychologique, l'image visuelle est la plus proche et la plus facile porte pour la sensibilité» [19].

Par les volumes *Jouets* (1938), *Luchi est mort...* (1942), *Mère Hiver entre dans le village* (1954), *L'album de photos* (1967), Otilia Cazimir se dédie à la littérature pour enfants, ayant des affinités avec I. Al. Brătescu-Voinești et Mihail Sadoveanu par la maîtrise avec laquelle elle s'approche de la vie simple de l'univers enfantin, en trouvant des modalités

d'expression inépuisables. Elle reste liée à son village natal, les images sont familières, le cadre intime et l'humour requiert des particularités inédites. G. Călinescu remarque le fait que la littérature de l'univers merveilleux de l'enfant s'adresse en plus grande partie aux lecteurs adultes. Dans ce cas-là on peut parler d'une littérature de reconstitution de l'âme pure par laquelle est passée l'enfance. Peu d'écrivains savent rester «enfants», retrouver cet univers perdu de l'enfance. La sensibilité de la poétesse la détermine à retourner dans le monde de l'enfance.

Selon Baudelaire, *le génie n'est que l'enfance retrouvée à la volonté, ou le génie n'est que l'enfance nottement formulée.* (Charles Baudelaire, 1928, p. 60, 162.) O. Cazimir manifeste cette sensibilité, ce manque de l'enfance: *Les choses depuis longtemps oubliés me manquent, / Les livres d'enfants, avec des visages, / Les coquillages chauds dans le sable, / Quand ils craquent dans mes mains chaud et doux, / Du gai gazouillement des moineaux, le soir, / Quand ils reviennent pour dormir... // Je me sens sourire un petit sourire, fragile, / léger jouet en cristal, / Et je ne bouge pas, de peur de l'abîmer.* (*Convalescence, Chanson de trésor*) [20]

G. Sanda [21] souligne le fait que la poétesse n'a pas été d'accord avec la compréhension de la poésie pour enfant en tant que jeu ou comme une poésie événement, comme un moyen de jouissance, mais elle a su faire de la poésie l'un des plus beaux jouets. Dans une interview, on lui a demandé ce qui l'avait déterminée à écrire pour les enfants, la poétesse a répondu: «La tendresse des enfants m'a toujours émue. Je les ai approchés en riant, en leur écrivant des poèmes joyeux, avec une légère nuance d'ironie. Celui qui m'a influencée dans cette manière d'écrire et de me comporter envers les enfants est le grand poète et ami des enfants Topârceanu». [22] Tout en écrivant pour les enfants, Otilia Cazimir n'a pas eu le sentiment de «s'abaisser», mais tout au contraire de s'élever dans les espaces épurés de la notion d'homme. *Le but* de la poésie *n'est pas moralisateur*, comme chez *Elena Farago*, mais celui d'enchanter *les enfants, d'écrire une «poésie-jeu»* ou *«poésie-événement»*.

Dans *Luchi est mort...* et *l'Album de photos*, on nous propose une reconstitution, une reviviscence, une nouvelle manière d'évocation de l'enfance. On sent la présence de l'homme mûr par la manière de sélectionner les souvenirs. Par rapport aux *Souvenirs* de Creangă, un esprit d'observation particulièrement attentif s'ajoute, une attitude de mère et de femme, un charme particulier. *Luchi est mort...* est un «roman» de l'enfance, autobiographique, où la poésie et la prose, la couleur et la lumière gardent la fraîcheur inaltérée. Le monde est découvert avec la fascination, la naïveté et la curiosité d'une petite fille d'âge préscolaire, où le réel se confond avec l'imaginaire. C'est un livre *sur* l'enfance, non pas *pour* les enfants, comme l'auteur avoue elle-même: *Luchi est mort... est faussement considéré comme «un livre pour enfants»*. *C'est le livre de mon enfance, il est autobiographique et la psychologie de l'enfance est étudiée avec un soin minutieux pour la vérité, âprement et honnêtement, non pas avec le soin de parer de nippes de couleur et amusantes pour réjouir les enfants ou les adultes à leurs dépens.* [23]

G. Călinescu souligne le fait qu'elle était remarquable «dans les esquisses en prose aussi, petits instantanés, drames en miniature, dans le même esprit puissamment évocateur et discrètement humanitaire qui traverse toute la prose moldave depuis Sadoveanu, Hogaș et Ionel Teodoreanu» [24]. Dans la prose d'Otilia Cazimir, l'humour a une teinte psychologique étant à la fois affectif et intellectuel, émotionnel, moral et philosophique, avec des jugements implicites et la femme est volontaire, libre dans les gestes et les actions, capable de déclencher dans la vie tout autour d'elle une irrésistible frénésie érotique.

Dans les articles publiés par Otilia Cazimir dans la presse de l'entre-deux-guerres, elle a continué les traditions de la lutte des femmes pour l'émancipation, pour les droits sociaux et politiques. Par les thèmes différents, par la finesse des nuances, par la clarté des idées et la justesse des arguments, ses articles ont eu un écho dans les publications du temps et même à

l'étranger. Elle a collaboré avec les organisations féministes de l'Europe, avec Ženská Národní Rada (le Conseil national des femmes tchécoslovaques) ou avec *La Petite Entente des Femmes*, qui l'ont priée de publier des articles sur la vie et la condition de la femme roumaine. Outre les nombreuses références à la femme roumaine, Otilia Cazimir a publié beaucoup d'articles sur la femme française, finlandaise (*La politique néfaste pour les femmes*), anglaise (*Le déclin d'une suffragette*), italienne (*L'armée féminine*), tchèque (*La femme et la poésie patriotique*), turque et coréenne (*Autour d'un divorce*), japonaise (*Des annotations sur un article féministe*), sur la femme d'Afrique du Sud (*La boîte aux petits riens*), etc., elle a milité pour les droits de la femme et contre les manifestations violentes du mouvement féministe.

G. Sanda [25] observe de nombreuses similitudes entre la poésie, la prose et les publications dans les journaux d'Otilia Cazimir, en ce qui concerne les moyens de réalisation, dans la reprise de certains sujets, dans les idées féministes. Le même critique mentionne de nombreux articles (*Alice Călugăru, Poétesses d'hier, d'aujourd'hui et de demain, le Concours du «Matin» et la littérature féminine, le Prix «Femina», La femme dans la littérature, Les rencontres littéraires féminines, De nouveau, La Société des Femmes écrivains Roumaines, La femme et la poésie patriotique, L'invasion des femmes en littérature, La peinture féminine, Aglae Pruteanu, etc.*) par lesquels Otilia Cazimir a montré de l'intérêt pour les manifestations artistiques de la femme, en relevant les caractéristiques de la littérature féminine.

Elena Farago et Otilia Cazimir incarnent admirablement le concept de féminité, par une création littéraire complexe et vigoureuse, une poésie de grande sensibilité, de celle érotique à la poésie de la nature, de la poésie d'attitude sociale et intellectualiste à la littérature pour les enfants. Dans leurs oeuvres, on trouve un pluralisme d'influences qui dépassent le cadre de la littérature européenne, on identifie ce «style de l'âme» [26], toutes des modalités inédites de la féminité créatrice. Ce ne sont pas seulement significatives les visions des femmes écrivains sur l'idée de féminité, mais leurs images aussi, reflétée dans la conscience des contemporains et de la postérité.

Notes

[1] Al. Bădăuță, *Hommage*, dans «Viața literară», no. 80, 31 mars, 1928.

[2] Selon Andrei Bârseanu, ce volume exprime « une douleur de l'homme qui n'a pas eu d'enfance heureuse, et qui a expérimenté des déceptions amères dans sa vie (...) une douleur de résignation, la souffrance qui se ferme en soi et qui attend la fin sans murmure (...) ». Rapport, dans les « Annales de l'Académie Roumaine », S. II, t. 31, 1908-1909, Section littéraire, p. 255.

[3] G. Călinescu, *Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent*, București, Editura Minerva, 1982 p. 625.

[4] C. D. Papastate, *Elena Farago*, Édition Scrisul românesc, Craiova, p. 49.

[5] E. Lovinescu, *Critiques*, V, Éd. Alcalay, București, p. 55.

[6] C. D. Papastate, *op.cit.*, p. 68.

[7] E. Lovinescu, *Op. cit.*, p. 56.

[8] *Op.cit.*, p. 120.

[9] Elena Farago, *Si je fléchis humblement les genoux*, dans le vol. *Autour du berceau*.

[10] Ilie Stanciu, *La littérature pour enfants*, București, EDP, 1968, p. 54.

[11] în «Viața românească », 1923, p. 450, sans signature.

[12] ils ont répondu aux critiques par une farce, en publiant des poésies et en changeant les signatures, et la critique m'a été favorable à moi, c'est-à-dire à lui... *Topârceanu, et aux vers du «Top» (parus sous ma signature) on a reproché une féminité excessive* dans l'interview *Parler avec Otilia Cazimir de la poésie, de l'humour et surtout de Topârceanu*, de Sig. Horoveanu «Urzica », année XV, 1963, no. 17 (15 septembre), p. 4.

[13] Valer Donea, *Cu Otilia Cazimir, în cetatea Iașului*, «Adevărul literar și artistic», an XIV, 1935, nr. 781, 24 novembre, p. 8.

[14] G. Ibrăileanu, *Otilia Cazimir: Fluturi de noapte*, „Viața românească”, XIX, 1927, nr. 1, janvier, p. 128.

[15] *Otilia Cazimir și teatrul*, în „Flacăra”, an XXVII, 1978, nr. 28, 13 juillet, p. 17.

[16] George Sanda, *Otilia Cazimir*, București, Editura Cartea Românească, 1984, p. 29.

- [17] E. Lovinescu, *Pași pe nisip*, vol. II, București, 1906, p. 141)
- [18] G. Sanda, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
- [19] M. D. Ioanid, *Otilia Cazimir: Grădina cu amintiri*, în „Ramuri”, anul XXII, 1928, nr. 10-11, octombrie-noiembrie, p. 309.
- [20] G. Sanda a l'intuition de la même nostalgie que chez Eugène Ionesco: *J'ai la nostalgie de moi, celui que j'étais alors, celui petit, une nostalgie désespérée, sans remède, comme j'ai la nostalgie des morts, de ma mère* (în „Viața românească”, 1935, p. 93), *op. cit.*, p. 41.
- [21] *Op.cit.*, p. 41.
- [22] *Interviu cu poeta Otilia Cazimir*, „Cravata roșie”, 1963, nr. 12, p. 22.
- [23] dans une lettre d'Otilia Cazimir – George Sanda, 16 mai 1964.
- [24] *Op.cit.*, p. 750.
- [25] *Op.cit.*, p. 80.
- [26] G. Călinescu, *Grădina cu amintiri*, în „Viața literară”, an IV, 1929, nr. 129, 30 noiembrie, p. 3.

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Défense et illustration de la féminité dans *Le deuxième sexe* de Simone de Beauvoir

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Résumé: Compagne du philosophe best-seller, J.-P. Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir s'avère l'un des beaux exemples de femmes-écrivains dont l'œuvre provoque de forts retentissements. Son essai de 1949, *Le deuxième sexe* a provoqué de vifs débats pro et contra non seulement relatifs aux thèses exposées mais aussi à la personne Beauvoir, pour s'être refusé le mariage et la maternité. Le mouvement féministe s'est approprié ce livre comme son texte-manifeste, même si le livre ne finit pas par un appel à la lutte pour changer les mentalités. L'essai aborde témérairement des sujets tabous : la liberté sexuelle, l'accouchement, l'avortement, la condition de la femme-objet, etc. ce qui attire sur son auteure tous les anathèmes. Soixante ans après, l'essai de Beauvoir reste original et unique pour avoir réussi à réécrire une histoire exhaustive de la femme à travers les temps, tout en remettant en question les stéréotypes et les affirmations péremptoires longuement colportées par les penseurs et les anthropologues. Sa tentative de mettre à mal tous des préjugés et d'explorer « les chemins de la liberté de la femme » est au moins révolutionnaire, et le retentissement du livre montre que son auteure pèse profondément sur nos idées et nos comportements, notamment pour le fait d'avoir contribué à l'émergence d'une conscience féminine capable de surmonter la fatalité de sa condition, ce qui est, somme toute, le sens même de l'existentialisme.

Mots-clés : essai, féminisme, existentialisme, stéréotype, autre, mentalité

Le début du XX^e siècle ne cesse pas d'offrir au monde des génies littéraires sinon des personnalités remarquables, puisque originales. Simone de Beauvoir est un bel exemple de femme-écrivain dont l'œuvre provoque des échos retentissants à l'époque et influence même soixante ans après. Plusieurs aspects biographiques conduisent Simone de Beauvoir à devenir un écrivain de race dans les lettres françaises : l'aînée d'une famille catholique aisée s'oppose très tôt et de vive voix au moralisme bourgeois étroit et au quotidien morose qui destinait les jeunes filles uniquement au mariage et à la maternité ; elle poursuit des études brillantes et devient à vingt et un ans la plus jeune agrégée en philosophie de France [1]. En compagnie de Jean-Paul Sartre pendant plus de cinquante ans dans une entente intellectuelle fondée sur un anticonformisme volontiers agressif et un amour singulier qui leur autorisait des liaisons contingentes [2] avec d'autres, on l'a étiquetée de « Notre-Dame de Sartre » de façon simplement réductrice. En 1981, dans *La Cérémonie des adieux*, elle lui apportera un dernier hommage.

En 1943, Simone de Beauvoir publie un livre d'analyse personnelle profonde, subjective et rigoureuse, *L'Invitée*, où, sur le canevas d'une histoire amoureuse triangulaire, elle se penchait sur les contradictions entre les consciences, de l'existence de l'Autrui « comme un irréductible scandale », de l'indépendance affective et spirituelle. On y voyait naître l'avocate fervente de l'existentialisme qui poursuit de façon programmatique la réflexion sur les problèmes de l'absurde dans des essais tels que *Pyrrhus et Cinéas* (1944), *L'Existentialisme et la sagesse des nations*, *Pour une morale de l'ambiguïté* (1947).

L'essai de 1949, *Le deuxième sexe*, provoque de vifs débats pro et contra non seulement relatifs aux thèses exposées mais aussi à la personne Simone de Beauvoir, femme qui s'est refusé le mariage et la maternité [3]. Un élément paratextuel aguiche l'intérêt du public : « La femme, cette inconnue » annonce la bande du livre [4]. L'auteure le dédie à Jacques Bost, « le petit Bost » qui fut l'un de ses amours collatéraux.

La tâche que l'écrivaine se donne, de définir la femme (ce fascinant « continent noir » selon l'expression de Freud) et la féminité dans leur altérité et non pas l'inverse, est courageuse puisque exhaustive (les deux volumes comptent plus de mille pages) [5]. De la colère froide de la part des hommes (intellectuels, littéraires, philosophes) qui s'y voient « maltraités » par cet ouvrage exhibitionniste, voire pornographique, à l'adhésion franche et totale de la part des femmes qui s'y voient enfin « vengées », à droite et à gauche, les

réactions du public frôlent les extrêmes (audace, défi, réprobation, hostilité, indignation) et assurent à son auteure une célébrité controversée :

Preuve de l'impact de ses thèses, le livre déclencha un véritable raz-de-marée de grossièreté, de bassesse et de mauvaise foi. Un nombre stupéfiant d'écrivains ne craignirent pas d'exprimer leur horreur névrotique devant le fait qu'une femme osât remettre en question toutes les idées reçues et surtout parler du corps sans fausse pudeur, en un style simple et précis [6].

Le prix à payer fut un grand scandale qui aide à vendre les vingt-deux mille exemplaires du premier tome dans une semaine. Le Saint-Office de Rome le met à l'index sur-le-champ. Les Françaises se l'arrachent, mais elles n'ont guère une réaction conscience de l'importance de la question féminine, tandis que les Américaines qui avaient déjà ébauché un féminisme embryonnaire, l'accueillent triomphalement : on osait enfin parler de la ségrégation sexuelle, du sexisme d'un univers phallocratie, d'égale importance que l'oppression raciale. On vend deux millions d'exemplaires en traduction anglaise et au Japon c'est le best-seller toute une année. Grâce à la traduction dans beaucoup de langues (y compris l'arabe, l'hébreu, le serbo-croate ou le tamil) [7], Beauvoir devient bientôt l'écrivaine féministe la plus lue au monde.

Même si le livre ne finit pas par un appel ouvert ou masqué à la lutte pour changer les mentalités, le mouvement féministe se l'est approprié et le revendique depuis comme un texte-manifeste [8]. Il convient de rappeler que ce livre n'est ni une revendication militante ni un désir de revanche. Il tient simplement une place essentielle dans la longue protestation des femmes contre la domination masculine occidentale au nom de principes religieux et juridiques qui exploitent les différences biologiques entre les mâles et les femmes. Ce ne sont pas non plus des comptes à régler puisqu'elle était confiante dans l'avènement du socialisme qui apporterait d'emblée l'égalité entre les sexes [9]. Par ailleurs, elle a franchement donné les raisons de son choix dans le deuxième volet autobiographique, *La force de l'âge* (1960) où elle fait globalement la somme de toutes ses expériences entre 1929 et 1944 :

Une première question se posait : qu'est-ce que ça avait signifié pour moi d'être une femme ? J'ai d'abord cru pouvoir m'en débarrasser vite. Je n'avais jamais eu de sentiment d'infériorité. Ma féminité ne m'avait gênée en rien. Personne ne m'avait jamais dit : « Vous pensez comme ça parce que vous êtes une femme. »

— Pour moi, dis-je à Sartre, ça n'a pour ainsi dire pas compté.

— Tout de même, vous n'avez pas été élevée de la même façon qu'un garçon. Il faudrait y regarder de plus près.

Je regardai et j'eus une révélation : ce monde était un monde masculin. Mon enfance avait été nourrie de mythes forgés par les hommes et je n'y avais pas du tout réagi de la même manière que si j'avais été un garçon. Je fus si intéressée que j'abandonnai l'idée d'une confession personnelle pour m'occuper de la question féminine dans sa généralité [10].

L'épigraphie célèbre tirée de Pythagore – « Il y a un principe bon qui a créé l'ordre, la lumière et l'homme ; et un principe mauvais qui a créé le chaos, les ténèbres et la femme », doublée par une remarque de Poulain de la Barre, penseur du XII^e siècle – « Tout ce qui a été écrit par les hommes sur les femmes doit être suspect car ils sont à la fois juge et partie » incendiait et orientait d'emblée la démarche critique du 1^{er} tome. Dans l'*Introduction*, Beauvoir se donne elle-même des arguments qui légitiment son entreprise :

Un homme n'aurait pas l'idée d'écrire un livre sur la situation singulière qu'occupent dans l'humanité les mâles. Qu'il soit homme, cela va de soi. Il est entendu que le fait d'être un homme n'est pas une singularité. Un homme est dans son droit en étant homme, c'est la femme qui est dans son tort. [...] La femme apparaît comme le négatif si bien que toute détermination lui est imputée comme limitation sans réciprocité. (I, p. 16)

Dès les premières lignes, elle attaque « à la hussarde » en employant pêle-mêle des termes tels que « femelle », « ovaires » ou l'Autre, « l'éternel féminin » pour énoncer la thèse principale

à développer, argumenter et réfuter tour à tour, de mille façons différentes, tout le long du livre :

Elle [la femme] se détermine et se différencie par rapport à l'homme et non celui-ci par rapport à elle ; elle est l'inessentiel par rapport à l'essentiel. Il est le Sujet, il est l'Absolu : elle est l'Autre. (I, p. 17)

La contestation de la « souveraineté mâle » (I, p. 19) imposée par la dépendance économique (I, p. 23) se donne comme but le changement de mentalité : si l'homme voit l'Autre dans la femme, il y aura de « profondes complicités » enrichissantes (I, p. 24). Ses premiers arguments s'étaient sur d'autres parallèles des rapports inégaux qui ont viré dans des stéréotypes socioculturels aggravants : la nature vs la culture, les capitalistes vs les ouvriers, les Blancs vs les Noirs, les colons vs les indigènes (I, p. 17-24). Vassale, esclave, inférieure, la chose (en minuscule), la parasite, tout fait de la femme un être lourdement handicapé (I, p. 23). Les hommes sont mal placés pour analyser impartialement la complexité du phénomène d'un *mitsein* originel puisqu'ils sont « juge et partie » (I, p. 31)

Nous proposons une approche linéaire exigée par la structure même du livre afin de montrer l'évolution d'une pensée encyclopédique, philosophique qui use de toute référence culturelle, anthropologique [11], biologique, etc. pour démolir un mythe mensonger. C'est pourquoi elle entame une démonstration rigoureuse dans le premier tome intitulé, *Les faits et les mythes* par un relevé de la condition féminine d'après les données biologiques et les renseignements que fournit l'Histoire à travers les mythes, les littératures, les religions. Elle remonte donc aux sources afin de broser le « destin » de la femme (titre de la 1^{re} partie du I^{er} tome) [12]. De façon méthodologique, c'est par « les données de la biologie » que Simone de Beauvoir réfléchit sur la valeur « femelle » : « Inerte, impatiente, rusée, stupide, insensible, lubrique, féroce, humiliée, l'homme projette dans la femme toutes les femelles à la fois » (I, p. 37). Gamètes, degrés de l'échelle végétale et animale, mythe platonicien, idées sartriennes sous le prisme de Hegel, données démographiques, l'écriture avance en accumulant des exemples dans la technique des boules de neige. Il apparaît avec évidence qu'

Il est difficile de donner de la notion de femelle une description généralement valable ; la définir comme porteuse d'ovules et le mâle comme porteur de spermatozoïdes est très insuffisant car le rapport de l'organisme aux gonades est extrêmement variable. (I, p. 53)

Elle disserte par la suite sur « les inconvénients qu'il y avait pour un esprit à habiter un corps femelle » (*loc. cit.*). Décrire cliniquement les humeurs de la puberté et de la souillure menstruelle subie par des jeunes filles, qui provoquent le dégoût et la honte, tandis que le destin des garçons est de jouir de leur « dignité de mâles », c'est pour approfondir ce malaise biologique qui range la femme dans une « catégorie inférieure », de sorte qu'elle est aliénée dans un rapport de subordination de l'espèce (I, p. 71 et 72).

Parler des sujets tabous tels que la liberté sexuelle, l'accouchement, l'avortement (à une époque où ce dernier est interdit et considéré comme un homicide), du stigmate d'animal de somme qu'une femme-objet acquiert puisqu'elle est exploitée dans les tâches ménagères (donc les limitations de la femme sont le résultat d'une tradition de droit et de mœurs) attire normalement sur Simone de Beauvoir toute sorte de virulences verbales. Dénoncer les mystifications fabriquées par le colportage des mythes masculins c'était d'une audace inouïe. Soutenir que le mythe de la féminité est la *fata morgana* d'un imaginaire social millénaire c'était d'autant plus courageux que les justifications historiques et scientifiques apportées étaient pertinentes.

On lui a reproché d'être une marginale aux mœurs dissolues, une cheftaine frigide à l'esprit desséché. Ses réponses sont sereines ;

On me reprocha mon indécence, écrivit-elle, on me déclara insatisfaite, glacée, priapique, nymphomane, lesbienne, cent fois avortée et même mère clandestine [...] Au nom de cette tradition polissonne qui fournit aux Français tout un arsenal de dictons et de formules qui réduit la femme à sa fonction d'objet sexuel. [...] Beaucoup d'hommes déclarèrent que je n'avais pas le droit de parler des femmes parce que je n'avais pas enfanté ! et eux ? Faudrait-il interdire aux ethnologues de parler de tribus africaines auxquelles ils n'appartiennent pas ? [13]

Ses détracteurs lui rétorquent que ces idées sont dues à l'absence du désir d'enfant qu'elle vit comme une mutilation frustrante. À ces attaques, elle répond que le but de son travail était sociologique et que toute la sociologie serait impossible s'il fallait vivre tous les états qu'on étudie. Beauvoir conclut ce premier chapitre comme suit :

Ainsi, c'est à la lumière d'un contexte ontologique, économique, social et psychologique que nous aurons à éclairer les données de la biologie. L'asservissement de la femme à l'espèce, les limites de ses capacités individuelles sont des faits d'une extrême importance ; le corps de la femme est un des éléments essentiels de la situation qu'elle occupe en ce monde. [...] la biologie ne suffit pas à fournir une réponse à la question qui nous préoccupe : pourquoi la femme est-elle Autre ? il s'agit de savoir comment en elle la nature a été reprise au cours de l'histoire ; il s'agit de savoir ce que l'humanité a fait de la femelle humaine. (I, p. 78-79)

L'approche psychanalytique de la femme ne la valorise pas non plus (chap. II – « Le point de vue psychanalytique ») : Freud et le Surmoi, le complexe d'Œdipe ou d'Electre, le complexe de castration, la théorie des actes manqués par exemple l'amène à la conclusion que les frustrations de la fille qui doit rester pudique et réservée viennent toujours de la surenchère de la virilité masculine, signe d'indépendance sexuelle. Dans l'érotisme, l'homme ne voit souvent que l'exaltation de sa virilité, sans égard pour l'individualité de la femme, pour sa jouissance [14]. Il n'y a pas, entre les sexes, de relation de réciprocité dans l'épanouissement sexuel, le terme « homme » désignant à la fois la masculinité et l'humanité dans son sens générique, la femme n'en faisant partie que secondairement et grâce au bon vouloir de l'homme. Si elle osait dépasser sa condition par l'indépendance dans une profession ou dans la vie amoureuse, l'homme, menacé dans sa suprématie, s'efforcerait de la bloquer par tous les moyens. Il ne lui resterait alors qu'un refuge passif et frustrant ou, à l'opposé, l'arme de l'agressivité qui lui sont tous deux inauthentiques, car ce sont des nécessités sociales, non des aspirations vécues (chapitre III – « Le point de vue du matérialisme historique »).

Après un long développement sur l'histoire de la condition de la femme au temps des hordes primitives (quelque cent vingt pages), parsemé de maints exemples de tous les ordres sociétaux anciens ultérieurs (dans la société romaine, dans l'idéologie chrétienne, au Moyen Âge, pendant la féodalité qui bâtissait déjà la notion d'« honnête femme », I, p. 171, pendant la Renaissance) [15], deux conclusions s'imposent à Beauvoir : « l'homme ne se pense jamais qu'en pensant l'Autre ; il saisit le monde sous le signe de la dualité ; » (I, p. 122) et « c'est à la propriété privée que le sort des femmes est lié à travers les siècles » (I, p. 138). L'Ancien Régime, la Révolution, le XIX^e siècle, n'ont rien apporté dans l'évolution des mentalités et la hiérarchie sociale des sexes [16]. La condition de la femme ouvrière française, allemande [17], anglaise, américaine, scandinave, russe, orientale, etc. et de la paysanne est largement commentée avec des données statistiques qui ont de la force testimoniale et argumentative. Cette 2^e partie du premier tome (« Histoire », I-V) finit par le constat que la femme reste une vassale, définie strictement par rapport à l'homme et ouvre la démarche vers la portée de femme rêvée dans laquelle s'accomplit sa condition concrète (I, p. 235).

Dans cent cinquante pages, la 3^e partie de ce premier tome – *Mythes* traite justement de l'imaginaire masculin littéraire (la femme comme Mère, Épouse, Idée, Muse), des aspects que la féminité prend sous la plume des philosophes (Kierkegaard) et des écrivains. Valéry est cité en passant avec des extraits, Montherlant – « ou le pain du dégoût » – montre de la mauvaise foi née d'un complexe adlérien. D. H. Lawrence – « ou l'orgueil phallique » –

témoigne d'un mythe de compensation, reflet d'une virilité hésitante. Pour Claudel, « la servante du seigneur » est la chance chrétienne de tentation ou de salut. Pour Breton – la femme est la concierge du mystère de la poésie. Dans son « romanque du vrai », Stendhal imagine la femme comme catalyseur. Chez tous les écrivains cités la femme incarne luxueusement les grands mythes collectifs, toutes les valeurs morales et leur contraire dans une figure de *chair* (I, p. 389) singulière et syncrétique (I, p. 320-321) :

[La femme] peut être médiatrice entre ce monde et l'au-delà : grâce ou pythie, étoile ou sorcière, elle ouvre la porte du surnaturel, du surnaturel ; elle est vouée à l'immanence ; et par sa passivité, elle dispense la paix, l'harmonie : mais si elle refuse ce rôle la voilà mante religieuse, ogresse. [...] l'Autre privilégié à travers lequel le sujet s'accomplit : une des mesures de l'homme, son équilibre, son salut, son aventure, son bonheur. (I, p. 389)

Symétriquement, dans le 2^e tome du livre, *L'expérience vécue*, Simone de Beauvoir place en exergue deux citations, la première tirée de Kirkegaard – « Quel malheur que d'être femme ! et pourtant le pire malheur quand on est femme est au fond de ne pas comprendre que c'en est un », et de J.-P. Sartre – « À moitié victimes, à moitiés complices, comme tout le monde », citations qui dirigent sa réflexion vers une approche existentialiste de l'altérité, renforcée par la réaffirmation de son dessein : l'analyse de la féminité sans *a priori* archétypal ou de quelque « immuable essence » (*Introduction*, II, p. 9). Le 2^e tome continue la guerre intellectuelle déclarée dans le 1^{er}. Religion, l'anatomie, la civilisation, les traditions, tout passe sous la loupe de l'écrivaine. Structuré en quatre parties (1^{re} – « Formation », 2^e – « Situation », 3^e – « Justifications », 4^e – « Vers la libération ») et en quatorze chapitres inégaux comme longueur et argumentation, il présente un ample développement des représentations collectives de la femme à travers ses âges physiologiques et psychologiques. Ainsi, pour la formation, les périodes envisagées partent dès l'âge tendre (l'enfance, chapitre I), passent par l'état de jeune fille (chapitre II) y compris l'initiation sexuelle (chapitre III), et abordent le cas spécial de la lesbienne (chapitre IV).

Dans la perspective de l'existentialisme, Simone de Beauvoir affirme qu'indépendamment de la sexualité et de la situation sociale privilégiée des hommes, ceux-ci et les femmes ont une « structure ontologique commune ». C'est ainsi qu'elle tente de mettre au jour ce que recouvre le fatras des représentations collectives, en exposant notamment la réalité crue de l'existence des femmes de la première enfance à la vieillesse. Elle récuse radicalement toute idée d'une « essence » ou d'une « nature » féminine. Pour elle, le sexe n'est pas tant une donnée génétique, imposant une différence des rôles, qu'une donnée sociale façonnée par notre culture. Il n'existe pas une nature des femmes qui permettrait de légitimer la domination qu'elles subissent, mais la féminité est un produit social. Le chapitre I du second tome s'ouvre justement par l'un des slogans des plus célèbres depuis qui résume une grande idée organisatrice de l'essai, à savoir qu'il n'y a pas de « nature féminine » ou d' « éternel féminin » :

On ne naît pas femme; on le devient Aucun destin biologique, psychique, économique ne définit la figure que revêt au sein de la société la femme humaine ; c'est l'ensemble de la civilisation qui élabore ce produit intermédiaire entre le mâle et le castrat qu'on qualifie de féminin. Seule la médiation d'autrui peut constituer un individu comme un *Autre*. (II, p. 13, ***c'est nous qui soulignons***) [18]

La « formation » analyse minutieusement les premiers émois y compris sexuels de la fillette et du garçon, « la fusion charnelle [qui] crée une aliénation plus profonde que toute démission sous le regard d'autrui » (II, p. 16), le désir des jeunes garçons d'être des filles, « les révérences et les tendresses » pour les parties génitales (II, p. 19), l'usage urinaire (p. 22 et suiv.), l'importance des jeux et des jouets (II, p. 52), l'intérêt des enfants pour la procréation (II, p. 32-35), l'infériorité hiérarchique bâtie par la culture des filles qui sombrent dans la

passivité (II, p. 45), le contact avec les inconnus ou les adultes raisonnables (II, p. 60). Beauvoir y dresse un tableau complexe de la psychologie sexuelle des jeunes, le tout agrémenté de divers témoignages littéraires. Les pages consacrées à la puberté et aux premières règles, raison de la fragilité nerveuse immanente des femmes, sont le reflet de son expérience personnelle (II, p. 63-89) [19] et sont décrites d'une manière dramatique, comme un phénomène suscitant la honte et le dégoût. Elles achèvent le chapitre I, mais les considérations se poursuivent au début du chapitre II, « La jeune fille », avec plus d'insistance au sujet du défaitisme de l'adolescence envers ses activités intellectuelles et artistiques constructives (II, p. 97 et suiv.) qui peut prendre la forme d'une rêverie morbide, du narcissisme déviant (II, p. 107) ou d'un refuge dans un imaginaire fantasmagorique.

Le passage de la sexualité infantile à la maturité fait l'objet du chapitre III, « L'initiation sexuelle ». Le « *contact* » (II, p. 154) est manifestement influencé non seulement par des « destins anatomiques » différents (II, p. 149), mais aussi par des éducations et des influences pesantes des mœurs, de sorte que la défloration est ressentie par les jeunes femmes comme une espèce de viol (II, p. 162) : « La femme est imbue des représentations collectives qui donnent au rut masculins un caractère glorieux, et qui font du trouble féminin une abdication honteuse ; son expérience intime confirme cette asymétrie » (II, p. 164-165). De surcroît, elle est traumatisée par la menace de l'enfant. Lorsque l'abdication n'est pas synonyme de la « jouissance violente et sûre » (II, p. 174) et que la valeur érotique n'est que douleur, le rapport femme-homme vire dans l'une des formes du masochisme, à savoir l'acceptation féminine de la dépendance érotique (II, p. 182, cf. Freud) ou, pire, dans la frigidity.

La réflexion débouche sur celle qui choisit « les chemins condamnés » (II, p. 189), sujet du chapitre IV, « La lesbienne ». Selon Beauvoir, l'homosexualité est soit une manière de fuir sa condition de femelle, soit de l'assumer ou « une tentative parmi d'autres pour concilier son autonomie à la passivité de la chair » (II, p. 193), donc une solution pour un existant traité d'objet qui se veut sujet ou objet choisi, désiré (« s'approprier les trésors de [sa] féminité », p. 205), dans une attitude de protestation contre son traitement prédéterminé en femelle et d'affirmation de sa libre transcendance. Aucune perversion délibérée, aucune malédiction fatale, mais une « attitude choisie en situation » qui entraîne « comédies, déséquilibre, échec, mensonge » ou, au contraire, « expériences fécondes », « selon qu'elle sera vécue dans la mauvaise foi, la paresse et l'inauthenticité ou dans la lucidité, la générosité et la liberté » (II, p. 215). Dans cette perspective, on comprend pourquoi le corollaire suivant a provoqué des réactions virulentes :

Dans tout amour – amour sexuel ou amour maternel – il y a à la fois avarice et générosité, désir de posséder l'autre et de tout lui donner ; mais c'est dans la mesure où toutes deux sont narcissistes, caressant dans l'enfant, dans l'amante, leur prolongement ou leur reflet, que la mère et la lesbienne se rencontrent singulièrement. (II, p. 207) [20]

Le chapitre V, « La femme mariée » est l'un des plus élaborés et controversés. Beauvoir s'attaque au grief traditionnel du mariage, « élection » toujours imposée aux femmes qui, les statistiques belges en témoignent et les exemples littéraires en sont nombreux (Balzac est de nouveau cité comme contre-exemple, II, p. 237), est le plus souvent une source d'aliénation : malgré les préparatifs (fiançailles, voyage et nuit de noces, II, p. 248, 280, 289), les mariées subissent « la souillure du devoir » (II, p. 249). Le « besoin du nid » (II, p. 260) les fait développer des fantasmes (les psychanalystes renforcent les propos de Beauvoir), l'obsession du blanc et de la propreté ou « la poésie des confitures » et des gâteaux (II, p. 270). Le « drame du mariage se résume comme suit : « ce n'est pas qu'il n'assure pas à la femme le bonheur qu'il lui promet – il n'y a pas d'assurance sur le bonheur – c'est qu'il la mutile – il la voue à la répétition et à la routine » (II, p. 319)

Le chapitre VI, « La mère » s'ouvre sur une brève analyse de la contraception, suivie de quelques quinzaine pages sur l'avortement [21], vu par les lois françaises comme « un crime de classe » (II, p. 330) donnant en somme la priorité au refus de maternité, vue comme une mutilation par le fœtus-parasite (II, p. 345) [22] ou diminution du moi chez les femmes coquettes (II, p. 355) : « La maternité est l'accomplissement intégral du destin physiologique de la femme ; c'est sa vocation "naturelle", parce que tout son organisme est orienté vers la continuation de l'espèce » [23]. Beauvoir tranche net : il n'y a pas d' « instinct » maternel pour l'espèce humaine (II, p. 366).

La même dureté des propos se retrouve également quant au rapport mère-enfant, mère-fille. Si le rapport mère-fils est ambivalent et équivoque, le rapport mère-fille est complexe, dramatique (II, p. 374). Elle affirme que la fille n'est qu'un double de la mère à qui elle impose sa destinée, dans laquelle elle projette avec un « sadisme capricieux » (II, p. 370) tous ses rêves, une « manière de revendiquer orgueilleusement sa féminité et aussi de s'en venger » (II, p. 301) :

La mère est « une femme insatisfaite : sexuellement elle est frigide ou inassouvie ; socialement elle se sent inférieure à l'homme ; elle n'a pas de prise sur le monde ni sur l'avenir ; elle cherchera à compenser à travers l'enfant toutes ces frustrations. (II, p. 367-368)

Le jugement sur la ménopause est aussi négatif puisque, à son avis, « la femme est brusquement dépouillée de sa féminité et perd, encore jeune, l'attrait érotique et la fécondité d'où elle tirait aux yeux de la société et à ses propres yeux la justification de son existence et ses chances de bonheur ». Les deux chapitres suivants, VII – « La vie en société » et VIII – « Prostituées et hétaires » développent la vie sexuelle des femmes de toutes les catégories sociales, avec des considérations perçantes sur l'importance de la toilette.

Dans tout un chapitre, IX, « De la maturité à la vieillesse » où, menée par son esprit révolutionnaire et avant-gardiste, Beauvoir ne cesse pas de scandaliser la société en se livrant à une analyse très fine de la vieillesse, vue comme une carence sociale. Elle le fera aussi plus tard, de façon encore plus nuancé dans l'essai *La Vieillesse* (1970). Elle y parle de la métamorphose physique et spirituelle des gens qui, une fois âgés, se confrontent à la peur de l'inconnu, aux changements apportés par cette étape de l'évolution. Opposant l'image du sage antique aux cheveux blancs à celle du vieux fou dont on se moque et que l'on abandonne, Simone de Beauvoir provoque un nouveau scandale qui fait que la société se sent offensée à l'égard du traitement des vieillards. Même si elle n'y fait pas référence directe aux femmes âgées, elle les implique dans la condition précaire à laquelle la société les condamne. Leur malheur est fortement accentué par la retraite, parce que : « Vieillir c'est aussi cesser travailler [...] une chute du niveau de vie » [24]. Cet arrêt de fonctionnement suppose une involution, non seulement financière, mais aussi psychologique. Une personne engagée dans certaines activités se sent utile, vive, cependant que la retraite signifie tout cesser, devenir ou se sentir devenir inutile, d'où la frustration. À cet âge-ci, les femmes, plus que les hommes, se confrontent à une baisse des qualités de séduction, donc à une crise accentuée de féminité. Elles doivent apprendre comment franchir cette borne entre l'âge jeune et celui de la vieillesse et comment vieillir d'une belle manière, ne pas se laisser la proie de fantasmes comme le décrit Simone de Beauvoir dans *Le Deuxième Sexe* : « La femme qui vieillit sait très bien qu'elle cesse d'être un objet érotique ; elle essaye d'exagérer sa féminité, elle se pare, se parfume... son agitation devient excentrique, incohérente et vaine. » [25]. Le dernier chapitre de la 2^e partie, « Situation et caractère de la femme », ainsi que la 3^e partie du 2nd tome, « Justification » avec XI – « La narcissiste », XII – « L'amoureuse », XIII – La mystique reformulent sous forme de quintessence (postulats, maximes, syllogismes, etc.) toutes ses idées étayées auparavant : de l'infinie difficulté du « monde féminin » à trouver sa place dans « l'univers masculin » (II, p. 477). Dans le chapitre XIV, « La femme indépendante » de la 4^e

partie, « Vers la libération » se trouvent justement ses solutions féministes : l'indépendance économique, le développement et l'accomplissement des intérêts professionnels, le droit à la jouissance sexuelle pour « s'évader du cachot » et affranchir la condition d'opprimée (II, « Conclusions », p. 635)

Pour faire le point

Dans son essai Simone de Beauvoir réussissait à réécrire une histoire exhaustive de la femme à travers les temps, en remettant en question les stéréotypes et les affirmations péremptoires longuement colportées par les penseurs et les anthropologues. Sa tentative de mettre à mal tous des préjugés mais surtout des tabous qui figeaient la femme dans un destin immuable figée et d'explorer les chemins de leur liberté [26], pour reprendre un titre de J.-P. Sartre est au moins révolutionnaire. Elle allait plus loin encore en proposant un rapport idéal entre l'homme et la femme fondé sur un amour qui trouve son authenticité dans la reconnaissance réciproque de deux libertés : « Le jour où il sera possible à la femme d'aimer dans sa force et non dans sa faiblesse, non pour se fuir mais pour se trouver, non pour se démettre mais pour s'affirmer, alors l'amour deviendra pour elle comme pour l'homme, source de vie et non mortel danger » [27] ou encore « l'union des deux êtres humains est vouée à l'échec si elle est un effort pour se compléter l'un par l'autre, ce qui suppose une mutilation originelle » (II, p. 320). Le mirage de la féminité est un leurre et il serait possible de coexister en tant qu'individualité si tous deux arrivent à bâtir une fraternité existentielle (II, p. 652).

Pour résumer la réception du *Deuxième sexe*, rappelons le propos d'Hourdin qui dégageait le sentiment moyen du lecteur masculin :

Ce livre est magnifique, brutal, impudique, irritant, nécessaire. Il ne cache rien. Il fouille tout. Il dit tout, avec une violence et une colère froides. Il révèle ce que nous savions déjà. Il répète inlassablement ce qu'il était peut-être inutile de dire. Il arrache l'admiration et provoque l'agacement [28].

Vu le retentissement du livre, on peut se demander si Simone de Beauvoir n'a pas pesé plus profondément sur nos idées et nos comportements que J.-P. Sartre. Somme toute, elle a contribué plus que tout autre à l'émergence d'une conscience féminine capable de surmonter la fatalité de sa condition, ce qui est le sens même de l'existentialisme [29]. Que de plus simple que son beau credo : « On écrit à partir de ce qu'on s'est fait être » [30] ? Elle jette elle-même un coup d'œil rétrospectif dans *La force des choses* : « Tous comptes faits c'est peut-être de tous mes livres celui qui m'a apporté les plus solides satisfactions. Si on me demande comment je le juge aujourd'hui, je n'hésite pas à répondre : je suis pour. »

Le style de l'essai est net, dépouillé d'afféterie, les phrases donnent l'impression d'être écrites d'un jet et cela leur donne de la force argumentative.

À présent, étant donné l'évolution des mentalités et les progrès scientifiques certains aspects de l'essai semblent obsolètes. En changeant de paradigme existentiel, toutes les thèses ne sont plus soutenables, mais peu de livres jouissent depuis d'une pareille prise de conscience collective et ont incarné les aspirations avouées, réprimées ou inconscientes d'une si large partie de l'humanité. Aujourd'hui, il est plus cité que lu. Toutes les études qui lui sont consacrées finissent par une invitation à la (re)découverte de cette auteure [31].

Notes

[1] Voir la biographie consacrée par Claudine Monteil, *Simone de Beauvoir, côté femme*, Paris, Timée-Éditions, 2006.

[2] Voir le dossier *Simone de Beauvoir* rédigé par André Durand, disponible sur : <http://www.comptoirilletteraire.com>

[3] Beauvoir le considère comme une institution bourgeoise aussi répugnante que la prostitution lorsque la femme est sous la domination de son mari et ne peut en échapper.

- [4] Le magazine *Paris Match* l'accueillait favorablement : « Une femme appelle les femmes à la liberté ! Simone de Beauvoir, lieutenant de Sartre et experte en existentialisme, est sans doute la première femme philosophe apparue dans l'histoire des hommes. »
- [5] Je ferai référence à Simone de Beauvoir, *Le deuxième sexe*, tome I – *Les faits et les mythes*, n° 37 et tome II – *L'expérience vécue*, Paris, Gallimard, collection « folio Essais », 1949, 1^{re} éd., renouvelée en 1976.
- [6] André Durand, *Simone de Beauvoir*, disponible sur: <http://www.comptoir litteraire.com>
- [7] En roumain, paraît à Bucarest en 1997, aux éditions Univers, *Al doilea sex*, dans la traduction de Diana Bolcu et Delia Verdeş.
- [8] Voir dans ce sens, Ingrid Galster (éd.), *Simone de Beauvoir : « Le deuxième sexe ». Le livre fondateur du féminisme moderne en situation*, Paris, Champion, 2004.
- [9] Mais après avoir connu la situation des femmes dans l'U.R.S.S. communiste, elle change d'avis.
- [10] Cité par André Durand, *Simone de Beauvoir*, disponible sur: <http://www.comptoir litteraire.com>.
- [11] Claude Lévi-Strauss lui fait une critique d'accueil favorable en affirmant que, du point de vue de l'anthropologie, *Le deuxième sexe* est un ouvrage était pleinement acceptable.
- [12] Ne fût-ce qu'à la lecture des premières pages du livre, l'américaine Nancy Huston s'exclame : « Dix pages à vous faire dresser les cheveux sur la tête, tant est vive l'évocation du cycle menstruel qui s'accomplit dans la douleur et dans le sang, du travail fatigant de la grossesse qui exige de lourds sacrifices, des accouchements douloureux, parfois mortels. », citée par André Durand, *art. cit.*
- [13] *Ibidem*.
- [14] Voir à ce sujet l'étude de G. Bataille, *L'Érotisme*, Paris, Minuit, 1957.
- [15] Beauvoir cite entre autre des féministes avant la lettre comme Jeanne D'Arc, Christine de Pisan (I, p. 228), Marie de Gournay, Olympe de Gouges (guillotinée en 1793).
- [16] Dans ce sens, Simone de Beauvoir cite Balzac, qui, dans la *Physiologie du mariage*, se faisait le porte-parole d'un anti-féminisme bourgeois : « La destinée de la femme et sa seule gloire sont de faire battre le cœur de l'homme » ou pire encore « La femme est une propriété que l'on acquiert par contrat ; elle est mobilière car la possession vaut titre ; enfin, la femme n'est à proprement parler qu'une annexe de l'homme » (I, p. 193)
- [17] Rappelons à ce titre que le destin de la femme était réduit par Hitler aux trois K : « Küche, Kinder, Kirche » (« Cuisine, Enfants, Église »).
- [18] Voir aussi Éliane Lecarme-Tabone, « *Le Deuxième Sexe* » de Simone de Beauvoir, Paris, Gallimard, coll. « Foliothèque », 2008, p. 63.
- [19] Beauvoir a raconté dans *Mémoires d'une jeune fille rangée* la honte qui la consuma le jour où son père apprit qu'elle avait eu ses premières règles : « J'avais imaginé que la confrérie féminine dissimulait soigneusement aux hommes sa tare secrète. En face de mon père je me croyais un pur esprit. J'eus horreur qu'il me considérât soudain comme un organisme. Je me sentis à jamais déçue. », *apud* A. Durand, *op. cit.*
- [20] Citons quelques exemples de réactions extrêmes défavorables : François Mauriac, un ennemi de longue date de Simone de Beauvoir déclarait : « Nous avons littéralement atteint les limites de l'abject » ; « Maintenant, je sais tout sur le vagin de votre patronne ! » lançait-il dans la rédaction des *Temps modernes*. Albert Camus déclara que ce livre est « une insulte au mâle latin ». Julien Gracq dénonçait « la stupéfiante inconvenance du ton du *Deuxième sexe* ». Pierre de Boisdeffre et Roger Nimier rivalisaient de dédain pour « cette pauvre fille névrosée ». Le philosophe Jean Guilton se déclarait « péniblement affecté de déchiffrer à travers cette œuvre la triste vie de son auteur ».
- [21] Sur l'avortement, on a souvent reproché à Beauvoir de s'être laissée influencer par ses choix personnels. Dans le 1^{er} tome, elle avait postulé que l'individu doit l'emporter sur l'espèce, l'esprit sur le corps et le choix sur la contingence. Ce « destin féminin », cette aliénation à la biologie, elle les avait refusés pour elle-même et il est possible que cette décision personnelle se soit reflétée dans l'analyse plutôt négative qu'elle fait de la grossesse, de la maternité et des rapports mères-enfants. Le climat social de cette époque y a joué un rôle important (l'avortement était toujours illégal après guerre, pratiqué dans l'angoisse de la clandestinité, dans des conditions psychologiques humiliantes et physiologiques désastreuses, et parfois mortelles), les statistiques en sont parlantes. L'obsession d'une grossesse non désirée faisait alors partie du paysage sexuel de la plupart des femmes. Le vote de la loi Simone Veil légalisant l'interruption de grossesse a dédramatisé le problème et fait diminuer significativement le nombre des avortements, au point qu'on oublie aujourd'hui le poids de cette angoisse qui compromettait l'épanouissement sexuel des femmes et souvent la vie conjugale elle-même. Le tableau triste que traçait Beauvoir correspondait à la réalité des années '40.
- [22] Beauvoir cite à plusieurs reprises Sophie Tolstoï, pour les vécus du voyage de noces, pour la difficulté de la jeune mariée d'organiser le ménage (II, p. 280-289), pour l'accouchement (II, p.362 et suiv.)
- [23] Simone de Beauvoir *Al doilea sex*, 2^e tome, trad. Diana Bolcu, éd. cit., p. 231 (notre traduction).
- [24] Interview avec Simone de Beauvoir sur *La Vieillesse*, disponible sur : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHVTky1cmuc>. Pour combattre cet état d'abandon collectif des personnes âgées, Simone de Beauvoir se donne elle-même pour exemple : s'entourer des activités chères à soi-même, ne plus penser au fait qu'on n'est plus jeune et profiter de la vie qui est toujours présente dans le corps et l'âme

- [25] S. Beauvoir, *Al doilea sex*, p. 322 (notre traduction)
- [26] Dans le sillage de ce livre, notons que dans *La Femme rompue*, recueil paru en 1968, qui comprend trois nouvelles : *L'âge de discrétion*, où l'on voit une femme âgée qui est déçue par une société changeante et qui retrouve l'équilibre grâce à son mari ; *Monologue*, pensées d'une mère restée sans sa fille, suicidée et qui ne voit plus son fils ; seule aux jours de Noël, elle manifeste son désir de vengeance et de consolation divine ; *La Femme rompue*, journal d'une femme parisienne, abandonnée par le mari pris dans une relation adultère et qui essaie de trouver un sens à sa vie, porte sur la vie des femmes au cours de leur libération, pendant les années '60.
- [27] *Apud* A. Durand, *op. cit.*
- [28] *Ibidem.*
- [29] Sur les facettes de Beauvoir – écrivaine de l'intime, philosophe, engagée, romancière, voir aussi J. Kristeva (s.l.d.), *(Re)découvrir l'œuvre de Simone de Beauvoir. Du « Deuxième sexe » à « La Cérémonie des adieux »*, Paris, Éd. Le bord de l'eau, 2008.
- [30] Cité en exergue de sa biographie par C. Francis et F. Gontier, *Simone de Beauvoir*, Paris, Perrin, 3^e éd., 2006.
- [31] F. Rétif, *Simone de Beauvoir. L'autre en miroir*, Paris, L'Harmattan, coll. « Bibliothèque du féminisme », 1998, p. 173.

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Aspecte teoretico-metodologice privind procesul de predare - învățare a problematicii personajului feminin din romanul *Baltagul*

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Abstract: *Being very important in the process of pupils' ethical-aesthetic / axiological formation process, Baltagul, Sadoveanu's novel, points out different types of feminine behaviour within the moral-civic education displayed by both a patriarchal and contemporary society. Thus, nowadays didactical methodology will relate the behavioural traits of the feminine protagonist to the teaching process specific to Romanian language and literature discipline.*

Key words: *didactical methods, feminine character, teaching process, moral-civic education.*

Corelarea problematicii personajului feminin din romanul *Baltagul* cu metodologia didactică actuală reprezintă o chestiune de importanță majoră, în opinia noastră, întrucât corelează impactul instructiv-educativ al literaturii cu relevanța estetică de ordin primordial a acesteia. În acest sens, în rezumatul tezei de doctorat cu titlul *Impactul metodelor alternative de evaluare educațională asupra nivelului performanțelor școlare ale elevilor din ciclul gimnazial*, autoarea, Boșorogan (Bersan) Otilia Sanda, semnalează: „Trecerea de la «pedagogia ascultării» (discursiv, expozitiv) la «pedagogia acțiunii» (experimental, activ) și ulterior, la «pedagogia interactivă» (activizant, bazat pe cercetare – acțiune și învățare prin cooperare) a determinat, în mod corespunzător, trecerea de la achiziționarea de cunoștințe, la dobândirea de capacități și competențe, ca finalitate a procesului educațional. În consecință, problematica evaluării școlare s-a diversificat și s-a complicat, înregistrând o mutație semnificativă: trecerea de la valorizarea și certificarea «a ceea ce știe elevul» la «ceea ce știe el să facă» și, mai ales, «a felului cum procedează pentru a fi performant și a obține succese». Această mutație valorică a determinat adoptarea unor noi metode de evaluare care să aprecieze și să valorizeze competențele elevilor. Este și motivul pentru care profesorii sunt din ce în ce mai preocupați pentru găsirea unor metode alternative, moderne, complementare celor clasice, care să determine un plus de obiectivitate în valorizarea competențelor elevilor și să evalueze, cât mai just, performanțele acestora. Metodele alternative de evaluare educațională (portofoliul, eseul, studiul de caz, investigația etc.) așa cum menționează însăși denumirea lor, sunt «o alternativă» la cele clasice (probe orale, scrise sau practice). Adeseori metodele alternative sunt considerate moderne, aici termenul «modern» având conotația de ceva diferit față de ceea ce este considerat «clasic».” [1]

De asemenea, cercetătoarea insistă asupra raportului corect dintre metodologia didactică modernă și cea așa-zis tradițională, arătând că „Metodele alternative / moderne nu sunt, prin ele însele, nici mai bune, nici mai rele decât cele clasice / tradiționale, ci, mai degrabă, reprezintă o altă modalitate de a evalua rezultatele învățării elevilor, diferită de cea consacrată, dar aflată în raport de interdependență și complementaritate cu modalitatea clasică, arhicunoscută, practică, cu predilecție, în școală.” [2]

Diferitele aspecte ale profilului personajului feminin central al romanului, care pot fi exploatate în corelație atât cu metodele tradiționale, cât și cu cele alternative, mai curând prin exploatarea raportului de complementaritate al ambelor categorii, se regăsesc, inventariate, într-o serie de articole de specialitate din care am selectat câteva, reprezentative pentru tema abordată aici.

În opinia Mirelei Fandly Rotter, „Tragedia Vitoriei începe exact în punctul unde se sfârșește mitul mioritic, devenindu-i astfel termen de simetrie. Călătoria eroinei care, însoțită de fiul ei, parcurge drumul lui Nechifor până la descoperirea rămășițelor, a fost solicitantă cerând tărie de caracter și bărbăție. În drumul ei, căutarea și descifrarea sunt subordonate unui

scop justițiar deoarece a fost încălcată o lege nescrisă a colectivității. Eroina este animată de sentimentul datoriei și cel al justiției, precum Anastasia, urmașa ei. Identificarea și pedepsirea făptașilor prilejuiesc adevărate investigații polițiste, menite să pună în lumină o inteligență pătrunzătoare. Ceremonialul înmormântării reprezintă repunerea lui Nechifor în spațiul care i-a fost hărăzit. Împlinirea acestui ritual este deosebit de importantă, ca și în cazul predecesoarelor Antigona, Medeea, Kriemhilda sau a urmașei, Anastasia. Personajul principal al romanului este o femeie ca toate femeile, soție, mamă și gospodină pricepută, harnică, credincioasă, însă situația în care se trezește o situează la un nivel superior condiției sale, o veritabilă excepție. Cuplul Nechifor și Vitoria a format o pereche de inițiați. Victoria de gen feminin și perechea ei de gen masculin, ea și el au trecut victorioși prin viață dacă ne gândim la traiul lor idilic.” [3]

Dimensiunea moral-juridică a comportamentului Vitoriei, în raport cu personajele masculine vinovate de moartea lui Nechifor Lipan, permite, din punctul de vedere al lui Carmen Țugui, analiza romanului pe baza a două cupluri de personaje - „Două cupluri de personaje orientează *Baltagul* înspre o abordare din punct de vedere juridic: Calistrat Bogza și Ilie Cuțui, pe de o parte, și Vitoria Lipan și Gheorghiiță, pe de cealaltă parte. *Rechizitoriul* ar reține în sarcina lor fapte precum: omorul (în scop de tâlhărie) și complicitatea la acestea, instigarea la omor, dar și alte infracțiuni *incidente* (distrugere de bunuri, calomnie, lovituri cauzatoare de moarte, amenințarea sau tănuirea). Absența îndelungată de acasă a lui Nechifor Lipan stârnește în sufletul femeii lui stări aflate în gradație ascendentă, pornind de la neliniște, îngrijorare, teama de a nu i se fi întâmplat ceva rău ca, mai apoi, dintr-o neînțeleasă, pentru omul de rând și chiar pentru cei apropiați ei, certitudine, Vitoria să pornească la drum pentru a afla trupul mort al soțului ei și pentru a-i face dreptate. Ceea ce scriitorul numește *intuiție* juristul ar califica drept *prezumție* (în cazul de față, fiind una a vinovăției unor făptuitori încă necunoscuți).” [4]

În fine, se poate avea în vedere și cumulul de trăsături de caracter având în centru abilitatea inteligent-detectivistică a Vitoriei, insistându-se asupra faptului că „Umbletul ei după vorbe vii recuperează o istorie care nu e scrisă de unii și citită de alții, ci împărtășită de toți. Posibilitatea care i se dă Vitoriei, să facă singură, în câteva luni, ceea ce stăpânirii pământești i-ar fi luat, poate, ani să descurce, vine din echilibrul perfect negociat al lumii în care trăiește. Echilibrul acela spune că ceea ce oamenii au făcut, tot oamenii pot să desfacă. Așa încât nu visele intră între oameni, în sfadele și-n iscodirile lor, ci invers. Din vorbe, păreri, vești visul i se schimbă, și Nechifor se întoarce cu fața la lume abia când devine limpede că a părăsit-o.” [5]

Și, ca o ultimă observație - „După ce Vitoria știe cum s-au întâmplat lucrurile, și pentru sine este lămurită, ultimul act pe care-l are de jucat, spre lămurirea celorlalți, este un studiu de psihologie socială. Zvonurile care umblă între Suha și Sabașa sunt aceleași din părțile Tarcăului. Intrigi de alcov amestecate cu bănuiele de crimă, într-o lume redusă la cele două mari teme. Existența primei o face pe a doua suportabilă, negociind, cum spuneam, acel echilibru în care făcutele oamenilor se compensează cu cele date de soartă. Și viața poate să continue, între singurătatea nelecuită pe care soroacele de dragoste și moarte, deopotrivă, o presupun, și implicarea rituală a comunității, care li se atribuie.” [6]

Note

[1] Otilia Sanda Boșorogan (Bersan), *Impactul metodelor alternative de evaluare educațională asupra nivelului performanțelor școlare ale elevilor din ciclul gimnazial* – rezumatul tezei de doctorat, disponibil la adresa <http://www.unibuc.ro/studies/Doctorate2012Ianuarie/Bosorogan%20Otilia%20Sanda%20%20Impactul%20metodelor%20alternative%20de%20evaluare%20educationala/REZUMAT%20teza%20Otilia%20Bosorogan.pdf>.

[2] Ibidem.

[3] Mirela Fandly Rotter, *Literatura voluntarismului feminin* - rezumatul tezei de doctorat, disponibil la adresa <http://arhiva->

www.uoradea.ro/attachment/791672704232e82e41d0a31a6bc16159/b78317d4489422a6b9e277b1ec2048cf/Fandly_Rotter_Mirela_rezumat_teza_doctorat.pdf.

[4] Carmen Țugui, *Dimensiunea juridică a romanului Baltagul de Mihail Sadoveanu*, text disponibil la adresa <http://orizontdidactic.wordpress.com/2013/08/26/studiu-de-specialitate-dimensiunea-juridica-a-romanului-baltagul-de-mihail-sadoveanu/>.

[5] Simona Vasilache, *Veste, poveste.....*, text disponibil la adresa http://www.romlit.ro/veste_poveste..?caut=Nechifor%20Lipan.

[6] Ibidem.

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www.uoradea.ro/attachment/791672704232e82e41d0a31a6bc16159/b78317d4489422a6b9e277b1ec2048cf/Fandly_Rotter_Mirela_rezumat_teza_doctorat.pdf.

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Scriitura intimă feminină între memoria recuperatorie și miza identitară

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Abstract: *Annie Bentoiu's confessing narrative enhances a special type of recollection-focused discourse generated from the point of view of a woman who has proudly passed through the harsh post-war history and will strongly believe that written words are able to save the next generation from the possible – and similar as well – moral and spiritual disaster. The identity restoration objective of such narrative becomes the main point of interest of the author's ethic project through which the woman writer tries to redefine herself along her intimately encounter with her own personal history.*

Key words: *recollection, autobiographic discourse, scriptural identity, authorial ego.*

Autoarea a unei scrieri memorialistice masive, în două volume, care acoperă, în principal, perioada de început a instaurării comunismului și a ideologiei totalitare în România, Annie Bentoiu – soția compozitorului Pacal Bentoiu – realizează o vastă frescă a perioadei menționate, inserând, pe lângă referirile nostalgic-admirative la familia sa – tatăl, fruntaș țărănist, medic respectat și bărbat elegant pentru vremea aceea, și mama, elvețianca aflată în permanent proces de adaptare la spațiul românesc și la mentalitățile sud-est europene, viitorul soț, familia acestuia etc. – scurte, pertinente și documentate eseuri despre situația politică, socială și culturală precară, despre oamenii politici mai vechi sau mai noi, despre efectele dezastruoase ale noii ordini asupra modelului românesc de existență.

Relativ slab întâmpinată de critica de specialitate – puține ecouri semnificative – dar bucurându-se de bună primire din partea unor voci de prestigiu ale discursului critic actual, ca și din partea unor tineri exegeți, cartea, intitulată semnificativ *Timpul ce ni s-a dat*, construiește – sau re-construiește – simultan cu datele istorice ale unei epoci trecute, profilul scriptural și uman al autoarei – ființă deosebit de cultivată, deprinsă de mică a utiliza limba română și limba franceză, inteligentă și cu un spirit analitic ascuțit.

În acest sens, remarcăm opinia lui Alex. Ștefănescu, potrivit căreia „Annie Bentoiu are, dimpotrivă, în minte o imagine cuprinzătoare a întregii ei existenței și a secvenței de istorie căreia îi aparține. Ea și-a făcut datoria de om de a trăi în cunoștința de cauză. În raza conștiinței ei intră și o mare parte din lume, privită cu un sentiment de responsabilitate. Este vorba de vocație, dar și de educație. Chiar și azi, Annie Bentoiu își cultivă memoria, completând ceea ce știe din propria ei experiență cu ceea ce află din cărți. Memoria ei culturală este vastă și asumată existențial, permițându-i să evoce firesc, cu un fior de emoție, și situații trăite de predecesori.” [1]

Relatând modul în care mai toți membrii familiei sale, și ai familiei Bentoiu, au fost loviți în mod direct de către noul regim, și obligați să petreacă ani grei în coloniile de muncă ale comuniștilor, ba chiar să-și piardă viața acolo, autoarea încearcă să înțeleagă mersul strâmb al istoriei și, tototdată, să lase posterității o mărturie onestă: „cu subtilitate filosofică, memorialista sesizează apoi esența comunismului, care este ura celor învinși în marea competiție a vieții față de învingători, ura rataților față de realizați. Această ură se instituționalizează, pentru prima dată în istorie. Annie Bentoiu nu se limitează la o teoretizare a aberantei situații; ea povestește cum toți oamenii de valoare în mijlocul cărora a crescut și s-a format au început să fie hăituiți numai pentru că erau de valoare. Meritele lor au devenit un blestem, și pentru ei, și pentru familiile lor. Memorialista găsește ca nimeni altcineva tonul cel potrivit pentru a istorisi această tragedie, dar și pentru a manifesta o anumită înțelegere, de ființă superioară, față de toți frustrații de pe Pământ, care au lansat comunismul în lume ca pe un cumplit urlet de nemulțumire, urcat din adâncul ființei lor.” [2]

În ceea ce-l privește pe Matei Călinescu, acesta – apropiat al familiei Bentoiu, ilustrează nostalgic o ipostază a (re)lecturii pe care, după cum se știe, o definește într-un

studiu – reper al metadiscursului specializat actual - „Mai ales memorialistica despre o vreme în care ai trăit și tu se oferă aproape de la sine unei duble lecturi: a textului și a propriei memorii (paralelisme sau contraste de situații, reacții similare sau diferite la evenimente istorice precise, atmosfera timpului, întâmplări intrate în umbră care ies brusc la lumină, chiar și atunci când întâmplările povestite n-au nicio altă legătură cu ele decât faptul că sunt contemporane); ba chiar unei triple lecturi, dacă se întâmplă să fi cunoscut personal autorul sau persoane despre care acesta vorbește. Căci, în ultimul caz, aproape fără să vrei, vezi chipurile din cartea pe care o străbați, așa cum s-au păstrat ele în albumul fotografic al memoriei tale.” [3]

Refracțiile acestui tip de discurs memorialistic în prezentul discursului critic fac parte, la rândul lor, dintr-o structură memorialistică virtuală al cărui autor, Matei Călinescu însuși, a făcut dovada apetenței sale pentru scriitura autobiografică în texte precum *Un altfel de jurnal* sau *Portretul lui M* - „La fel, nu m-am putut împiedeca s-o văd cu ochiul minții, încă din prima parte a cărții, pe tînăra și fermecătoarea Marta, sora lui Pascal, din perspectiva felului cum am cunoscut-o eu în 2004. Citise *Portretul lui M* și a vrut să stea de vorbă cu mine despre fiul ei autist, în vîrstă de patruzeci de ani, incapabil să trăiască independent, și despre grija ei și a soțului ei, doctorul Mircea Pop (poet și eminent traducător din greacă, sub pseudonimul literar Alexandru Miran), în legătură cu soarta fiului lor după ce ei, intrați în deceniul al șaptelea al vieții, nu vor mai fi.” [4] Criticul și teoreticianul lecturii remarcă, de asemenea, profilul uman al scriitorului Camil Petrescu, așa cum reiese din scriitura recuperatorie - „O altă suprapunere de același tip, ținînd de o asociere mnemonică pur subiectivă: în memoriile lui Annie se vorbește destul de mult despre Camil Petrescu, prieten vechi și fidel al lui Aurelian Bentoiu. După ce acesta a fost arestat și Camil a devenit, ca autor al piesei Bălcescu (1948) și al romanului în trei volume *Un om între oameni* (1953-1957), un scriitor agreat de regim, membru al noii Academii comuniste, el a continuat să se poarte generos, aproape părintește cu copiii prietenului năpăstuit.” [5] Iar concluzia stabilește ferm miza etică și valoarea estetic-compensativă a textului: „Timpul ce ni s-a dat reconstituie o perioadă sumbră, brutală și mai ales ininteligibilă. Problema ininteligibilității e de altfel centrală întregii cărții: ce s-a întîmplat în comunism, în România, pînă în 1989, e imposibil de înțeles cu adevărat; amintindu-ne, intrăm într-o dublă irealitate, cea a oricărui trecut și cea a caracterului inimaginabil al acelei vremi, încărcată de suferință, de frică și de absurditate.” [6]

În fine, Camelia Manuela Sava insistă asupra talentului analitic și a spiritului dinamic al memorialistei, capabilă să evalueze corect și să cartografieze spațiul ideologic agitat și complex al perioadei: „Annie Bentoiu raționează ca un istoric, ca un cercetător, făcând analize pertinente, comparații: «Și comunismul, și nazismul și-au construit teorii sistematice, generale, menite să-i convingă pe viitorii criminali că au nu doar dreptul, ci chiar datoria de a ucide sau de a pedepsi preventiv, în vreme de pace, viitoarele victime fiindu-le prezentate în culorile cele mai odioase, ca niște ființe răufăcătoare.» Autoarea face o paralelă între nazism și comunism, din care ultimul, din nefericire, iese învingător ca număr de victime și pagube colaterale. Dar cartea de memorii a lui Annie Bentoiu nu este nici pe departe o condamnare a comunismului, ci este o istorie, în sensul de povestire, de redare a unei perioade grele din viața ei, care, de fapt, a marcat un popor întreg. Pentru noi, românii, perioada cuprinsă între anii 1945 și 1949 este tot mai înțeșoșată și mărturia acestei femei (tinere pe atunci) este binevenită, atît din punct de vedere literar, cît și istoric.” [7]

Totodată, se are în vedere un supra-personaj al scriiturii autobiografice, și anume timpul – corelat, obligatoriu, ideii de destin și de asumare demnă a soartei, oricare ar fi aceasta - „Ochiul critic, dublat de o feroare ce se împletește cu o finețe a frazelor, redă aici o sumă de lucruri importante atît pentru ea, dar și pentru noi, ca cititorii ei, timpul prezent în cartea ei devine un soi de personaj ciudat, câteodată nerăbdător, alteori prea calm, o acalmie ce nu poate aduce nimic bun.” [8].

La final, se cuvin amintite *amintirile* Monicai Lovinescu, pentru care întâlnirea cu textul lui Annie Bentoiu reprezintă o posibilitate de recuperare, prin discursul altcuiva, a unei epoci pe care a trăit-o, într-o anumită măsură, pe cont propriu - „Pentru volumul ei de memorii publicat la Editura Vitruviu, Annie Bentoiu a ales un titlu într-adevăr frumos: *Timpul ce ni s-a dat*. Accentul este astfel pus cu măsură, cu grație, cu decență, asupra tragicei ireversibilități a acestui timp pe care generația autoarei l-a trăit sub comunism. Îl trăia (ce altceva putea face, altul nu i se dădea) și în același timp își amâna plenara viețuire pentru vremuri mai bune. Au sosit și ele, dar la sorocul bătrâneții, cam târziu pentru generația autoarei, care e aproximativ și a mea. Aceeași carte ar putea deci purta drept subtitlu *Timpul ce ni s-a luat*, ca unul trăit în absența celui adevărat.” [9] Analizând elementele și mărcile distinctive ale textului memorialistic, Monica Lovinescu se auto-identifică permanent, cu nostalgie, regret, dar și cu satisfacția întâlnirii cu un spirit afin - „Prezentată astfel, istoria trăită pierde poate din patetismul ei extravagant pentru noi toți cei care am suportat-o, dar câștigă în credibilitate. Mai am un motiv să-i mulțumesc autoarei: mă bănuiam uneori vinovată de o ușoară idealizare a epocii interbelice coincizând pentru mine cu copilăria și adolescența, două anotimpuri de aur. Interbelicului, acoperit acum de toate păcatele - și nu numai de nostalgiei comunismului - îmi era greu să-i strămut statutul dintr-un rai într-un purgatoriu incert. Or, văd că mă întâlnesc în priviri cu Annie Bentoiu chiar dacă ea, răbdătoare, își motivează calm punctul de vedere, iar la mine un oarecare patos îmi ține loc de argumente.” [10]

Timpul ce ni s-a dat este, cu alte cuvinte, o carte-mărturie despre trecut, un argument în favoarea libertății individului și o pledoarie anti-totalitarism.

Note

[1] Alex. Ștefănescu, *Annie Bentoiu își amintește...*, în *România literară*, nr. 2/2001, disponibil la adresa http://www.romlit.ro/annie_bentoiu_i_amintete...

[2] Ibidem.

[3] Matei Călinescu, *Memoriile lui Annie Bentoiu – o pagină de jurnal*, în *Apostrof*, nr.10/2007, disponibil la adresa <http://www.revista-apostrof.ro/articole.php?id=441>.

[4] Ibidem.

[5] Ibidem.

[6] Ibidem.

[7] Camelia Manuela Sava, *Annie Bentoiu: Închisoarea „din exterior”*, disponibil la adresa <http://spatiiculturale.0catch.com/18-2011/CameliaManuelaSAVA.html>.

[8] Ibidem.

[9] Monica Lovinescu, *Timpul ce ni s-a luat*, în *România literară*, nr 19/2001, disponibil la adresa http://www.romlit.ro/timpul_ce_ni_s-a_luat?caut=Annie%20Bentoiu.

[10] Ibidem.

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Feminitatea – complementaritate și / sau contradicție. Glose pe marginea textelor exegetice ale lui Vasile Lovinescu

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Abstract: *The analysis of the female character, especially in Ion Creangă's tales, is in Vasile Lovinescu's opinion, a genuine means of emphasizing complexity. Gathering many meanings, femininity is first of all the necessary way to accede to the "Big" and "Short mysteries." On the other hand, its presence can often attract counterbalance. Mystical and/or Prophet gifts, can turn into a true measure of the identity crisis that can travel and become masculine in its path. At the edge of the complementary and / or contradiction, the feminine character can be considered a refinement, an ego guide.*

Key words: *feminine, masculine, complementary, spiritual alchemy, symbol, myth, tradition*

„Adevărurile cele mai înalte, imposibil de comunicat ori transmis prin orice alt mijloc, devin comunicabile sau transmisibile până la un anumit punct atunci când sunt, dacă se poate spune așa, încorporate în simboluri care, fără îndoială, le vor disimula pentru mulți, dar care le vor manifesta în tot strălucirea ochilor celor ce știu să vadă.” René Guénon, Simboluri ale științei sacre[1]

În mod voalat sau voit ancorat în concretețe, autorii din toate timpurile au încercat să imprimat feminității îndeosebi coordonatele sensibilului, ale infefabilului feciorelnic. Este știut faptul că schema care articulează un astfel de portret este de cele mai multe ori o formă de reiterare a imaginii sacrale. Pură, sensibilă, candidă etc., feminitatea apare dacă nu ca proiecție a idealității, cel puțin ca încercare de plasticizare a ceea ce este „fără prihană”. Feminitatea vrăjește, amăgește și adesea topește spiritul dornic de elucidare. In creuzetul misterului pe care îl degajă se adună și se decantează frumusețe, maternitate, devotament, sacrificiu etc.

Istoria (a se citi istoria începuturilor, și/sau mitologia!) ne învață însă că dincolo de valențele pozitive, care nu sunt decât un pol al încercărilor de a elucida, de a descifra tot ceea ce ne înconjoară, putem desprinde și trăsături la antipod. [2] In aceste condiții, feminitate nu înseamnă numai ceea ce este imaculat, uneori dimpotrivă, chiar și ceea ce se află la polul opus, cu toată galeria de conotații negative. Structurile feminității conjugă semnificații dintre cele mai neașteptate, confirmând astfel simbioza firească a contrariilor, pe linia antinomiilor masculin și feminin, putere și sensibilitate, moarte și viață etc., dar și „nostalgia” permanentă a dualității, specifice cuplului.

O astfel de viziune complexă asupra feminității oferă în comentariile sale Vasile Lovinescu, mai cu seamă în considerațiile pe marginea basmelor lui Ion Creangă. Finețea interpretativă uimește înainte de toate prin bogăția documentării, autorul valorificând compartimente numeroase tangente din punct de vedere tematic: literatură, folclor, mitologie, simbologie, alchimie etc.

Limitând sfera de interes a considerațiilor lovinesciene doar asupra comentariilor pe marginea volumului *Creangă și Creanga de aur* [3], remarcăm două idei fundamentale care orientează afirmațiile pe marginea feminității. Pe de o parte faptul că Vasile Lovinescu punctează valențele antinomice ale feminității, insistând cu precădere asupra dimensiunii negative, după cum, pe de altă parte, abordarea tematică nu exclude o veritabilă pledoarie pentru modelele creștine, pe care de altfel, oricând are prilej, le invocă, demonstrând intenționat sau nu că „mitologiile sunt depozite de sensuri așezate pe un teren epic de factură religioasă”. [4] Autorul insistă pe aceste două metode de punctare a originalității lui Creangă,

pledând pentru finețea intelectuală a acestuia, demontând de departe asocierea numelui humuleșteanului cu „țărăniile” atât de hulite în diferite contexte. Construiește indirect un portret al unui superior cunoscător al simbologiei universale, dat semnificațiilor mitice, folclorice, antropologice chiar, stăpânite cu mare artă de scriitorul artist. Acestea însă nu constituie decât suportul necesar mării demonstrații, căci adevărata analiză urmărește ancorarea basmuitorului în seria, pe cât de restrânsă, pe atât de complexă, a scriitorilor români ce aparțin Tradiției, întrucât descoperă în Creangă un scriitor inițiat. Teoria lovinesciană se deschide pe marginea acceptării existenței în spațiul românesc, îndeosebi la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea, a unei organizații inițiatice de „povestași”[5], în care locul nu era dobândit în funcție de talent, ci în funcție de posibilitatea, capacitatea de a ascunde un secret, de a-l oculta. [6] Se asigura astfel o formă, cel puțin bizară pentru lumea profană, de a proteja un secret. Analiza textului lovinescian devine astfel „o hermeneutică totalizantă”, un mod superior de a ne forța mintea să gândească după alte tipare, „deranjând schemele noastre mentale încărcate de rațiuni și prejudecăți pozitivistice.”[7]

Prin *Creangă și creanga de aur* se afirmă pe de o parte originalitatea scriitorului-artist, maestru al povestirii, dar, pe de altă parte, se conturează și eșafodajul unei demonstrații de mare finețe: teoria privind „semnele sfârșitului și începutului unei tradiții care, cu toate ocultările ciclice, n-a început să existe în aceste ținuturi bântuite de furtunile și incendiile istoriei”, existența hiperboreeană a spațiului cultural românesc, în fapt „un nou început în remanifestarea tradiției prin întoarcerea la originea ei imemorabile, hiperboreene și atlante”. [8] În sprijinul acestei teorii Creangă articulează două idei care presupun obligatoriu raportarea la originar, sacru, primordial în ceea ce privește construirea feminității: maleficul, care nu exclude însă valorificarea dimensiunii creștine.

Se remarcă distinctiv pentru textul exegetic propus de Vasile Lovinescu insistența, de tip cumul, pe marginea semnificațiilor negative asociate feminității în scriitura lui Creangă. Sursa acelei viziuni este, evident, cea mitologică. Feminitatea distructivă, funestă[9], care maculează, pervertește etc., amintește de Erinii/Furii la greci, care ca și Harpiile ori Gorgonele sunt instrumentele răzbunării zeilor, [10] pedepsind pe toți cei care încalcă legile naturii și ale ordinii fizice sau morale. Privite din acest punct de vedere, basmele lui Creangă sunt pronunțat ancorate în dimensiunea morală, care apare nu atât ca o concluzie, cât mai degrabă ca formă de a construi un epic tezist, conform schemei basmice, după modelul: triumful binelui asupra răului.

În ceea ce privește raportarea la valențele creștin-sacrale ale feminității, teza fălticineanului nu este nouă. Evident lectura, oricât de superficială ar fi, dacă nu trezește sclipiri de raportare la *Marele Cod*[11], la sensul „anagoric”, măcar readuce în memorie fragmente mitologice devenite clasice, deoarece autorul pare să transforme demonstrația într-un text dublu, grație limbajului „kerigmatic”. Din acest punct de vedere rândurile lovinesciene oferă premisele unui text dublu: la un prim nivel derulându-se considerațiile legate de scrierea lui Creangă, iar ca suport este oferit un al doilea nivel, elevat, care se dezvăluie ca o rafinată enciclopedie mitologică, ce susține îndeaproape ideea „societăților tradiționale [ce] aveau rațiunea lor suficientă în mit” [12], autorul mișcându-se cu o inegalabilă lejeritate în lumea simbolului, indiferent de compartimentul la care acesta este raportabil, cel puțin la o primă analiză. Astfel, exegeza este una inedită. Discipolul lui Guénon, în pofida comentariilor legate de îndepărtarea de la ortodoxie[13], pare a demonstra exact contrariul în scrierile sale, întrucât, de câte ori are prilejul, nu refuză popasul în universul biblic, remarcile devenind adesea o reală lecție de religie. [14]

Oprindu-se asupra complexității personajului feminin central din *Soacra cu trei nurori*, Lovinescu afirmă că există în realitate „două fețe ale feminității”[15] în creația basmică a lui Creangă. Putem distinge între o valență „superioară”, ale cărei dominante sunt tributare în special pozitivului, marcate de predicțiune, răbdare, ingeniozitate, dragoste – așa

cum se aflăm, de pildă, în incipitul din *Povestea porcului*, când „băbușca” realizează că „la casa fără de copii nu [...] mai este vreun Doamne-ajută!” [16] sau prin prezența bătrânei/Sfintei Duminici din *Povestea lui Harap-Alb*. La celălalt pol se află „feminitatea inferioară”, reprezentând aspectul negativ în *Soacra cu trei nurori*, baba din *Punguța cu doi bani*, baba și fata ei din *Fata babei și a moșneagului*, codoașa din *Stan Pățitul*, mama fetei și scroafa din *Povestea porcului* și Talpa Iadului din *Ivan Turbincă*. Chiar și simpla înseriere demonstrează aplecarea lui Creangă în suprinderea dimensiunii negative a feminității, apetență ce poate fi interpretată drept „necesarul golgotian”. [17]

Evident fiecare dintre aceste personaje simbolice poartă cu sine semnificații individualizante, prin raportare directă la trama propusă de lumea basmică.

Soacra din binecunoscutul basm simbolizează „gelozia mamei”, a unei mame „divine” [18], ce amintește de dimensiunea matricială a Lumilor. Ea pare a fi pe rând Gaia, ce-și apără Titanii, dar și „ochiul rău”, sinistru, inversul celui ciclopic, sau al înțelepciunii – ochiul celui lui Șiva. Precum cerbul din *Povestea lui Harap-Alb* ea amortește feciorii și nurorii, e însăși Medusa, pusă la extrema nurorii celei tinere „mai șugubață decât cele două” [19], chemată parcă pentru a purifica miasmele, pentru a pune ordine în haosul provocat de babă. Dacă soacra nu este decât răul suprem, „coextensivă cu temelia lumilor și a manifestării integrale, constituindu-i rădăcina tenebroasă” [20], nora aduce cu sine „trezirea gunelor”, a ielelor, „milostivelor”, cum le numește Tudor Pamfile. [21]

De departe însă putem observa faptul că feminitatea coroborează dimensiuni mitice articulate pe eșafodaj sacerdoțial. Această particularitate Lovinescu o consideră definitorie pentru scriitura humuleșteanului. Suntem în fața unui „sacerdoțiu feminin deviat” [22], pe care, se pare, humuleșteanul îl preia din „lecția” oferită de cultul Dianei, al Proserpinei sau Persefonei lui Homer. Filiera prin care Creangă preia aceste imagini este Ispirescu. Basmele culese de acesta pun în valoare dimensiunea mai puțin cunoscută a „feminității orgiastice” în *Cele douăsprezece fete de împărat și Palatul fermecat* și *Fiul vânătorului*. Analiza textului propune însă o coborâre mult mai adâncă în mit, considerându-se că sursa feminității care maleficiază trebuie asociată *kșatriylor*[23], locuitori din munții Rodopi, rămași liberi până în vremea lui Herodot, considerați a fi strămoșii nației noastre pe traseul regentat Tradiției Primordiale.

Un alt exemplu de „sacerdoțiu feminin satanizat”[24] Lovinescu analizează în *Punguța cu doi bani*. Și aici asistăm la o „revoltă contra autorității spirituale supreme din această lume”, baba – „câinoasă la inimă”[25] trimițând la „Atlantida însăși, căzută în nemernicie”[26]. Ceea ce șochează este violentarea masculinului, copleșit și covârșit ca în vremea Amazoanelor. Avem de-a face cu o „feminitate nocivă”, o „feminitate deviată” [27].

O imagine interesantă poate fi asociată caprei din basmul cu titlul omonim. Capra reprezintă „văduva simbolică”, amintind de portretele simbolice, articulate pe schema sacrificiului feminin: Isis, Demeter, Maica Domnului sau Iștar. [28] Auzind cele întâmplare cu iezii săi, aceasta nu are timp de jelit. Nu asistăm, cum ne-am fi așteptat la o perspectivă ofelizantă, ci, dimpotrivă, știind că „până la Dumnezeu, sfinții își ieu sufletul” [29] și găsește de cuviință să găsească repede ac de cojocul lupului. „Divina capră”, cum o numește Lovinescu, poate fi asociată totemului Atlantidei [30], semnificațiile sacrificiale complexe pe care aceasta le impune coborând dincolo de istoria creștinismului, către Tradiția Primordială, hiperboreeană.

Binecunoscut este faptul că răul este adesea necesarul pilon prin care se poate proba binele. Așa se întâmplă și în *Fata babei și fata moșneagului*. Avem două modele simbolice: fata cea bună, o adevărată Vestală ce însumează aici virtuțile teologale: Speranța, Credința (Caritatea) și Iubirea[31], iar cea rea o „contra Vestală” [32], care alături de babă asigură răul necesar.

Este interesant de observat faptul că răul este prezent în dublă ipostază feminină: fata și baba construiesc un adevărat „sacerdoțiu parazit”, cele două „miasme corporificate” „țesându-și propriul giulgiu, îmbrăcăminte Neantului”.[33] Ne întrebăm dacă nu cumva și binele este sugerat, la un alt nivel, tot prin complementaritate. Pe de o parte avem fata moșneagului, care însumează calități ce o propulsează în panteonul feminității, simbol al însuși Focului Sacru, Centrul Lumii, dar și al Maicii Domnului ce-și caută fiul, sau chiar al Șehinei, prezența reală a Divinității în lume[34], pe de altă parte, făcând pardedru cu aceasta, Sfânta Duminică, cea „blândă și îngăduitoare, [care] n-a vrut să-și pună mintea c-o sturlubatică și c-o leneșă de fată”[35]. Avem în față imaginea sacrală sublimată. Sfânta Duminică este „stăpâna Cheilor, Vieții și a Morții, reprezentanta lui Dumnezeu în lumea noastră”, „imagine a ineputabilului” [36], deținând secretele polare, așadar hiperboreene.

În *Povestea lui Stan Pășitul* ideea centrală se construiește pe marginea mitului creării femeii. Nașterea acesteia este una compensatorie, pornind de la androgenia adamică, justificată doar de dorința celui dintâi bărbat de a nu fi singur, „toate ca toate, dar urâtul îi venea de hac.” [37] Lovinescu analizează textul lui Creangă, supunându-l unei exegeze de tip alchimie spirituală, văzând în Chirică – Demiurgul, iar feminitatea – o adevărată „Pandoră”, pe marginea unei interesante analogii: „în creștinism femeia (elementul negativ) este reabilitată de Maria, dar aceasta numai după ce 'Kiriakos' a făcut operațiile preliminare” [38]. Prin această demonstrație cititorul reiterează lecția Facerii din de mitologie creștină.

Un alt exemplu de acribie analitică în sublinierea particularităților feminității se realizează în comentariul la *Povestea porcului*. Și aici nocivul este coordonata definitorie. Basmul este unul dintre cele mai pedant analizate, întrucât se pot identifica numeroase racorduri mitologice: de pildă fata de împărat e „Anima Mundi” [39], după cum „hârca de babă”- scroafa cu purcei „... în tot basmul e activă forța feminină virulentă, deviată și nocivă în proporții diverse”. Inseși apelativele acesteia, „băbornița”, „pohoanța de babă”, „hoanghina”, „Talpa Iadului” [40], trimit către „rădăcina tenebroasă a lumii, *Mula Devi*, *Tamas* în totalitatea ei, tendința descendentă din *Prakriti*. Influența ei pulverizează sau cel puțin maleficiază toate stările de existență” etc.[41] Însă, ca în orice basm, aceasta este anulată prin mortificare, de o „feminitate transcendentă, compensatoare”. Nu trebuie uitat faptul că în final, „eul feminin” pornește către un veritabil pelerinaj către propriul Sine, justificând dependența omului de Principiu, în deplină Tradiție hiperboreeană, dar și interdependența om-cosmos. Din acest punct de vedere, Lovinescu analizează magistral tribulațiile feminității pe „graficul celor trei gune: Exaltarea, Amploarea și Cufundarea în abis.” [42] De asemenea o atenție deosebită acordă Lovinescu teoriei complementarității femininului, căutarea simbolică pe care acesta o presupune în vederea restabilirii echilibrului primordial. Ajutându-se de obiectele simbolice: furca și cloșca cu puii de aur, în ipostaze ce amintesc de sfintele ce porneau în pelerinaj, „nenorocita drumeață”, „străina”, „zbuciumata drumeață”, feminitatea trebuie să asigure nevoia completitudinii masculine, liantul fiind pruncul ce aștepta să se nască, chinându-și mama de patru ani, semn al nevoii parcurgerii tuturor treptelor inițiatice. Exegeza se transformă și aici în alchimie spirituală.

Considerat cel mai complex dintre basmele lui Creangă, „locul de întâlnire a numeroase simboluri, venind din toate orizonturile tradiționale” [43], *Povestea lui Harap-Alb* presupune ca obligatorie raportarea la feminitate, aceasta asigurând în drumul hiperboreului necesara inițiere. Putem considera din acest punct de vedere că simbologia acestui basm poate fi rezumată sub semnul mitului Creației. Personajul parcurge un veritabil drum al Creației, care presupune repetate nașteri, orientate cu sprijinul direct al feminității. Prezența acestui simbol întemeiază la nivelul textului și, implicit al receptării sale, un „cod” conform căruia se construiește un model de reprezentare a lumii, o „armătură susceptibilă de transmitere sub formă de mesaj” [44].

Si aici avem de-a face cu o inițiere războinică, sacerdoțiul feminin fiind asigurat de Fata Impăratului Roș, „cumplita farmazoană”. Întâlnirea sacrificială cu cea care poate fi considerată o „Mare Preoteasă atlantă” [45], Lovinescu o așază sub semnul semnificațiilor asociate Druideselor la Celți, sinteză simbolică a forțelor terestre și cosmice. Ea este deopotrivă o „Atlantidă” [46], dar la fel de bine și o Atalantă grecească, reunind cele două mituri devine copleșitoare prin semnificația complexă asociată chemării către stabilirea echilibrului, necesara balanță cerută de Tradiția primordială, fata este cea care umple „spațiul gol” al bărbatului, se completează dar numai trecând alături de acesta peste probele vieții și ale morții[47].

Ghidajul simbolic pe care i-l oferă fata Impăratului Roș îi asigură dimensionarea spirituală, drumul către Marile Mistere, necesara „sublimarea” alchimică a lui Harap-Alb, ajutându-l să-și păstreze ritmul vieții în macro și microcosmos, prin ceea ce alchimiștii numesc „*solve et coagula*”. Cu ajutorul acesteia și al Sfintei Duminici, personajul va anula distanța dintre cer și pământ, țintind și ajungând la esențe, ca în faimosul dicton hermetic din *Tabula Smaragdina* : „ce este deasupra e la fel cu ceea ce este dedesubt [...]”[48], devenind în cele din urmă „Avatar, mătuitor al Lumii”. Sunt propuse astfel două personaje feminine coextensive simbulogiei alchimice.

Considerăm mult mai complexă și plină de semnificații Bătrâna/Sfânta Duminică, cea care îl ajută pe erou să se descopere și să se „construiască” în plan cosmologic. Pentru bunătate și milostenie Harap-Alb va fi orientat în drumul ce va urma în „nașterile” sale, în drumul către/prin Micile Mistere. Acest fapt poate fi confirmat și de una dintre explicațiile pe care le oferă un exeget al operei Trismegistului. „Hobotul”/Vălul este asociat cu „simbolul Misteriilor”, cu „Veșmântul lui Isis”, cu natura spirituală a omului, pe care, pentru a-l putea ridica, trebuia să treacă peste limitele individualității [49]. Revenind la subiectul basmic, putem rezuma: personajul asistă aici la o Teofanie. Interesantă este însă valența sacrificială, căci, după comentariul lovinescian această Bătrână a Timpului poate reprezenta „cele trei fețe ale timpului [...], o triplă *Śakti* [50], un sacerdoțiu virginal, o triplicitate de Vestale, identică probabil (și) cu ternarul Ielelor”.[51] De asemenea, nu este lipsită de importanță insistența pe care Lovinescu o dovedește în descifrarea simbulogiei complexe: ea poate fi în accepția hindușilor „Manu, Intellectul cosmic, oglindire în lumea noastră a Intellectului necreat”, dar și „Îngerul solar Mikael [...] „Acela care este ca Dumnezeu” ori „Dea Syra”-Zeița soare [52]. Sfânta Duminică - „cea mai mare peste toate sfintele cărora Dumnezeu le-a dat în stăpânire zilele săptămânii” [53] apare justițiară, dar și înțeleaptă, o adevărată Sofia ce sporea nevoile sale ascetice pentru a-și dovedi credința, aici semnificând cu precădere o dimensiune cosmică, „aspectul sapiențial și moralizator”, cu „rol de reglator al activităților umane, de instanță morală supraumană”[54]. Rolul ei mistagogic vine ca reflex direct al legăturii cu divinitatea. [55] Faptul că prima ei apariție este de „babă gârbovă de bătrânețe, care umbla după milostenie” [56], nu este decât o confirmare a dualității, „alternanță de strălucire și de stingere, de umilință și de măreție” [57], motiv frecvent teologic, acolo unde sfinții apar în ipostaze umile, asemenea Sfinților Vasile cel Mare, Pantelimon ori lui însuși Iisus, demonstrând faptul că materialitatea nu decât o haină aruncată vremelnic peste spirit. De altfel Lovinescu explică nevoalat semnificația bătrânei: „Nu e o chestiune de „smerenie” în sensul religios al cuvântului; în punctul de vedere transcendent în care se află Sfânta nu mai poate fi vorba de smerenie și de orgoliu [...] E o succesiune de eclipse și de epifanii, a afirmări și de negări, de plus și de minus, voite și riguros obligatorii [...] Pomana pe care o cere e o punte caritabilă aruncată de Sfânta Duminică între cer și Pământ” [58].

Tot în accepție sacrală trebuie înțelasă și semnificația *cuvântului*. Înțelepciunea Sfintei Duminici se țese prin cuvântul ce trimite către sfatul începutului de lume, căci: „cuvintele sunt vehicule de prim rang ale miturilor”.[59] Când Sfânta îi rostuiește lui Harap-Alb destinul: „Vedea-te-aș împărat!”, nu uită să invoce învățătura biblică: „De unde dai,

milostivul Dumnezeu să-ți deie [...] și mult să te înzilească [...] că mare norocire te așteaptă.”[60] Bătrâna scrie astfel poezia destinului eroului. Tot acesta este și momentul în care neofitul se împărtășește cu valențele acestuia, pășind către demiurgie, căci, din cuvânt s-au născut și se nasc toate, el este „uni-Vers” [61]. Euharistic, cuvântul este poezia nașterii și ființării.

Neîndoielnic, demonstrația, făcută de Vasile Lovinescu pe marginea textelor lui Creangă, dincolo de un exemplar enciclopedism mitic, țintește către conturarea unui cutremurător model arhetipal. Panoplia feminității luxuriante la care ne-am aștepta într-un text basmic este înlocuită cu una în care se articulează mai degrabă valori morale, cele mai multe coextensive și complementare masculinului. Analiza atentă a textului exegetic demonstrează însă un aspect interesant, prin faptul că, adesea, chiar și acestea sunt anulate în favoarea prefigurării unei feminități predominant nefaste, traumatizante. Lovinescu sesizează această apetență a prozatorului și comentariile sale nu sunt decât prilej pentru demonstrația unor astfel de structuri complexe ale feminității. Lectura unui astfel de text naște firesc întrebarea, inexistentă în textul exegetic al lui Lovinescu, dacă nu cumva Creangă, cel atât de acuzat de verbiajul popular, nu a gândit, dincolo de funcțiunea tradițională pe care o descifrăm cu ușurință la nivelul mesajului scriiturii sale, către o deturnare a feminității în favoarea estetizării, sau e doar ochiul critic lovinescian cel care împinge către coagularea unor astfel de portrete.

Note

- [1] René Guénon, *Simboluri ale științei sacre*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2008, p. 17
- [2] Teorii privind dubla valență a simbolului pot fi consultate în Chevalier, Jean și Gheerbrant, Alain, *Cuvânt înainte la Dicționar de simboluri literare*, I, Editura Artemis, București, 1995, p. 9-64. De asemenea, una dintre cele mai cunoscute apare la Durand, Gilbert, în *Structurile antropologice ale imaginarului. Introducere în arhetipologia generală*, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2000, p. 39. Autorul argumentează existența unui „izomorfism al schemelor, al arhetipurilor și al simbolurilor în cadrul sistemelor mitice sau al constelațiilor statice ne va duce la constatarea existenței anumitor protocoale normative ale reprezentărilor imaginare, bine definite și relativ stabile, grupate în jurul schemelor originale”, numite „structuri”.
- [3] Lovinescu, Vasile, *Creangă și Creanga de aur*, Editura Cartea Românească, București, 1989
- [4] Liiceanu, Gabriel, *Om și simbol, Interpretări ale simbolului în teoria artei și filozofia culturii*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2005, p. 44
- [5] Lovinescu, Vasile, op.cit., p. 14
- [6] Acuzația de masonerie care planează asupra biografiei lui V. Lovinescu pare a fi respinsă de cei care l-au cunoscut: „nu făceam <masonerie>, ci mai degrabă <massenie>, ca aceea a Sf. Graal, în jurul unei nevăzute mese rotunde a tradiției perene.”, după cum aflăm la Mihăescu, Florin, *Vasile Lovinescu și funcțiunea tradițională*, Editura Rosmarin, București, 1998, p. 16-21
- [7] Cf. Spiridon, Vasile, *Analogii răsfrânte*, în „Ateneu”, nr. 10, octombrie, 1993, p. 4
- [8] Cf. Mihăescu, Florin, op.cit., p. 63
- [9] Pentru o bibliografie minimală Cf. http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gorgone#Feminitatea_funest.C4.83 și Kernbach, Victor, *Dicționarul de mitologie generală*, Editura Albatros, București, 1995 și Evseev, Ivan, *Enciclopedia simbolurilor religioase și arhetipurilor culturale*, Editura Invierea, Timișoara, 2007
- [10] Cf. Chevalier, Jean și Gheerbrant, Alain, op.cit., II, p. 21 și Kernbach, Victor, op.cit.
- [11] Frye, Northrop, *Marele Cod. Biblia și literatura*, Editura Atlas, București, 1999
- [12] Lovinescu, Vasile, op.cit., p. 7
- [13] Menționăm aici doar faptul că a fost acuzat de a se fi îndepărtat de la religia ortodoxă prin ratașarea islamică. ortodoxia, dimpotrivă a participat la slujbe ortodoxe și inclusive înmormântarea acestuia s-a desfășurat după ritual creștin ortodox. Cf. Aioanei, Arhim. Timotei, *Portrete în lumină: Un cărturar și o pioasă doamnă*, în „Lumina”, 06 iunie 2007, ediție online: <http://www.ziarullumina.ro/articole;1341;0;193;0;Portrete-in-lumina-Un-carturar-si-o-pioasa-doamna.html>
- [14] În acest sens, confirmare a ideilor privind circulația în timp a valențelor religioase asociate feminității poate fi studiul lui Baldock, John, *Femeile din Biblie*, Editura Lider, București, 2008
- [15] Lovinescu, Vasile, op.cit., p. 54
- [16] Creangă, Ion, *Soacra cu trei nurori*, în *Povești. Amintiri. Povestiri*, Editura Minerva, București, 1970, p. 44
- [17] Lovinescu, Vasile, op.cit., p. 118
- [18] Ibidem, 53

- [19] Creangă, Ion, *Soacra cu trei nurori*, în *op.cit.*, Editura Minerva, București, 1970. p. 14
- [20] Ibidem, p. 68
- [21] Pamfile, Tudor, *Mitologia poporului român*, vol 2, Editura Vestala, București, 2008, 87-98
- [22] Lovinescu, Vasile, *op.cit.*, p. 29
- [23] Miulescu, Nicolae, *Cine au fost sygnii*, în “*Noi, tracii*”, Buletin circular tracologic al Centrului de Studii istorice de la Veneția, Anul II, nr. 14 – octombrie 1975, p. 8, ediție online - http://www.def.ro/media/10_1975_nt_ottobre.pdf
- [24] Lovinescu, Vasile, *op.cit.*, p. 102
- [25] Creangă, Ion, *Punguța cu doi bani*, în *op.cit.*, p. 27
- [26] Ibidem, p. 112
- [27] Ibidem, p. 94
- [28] Cf. Lovinescu, Vasile, *op.cit.*, p. 82
- [29] Creangă, Ion, *Capra cu trei iezi*, în *op.cit.*, p. 22
- [30] Cf. Lovinescu, Vasile, *op.cit.*, p. 86
- [31] Ibidem, p. 129-130
- [32] Ibidem, p. 123
- [33] Ibidem, p. 120 ș.u.
- [34] Idem
- [35] Creangă, Ion, *Fata babei și fata moșneagului*, în *op.cit.*, p. 136
- [36] Ibidem, p. 134
- [37] Creangă, Ion, *Povestea lui Stan Pățitul*, în *op.cit.*, p. 61
- [38] Lovinescu, Vasile, *op.cit.*, p. 199-201
- [39] Lovinescu, Vasile, *op.cit.*, p. 262
- [40] Cf. Creangă, Ion, *Povestea porcului*, în *op.cit.*, p. 44-59
- [41] Lovinescu, Vasile, *op.cit.*, p. 273
- [42] Ibidem, p. 205-206
- [43] Ibidem, p. 278
- [44] Stănciulecu, Traian, *Miturile Creației. Lecturi semiotice*, Editura Performantica, Iași, 1995, p. 20-21; Pe teoria codului religios, ca bază a tuturor simbolurilor omenirii își construiește demonstrația și Frye, Northrop, *op.cit.*
- [45] Lovinescu, Vasile, *op.cit.*, p. 376
- [46] Ibidem, p. 393
- [47] Utilă este în acest sens definiția simbolică: „Ce este un bărbat? Un bărbat e un spațiu gol: dorul după o femeie. Si ce este o femeie? Femeia este un spațiu gol: dorul după un bărbat. Ei sunt ceea ce le lipsește.”, în Alves, Ruben A., *Cuvinte și trup*, în *Cartea cuvintelor bune de mâncat sau Bucătăria ca parabolă teologică*, Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 2007, p. 95
- [48] Trismegistos, Hermes Mercurius, *Tabula Smaragdina*, Editura Herald, București, 2006, p. 20
- [49] Cf. Mead, Robert-George, *Hermes Trismegistos. Gnoza și originile scrierilor trismegiste*, Editura Herald, București, 2007, p. 21: „În Panathenaea, renumitul Peplu, Văl, Pânză sau Veșmânt al lui Atena, zeița înțelepciunii, era purtat la înălțime precum vela unei galere; dar acesta nu era decât simbolul Misteriilor. Din punct de vedere mistic, semnifica Vălul universului ferecat cu stele, Vălul multicolor al Naturii, renumitul Văl sau Veșmânt al Lui Isis, pe care niciun muritor nu l-a ridicat, căci acel Văl era chiar natura spirituală a omului, iar pentru a-l ridica acestea trebuia să depășească limitele individualității [...]”
- [50] Principiu feminin, acea energie divină, personificată ca soție a Divinității (Brahma, Vișnu, Șiva)
- [51] Cf. Lovinescu, Vasile, *op.cit.*, p. 282
- [52] Ibidem, p. 287
- [53] Bârlea, Ovidiu, *Mică enciclopedie a poveștilor românești*, Editura Stiințifică, și Enciclopedică, București, 1976, p. 452
- [54] Evseev, Ivan, *op.cit.*, p. 548-549
- [55] Cf. Ruști, Doina, *Dicționar de teme și simboluri din literatura română*, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2002, p. 125: „(...) ea apare în miturile românești ca mamă a celor douăsprezece luni ale anului, așadar ca simbol al ciclului încheiat, privilegiu descins și din faptul că ziua de duminică este cea de-a șaptea, cea care încheie săptămâna, dar și perioada Zidirii lumii.”
- [56] Creangă, Ion, *Povestea lui Harap-Alb*, în *op.cit.*, p. 84
- [57] Lovinescu, Vasile, *op.cit.*, p. 289
- [58] Idem
- [59] Kernbach, Victor, *Universul mitic al românilor*, Editura Lucman, București, 2001, p. 189
- [60] Creangă, Ion, *op. cit.*, p. 84-85
- [61] Alves, Ruben A., *op.cit.*, p. 94

Female presence in Romanian Folk Customs

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Abstract: *The analysis of the system of Romanian folk customs may result in discovering the existence of a significant female presence in the field: female characters playing secondary roles; the female procession; the female group; female characters playing main ritual roles. The present paper may represent a landmark for conducting a detailed study in the field; what is also worth remembering is that such a study is currently missing from the specialized bibliography, as male ritual presence predominantly enjoys more attention from researchers.*

Key words: *folk rituals, Romanian folk customs, female actants*

No thorough analysis of the said matter has been conducted up to the present date. Various customs and traditional practices have been studied, however, without the purpose of conducting an overall analysis of the matter at the level of the entire system of customs. The present paper aims to outline the main aspects of the theme in question, taking into consideration precisely the entirety of ritual manifestations of the abovementioned type. On the basis of the analysed materials, the existence of the following types of female presence in Romanian customs can be established:

1. Female characters playing secondary parts

A series of folk rituals are marked by the presence of female actants who perform various actions during a certain sequence of the customs; the customs worth mentioning when discussing this issue are: the dance and dramatic plays performed by the *călușari*, *colindatul cu măști* (masked carolling), *vălărit* (ceremonial baptism reiterating Saint John the Baptist's blessing ritual), funeral customs, *caloianul* (rain invoking folk custom consisting of ceremonial plays, songs and ritual practices), etc. This category also includes female characters who participate in the performance of the final sequence of several customs (the feast, the party, or, the joint meal, etc.), similar to the case of several folk rituals such as *iordanitul* (see *vălărit*), *vălăritul*, *colindatul* (Romanian carolling). Another aspect worth remembering is that the joint meals at the end of some customs have been, for a long time, considered to be “disjointed” from the said ritual, when, in fact, they represented the final sequence of the said ritual scenarios and they were completely justified in the abovementioned ritual contexts.

The most remarkable female characters belonging to this category are the *crăițele* (the brides) and the *bocitoare* (the mourners or keeners).

Crăițele are women who used to be part of the characters included in the *călușari* ritual scenario. They would wear the national costume and perform certain choreographic sequences. Also, they were not stricken down during the dance. However, they were denied access to the esoteric part of the ritual. *Crăițele*, similar to the *călușari*, would perform their activity during the *Rusalii* (Whitsunday) period and, in some areas (such as Dolj County), the dance of the *călușari* would open with the dance of the *Crăițe*, thus, named *Crăițele*, after the actants. The dance of the *călușari* did not involve any female presence among the actants, in its archaic form. However, as mentioned by D. Cantemir, at certain points during the dance, the *călușari* would dress up as women and “speak in a female voice”¹. Through such actions, the actants intended to deceive the evil forces².

Bocitoarele were true professionals of crying and they would have well-established moments for performing their action; readers should bear in mind the fact that they were forbidden to mourn at night. Their manifestations were particularly interesting in the context of the *Dawn song* (*Cântecul zorilor*) when the nine *bocitoare* would form two groups, face

east and stand on some high natural rise (such as a hill or a mound). They would act only at dawn and only with their hair unbraided, as a sign of grief. Another aspect worth mentioning is that the *bocitoare* would update their song only when an “unexpected death”³ occurred.

The category of characters analysed above displays other interesting mythical connections:

- the presence of the *babe* (the crones) (usually, forming a couple with *moşii*, their male counterparts) is connected to the ancient cult of the ancestors;
- *Crăițele* have sometimes been assimilated to the *Iele* (feminine mythical creatures in Romanian mythology, often described as virgin fairies with great seductive power over men, magic skills and attributes similar to the Ancient Greek Nymphs, Naiads and Dryads); therefore, they can be seen as human substitutes of the much-feared mytho-folkloric beings;
- *Bocitoarele* (*Cântecul zorilor*) does not address the deceased one, but the dawn, as personification of the said moment that is situated at the fine line between night and day.

2. The female procession

It is necessary to make some observations regarding two almost identical concepts (*procession* and *group*): *procession* refers to “a number of individuals accompanying a ceremony”⁴, while *group* refers to “a number of individuals usually assembled together because of some unifying purpose”⁵. As noticeable, there are semantic differences between the two concepts, to which some folkloric differences could be added, as well: therefore, the procession is characterized by the lack of a minimal structure, heterogeneity and the absence of specific parts. The procession must also be differentiated from the group of participants to folkloric manifestations; sometimes, the procession appears to participants as a structure with specific ritual parts. For example, upon the passing of the funeral convoy, participants make the sign of the cross, men take their hats off and there is general silence, etc.

In the case of the analysed theme, the procession may be an exclusively female one, or, it may include mostly female participants. The female procession is present in wedding rituals, as well, in funeral rituals, in customs such as *cununa* (or *the wreath*, a folk celebration of the completion of harvesting) or *caloianul*. One of the abovementioned customs (*cununa*) shows us, among other things, the movement of the procession from the field towards the householder’s home, accompanying the bearer of the wreath made from the last wheatears left unreaped. This procession was made of boys and girls, and harvesters. On the way towards the householder’s home, the members of the procession were splashed with water. After reaching the householder’s home, the procession would enter the largest room in the house and go around the table (which the householder had previously set, by placing various food products on it) three times.

In the case of the *caloian*, it is also worth noticing that the procession appeared in many areas as a convoy, formed of girls, little girls and, sometimes, even pregnant women. The members of the procession would take part in the so-called *pomană a caloienilor* (a pseudo funeral feast); what is interesting is that boys were also invited to attend the last sequence of the custom (the *hora* or the ring dance).

It is also worth mentioning that in the case of the abovementioned customs (*cununa*, *caloianul*), the procession was initially made exclusively of women, considering the fact that such rituals came into being during matriarchy.

3. The female group

As noticeable, from a mytho-folkloric perspective, the group represents a far more complex reality than the procession. However, it is worth mentioning that many of the

differences were eliminated, or faded away over time, so that today the two folkloric realities could be mistaken. The female group is present in customs such as *Lăzărelul* (folk ritual performed on Lazarus Saturday, the day before Palm Sunday, when a group of girls would go from house to house and sing holly songs), *Goana Rusaliilor* (ritual performed for the purpose of chasing away evil spirits), *Lăzărița* (see *Lăzărel*), or during *șezători* (gatherings) that are associated with agrarian customs.

The short customs mentioned above will be presented starting with the latter type of folkloric manifestation, the *șezătoare*: researchers consider it to be the main manifestation of the female group, a counterpart to the male group. The participants are exclusively women and the custom itself consists of initiating young girls in various fields. The hostess, an older woman, plays the main part (as group representative) in a marked educational and initiation action, which actually represents one of the essential functions of the female group.

The manifestations that are specific to the female group throughout the scenarios of the *Goana Rusaliilor* and *Lăzărița* customs are extremely interesting. In the former scenario, the female group performs an entire series of actions, some of which have a preparatory nature (on Whitsunday Friday): secretly going into the forest, making the wreaths from flowers, fasting until the next day, etc.); the members of the group had to be maidens who had not yet been taken to the ring dance. They would act at night, after taking a specific oath. Dressed in white, the girls would dance a ring dance around the funeral mounds within village limits. Preserving the secrecy was mandatory, as well as observing the speech interdiction throughout the performance of the ritual. The female group is deemed a counterpart of the group of the *iele* that they would symbolically banish from the village.

Lăzărița introduces us to other types of ritual activities of the female group; the main character is the *Lăzărița*, the group leader who sings and dances in the middle of the circle made of girls, while also telling a story regarding the tragic death of the mythical character called *Lăzărel*. The female group is also present in the related custom (*Lăzărelul*). In time, the dance performed by the female group became independent, turning into a ritual dance performed by children in the Saturday before Palm Sunday, also called *Sâmbăta lui Lazăr* (Lazarus Saturday) in the folk calendar.

Even the concise presentation of the abovementioned manifestations suggests the fact that the female group was a far more active presence in Romanian customs, in the past.

4. Female characters playing main ritual parts

There are several Romanian customs during which a female character clearly stands out, compared to the other participants, sometimes transferring her name to the entire ritual scenario: *Drăgaica*, *Paparuda*, *Joimărița* (the *Joimărița* procession), etc.

Drăgaica is the girl playing the main part in the custom bearing the same name; she is the substitute of an archaic goddess: “an agrarian deity and the protector of wheat fields and married women”. D. Cantemir’s long-standing intuition is worth mentioning here: according to the said intuition, the female actant abovementioned was seen as a substitute of the goddess Ceres⁶. Cantemir also states the criteria for selecting the *Drăgaica*, as well as her main ritual actions. It is also worth mentioning the existence of a matrimonial interdiction: the girl playing the part of the *Drăgaica* cannot get married for a period of three years.

Paparuda is also a human substitute of another mythical character, probably a Thracian deity of the rain. It is common knowledge that the “ceremonial and ritual part of the goddess is played either by a pure person (a little girl or an unmarried girl), or by a pregnant woman who always dresses near a well or on the bank of a river, in danewort or burdock leaves”⁷. Cantemir draws attention to several ritual aspects: the actant is a girl aged 10, at most, and her accompanying procession is made of little girls and boys of the same age. The

female participants would also take part in another sequence of the ritual: “it is customary for the old ladies to pour cold water on their heads”⁸.

In the case of the *Joimărița*, the circumstances are different altogether: the main character of the *Joimărița* procession may be of both female and male sex (the latter will be dressed as a woman). This time, we are dealing with a human substitute of a demonic imaginary character (the *Joimărița*). The scenario in question displays a deeply playful nature; it is also Cantemir who suggests that, in his time, the scenario in question did not display the playful nature that it will display later on: “*Joimărițele* is the name they ascribe to women who are believed to wander on Holy Thursday, before Easter, in the vicinity of fires that are lit on that day in all houses in Moldavia and, should they find a woman sleeping, they would punish her, so that she can no longer be able to work afterwards”⁹.

We believe that the female presence in folk customs does not limit to the categories of characters abovementioned; another category of female characters (which is usually ignored) should be taken into account, as well; even though these characters are usually participants (as spectators) to the ritual, they may contribute, as community representatives, to the full performance of the scenario: we may include here *bătrânele* (*the crones*, mentioned by Cantemir in the case of the *Paparudă*), *the mistress of the house* who awaits the carollers at the gate, together with the householder, etc. Modern folkloric research embraces the idea that, in fact, the community does not play a merely passive part, as simple recipient, but that it actually contributes to the accurate completion of the ritual scenario thorough counterpart specific actions that are sometimes difficult to perceive.

Researchers insisted in particular on the male presence in rituals. Therefore, the present paper could represent a landmark in the undertaking of emphasizing female presence in Romanian folk customs. Folkloric manifestations of the abovementioned type (including the female presence) are remarkable due to a series of interesting mythical echoes: speech interdictions, initiation procedures, ritual control of the labour, etc. The hallmark of archaic mentality is particularly conspicuous in the case of characters such as the *Drăgaica*, or the *Paparuda*. Even in the current evolutionary stage of folk customs, both the ritual characteristics of the female group and the mytho-folkloric differences between the group and the procession can still be retraced. Last, but not least, the study of the abovementioned phenomena is of interest at both Balkan and even Indo-European level.

Notes

- [1] Cantemir, Dimitrie, *Descriptio Moldaviae*, Ed. Academiei, București, 1973, p. 315.
- [2] Berdan, Lucia, *Totemism românesc*, Ed. Universității “Al. I. Cuza”, Iași, 2001, p. 77.
- [3] Coșbuc, George, *Elementele literaturii populare*, Ed. Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1986, p. 225.
- [4] *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române*, Ed. Univers Enciclopedic, București, 1998, p. 23.
- [5] *Ibidem*, p. 158.
- [6] Cantemir, Dimitrie, *Op. cit.*, p. 341.
- [7] Ghinoiu, Ion, *Obiceiuri de peste an*, Ed. Fundației Culturale Române, București, 1997, p. 147.
- [8] Cantemir, Dimitrie, *Op. cit.*, p. 342.
- [9] *Idem*.

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Ipostaze ale feminității în proza lui Vasile Voiculescu

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Résumé : *Au fil du temps on a pu identifier des modèles de la féminité spécifiques aux diverses époques historiques. Le modèle de la féminité a beaucoup changé en même temps que l'évolution historique, en temps et en espace. En ce qui concerne le fait que dans tous les récits de Vasile Voiculescu l'action se déroule dans un village archétypal, qui n'est pas situé dans l'espace et en temps, on ne peut pas identifier un modèle de féminité spécifique à une certaine époque ou à une certaine vision. Ce qui apparaît dans l'œuvre de Vasile Voiculescu il y a seulement des hypostases de la féminité, comme : la femme comme simple chimère, la femme comme incarnation de l'élément séduisant, la femme comme épouse, la femme comme mère. Tous les personnages qui apparaissent dans l'œuvre de Vasile Voiculescu sont chargés de signification symbolique. Les personnages féminins ne font pas exception de cette règle, sans égard à leur présence dans le texte comme des apparitions réelles ou simplement comme des chimères des autres personnages.*

Mots-clés : *féminité, modèles, hypostases, archétypal, signification symbolique.*

Fiecare femeie se exprimă diferit, însă feminitatea este ceva ce izvorăște din interior. Dacă pentru unele dintre femei zâmbetul reprezintă atutul feminității, pentru altele elementul reprezentativ sunt ochii. De multe ori femeile emană eleganță și fragilitate. Feminitatea este o stare permanentă ce însoțește o femeie. Feminitatea este ceva inconștient și incontrollabil. Femeia a fost închistată de istoria culturală a umanității în niște tipare minimalizatoare. Tipul de femeie care este considerat ca fiind la modă se transformă de-a lungul timpului. Modelul feminității diferă în funcție de timp și spațiu. În Egiptul Antic, de exemplu, erau la modă femeile cu nasul proeminent. La începutul secolului al XX-lea femeile purtau corsete pentru a-și accentua dimensiunea cât mai redusă a taliei. Mai târziu, prin anii '60, ceea ce primează este rotunjimea formelor și voluptatea sânilor. În prezent sunt considerate drept modele femeile foarte slabe. Aceste exemple se referă la dispunerea temporală a modelelor feminității. În ceea ce privește diversitatea modelelor feminității în funcție de localizarea spațială, pot fi luate în considerare doar două exemple de practici duse uneori până la extrem : de zeci de secole femeile din China poartă încălțăminte cât mai mică și mai îngustă, pentru a-și păstra picioarele cât mai mici, iar cele din Thailanda poartă încă din copilărie niște inele speciale care le subțiază gâtul. Aceste practici străvechi, care pot fi foarte ușor considerate modalități de tortură, au ca unic scop încadrarea femeilor în niște tipare ale frumuseții valabile la un moment dat. Oricare ar fi moda, feminitatea rămâne o caracteristică a femeilor. Elemente ale feminității există în orice femeie, indiferent de vârstă, cultură sau mediul social.

Inițiat în credințe și mitologii, în practici ezoterice, filosofii, religii, folclor, Vasile Voiculescu adună teme senzaționale de pretutindeni și le valorifică în narațiuni care exprimă o idolatrie a omului. În proza lui există un incontrollabil al întâmplărilor unice, irepetabile, neobișnuite, stranii, fantastice, care scot în evidență o existență ritualică estetizantă. Naratorul din narațiunile fantastice înfruntă îndoiala cititorului, înfățișează protagoniștii ca pe purtătorii misterelor, cu aspectul lor neobișnuit, incredibil, într-un spațiu în care se întâlnesc fapte cu rădăcini în imaginația populară primitivă și fapte adunate din civilizația modernă, în așa fel încât mentalitatea tribală se intersectează cu intelectualismul omului contemporan. Este o proză în care plăcerea invenției epice este marcată de întoarceri la mișcările autentice și profunde ale spiritului universului, reprezentând o literatură a aventurii. Atras de situația rară, prozatorul caută excepția, în cele mai diverse medii, printre vânători și pescari, călugări și tâlhari, magicieni și intelectuali, haiduci și hoți de cai și evocă lumea satului, pitorescul vieții mănăstirești, exotismul extrem oriental, societatea modernă unde au loc coliziuni între formele tribale și formele civilizației tehnico-științifice. Într-o asemenea diversitate de personaje, deși majoritatea masculine, era imposibil să nu se regăsească și personaje feminine.

Având în vedere faptul că în toate povestirile lui Vasile Voiculescu acțiunea se petrece într-un sat arhetipal, nefixat în spațiu și timp, nu putem identifica un model de feminitate specific unei anumite perioade sau unei anumite viziuni. Ceea ce apare în opera lui Voiculescu sunt numai ipostaze ale feminității, cum ar fi : femeia ca simplă închipuire, femeia ca întrupare a elementului ispititor, femeia ca soție, femeia ca mamă. Personaje feminine care ilustrează aceste ipostaze apar în *Lacul rău*, *Lostrița*, *Iubire magică* și *Sakuntala*.

Povestirea *Lacul rău* redă tema pescarului înghițit de ape. Personajul principal este unul masculin, Gheorghieș, un tânăr pescar asupra nașterii căruia plutește o enigmă, „sub care se întrevește ipoteza fantastică a descendenței lui dintr-un neam de ființe acvatică.”[1] O primă ipostază în care apare redată ideea de feminitate în acest text este cea de mamă. Copil din flori, Gheorghieș fusese născut de mama lui chiar pe malurile înflorite ale iezerului, într-un cuib de papură, alături de cuiburile lebedelor sălbatice. Mama nu spusese niciodată cine este tatăl copilului, astfel că în sat s-a născut ideea că acesta trebuie să fi fost însuși „zmeul lacului”. [2] Acest tată înconjurat de taină joacă rolul unei zeițăi tutelare de esență acvatică, lucru care relevă legătura profundă a lui Gheorghieș cu natura. La un moment dat, flăcăul este pedepsit de lacul cel rău înecându-se. Moartea băiatului este considerată de către oamenii din sat drept un eveniment normal, rezultatul firesc al nesăbuiței lui. Paradoxal, până și mama lui Gheorghieș, gândind la fel ca ceilalți oameni din sat, nu se revoltă de nedreptatea acestei morți a fiului, în fond nevinovat, ci numai pentru neputința de a-i îngropa trupul în pământ, cum cer datinile creștine, deoarece lacul cel rău nu vrea să dea înapoi trupul celui pedepsit, nici măcar după moarte. Mama, ființă simplă și neștiutoare, concepe lumea numai la nivel fenomenal și vrea să redea pământului trupul fiului ei. Ea cere ajutor satului, iar autoritățile care îi răspund sunt popa, primarul, apoi jandarmii care îi aduc pe cei mai pricepuți pescari. După încercări nereușite de a scoate trupul înecatului din apele lacului, toate resursele oamenilor fuseseră epuizate. În acest moment al povestirii își face apariția bătrâna Savila, cunoscătoare de taine și vrăji. Personajul nu este unul complex, ci simplu, ca toate personajele din proza voiculesciană. Însă puținele trăsături ale personajului sunt semnificative pentru conturarea acestui personaj feminin. Savila, în vârstă de o sută douăzeci de ani, este strămoșa satului, omul cel mai vechi din colectivitatea sa, prin care neamurile de pescari de pe malurile lacului se întâlnesc într-o origine comună, îndepărtată: „sosi la iezer, pașind anevoios în cârjă, o arătare, o mogâldeată abia ținându-se pe picioare: bătrâna Savila, strămoșa satului, intra în gloata zgomotoasă, aducând în gheba spatelui cumiștenia celor peste o sută douăzeci de ani ai ei”[3]. „Prin această bătrână firavă la trup, dar cu sufletul și mintea intacte, puternice, cunoașterea de sine a omului de aici se proiectează în adânc, în afundul trupului, spre originile pline de taine, azi uitate de ceilalți.”[4] Ea nu este o ființă singuratică și bizară, cum sunt de obicei vrăjitoarele, ci apare înconjurată de copii, nepoți și alte neamuri. Bătrâna Savila nu este o vrăjitoare oarecare, pricepută în diferite vrăji, ci este cunoscătoare doar a tainelor apelor, a lumii pescarilor. Știința ei în domeniul magiei este numită „o nesmintită înțelepciune pescărească”. [5] Bătrâna nu este chemată de nimeni la malul lacului să ajute la găsierea înecatului. Ea vine singură, adusă parcă de o forță ocultă care îi dă puteri noi. Există o punte de legătură între flăcăul înecat în apele lacului și bătrâna cea înțeleaptă, deoarece flăcăul cu o origine fabuloasă, legat de lumea apei aproape ca o făptură acvatică, pescarul cel mai iscusit, este, fără îndoială, mai aproape sufletește de strămoșa satului, cunoscătoare a tainelor apelor. „Pentru neinițiați rămâne un miracol stabilirea legăturilor lăuntrice dintre magiciană și pescar, înzestrat cu același mod de cunoaștere arhaică și cu capacitatea de a nu se înstrăina de esența umană.”[6]

Ultima parte a povestirii descrie ritualul magic pe care îl întreprinde bătrâna pentru a scoate din apă trupul înecatului. Operațiunea magică se deschide cu un moment de pregătire sufletească, de concentrare a forțelor lăuntrice. Bătrâna își încordează vederea, în afară și înăuntru, ochiul fiind la Vasile Voiculescu organul cunoașterii esențiale. Ea își ascute privirile

îndreptându-le ca pe niște mesageri spre cer și spre apă, cele două cosmosuri paralele care circumscriu viața neamurilor de pescari. Privirea aceasta este în același timp o cufundare înăuntrul sufletului și o organizare a forțelor cunoașterii. Bătrâna află unde este trupul tănărului pescar înecat în „tainicele rune cu care lacul își scrie legile lui veșnice”[7], adică undeva în trecut, în spiritul cunoscător al tainelor lacului. Acolo unde civilizația cu mijloacele ei se dovedește inefficientă, intervin practicile magice necunoscute omului modern, dar păstrate cu sfințenie în memoria celor bătrâni. În timpul ritualului, aceasta a folosit anumite obiecte magice: turtă de făină albă, o cruce din lobdii de anin, cârja cu care tăia apa în chip de cruce, la care se adăugau rugăciunile preotului. Turta avea cinci lumânări, patru în cruce și una în mijloc și, fiind pusă pe apă, s-a deplasat până în dreptul cadavrului, după care pescarii l-au scos la suprafață. Așadar, avem de-a face cu femeia cunoscătoare a tainelor ancestrale, care nu ezită în a-și folosi cunoștințele pentru ajutorarea semenilor aflați în impas.

În *Loștrița*, Voiculescu pleacă de la motivul mitologic al sirenei. Loștrița apare ca o ființă acvatică ce se întrupează în femeie pentru a cunoaște dragostea unui muritor. O fată necunoscută este adusă într-o zide apele învolburate ale Bistriței, pe o rămășiță de plută, iar un flăcău curajos o salvează de la înec. Fata este de o frumusețe aparte, mai mult stranie decât armonioasă, cu trup lung și șui, cu chip bucălat și cu ochi reci ca de sticlă: „Ochii, de chihlimbar verde-aurii cu strilici albaștri, erau mari, rotunzi, dar reci ca de sticlă.[...] Era frumoasă, cu chipul poate cam bucălat, șuie, cu trupul lung, mlădios și despicatora coapselor sus ca la bunii înotători”.[8] Între flăcău și fată se naște o dragoste pătimașă, a cărei violență întărește oamenilor din jur impresia că se petrece ceva neobișnuit. Apoi, după un timp, apare un alt personaj feminin, mama fetei, care o ceartă că și-a uitat lumea ei, părinții, surorile, avuțiile, luând-o înapoi acasă, la izvoarele Bistriței. Un alt element ciudat este faptul că un moșneag foarte bătrân își amintește de Bistriceancă și de fetele ei, care, cu un veac în urmă, fuseseră alungate de oameni ca niște ființe blestemate. Aceste Bistriceance sunt similare fantasticelor zâne ale apelor din legendele multor popoare, acele stihii viclene care iau chip femeiesc pentru a-i ademini pe marinari și pescari în adâncuri. S-ar putea ca fata-loștriță să-l fi îndrăgît mai demult pe flăcău, ascunsă în apele Bistriței, ocrotindu-l când se afla în apropierea lui. Aliman observase că atunci când i se arăta loștrița îi mergea bine la pescuit, avea mult spor, iar apele i se supuneau ascultătoare. Apoi, ori de câte ori era gata să se înece, cineva îl salva în mod miraculos din situația primejdioasă. „Expresivă este și operațiunea de reformulare (redenumire) a personajului enigmatic: știmă vicleană, fata șuie, loștrița, supraviețuitoarea de pe plută, strigoaica.”[9] De asemenea, finalul povestirii poate avea o semnificație în acord cu motivul sirenei. Aliman moare înecat în Bistrița în ziua nunții lui cu o altă femeie, ca și cum forțele apei l-ar fi pedepsit pentru infidelitatea față de prima lui mireasă. Redat acestei iubite veșnice ca natura, Aliman este înghițit de apele mâniașe, strângând la piept loștrița cea frumoasă care îi dă acum îmbrățișarea morții. Întreaga poveste este privită din punctul de vedere al lui Aliman, în care loștrița ca personaj rămâne o simplă virtualitate. În această povestire există o legătură între vânătoare și eros întruchipată în apariția fantastică a loștriței. Este vorba de o apropiere pe linia instinctelor fundamentale ale bărbatului, care vede în vânătoare, ca și în dragoste, un act de cucerire, de luare în stăpânire a naturii. În vânătoare și în dragoste, eroul lui Voiculescu se caută pe sine, își caută propriul suflet însetat de un ideal ancestral al vitalității și frumuseții. Loștrița cu unduirii ispititoare de fată și fata cu trupul șui de loștriță (imagine simetrică și ambiguă), simbolizează aspirațiile lui Aliman ca vânător și ca bărbat contopite într-o reprezentare unică. Doar într-un singur moment cele două imagini, fata și loștrița, se apropie până la fuziune în sufletul lui Aliman, dar acest lucru se întâmplă în somn, în ajunul nunții lui pământene, când i se arată în vis cealaltă nuntă, fantastică, cu loștrița: mireasa-loștriță „stătea dreaptă lângă el, înălțată pe coada ei ca două pulpe gata să se despice, și-și rezema capul bucălat de al lui.”[10] Fata este întruparea dorinței erotice și pare a fi totuna cu loștrița. Acel substitut de lemn, cu trimitere la

tema dublului, mărește echivocul. *Lostrîța* este un basm despre diavolul metamorfozat în pește cu trup de fecioară.

Câteva personaje feminine al cărui atribut unic este frumusețea, o frumusețe izbitoare (Rada din *Sakuntala*, Mărgărita din *Iubire magică*), atrag atenția asupra unei semnificații specifice a privirii, care selectează în primul rând frumusețea. *Iubire magică* are ca temă fascinația iubirii, magia erotică. Protagonistul, un poet, dorind să-și găsească „atmosfera pură și austeră”[11] specifică creației, acceptă invitația unui prieten de a merge într-un sat de munte. Poetul lucrează la un proiect artistic ambițios, o operă capitală bazată pe Faust de Goethe, a cărui originalitate ar consta într-o schimbare a semnificației personajelor. Margareta ar deveni factorul principal al dramei, imaginea simbolică a eternului feminin sau, cum spune pretențios poetul, „o uriașă putere cosmică liberatoare”.[12] În acel sat de munte poetul își întâlnește personajul, pe Margareta. Zeiță din tablourile clasice, perfectă prin proporția formelor, grația liniilor și armonia culorilor, de la părul revărsat unduios pe umeri și până la călcâiul mic și roz „ca la nimfele zugrăvite de maeștri”[13], Margareta este, în același timp, un exemplar natural desăvârșit, „cu coapse glorioase, cu glezna delicată și sugrumată.”[14] Prea frumoasă ca să fie reală, femeia îi apare poetului ca și cum ar fi coborât din miezul inspirației sale, încât el se simte fermecat: „Era înaltă, zveltă, cu părul castaniu și unduios, ochii mari de un verde ca fundul de talaz, obrazul alb-trandafiriu împuns de două gropițe, nasul subțire, drept, cu nări pâlپătoare. Bărbia puternică pornea semeț în jos, ca să se rotunjească seducătoare, și gura fermecător arcuită își ascundea colțurile ușor sumese în două gingașe bride. Coloana splendidă a gâtului se îmbina cu măiestrie în linia umerilor de o proporție și o grație nemaiînchipuită. Sâniile zglobii, drepte umpleau de o viață misterioasă iia în care pâlپăiau fără încetare. Brațele admirabile, lungi și netede se terminau cu mâini suave și mici cât un cuib de pitulice, încărcate cu dezmierdări. Sub mijlocul strâns, de amforă ușor revărsată, coapsele glorioase, pline de voluptăți erau modelate de fota neagră, care-i acoperea picioarele goale, desăvârșite, cu glezna delicată, sugrumată, cum numai o rasă cu har poate zămisli. Purta sandale, care scoteau la iveală ușoara boltire a tălpii și călcâiul mic și roz, ca la nimfele zugrăvite de maeștri. [...] era de o perfecțiune copleșitoare.”[15] Zadarnic ea îi spune că e Mărgărita, nora gazdei, cu alte cuvinte o țărancă frumoasă și nimic mai mult. Faptul real nu poate fi acceptat, căci credința artistului într-o plăsmuire ideală a atins un moment absolut prin acest transfer fantastic al imaginarului în real. Copleșit de perfecțiune, poetul își concentrează voința într-un singur scop: cucerirea femeii. Cum toate mijloacele folosite pentru înduplecarea femeii sunt zadarnice, el cere sprijinul unei vrăjitoare. În momentul final al „iubirii magice”, într-o secundă, la fel de fulgerător cum apăruse, frumusețea Mărgăritei se preface într-o urătenie absolută. Privind-o, eroul vede cu uimire în locul zeiței de până atunci o babă hidoasă ca o strigoaică. Schimbarea ra putea fi interpretată ca un joc al imaginației artistice excesive, un fel de festă a propriei exaltări vizuale. Înfașurarea adevărată a femeii ne rămâne necunoscută. Poate că privită altfel, Mărgărita nici nu este o perfecțiune, cum o vede eroul.

În *Sakuntala*, un tânăr intelectual vine în satul copilăriei, la munte, ca să se întrezeze după o boală grea. Primul lucru pe care îl face este să citească *Sakuntala* de Kalidasa. Citită într-o singură noapte, pe nerăsuflăte, cartea aceasta va juca un rol crucial în destinul eroului, același pe care l-a avut poemul dramatic *Faust* în viața eroului din *Iubire magică*. Tânărul privește atât de intens portretul desenat în carte, încât privirile lui ațâțate de intensitatea reveriei sunt pregătite să o recomună aievea. Nu e de mirare că frumoasa țigancă Rada, pe care el o vede mai târziu venind prin poiană este identificată în imaginație cu fecioara sacră din povestea indiană: „Aidoma. Același mers modulat în cântec, aceeași statură cu forme pure, aceeași mândră gingășie, pletele cu reflexe albastre încadrând sumbrul oval al chipului covârșit de ochii magici, sâniile înfloriți pe negrul liman al pieptului și, mai ales, sub borangicul galben al veșmântului, coapsele străvăzute ca două zeițe misterioase pe umerii gemeni cu

chiupul tainic al pântecului.”[16] Văzută a doua oară, Sakuntala/Rada i se pare și mai frumoasă. Acum contemplatorul nu-i mai descrie trupul, mersul, privirea, ci face o teorie a frumuseții: „Sakuntala nu era o frumusețe anume, ci frumusețea în sine și toată la un loc. Nu o frumusețe de nuri și drăgănele risipite în chip, împrăștiate pe trup, ci o frumusețe strânsă, densă, concentrată toată în fiecare parte, în orice mădular. Nu o frumusețe întâmplătoare, ci una cu tâlc, o frumusețe cu destin.”[17] Ca de obicei la Voiculescu, eroul se îndrăgostește brusc și absolut de un model feminin livresc pe care îl asimilează cu un ideal al perfecțiunii, însă țigancă îl ține la distanță. Tânărul este tot mai fascinat de frumusețea Sakuntalei/Radei, fără nicio altă dorință decât de a o contempla. În final, eroina se dovedește a fi doar o țigancă proastă, care s-a lăsat ademenită de un hoț de cai și are și un copil. În această povestire apare femeia în ipostaza de mamă. Însă copilul femeii este răpit și astfel ajunge să crească un pui de urs, legat de ea prin griji și răsfățuri ce îl umanizează.

În majoritatea cazurilor personajele feminine din prozele voiculesciene sunt personaje secundare. Toate personajele care apar în opera lui Vasile Voiculescu sunt încărcate de semnificație simbolică. Personajele feminine nu fac excepție de la această regulă, indiferent dacă sunt prezente în text ca apariții reale sau simple închipuiri ale altor personaje.

Acknowledgement: This paper is supported by Project SOP HRD - TOP ACADEMIC 76822.

Note

- [1] Elena Zaharia-Filipaș, *Introducere în opera lui Vasile Voiculescu*, Editura Minerva, București, 1980, p. 134;
- [2] Vasile Voiculescu, *Integrala prozei literare*, Editura Anastasia, București, 1998, p. 129 ;
- [3] Vasile Voiculescu, op. cit., p. 131;
- [4] Elena Zaharia-Filipaș, op. cit., p. 139;
- [5] Vasile Voiculescu, op. cit., p. 133;
- [6] George Bădărău, *Proza lui Vasile Voiculescu*, Editura Princeps Edit, Iași, 2006, p. 68;
- [7] Vasile Voiculescu, op. cit., p.133;
- [8] Vasile Voiculescu, op. cit., p. 292;
- [9] George Bădărău, op. cit., p. 51;
- [10] Vasile Voiculescu, op. cit., p. 293;
- [11] Vasile Voiculescu, op. cit., p. 179;
- [12] Vasile Voiculescu, op. cit., p. 190;
- [13] Vasile Voiculescu, op. cit., p. 191;
- [14] Ibidem;
- [15] Ibidem;
- [16] Vasile Voiculescu, op. cit., p. 147;
- [17] Vasile Voiculescu, op. cit., p. 162;

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Mutații psihologice ale personajului feminin: de la Ana la Polina

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Résumé: De Liviu Rebreanu à Marin Preda, le regard sur les personnages du roman paysan a beaucoup changé. M. Preda considère que ni le paysan roumain ni la paysanne roumaine ne sont ceux décrits par Rebreanu. Ion est instinctuel, Ilie Moromete est réflexif. Si Ana est une victime, Polina se révolte et lutte pour son amour. Pourtant, ce que les deux héroïnes partagent est l'amour vrai, au-delà de la famille, la fortune, la tradition et les préjugés. Ana paraît née sous le signe du malheur, prédestinée à une existence tragique. Polina est forte et, menée par la vengeance et la liberté reçue par l'amour de Birică, réussit à triompher, maîtrisant ainsi « la voix de la terre » - la sur-individualité du premier âge du roman dorique.

Mots-clés : victime, amour, préjugés, liberté

În anul 1920, realismul românesc își găsea, prin formula romanului *Ion*, expresia cea mai înaltă a împlinirii genului - experiment literar care constituie, de altfel, punctul de plecare spre modernism. “Țăranul și Pământul sunt doua personaje centrale ale creației lui Rebreanu, unite printr-o forță irezistibilă, care este prin excelență una mitică.” (În celebrul său discurs de recepție de la Academie, intitulat sugestiv „Lauda țăranului român”, prozatorul va menționa că țărănimea nu poate avea la noi un rol secundar, șters: „pentru noi e izvorul românismului pur și etern. La noi, singura realitate permanentă, inalterabilă a fost și a rămas țăranul.”(1)

Având ca temă setea de pământ a țăranului sărac, romanul își consolidează construcția epică pe cele două coordonate esențiale ale vieții omului de la sat: glasul pământului și glasul iubirii - vocile interioare ale personajului principal, între care se va da o luptă; dar, în loc să câștige spiritualul, expresia superiorității umane, învinge materialul - simbolul deșertăciunii existenței umane, al efemerității, dar și al necesității refacerii echilibrului universal. “În luptă, omul nobil și milos dispare, pentru a nu lăsa decât fiara, așa că cele două voințe se încordează în eforturi uriașe ce ar fi meritat un obiect mai vrednic, în loc să se consume pentru câțiva bulgări de pământ, simbol al supremei zădărnicii omenești.” (2)

Orbecând între cele două voințe care-i vor călăuzi destinul, Ion este forțat de naratorul impersonal, care reprimă inițiativele eroilor, prin perspectiva represivă asupra evenimentelor, să aleagă între cele două opțiuni: să aibă pământ, alături de Ana, femeia pe care n-o iubește sau să se bucure de dragoste alături de Florica, în imaginea căreia se prefigurează sfârșitul eroului. “O minte lucidă și o mână necruțătoare (aceea a prozatorului-demiurg) construiește simplu, dar temeinic, structura personajului, punând la bază, firește, pornirea instinctuală, apoi – urmând o scară evolutivă a domnia vieții - sentimente tot mai evolute. Dar cum “etajele” superioare ale vieții omenești sunt mișcate mereu și cu necesitate din adâncuri, eroii lui Rebreanu par mai ales elementari, telurici, rușiți parcă ieri din bulgărul nediferențiat al naturii. O “voce a pământului” vorbește primordial în ei și abia după acest glas obscur, tiranic și dominator (uneori abia articulat!) vine, să spunem, “vocea iubirii” sau sentimentul apartenenței la o clasă ori la o castă socială.”(3)

Începutul romanului ne invită să cunoaștem eroii, prin intermediul motivului horei, din primul capitol, anticipând și principalele conflicte. Vasile Baciș se plânge : “O fată am și eu și nu-mi place fata pe care-o am!”. Este vorba de Ana, fiica sa, îndrăgostită de Ion, cea care va deveni victima propriilor năzuințe, dar și a patimilor bărbatului său, victimă, la rândul lui, a propriilor idealuri: “Aproape nu este personaj în acest roman care să nu devină o victimă. Ana, unul din cele mai zguduitoare din tot romanul nostru, se mișcă de la început până la sfârșit într-un cerc vicios. Lamentația ei repetată invocă un noroc inexistent: “Norocul meu, norocul meu!”. Singura ei vină este de a fi tras, la naștere, lozul nefericit.” (4) Ion o va urmări ca pe o pradă, cu strategie și sadism: “Ion o urmări pe Ana din ochi câteva clipe. Avea ceva straniu în privire, parcă nedumerire și un vicleșug neprefăcut. Tot atunci zări mai alături și pe

Florica, fata vădanei lui Maxim Oprea, cu care se ținuse până acum, puțin posomorâtă, dar mai frumoasă ca oricând.” Autorul o surprinde în trei ipostaze succesive care îi conturează treptat profilul moral, prin analiza sufletului ei chinuit: cea de tânără femeie, îndrăgostită profund de Ion, căruia îi încredințează cu generozitate viața, aceea de soție, îndurând cu umilință vorbele grele și loviturile bărbatului, și aceea de mamă, ipostază care în circumstanțe normale ar fi putut deveni o supapă salvatoare pentru femeia nefericită.

Întreaga existență a Anei este guvernată de iubire și blândețe, virtuți care întregesc un profil moral superior; e harnică, supusă, rușinoasă, prototipul femeii de la țară. Suferința se naște din lipsa iubirii: “Nu-i fusese dragă Ana și nici acum nu-și dădea seama bine dacă i-e dragă. Iubise pe Florica și, de câte ori o vedea sau își amintea de ea, simțea că tot o mai iubește. Purta în suflet răsul ei cald, buzele ei pline și umede, obrajii ei fragezi ca piersica, ochii ei albaștri ca cerul de primavară. Dar Florica era mai săracă decât dânsul, iar Ana avea locuri, și case, și vite multe.” Într-un stil indirect liber sunt preluate gândurile personajului vizavi de femeia care plătea pentru îndrăzneala de a se compromite în producerea “dezechilibrului” : “Tare-i slăbuță și urâțică, săraca de ea! Rămăsese cu ochii pe urmele ei până ce disparu la o cotitură și văzând-o cum se legăna în mers , ca o trestie bolnăvicioasă, fără vlagă, slăbănoagă, avu o tresărire și o părere de rău: <<Uite pentru cine rabd ocări și sudălmii!>>” Firavă și fără personalitate, așa cum pare la început, covârșită de voința lui Ion, îmbătată de cuvintele și gesturile lui dragăstoase, Ana va deveni o victimă ușoară a flăcăului, interesat numai de zestrea ei; îl vede pe Ion cum o strânge-n brațe pe Florica și simte cum lumea se prăbușește sub privirea ei : “ O durere mare i se sfredelea în piept și ochii nu și-i mai putea smulge de la dânsii. Auzea ca prin vis amenințările tatălui ei. (...) Glasul lui însă nu-i pătrundea în suflet, căci sufletul ei se împietrise de amărăciune. Se simțea neputincioasă și părăsită. (...) Doar buzele subțiri, înălbite, mai puteau murmura, tremurând de durere: - Nu mă iubește...Tot nu mă iubește...Of, Doamne, Doamne!..” Cu toate acestea, Ana se sacrifică întru totul. Va dovedi pe parcursul acțiunii o voință și o putere de a răbda uluitoare. Nu numai Ion e un revoltat, încălcând normele colectivității, Ana însăși trăiește aceeași condiție, întrucât nesocotește obiceiul tipic lumii rurale de a accepta căsătoria plănuită de părinți, în care latura sentimentală nu are importanță. Naratorul comentează: “Ana lui Vasile Baciui îi era fâgăduita lui (George Bulbuc) de nevastă. Ea, fată cu stare, el fecior de bocotan, se potriveau.”

Din dragoste pentru Ion, Ana acceptă relația cu acesta și, chiar atunci când, însărcinată, ajunge de răsul satului și e crunt bătută de tatăl ei, nu-i reproșează nimic lui Ionică. Pentru că “a crescut singură, lipsită de o dragoste părintească mângâietoare...sufletul ei trist caută o dragoste sfioasă și adâncă.” Din dragoste își înfruntă tatăl, acceptând orice umilință din partea lui și a colectivității. Ceea ce o distruge este totala lipsa de afecțiune a lui Ion, pentru care sacrificase totul și fără de care viața ei nu-și afla rostul: “își zicea mereu că fără el ar trebui să moară.” În ochii tatălui, înfățișarea ei se reduce la “burta uriașă, vinovată, urâtă, ațâțătoare, în care rușinea se lăfăia sfidătoare și trufașă.” Durerea Anei depășește limita normalului și a posibilului, transformând personajul în simbol al suferinței, dincolo de puterea percepției umane, amintind de Ana lui Manole, de mitul jertfei pentru creație, aici fără vreo rezonanță legendară, poate doar biblică, dacă ne referim la Epistola întâi către Corinteni a Sfântului Apostol Pavel, unde ni se spune că dragostea “ toate le suferă, toate le crede, toate le nădăjduiește, toate le rabdă.” (cap.13): “Baciui o lovește mereu, parcă tot mai nesăturat. Apoi, ca să-i înăbușe vaietele o trânti cu capul în zăpada care se roși îndată de sângele ce-o podidi pe gură și pe nas, pe când pieptul ei tot mai horăia de gemetele neputincioase.” Umlințele sunt atât de grele, încât cititorul, pentru a nu judeca aspru atitudinea naratorului, trebuie să-și amintească, pentru o clipă, de pactul ficțional de la-nceputul lecturii, pe care l-a încheiat, acceptând principiile universului romanesc. La nuntă, Ana, surprinzând privirea înfocată pe care Ion o arunca Floricăi, “simți că nădejtile ei de fericire se risipesc și că ea se prăvale iar

furtunos în aceeași viață nenorocită.” Totuși, nașterea copilului îl face pe Ion să-și amintească o clipă de Dumnezeu și să-și facă cruce în fața miracolului vieții.

Frământările femeii, nesigură de dragostea lui Ion, complexată de frumusețea Floricăi, sunt surprinse cu fină intuiție psihologică, autorul insistând mai ales pe deznădejdea ei care îi dădea adesea “gânduri de moarte.” În seara când e izgonită și de Ion și de tatăl ei, Ana “își dădu seama întâia oară de prăăpastia în care-și zvârcolește ea viața. Și atunci gândul morții i se coborî în suflet ca o scăpare fericită (...), ca un liman unde nu mai sunt nici dureri, nici nădejdi.” Prima revelație a acestui gând o avusese la moartea lui Avrum: “Nu simțea nici groază, nici milă, ci doar o dorință de a citi pe fața lui taina care o împiedica pe dânsa (...).” După moartea lui Dumitru Moarcăș începe să se înstrăineze: “În urechile ei răsunau vorbele moșneagului și-n ochi păstra înfățișarea lui senină mulțumită din clipa morții.” Nunta Floricăi cu George e un moment de cumpănă în existența Anei, care întrevede acum moartea ca pe unica scăpare din acest univers cuprins parcă de “niște ape tulburi”. Femeia simte acum “o silă grea pentru tot ceea ce o înconjură”, iar copilul i se pare o povară. Vedea limpede realitatea care o pedepsea tot mai crunt, prin Petrișor, în privirea căruia se oglindea bărbatul ei; uitându-se în ochii băiatului vedea ochii aceia, din noaptea ospățului, cei care-au pătruns ca niște săgeți aprinse în carnea celeilalte femei.” Obsesiv, îi apare în minte imaginea lui Avrum care se spânzurase. Gândurile i se stinseră și ele odată cu întreaga ființă, iar moartea singură îi domina închipuirile și trupul, prin viziunea celor “două chipuri tot mai deslușite, care i se plimbau de ici-colo greoaie, apăsătoare și dureroase, silindu-i sufletul să se împace cu ele și chiar să le îndrăgească: Avrum și Dumitru. (...) chipurile acestea o înspăimântau și îi stârneau o întrebare pe care n-o putea îmbrăca în cuvinte și nici măcar n-o putea lămuri bine.” Zbuciumul sufletesc se transformă în alienare totală, iar vorbele Savistei, ca un leitmotiv sinistru răsunau în creierul Anei (“Ion, Florica, George”(5)), în ritmul descendent al prăbușirii ființei. “Puține atrocități din *Răscoala* sunt mai zguduitoare decât sinuciderea Anei într-o scenă în care fiecare detaliu este parcă filmat cu încetinitorul (“încet, tacticos, își scoase năframa și o puse pe parul ce despărțea pe Joiana de Dumana”), iar moartea nu găsește răsunet nici măcar în simțirea animalelor din grajd, indiferente ca însăși natura: „Joiana, nemaisimțind nicio mișcare, întoarse capul și se uită nedumerită. Dădu din coadă și atinse cu moțul de păr moale poalele Anei. Și, fiindcă Ana rămase țeapănă, Joiana își afundă limba verzuie apăsă, întâi într-o nară, apoi în cealaltă, și porni să rumege domol, plictisită.”(6) Moartea Anei, fără să fie în intenție asta, devine, prin urmările ei, o cumplită pedeapsă aplicată aceluia care i-a distrus viața. Destinul ei, însă, este unul tipic lumii rurale, unde “femeia reprezintă două brațe de lucru, o zestre și o producătoare de copii. Odată criza erotică trecută, ea încetează de a mai însemna ceva prin feminitate. Soarta Anei e mai rea, deosebită cu mult de a oricărei femei de la țară, nu. Drama Ion-Ana este dar drama căsniciei țărănești.” (7) Ieșit din închisoare, Ion continuă să plătească: Petrișor moare ca și mama lui, din aceleași motive : lipsa iubirii și dezinteres. Rămas fără obligații, o caută pe Florica, acum soția lui George Bulbuc. Ion este sancționat dur pentru îndrăzneala de a sfida legile colectivității; este lăsat în libertate pentru a putea plăti cu viața: “Cercul destinului lui Ion nu se încheie înainte de reparația în conștiința lui a unei posibilități, cea a recăștigării dragostei Floricăi. Eroul pătrunde în câmpul anihilant al iubirii pentru Florica(considerat imposibilă de ea: <<Când s-a putut, n-ai vrut; când vrei tu, nu se poate!>>) pentru a fi reîntors în zona lucidă a conștiinței. (...) Ion a fost readus în spațiul original al conștiinței și grăbit să-și isprăvească vina față de Ana prin moarte. (...) Întâlnirea “glasului pământului” cu “glasul iubirii” a fost doar dramatică, în timp ce dedublarea “ glasului iubirii” e de-a dreptul tragică. Ion se află mereu la limita ființei, ceea ce dă puternica notă a modernității romanului.” (8)

Pășim acum într-o altă epocă și facem un salt de peste 30 de ani, din Ardeal în câmpia Dunării, cu câțiva ani înaintea celui de-al doilea război mondial. *Moromeții* este romanul reprezentativ al literaturii române postbelice, mai ales prin formula estetică celebră abordată

de Marin Preda, "morometianismul". (9) În centrul atenției este tot țăranul, dar de această dată, surprins în momentele cele mai grele din istoria satului românesc: reforma agrară din 1945 și colectivizarea din 1949.

Romanul este o monografie a satului muntean, dar viziunea asupra evenimentelor se schimbă, raportul pământ-iubire este privit din altă perspectivă, la fel și umanitatea care participă la spectacolul vieții: "Cruzimea, cât și josnicia, omorurile și spânzurările întâlnite des la Rebreanu și Sadoveanu, și existente, de altfel și în viața țăranilor, nu și-au mai găsit loc și în universul meu scaldat în lumina eternă a zilei de vară." (10) Despre motivul luminii la Preda vorbește și Valeriu Cristea în *Alianțe literare* - lumina înseamnă plenitudinea vieții, participarea naturii la bucuria personajelor, seninătate, nemurire.(11) În această notă optimistă, "glasul pământului" și al iubirii nu mai constrâng personajele, viziunea este mai îngăduitoare, mai deschisă, actorii sunt lăsați să creadă în idealurile lor și să lupte pentru ele. *Moromeții* poate fi privit ca o replică la romanul lui Rebreanu, mai ales din perspectiva relației Polina-Birică, un cuplu asemănător celui Ion-Ana. În ce constă diferența? "Birică și Polina fac o căsătorie din dragoste. (...) În legătura celor doi tineri nu intră niciun calcul, Birică o iubește pe Polina și Polina îl iubește pe Birică. Flăcăul e sărac, fata e a bogatului. Situația din *Ion* e identică în punctul de plecare. Ion e sărac, Ana e bogată. Legătura se realizează de ambele părți, fără știrea părinților. În *Ion* ea e urmarea unei seducții calculate, în *Moromeții*, dragostea e reciprocă și neumbrită de premeditari. (...) Birică nu urmărește pământul Polinei și însoțirea se face fără gândul la avere. Singura avere a flăcăului e de o valoare gratuită: Birică are glas frumos. Dragostea lui și a Polinei se împlinește nu numai prin instinct și nu durează cât instinctele. (12) "Glasul pământului" își pierde autoritatea, lăsând iubirea să iasă din umbră: "...pământul nu mai are aici forța despotică, demonizantă din romanul lui Rebreanu. El este un instrument însemnat, indispensabil, dar nu ultimul țel. Oamenii constată că loturile sunt extrem de importante pentru ei, dar reușesc un fel de detașare pe care nu trebuie s-o căutăm în romanul *Ion*. Acolo pământul e atotputernic, devorant. M. Preda descrie un alt țăran, cu altă mentalitate, din altă perspectivă și aceasta e cucerirea cea mai de preț pentru literatura română."(13)

Deși se află într-un plan secundar, povestea de dragoste dintre Birică și Polina reprezintă un pilon important în susținerea noii viziuni asupra vieții - libertatea (independența) - pe care o susține Ilie Moromete, personajul preferat al lui Marin Preda. Birică o cunoaște pe Polina la curățat porumbul, unde se juca inelușul. Atitudinea lui de bărbat hotărât, puternic o face pe fata lui Bălosu să iasă la poartă chiar din prima seară, când flăcăul, după obicei, venise să fluiera. Polina, însă, era făgăduită lui Stan Cotelici, un băiat bogat, cu pământ, dar pe care fata nu-l plăcea deloc. Birică nu avea mai nimic, dar "faptul ca Polina ținea la el (...) îl făcuse mai pe urmă să uite că el e flăcău sărac și să se gândească mai cu îndrazneală la însurătoarea lui." Dar istoria se repetă: Bălosu, ca și Vasile Baci, nu vrea să dea binecuvântarea sa celor doi tineri, iar fata nu va mai ieși la poartă la chemarea flăcăului. Duminică, după dansul călușarilor, Polina este așteptată de Birică în grădina Moromeților: "numai Birică îi cunoștea privirea vie, strălucitoare, umbrită totuși de ceva tainic care nici ea nu părea să știe ce ascunde." Înainte de a lua decizia să plece cu Birică, Polina îl pune la încercare și-l provoacă, luându-l peste picior: "- Joi după Paști, nu ții minte? repetă ea batjocoritor. Și pe urma ce, trebuie să-ți spun ție cine îmi place?". Birică, rănit în suflet și în orgoliu, o plesni cu forță, demonstrându-i măsura iubirii lui; Polina, mulțumită, deveni înțelegătoare și îl liniști "cu glasul care îi aprinsese inima", vocea ei "șoptită și fierbinte". După ce-și clarifică sentimentele, tinerii fug și se ascund în casa lui Dumitru lui Nae. Spre dimineață, însă, se duc acasă la Birică, întâmpinați cu bucurie de părinți și surorile acestuia:" Polina îi luă mâna și i-o sărută, mama o îmbrățișă, dar nu se putu stăpâni și izbucni în lacrimi. Polina, însă era veselă, și la lacrimile soacrei ea se veseli parcă și mai tare." Modestia traiului din casa socrilor nu o deranja pe fată, necazul vine din lipsurile și greutățile pe care părinții

soțului ei le îndură cu o seninătate specifică oamenilor simpli, cu credință și cu sufletul curat. Dacă sărăcia n-ar fi atins pragul maxim al suferinței, și dacă mila pentru condițiile vitrege de trai nu-i măcina sufletul, Polina s-ar fi mulțumit să stea cu Birică oriunde, fericită că a ales-o pe ea să-i fie nevastă, fără să gândească vreun moment că bunurile materiale ar fi putut aduce împlinire căsniciei lor. Mulțumirile spirituale “țin cu adevărat locul valorilor de schimb instaurate în realitatea economică a satului, pe care o rezumă cel mai bine Polina: <<Destule vorbe urâte am auzit în casă! Am crezut că dacă mă mărit o să scăp! Toată ziua și toată noaptea numai bani și pământ! Bani și pământ!.>>” (14) Iubirea îi este de ajuns Polinei, fuge de material și de materie; în *Ion*, dragostea este substituită de pământ, fără vreun rezultat, și, pentru reclamarea tardivă a dreptului la iubire, eroul este sancționat: “Rămânându-i doar posibilitatea înavuțirii, Ion are tot mai des viziunea unei comuniuni erotice cu pământul. (...) Prima proiecție erotică asupra pământului o are Ion în noaptea balului din Armadia, de când i se desfășoară în minte imaginea unei “țărănci voinice și frumoase a cărei îmbrățișare îi zdrobește oasele.” Treptat, pământul se antropomorfizează, dobândind, pentru Ion, însușirile unei prezențe feminine desăvârșite. Ceea ce-și refuză față de Ana, căreia îi recunoaște urâtenia, își revarsă asupra pământului.” (15)

Din dorința de a-și ajuta socrii, dar și provocată de atitudinea tatălui ei, Polina îl ia pe Birică și, deși la început pleacă cu gândul să-și ceară drepturile, schimbă strategia și cere părinților ajutor, în speranța împăcării: “Polina deschise ușa de perete și o lăsă larg deschisă. I se auziră pașii apăsați, străbătând bătătura.” Chiar dacă nici în acest caz “glasul pământului” și “glasul iubirii” nu pot crea o simbioză, nu totul e pierdut; o intervenție salutară hrănește cu seve proaspete dragostea celor doi tineri - este vorba de mama Polinei, Aristița, care, în ciuda neputinței de a acționa în favoarea fiicei, îi va lua apărarea, înfruntându-și soțul, pe Bălosu, rămas în urmă, “îngropat în brazde”, marcând trecerea la un alt nivel al gândirii, într-o altă etapă socială, în care percepția despre viață pare să se fi schimbat odată cu transformările survenite în lumea satului: “Proastă să fie Polina să-ți mai spună în viața ei tată. (...) Ea singură a muncit cât noi toți...Nu ți-e frică să nu te ia lumea la ochi?” După ce pleacă din casa lui Balosu, Polina își urmă supusă bărbatul și, în aceeași tonalitate glumeată, ironică, îl asigură pe Birică de iubirea ei necondiționată (doar că-i plăcea să facă ce vrea): “...cu ce zici ca ai sa faci casa? (...) Sa stii ca mie nu-mi place cu doua etaje!”

În inocența iubirii lor, tinerii merg la vâgăuni să sape pământul pentru cărămizi. De această dată, “glasul pământului” este dominat de cel al iubirii, este stăpânit, controlat de forța umană care nu-l mai lasă să iasă din “albia” materiei invadând și subordonând spiritualul. Triumful femeii asupra pământului marchează o altă treaptă în evoluția vârstei romanului doric: “Se uita la el cu o ciudată satisfacție; pe chip avea o expresie de parcă totul ar fi fost pus la cale de ea: până și sudoarea pe care și-o ștergea din când în când cu cotul, și mirosul puternic de pământ care parcă țâșnea de sub târnăcopul lui, chiar și acestea erau ale ei. (...) El o duse chiar pe pământul din care avea să-și ridice casa și o iubi acolo pe răcoarea lui curată, păzit de lumina mare a zilei.” Prin această scenă, Preda unifică într-un singur glas “vocile” incompatibile la Rebreanu, reafirmând cele două dimensiuni ale vieții satului: iubirea și pământul consfințite de binecuvântarea naturii și a naratorului-creator, contaminat de personajele sale. În ziua secerișului, Polina demonstrează tărie de caracter și o forță de convingere irezistibilă; își atrage soțul de partea ei, cu strategie, impunându-i să lupte împreună cu ea pentru drepturile lor: “Secerăm grâul nostru pe care ai să-l cari pe urmă cu căruța în aria noastră.” Fata avea ambiția de a-și obține partea de pământ de la tatăl ei; mersul cu “pleoapele peste ochi” trădează o oarecare interiorizare, dar și un semn de liniștire, de restabilire a echilibrului interior, mai ales după ce “se făcea înțeleasă”. Polina tace după ce voia ei s-a împlinit și nu obosește în conflictul cu familia, pentru cele cinci pogoane de pământ. La prezentarea citației, analizează cu luciditate situația, judecă profund, stă pe gânduri ceva vreme, luând în calcul și opiniile lui Birică: “Polina se uită iar la bărbatul ei și

încetul cu încetul ochii ei care erau atât de catifelati și de frumoși se micșorară și căpătară culoarea oțelului rupt. (...) clătină din cap cu îndoială (...). Ea își plecă fruntea: avea dreptate omul ei, trebuia vazut...”

În libertatea pe care i-o dă supraindividualitatea romanului, Polina va lupta continuu pentru propriile drepturi. Văzând că în demersul ei nu reușește să trezească raționalul, nici latura umană, că obscuritatea și patima înavușirii ajung să desfacă legătura de sânge, eroina purifică locul, lăsând flăcările să amintească părinților ei de judecata dreaptă, de procesul împotriva fiicei lor, de umanitate și de valorile cu adevărat importante. Ceea ce-i dă putere de acțiune este iubirea soțului ei, pe care l-a ales fiindcă voia să fie liberă. “Polina Bălosu a rupt cu familia ei chiaburească, luându-l de bărbat pe Birică, flăcăul fără avere, pe care apoi îl îmboldește, precum Vidra pe Răzvan, să folosească măsuri extreme pentru a dobândi de la socrul ce-l reneagă, pământul care i se cuvine: “ – Cum de nu înțelegi tu, Ioane, că trebuie să-l faci pe tata să tremure când ți-o pomeni numele! Pe marginea satului să te ocolească când te-o vedea! Să vezi tu atunci cum îi trece lui cheful să se mai bucure de zestrea mea!” Tânăra femeie se înfățișează cu soțul ei la părinți, își înfruntă cu dușmănie tatăl și fratele, provoacă bătaie între aceștia și Birică, seceră cu forța și treieră grâul de pe câteva pogoane părintești, se judecă cu familia și, într-o noapte pune foc casei natale.” (16)

Polina trece peste legile colectivității străvechi (tradiție, prejudecăți, familie, căsătorie între oameni cu același statut social etc.), pledând pentru supremația iubirii și a dreptății. Naratorul îi dă libertatea de acțiune, relativizând perspectiva, înstrăinându-se odată cu trecerea timpului care “nu mai avea răbdare”. (17) Timpul istoric și evenimentele sociale nu mai pot accepta drept supraindividualitate “glasul pământului” și, odată cu evoluția mentalității, iubirea “în stadiul de civilizație nu mai e doar “geniul speței”, ci are un caracter conștient și autonom (...)”. (18) De la “tipul de iubire elementară și obscură din *Ion* al lui Liviu Rebreanu” se trece la “pasiunea conștientă, deliberată și revendicativă a Polinei și a lui Birică din *Moromeții*.” (19)

Note

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- [3] Oarcășu, Ion, *Destine și valori*, Editura Dacia, Cluj, 1974, pp. 67-68.
- [4] Manolescu Nicolae, *Arca lui Noe*, Editura Gramar, București, 2007, p.151.
- [5] Citatele au fost extrase din textul romanului *Ion* de Liviu Rebreanu, Editura Hyperion, Chișinău, 1992.
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- [9] Mincu, Marin, *Critice, II*, Editura Cartea Românească, București, 1971, p.221.
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- [15] Țeposu, Radu G., *Viața și opiniile personajelor*, Editura Cartea Românească, București, 1983, pp.49-50.
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Gender Relationships in Translating Literature for Children

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Résumé : *Notre travail vise à démontrer que la traduction de la littérature pour les enfants développe une vraie relation plus ou moins évidente avec les études de genre. Pour y parvenir, l'accent est mis sur: l'état de la littérature pour les enfants et sa traduction qui a été semblable à celui de la littérature féminine, la même position marginale dans le polysystème littéraire; la plupart des livres pour les enfants ont été signés par des femmes; un sous-genre de la littérature pour les enfants est la fiction narrative pour les filles qui donnent certaines fonctionnalités aux livres dans cette catégorie; la plupart des traducteurs de la littérature pour les enfants sont des femmes et les théoriciens des études de traduction dans la littérature pour les enfants aussi. En plus, le processus de traduction lui-même traite de certaines questions spécifiques aux études de genre: les concepts d'autorité et de responsabilité, les différences grammaticales, l'appropriation de la violence, la médiation culturelle ou les relations de pouvoir. Enfin, en explorant l'échange mutuel de livres pour les enfants entre la langue et la culture roumaine et la langue et la culture anglaise, l'oeuvre souligne que la recherche en ce qui concerne la littérature pour les enfants de la perspective du genre éclaire le processus de production et réception des traductions littéraires pour les enfants.*

Mots-clés: *la position marginale, l'attitude patriarcale, les stratégies de traduction*

In a survey of the theoretical approaches to translation, we cannot overlook the influence of gender studies. To support this idea, Munday [1] acknowledges Simon's contribution to an understanding of translation from a gender-studies angle. She sees a language of sexism in translation studies, with its images of dominance, fidelity, faithfulness and betrayal. On a larger scale, the feminist theorists see a parallel between the status of translation, which is often considered to be derivative and inferior to original writing, and that of women, so often repressed in society and literature. This is in fact the core of feminist translation theory, which seeks to “identify and critique the tangle of concepts which relegates both women and translation to the bottom of the social and literary ladder” [2]. But Simon takes this further in the concept of the committed translation project to which feminist translation is supposed to be faithful.

Translation for children is being related to gender studies due to multiple reasons: the status of children's literature and implicitly of its translation has been similar to that of women's literature, having the same marginal position within the literary polysystem; most of the children's books were signed by women writers; a sub-genre of children's literature is represented by narrative fiction for girls which bestows certain characteristics upon the books included in this category; the majority of the translators of children's literature are women and last but not least, the theorists of CLTS are mainly women too. In the following pages, I shall garner evidence in support of all these reasons.

First of all, the tendency to regard children's literature as “the Cinderella of literary studies” [3] is understandable in the sense that it kept remaining “uncanonical and culturally marginalised” [4]. Being written for a minority, children's books have shared a similar status with women's literature. Both types of literature have been considered peripheral and treated as such in many cultural systems.

An important aspect stressed by Hunt [5] refers to the fact that the conventional literary system, reflecting the values of the traditional hierarchical family system, has a predisposition to undervalue women's writing whereas children's literature is treated even worse as it concerns children primarily and is likely to be seen as the domain of women – whether mothers or teachers.

Drawing a parallel between the emergence of children's literature and other kinds of literature (national, ethnic, feminist, post-colonial), Hunt argued that: “Just as the literatures

of colonial countries have had to fight against a dominant culture, so children's literature (as a concept) has had to fight against the academic hegemony of 'Eng. Lit' to gain any recognition. Just as colonised countries have adopted a paternalistic stance towards the 'natives' and a patronising stance to their writings, so, within what seems to be a single culture, the same attitude has been taken to children's literature books" [6].

Secondly, the evaluation of children's literature as being an inferior part of the literary polysystem also lies in the fact that books for children do not always comply with conventional literary norms and raise questions regarding conventional evaluation and classification. Often considered formulaic or stereotypical, books for children could display recurrent patterns in terms of structure, character and language. From my perspective, this is not a viable argument to prove the inferiority of children's literature. Text typology is extremely diverse in children's literature and each age group has its own characteristics hence children of different ages have their own abilities to read and comprehend literary texts which lead to a certain writing style and translation requirements. Unfortunately, O'Connell is perfectly right when she stipulates: "If the genre itself is not held in very high esteem by the world of scholarship, it is not highly surprising that the authors of books for children often suffer from problems of poor status and low pay" [7].

The position of children's literature in the literary polysystem has influenced and established a low status for the translation of literature for children as well.

If its very source material is considered of marginal interest and the professional activity carried out on this material is undervalued then it is no wonder that the potential of translating literature for children has been underestimated. O'Connell warns against the implications generated by the rates of pay and conditions offered to literary translators and the minimal formal acknowledgement of the translator's contribution on the cover or elsewhere in a translated work: "Poor status, pay and working conditions can perpetuate a vicious circle in which publishers are often presented with what they deserve, namely, translated work which could be a good deal better" [8].

My concern here is to pinpoint to the causes of such a situation and to emphasise some solutions to the problem. Breaking the above-mentioned "vicious cycle" would require the training of professional translators, real experts in CLT. This has not been possible so far partly because of the academic institutions and their position towards the necessity to offer students undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the field of CLT. Their attitude has undoubtedly contributed to this problem of poor public perception and low status.

On the other hand, the academic world alone is not responsible for the so-long perpetuated state of CLT. Editors and publishers play an active role in the field too. After all, the selection of the books to be published rests with the publishing houses. In Romania, things have changed after the fall of the totalitarian regime in 1989. The monopoly of "Ion Creangă" Publishing House over the literature for young people has been replaced with the emergence of the new private publishing houses for children such as "Tineretului" or "Cartea Copiilor" Publishing Houses. In addition, the most influential Romanian publishing houses after 1989 (Humanitas, Corint, Nemira, Teora, All, Paralela 45, RAO etc.) have resorted to collections dedicated to children and youth literature. Republishing Romanian and foreign authors for children and diversifying the typology of books for children published in Romania have represented a major step forward for the Romanian book market addressing this segment of TRs.

By contrast, the present situation of translated children's books in Romania shadows the courageous initiatives of the first years after the Romanian revolution. Translated books from authors of English expression by far exceed the writing and publishing of original autochthon books for children not to mention the scarcity of translations of such books.

In CLTS, gender could become an important matter since many of the issues related to gender studies could be applied to the translation of children's literature: the problems of authority and responsibility, challenging grammatical gender, the violence of appropriation, cultural mediators or translating relationships.

For Chamberlain, metaphors of gender reveal something of the politics of translation: "They reveal an anxiety about origins and originality, and a power struggle over the meaning of difference" [9]. Indeed, translating literature for children has always involved a rather controversial enterprise due to the status of children's literature in the literary polysystem and the status of CLT within the larger context of Translation Studies.

Perhaps in search of a sanctuary in a male dominated society, women have started writing books for children, somehow confirming their alleged role as mothers and teachers of the young generation. Famous authors for children used to be and still are women and an insight into the history of the genre is clear evidence in this respect. Literature for children of English expression takes pride in the works of women writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Maria Edgeworth, Anna Sewell, E. Nesbit, Eleanor Farjeon, Enid Blyton, Anne Barrett, Cynthia Harnett, Penelope Farmer, Helen Cresswell, Anne Digby, Jacqueline Wilson, J.K.Rowling or Stephenie Meyer.

Although to be praised, English literature for children signed by women writers does not exceed in value or in quantity the one signed by men writers. As a consequence, considering children's literature is the appanage of women is just a matter of prejudice and an example of patriarchal attitude.

The same observations apply to Romanian literature for children in the case of which one might easily identify a balance between men and women writers of books for young readers. On the other hand, we cannot deny the major contribution of Romanian women writers for children who have embraced a variety of literary genres and species: poetry (Nina Cassian, Ana Blandiana, Constanța Buzea, Otilia Cazimir, Elena Farago, Alina Miron or Ioana Nicolaie), fairy tales (Maria Ioniță, Elena Zafira Zanfîr, Maria Chita Pop or Maria Itu), legends (Angela Dumitrescu-Begu), novels (Elvira Bogdan, Gica Iuteș or Rodica Moldoveanu), short stories and novellas (Irina Teodorescu, Adina-Maria Popa or Virginia Carianopol).

In spite of being well represented, Romanian literature for children written by women have not shared the same status with the one of men writers in the field who have acquired at least national recognition of their work. This is the case of Mihai Eminescu, Ion Creangă, Ioan Slavici, I.L.Caragiale, Mihail Sadoveanu or Liviu Rebreanu.

What is more, the translation of their work into English or any other foreign language is out of question altogether.

An interesting sub-genre of children's literature is narrative fiction for girls described by Desmet as being intended for a girl audience focusing upon a girl or a group of girls as main protagonists: The gender constructions pertaining to the intended reader create the distinction between books for girls and books for boys, even though this distinction is called into question by some critics and even vehemently opposed. [10]

Besides character representation, gendering also lies in the development of plot, in actions, in point of view and/ or focalisation, in the subject position for the reader, in language use and intertextuality.

Numerous examples could be provided to support the gender theory in relationship with the writing and translation of children's literature. For instance, Grenby [11] draws attention upon an interesting issue: most British public schools used to be single-sex, therefore major differences appeared between the traditions of boys and girls school stories.

The golden age of the girl's story includes L.T. Meade (beginning with *A World of Girls*, 1886), Angela Brazil (from *The Fortunes of Philippa*, 1906), Dorita Fairlie Bruce (from

Dimsie Goes to School, 1920), Elinor Brent-Dyer (from *The School at the Chalet*, 1925) and Enid Blyton (from *The Twins at St. Clare's*, 1941 and *First Turn at Malory Towers*, 1946). Anne Digby's girls' school stories, from *First Term at Trebizon* in 1978 preserved the tradition, although the sexual theme was introduced in *Boy Trouble at Trebizon* (1980).

On the other hand, Alcott's *Little Women* (1869) has become known as "the milestone text in the history of the family story" [12]. At the beginning of the twentieth century, authors wrote about girls who have lost at least one parent, but their childishness is still preserved: Kate Douglas Wiggin's *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1903), L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) and Eleanor Hodgman's *Pollyanna* (1913).

Examining narrative fiction for girls both diachronically and synchronically, Desmet highlights the variation displayed by this type of literature: "A book for girls from 1900 is different from one published in 2000 insofar that the only common aspect may be the presence of a girl protagonist" [13].

For example, Wilson approaches topics once prohibited in literature for youth. Dixie Diamond, the protagonist of her novel *The Diamond Girls* (2004) is the youngest in a family of four sisters, all from different fathers. Their mother, who is now expecting another child, wants a boy so much that she pretends that she has given birth to a son until one day Dixie changes her new "brother's" nappy and realises he's a girl. Dixie tries to comprehend the actions of her family whilst hiding the secret of their new neighbour, Mary, who is abused by her apparently depressed mother.

In Romanian literature for children, we cannot speak of a tradition of the narrative fiction for girls although there are memorable girl characters paradoxically created by men writers. As an illustration, we can mention Sadoveanu's *Duduia Lizuca* in *Dumbrava minunată* (1926) or Teodoreanu's *Olguța* in *La Medeleni* (1925-1927).

Last but not least, I shall tackle the problem of the women translators of children's literature. According to Robinson [14], women use the discourse of the translator to give themselves a public voice and to ensure themselves a place in the world of writing.

Again, Munday [15] mentions Simon's examples of Canadian feminist translators from Quebec who seek to emphasise their identity and ideological stance in the translation project. One of these, Godard, theorist and translator, is openly assertive about the manipulation this involves: "The feminist translator, affirming her critical difference, her delight in interminable re-reading and re-writing, flaunts the signs of her manipulation of the text" [16].

Interestingly, Lathey [17] tries to situate the translating woman between two major coordinates: the assertive professional and the invisible storyteller. Historical research of translation scholars reveals the activity of women as translators from the end of the seventeenth century (with Aphra Behn's self-designation as "translatress") throughout the eighteenth century (when there was an increase in the range of texts translated by women as daughters of the professional and mercantile classes gained an education and sought professional employment in the world of letters) up to the Victorian age (which witnessed an increasing autonomy for women translators). Statistically speaking, Lathey indicates the following reality: "Today no comprehensive data exist on the relative proportions of women and men as translators of children's literature, although given the predominance of women as children's authors in the latter half of the nineteenth century, it is not surprising that Sutton should note a majority of women's translators of Grimms' tales at that time" [18].

The invitation to check the contribution of women translators as well as women translation theorists in the field of both English and Romanian children's literature is pending and calls for extensive research on the subject. As for the specialists dealing with theoretical and practical aspects of CLT their overwhelming majority is represented by women and no

one can deny the fact that this is not a mere coincidence but an understanding of the necessity to revalue an unforgivable attitude towards children's literature and its translation.

Notes

- [1] Jeremy Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*, London and New York, Routledge, 2001, p. 131.
- [2] Sherry Simon, *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*, London and New York, Routledge, 1996, p.1.
- [3] Shavit Zohar, *Children's Literature*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1992, p. 4.
- [4] Eithne O'Connell, "Translating for Children", in Gunilla M. Anderman, Margaret Rogers (eds.), *Word, Text, Translation: Liber Amicorum for Peter Newmark*, New York, Multilingual Matters, 1999, p.210.
- [5] Peter Hunt, *Literature for Children. Contemporary Criticism*, London and New York, Routledge, 1992, pp. 2-3.
- [6] Peter Hunt, *Literature for Children. Contemporary Criticism*, London and New York, Routledge, 1992, p. 2.
- [7] Eithne O'Connell, "Translating for Children", in Gunilla M. Anderman, Margaret Rogers (eds.), *Word, Text, Translation: Liber Amicorum for Peter Newmark*, New York, Multilingual Matters, 1999, p.211.
- [8] Eithne O'Connell, "Translating for Children", in Gunilla M. Anderman, Margaret Rogers (eds.), *Word, Text, Translation: Liber Amicorum for Peter Newmark*, New York, Multilingual Matters, 1999, p.212.
- [9] Lori Chamberlain, "Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation", in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* XIII(3), 1988, pp. 455.
- [10] Mieke K.T. Desmet, *Babysitting the Reader. Translating English Narrative Fiction for girls into Dutch (1946-1995)*, Bern, Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishing, 2007, pp.69-70.
- [11] M.O.Grenby, *Children's Literature*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2008, p. 145.
- [12] M.O.Grenby, *Children's Literature*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2008, p. 146.
- [13] Mieke K.T. Desmet, *Babysitting the Reader. Translating English Narrative Fiction for girls into Dutch (1946-1995)*, Bern, Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishing, 2007, p. 71.
- [14] Douglas Robinson, "Theorising Translation in a Woman's Voice", in *The Translator* 1(2), 1995, pp. 153-175.
- [15] Jeremy Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*, London and New York, Routledge, 2001, p. 132.
- [16] Barbara Godard, "Theorising Feminist Discourse/Translation", in Susan Bassnett, André Lefevre (eds.) *Translation, History and Culture*, London and New York, Pinter Publishers, 1990, p. 91.
- [17] Gillian Lathey, *The Role of Translators in Children's Literature*, New York, Routledge, 2010, pp. 95-97.
- [18] Gillian Lathey, *The Role of Translators in Children's Literature*, New York, Routledge, 2010, pp. 96.

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Des projections féminines dans l'espace littéraire et culturel central-européen

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Abstract: *Joseph Roth proves his sympathy as he often empathises with women who are deeply affected by misfortunes like poverty, war and men's betrayal. The First World War destroyed the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and its imperial power, bereaving millions of women and having a negative impact on them. The cycle of 33 articles entitled Le genre féminin comprises excerpts taken from Joseph Roth's complete journalistic work written between 1924-1939, mirroring the writer's keen attachment as a fervent defender of the women renegated by society and wronged by law. Roth's work portrays quite a wide range of women in different places such as streets, night clubs, gipsy neighbourhoods or Berlin's sordid slums. Roth also witnessed the woman's emancipation and was mesmerised at the sight of the pilot woman, the embodiment of the modern woman. Joseph Roth representative gallery of women is also found in works like La Crypte des Capucins or La Marche de Radetzky and the present paper aims at analysing the feminine projections in the Central-European society as well as the literary representations from the Austrian writer's work.*

Key words: *embodiment, feminine projections, gallery, emancipation, genre*

En ce qui concerne l'œuvre de Joseph Roth, les projections féminines acquièrent une autre dimension que celle eue par les femmes de sa vie, se soustrayant ainsi à l'incohérence, comme à l'anarchie de la vie sentimentale de l'écrivain. Roth n'aime pas les femmes qui sont capables de se détacher de lui, de s'échapper de ses charmes. Par suite, Nicole Cassanova, souligne la note sarcastique choisie par l'écrivain pour présenter la fascinante aviatrice qui cherche assidûment des photos, la dive du cinéma ou les femmes qui désirent faire carrière comme juges, ingénieurs ou qui réclament leur droit de voter, ayant ainsi la possibilité d'être projetées dans la sphère du politique. La grande guerre mondiale a écrasé l'empire austro-hongrois, dissolvant ainsi la monarchie autrichienne, provoquant des catastrophes et laissant des millions de femmes veuves ; donc les femmes apparaissent subjuguées, leur existence étant limitée. Joseph Roth, comme le montrait Nicole Cassanova dans la Préface du cycle d'écritures journalistiques *Le genre féminin*, présente le principe féminin, exprimant sa désolation, tandis que *Croquis de voyage* présente l'image de la femme russe qui, comme toutes les femmes d'ailleurs, considère l'écrivain qu'elle ne se trouve plus au centre, ni au centre de son foyer, ni au milieu du cercle social, ni au centre de l'image masculine : « La Révolution qui lui a accordé tous les droits, lui a enlevé tous ses privilèges. (...) La dame, à vrai dire n'existe plus. » (1).

Nicole Cassanova opère une distinction très nette entre la panoplie des personnages féminins que Roth n'aime pas et la galerie des protagonistes qu'il admire, ces femmes étant plus lumineuses, plus géniales, plus captivantes. L'image de la mère apparaît souvent dans l'œuvre de Roth, dans *Crypte des Capucins*, la mère est peinte comme le pilier de soutien du jeune Trotta qui ne s'identifiait plus aux repères du monde où il menait son existence : « Elle m'embrassa sur le front. Oui, c'était bien là ma mère. (...) Au milieu d'une patrie détruite, je m'endormais dans une forteresse inexpugnable. De sa vieille canne noire, ma vieille maman écartait de moi tout ce qui aurait pu me troubler. » (2). Un autre personnage féminin qui apparaît en hypostase de mère qui excelle par un amour incommensurable, extrêmement courageuse, agissant souvent avec incision est Deborah de l'œuvre *Le Poids de la grâce*. La femme se remarque par persévérance, mais aussi par un dévouement incroyable envers son fils infirme quand elle reste immobile devant l'immeuble où vit ce rabbi guérissant, attendant de voir si son fils vivra et sera guéri : « (...) Deborah fonça à travers la foule immobile en attente. Sans aucune pitié, ses poings écartaient les malheureux trop faibles qui lui faisaient obstacle. (...) Tous étaient aveuglés par la douleur ardente qui consumait son visage. » (3).

La galerie des femmes qui apparaissent dans l'œuvre de Joseph Roth continue avec les projections féminines de l'œuvre *La marche de Radetzky*, des femmes auxquelles l'écriture

offrira une existence qui sera d'une force extraordinaire. La femme du docteur Demant est présentée en accentuant le mystère reflété par ses yeux : « le bel éclat gris de ses grands yeux » (4). Une autre femme qui apparaît dans l'hypostase de la séductrice est Wally von Taussing, celle qui sera en fait la coupable de la disparition du jeune Trotta. Peu avant de connaître Wally dans le train, Charles-Joseph, se croit être épié d'un péril imminent, de nombreux visages, regards des femmes étrangères, les yeux bleus, noirs, marron, les cheveux blonds ou noirs des toutes les projections féminines qu'il avait connues dès son enfance, de son adolescence et sa maturité lui apparaissaient soudainement dans son regard, s'imaginant « un merveilleux et tendre assaut de femmes » (5).

Roth se trouve souvent envahi par la pitié, mais aussi par une empathie extraordinaire envers les femmes besogneuses, des femmes que le destin met à de rudes épreuves, leur vie est détruite par la guerre, par la trahison d'un homme, par le manque aigu de l'énergie, la fin de la Guerre Mondiale les laissant veuves, leurs époux mourant sur le front sanglant des luttes de la grande déflagration mondiale. Les représentations féminines de l'écriture de Roth peuvent être souvent rencontrées dans des pâtisseries, le dimanche, quand elles défient l'écoulement du temps devant un café et un gâteau. Nicole Cassanova souligne aussi la présence des artistes de variétés, des contorsionnistes, des chanteuses, les portraits esquissés par l'écrivain se remarquant par le raffinement. Parmi les représentations féminines surprises dans l'œuvre de Joseph Roth il y a aussi des typologies qui appartiennent à une couche sociale inférieure, comme : les casanières, les nourrices souvent exploitées par les patrons et même des servantes brutalisées par les officiers pour avoir cassé une tasse. Aussi, une marche plus bas sur l'escalier social, se trouvent les prostituées qui ébauchent un paysage dur, comme par exemple le bordel de Resi de l'œuvre *La marche de Radetzky*, espace où les officiers attirent le jeune Charles-Joseph, qui fait de vrais efforts pour s'en soustraire, mais la scène présentée se remarque par son caractère grotesque, sordide, immonde.

Le cycle composé de trente-trois textes journalistiques écrits entre les années 1919-1938 est traversé par des projections féminines qui portent de différents noms, comme Paula, Thérèse ou Erna, près de leurs petits amis, ou par des représentations féminines comme Emma et Frieda qui incarnent des cibles fragiles, souvent tombant dans la piège du proxénète Aujust. Frida est une ex-prisonnière, détenue pour s'être embauchée par le biais des papiers faux et volant de la maison de ses patrons. « Elle volait la cire à cacheter, par passion. Frida aime la cire à cacheter. Elle a une manie, elle cache tous les paquets volés. » (6) Emma a été internée dans l'hôpital pour huit semaines et elle en a honte, c'est pourquoi elle préfère dire qu'elle aussi a été en prison, au lieu de dire quelle est la raison d'avoir été hospitalisée.

La première représentation féminine esquissée dans *Le genre féminin* est la dive envisagée avec beaucoup de sarcasme comme un axe autour duquel tourne « le petit art cinématographique », mais aussi du kitsch : « Elle est point de repos dans le mouvement circulaire de la nervosité et de l'exaltation, cause et conclusion de romans palpitants et de rengaines de la saison, star du cinéma et étoile fixe en une seule personne » (7). Par la suite la dive est représentée en mettant en relief, avec ironie, non seulement les aspects physiques, mais aussi ceux moraux : « Elle ne se laisse pas marcher sur ses pieds, mais elle marche volontiers sur ceux des autres, surtout ceux du metteur en scène » (8).

« Les girls » sont ces projections féminines que Joseph Roth décrit avec sarcasme comme étant plus ou moins jeunes dans des maillots de bain, changeant sur les plages sèches les théâtres européens de variétés et de revues dont les scènes sont respectées. « Ces créatures bâties gracieusement sans aucun doute possible, savent lever la jambe, grimper la corde, marcher sur les mains. Elles sont comme une traduction féminine du sérieux exercice militaire. Leurs jeux sont des compositions de militarisme et d'érotisme. » (9)

Une autre hypothèse féminine de ce recueil est, comme on l'a déjà montré « l'aviatrice », dessinée ironiquement, soulignant son désir ardent d'être photographiée et

d'apparaître dans tous les journaux titrés de la société contemporaine de l'époque. Le sarcasme de l'écrivain se révèle surtout dans le fragment où l'aviatrice est vue comme une amazone classique : « en comparaison avec elle, est en quelque sorte un zéro, pour ne pas dire un zéro hermaphrodite. » (10). Roth met en évidence aussi l'idéal de l'aviatrice, elle rêve qu'on lui rédige même pendant sa vie un éloge funèbre élaboré et dit de très tôt. L'aviatrice croit qu'il serait fascinant qu'elle disparaisse pour un moment pour analyser la réaction des journalistes qui lanceront des commentaires. L'article surprend l'image de l'aviatrice présentée par des exclamations rhétoriques qui dessinent ironiquement l'image de l'aviatrice : « Petite, charmante aviatrice ! Elle est la femme ancêtre stérile, l'ancêtre –athlète, l'ancêtre-aviatrice, pourrait-on dire, d'un monde sans sexe, dans lequel ce qui pourra encore être appelé « femme » enfantera des créatures pendant le vol ; des créatures dont le premier son émis par elles ne sera pas le cri, mais un bourdonnement, un ronronnement de moteur. » (11).

Les femmes émigrantes et immigrantes apparaissent dessinées dans l'article *Femmes devant la vitrine*, ces femmes étant surprises dans la rue, s'arrêtant devant les magasins luxueux pour beaucoup de temps. Aussi est-il souligné le fait qu'elles faisaient la même chose quand elles étaient dans leur pays, avec la précision que si alors la pauvreté était un état, maintenant elle représente une fatalité implacable : « Là-bas, l'envie était au moins encore possible, de même que tout péché est possible et humain. Ici, on peut à peine pécher. Ce qui coûte le moins cher, à l'étranger c'est l'émoussement progressif de l'amertume. » (12).

Un autre aspect mis en relief par Joseph Roth dans *Le genre féminin* est représenté par les orchestres composés de femmes : « Je ne sais plus exactement à quelle époque les premiers orchestres de dames commencèrent à se produire dans les lieux publics. » (13). Elles sont dessinées toujours ironiquement, soulignant que ce métier ne les exposait à aucun danger corporel, détenant le courage des trapézistes bien que leurs risques soient très petits. Il y a plein d'ironie dans le fragment où l'écrivain peint ces artistes à la page même avant la première guerre mondiale comme des amazones qui manœuvrent leur instrument musical comme s'il s'agissait d'une arme, démontrant un élan féroce dans l'acte musical initié : « Elles entraient en scène comme dans la lice d'un tournoi et quand elles jouaient, elles tiraient en réalité des armes. Pourquoi ces douces jeunes filles aux âmes férues d'harmonie rappelaient si fortement les Amazones et pourquoi à la sphère érotique qui les enveloppait se mêlait tout d'éclat belliqueux, c'est inexplicable. » (14)

La représentation féminine du chef de l'orchestre, tout comme la chanteuse à la flûte constituent les aubes de l'émancipation des femmes : « (...) cette émancipation qui à cette époque était encore menées par les abominables « suffragettes ». (15).

Les jeunes envisagées dans les pages qui forment l'article *Souvenir d'un orchestre de dames en blanc* sont des victorieuses des estrades, étant constituées d'un éclectisme entre les traits des nixes et ceux des amazones et ayant une audace impétueuse parce que souvent elles se donnaient en spectacle pour devenir plus attrayantes. Ces jeunes femmes mettaient en relief la pureté, le caractère vertueux, le raffinement par la manière de s'habiller en blanc : « Celles dont je garde le fidèle souvenir portaient des tailleurs anglais stricts et d'un blanc de neige, avec des revers bleu ciel et de fins passe poils autour de leurs manchettes retournées. Une large écharpe bleu ciel distinguait le chef d'orchestre. Et son petit bâton de commandement était blanc, une véritable baguette magique. (16). Les femmes de l'orchestre sont caractérisées comme étant « pures » et « vertueuses », Roth soulignant qu'il aurait mis sa main au feu pour ces femmes, et puis il pourrait l'offrir à l'une d'entre elles. L'article s'achève circulairement, revenant à la dame chef d'orchestre qui tout comme une adolescente fait une révérence gracieuse à la fin du spectacle démontrant ainsi son autorité et se permettant d'être en quelque sorte charmante : « Elle avait encore ses manifestations élémentaires comme la passion. Ensuite, la dame chef d'orchestre faisait une gracieuse révérence et ressemblait un instant à une adolescente. Son autorité était fondée, elle pouvait se permettre d'être charmante. » (17)

L'article intitulé *La reine de la beauté* surprend la manière où la société contemporaine choisissait sa reine de la beauté, les journaux mettant en évidence la formation du jury désigné ainsi pour élire la plus belle femme après avoir observé et trié un tas de photos envoyées par les candidates, éliminant l'une après l'autre les femmes, jusqu'à ce qu'il n'en reste qu'une, la préférée du jury. De même, ce sont toujours les journaux qui promeuvent celle qui a gagné, la femme étant célébrée et photographiée : « comme si cette première photographie, sur la foi de laquelle elle a été élue, n'était pas suffisamment royale. » (18). Ce sont les nations européennes, conclut l'auteur, qui ont démontré dans la société contemporaine de l'époque, dans de différentes circonstances, que les reines de la beauté sont celles qui détiennent l'essence de la dignité nationale. Cet événement social réunissait les gens de cinéma, les chroniqueurs de mode, les designers qui définissent et mettent en valeur la beauté féminine, identifiant le type national et l'exportant souvent en Amérique. L'article souligne aussi la gloire éphémère de ces jeunes femmes promue pendant quelques semaines par les journaux, pour qu'ensuite elle soit oubliée : « De toutes les reines élues ces trois dernières années, pas une seule n'a vu son nom dépasser la gloire de quelques semaines. » (19)

Madame Annette est l'un des 33 articles qui composent le cycle de textes journalistiques *Le genre féminin*, surprend la typologie de la vieille fille qui, une fois arrivée à l'âge de 28 ans, n'ayant pas de mari et ne voulant plus être la cible des méchancetés, va dans la rue de Providence et choisit un anneau de ceux exposés pour se conformer ainsi aux normes sociales. L'anneau d'argent choisi ne constitue qu'une manière par laquelle madame Annette se rallie aux normes sociales, mais aussi un repos dans la situation où il y aurait un mari qui lui donne un anneau d'or, l'ironie de l'écrivain étant saisie dans les phrases : « Provisoirement l'anneau d'argent suffisait en quelque sorte comme un avertissement adressé au bon Dieu, une obligation morale qu'elle imposait au destin, afin qu'il se voie enfin forcé de lui faire don d'un époux. Du reste l'anneau avait aussi un but immédiat : il pouvait préserver la jeune fille des assiduités d'hommes importuns en outre habituellement lâches, en évoquant devant eux l'image d'un mari d'Annette, présent quelque part, jaloux et solidement bâti. » (20)

Pour conclure, on peut souligner que la galerie des personnages féminins du recueil *Le genre féminin* est envisagée par l'auteur avec du sarcasme, une ironie mordante, au centre se situant l'image de l'aviatrice « fascinante » ou de la madame Annette, toujours à la recherche de prétendants, envoyant à ce sujet des avertissements sérieux au bon Dieu. Quand même, la plus antipathique projection de toute son œuvre reste Elisabeth qui se considère très talentueuse dans la pratique des arts décoratifs, voulant se remarquer par son esprit moderne et libre, mais à la fin on la découvre obéissante dans relation qu'elle a avec une autre femme.

***Acknowledgement: The work of Georgiana Ciobotaru was supported by Project SOP HRD – EFICIENT, 61445/2009**

Notes

[1] Roth, Joseph, *Croquis de voyages*, Ed. Seuil, Paris, 2004, p. 24 « Révoluția care îi acordase toate drepturile, i-a ridicat toate privilegiile. La drept vorbind, doamna nu mai există »;

[2] Roth, Joseph, *La crypte des Capucins*, Ed. Seuil, Paris, 2006, p. 100 ; « Ea mă sărută pe frunte. Da, era chiar ea, mama. În mijlocul unei patrii distruse, adormeam într-o fortăreață de nepătruns. Cu bastonul ei vechi negru, mama îndeapărta de mine tot ce ar fi putut să mă deranjeze. » ;

[3] Roth, Joseph, *Le poids de la grâce*, E.D.S. Paris « Deborah trecea prin mulțimea nemișcată care aștepta. Fără nicio milă, pumnii săi îi îndeapărtau pe acei nefericiți prea slabi care îi stăteau în drum. (...) Toți erau orbiți de durerea arzătoare care-i împurpura chipul »;

[4] Roth, Joseph, *La marche de Radetzky*, E.D.S., 2005 « ... frumoasa strălucire gri a ochilor săi mari ».

[5] Ibid., « ... un minunat și tandru atac al femeilor » ;

- [6] Roth, Joseph, Six pieds sous terre, in « Le genre féminin », Liana Levi, 2006, p.40, « Ea fura ceara pe ascuns, din pasiune. Fridei îi plăcea ceara furată. Are o manie, ascunde toate pachetele furate. »
- [7] Roth, Joseph, *La diva*, œuvres citées, p. 19, « Ea este un punct de repaos între mișcarea circulară a nervozității și a exaltării, cauză și concluzie a unor romane palpitate și a unor romane de sezon, star de cinema și stea fixă într-o singură persoană »
- [8] Ibid, p. 20, « Ea nu lasă pe nimeni s-o calce pe picior, dar calcă conștient pe picioarele altora, mai ales pe cele ale regizorului »
- [9] Ibid, p.97, « Aceste creaturi construite fără nicio îndoială în mod grațios, știu să-și ridice piciorul, să sară coarda, să meargă în mâini. Sunt ca o traducere feminină a exercițiului militar. Jocurile lor sunt compoziții de militarism și erotism »
- [10] Ibid, p. 158, « în comparație cu ea, este într-o oarecare măsură un zero, ca să nu spunem un zero hermafrodit »
- [11] Ibid, p. 160 – 161, “ Micuță, fermecătoare aviatore ! Ea este femeia precursoră sterilă, precursoră – atletă, precursoră-aviatoare, am putea să spunem, într-o lume fără sex, în care ceea ce am putea numi încă femeie ar putea da naștere la creature în timpul zborului; creature al căror prim sunet emis de ele nu va fi un țipăt, ci un huruit al motorului”
- [12] Ibid, p. 163, “Acolo cel puțin pofta încă mai era posibilă, așa cum orice păcat este posibil și omenesc. Aici, cu greu se poate păcătui. Lucrul care costă mai ieftin în străinătate este ștergerea progresivă a amărăciunii”.
- [13] Ibid, p.154, « Nu știu exact perioada când au început să cânte în locuri publice primele orchestre de femei. »
- [14] Ibidem, « Ele intrau pe scenă ca în arena unui turnir și atunci când cântau, în realitate ele trăgeau din arme. De ce oare aceste tinere drăguțe cu sufletul tânjind după armonie aminteau atât de puternic de amazoane și de ce sfera erotică care le înfășura se amesteca cu o strălucire războinică, acest lucru este inexplicabil. »
- [15] Ibidem, p.155, « această emancipare care la acea vreme era condusă de abominabilele feministe »
- [16] Ibidem, « Acele femei de care îmi amintesc bine purtau taioare englezești stricte și de un alb ca de zăpadă, cu revere albastru deschis și fine dubluri în jurul manșetelor întoarse. Dirijorul se remarcă printr-o eșarfă bleu deschis. Chiar și bastonașul său era alb, o adevărată baghetă magică. »
- [17] Ibidem, p.157, « Ea mai avea unele apucături elementare, precum pasiunea. Apoi femeia dirijor făcea o reverență grațioasă și pentru o clipă semăna cu o adolescentă. Autoritatea era construită, își putea permite să fie fermecătoare. »
- [18] Ibidem, p.127, « ca și cum această primă fotografie, în baza căreia ea a fost aleasă, n-ar fi fost suficient de regală ».
- [19] Ibidem, p.130, « Dintre toate reginele alese în ultimii trei ani, nici măcar una singură nu și-a văzut numele în plină glorie mai mult de câteva săptămâni. »
- [20] Ibid, p.108, « Pentru moment verigheta era de ajuns oarecum, ca un avertisment dat lui Dumnezeu, o obligație morală pe care ea o impunea destinului, astfel încât el să-i ofere un soț. În rest verigheta avea și un scop imediat : o putea ajuta să scape de insistențele bărbaților inoportuni și în plus lași, evocând în fața lor imaginea unui bărbat al lui Annette, prezent pe undeva, gelos și foarte bine făcut. »

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Early Modern Representations of the Feminine Bodily Canon

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Résumé : *Cet ouvrage se propose d'expliquer les mentalités, les discours et les pratiques culturelles pré-modernes liés au corps féminin et à l'idée de féminité prescrits par le nouveau canon apparu aux temps pré-modernes et aux valeurs que celui-ci allait représenter. Le canon a été conçu le long de deux axes: le canon médiéval versus le canon pré-moderne, et le canon pré-moderne classique du corps féminin achevé et l'anti-canon. Le corps est analysé par les diverses hypostases dans lesquelles celui-ci est représenté pendant la période pré-moderne et en comparaison avec le Moyen Age : la relation avec l'église, la représentation du corps à travers la mode, les interprétations et les représentations du corps dans l'art et la littérature. On a choisi une approche interdisciplinaire et on a utilisé des ressources tirées de la littérature (les pièces de Shakespeare), de l'histoire de l'art, de l'histoire des idées et des mentalités, de la sociologie qu'on a interprétées du point de vue des études culturelles.*

Mots-clés : *corps, féminité, canon, anti-canon, représentation*

The body – from effacement to celebration

Social representations place the body in a certain position within the general symbolism of the society. The body is never a given fact, it is the effect of a social and cultural construct. Within the framework of the transformations that occurred in the early modern times, the approach to the body also shifts: the body is no longer repealed, condemned, and effaced; on the contrary, it is celebrated as a valuable part of human experience.

The body, as an element which can be isolated from the person who owns it, can only exist in individualist societies, where people are separated from each other, relatively autonomous in their initiatives and values, and where the body functions as a boundary separating one person from the rest of the community. In traditional societies like the medieval one, the body, on the contrary establishes the connections with the community.

The rise of individualism in the early modern period gradually leads to the individual's separation from his/her body, not from a religious, but a profane perspective. In the Middle Ages, the individual was separated from his/her body from a religious perspective: as opposed to the soul, which was the only important element in the human experience and the only one capable of reaching God, the body is discredited as leading only to temptation and sin. In the early modern times, the human being is separated from the body in the sense that he perceives his body as an asset, or as an instrument, which should be taken care of, used, or displayed.

Individualism emerged in the late Middle Ages, as a result of the development and increase in importance of the fields of commerce and banking. The merchant is the prototype of the modern individual, he is a cosmopolitan, whose ambitions go beyond the pre-established limits. He is therefore less influenced by the community and by traditions. He is aware of his social importance, and therefore he knows that he is the only one to create his destiny. On the other hand, secularization, liberation from all the restraints imposed by religion, leads to the awareness of personal responsibility.

As a consequence of the rise of individualism in Western Europe, more and more people become famous and gain glory in their lifetime: poets and artists are the best examples. If, in the Middle Ages, creators remain anonymous, parts of a community, the early modern artists sign their works, they are acknowledged and appreciated by the society, and gradually they impose their own views in the design and creation of the work of art. Giorgio Vasari contributes to the artists' social recognition. The artist is no longer dependent on the spirituality of the masses, he becomes an autonomous creator.

The rise of individualism is also reflected in the approach to the body. In the early modern times, the portrait becomes one of the most important forms of painting, gradually

removing and replacing religious painting and the subsequent tendency of representing the human being only with reference to a religious figure. The church considered that portraits were sources of temptation, and the sitters were likely to become victims of magic. Therefore, the only portraits in the early Middle Ages were portraits of high dignitaries of the church, were protected against magic, because they were portrayed as participants in religious episodes and surrounded by divine characters. Individualism and secularization made it possible for the portraits to increase in number and to become devoid of any religious reference.

As a result of the human being's self-awareness as an individual, not as a member of a community, the body becomes the boundary between individuals. As a factor of individualization, the body becomes the target of specific interventions: the anatomic research, through the dissection of the human body, is the most remarkable in this sense.

In the Middle Ages, the human body was studied in relation to the universe. The body was defined in terms of the four humours: the blood, the phlegm (mucus), the yellow gall, and the black gall. Health and illness depended on the exchanges between the four humours. The vital fluids had to have a constant level, ensuring the individual's relation with the world. Illness was thought to appear when one of the humours was either in excess, or insufficient.¹ Each of these humours was believed to cause specific illnesses, and the doctor's task was to reestablish the balance between man and universe. The movements of the stars were thought to decisively influence the balance of these humours, as well as the cycle of the seasons. Medical care, consisting in the taking of blood, diets or some surgical interventions, tried to reestablish the humoral balance and harmony. The medicine of correspondences contributed to this representation which unites the human being with the entire universe. The moon, for instance, was said to influence the taking of blood, women's menstruation, the moment of birth or death etc. By analogy, an element of nature – an object, a colour, a smell, a shape – could act upon an organ, a wound, a disorder etc.² A multitude of beliefs which link the human body with the stars, with the universe and with the elements of nature was what medieval medicine consisted in.

Popular beliefs were based on the same idea: man was part of a holistic network, in which everything intertwined, and in which a simple gesture could influence the universe and unleash forces, either on purpose (magic, witchcraft), or accidentally. The frontiers of the individual are beyond his body; the individual is defined not by his/her body, but by his/her family, his/her assets, by everything that surrounds him/her, in a network which is typical of the community structure where the human being is not an individual, but a man or a woman in a relation or a network of relations.

In the Middle Ages, the individual couldn't be separated from his/her body, not even after his/her death. It was believed, for instance, that the victim's dead body bleeds in the presence of the assassin. The murderer's body, on the other hand, could be subjected to any kind of torture, because the murderer is someone who imposed his/her individuality against the will and values of the community. This is the murderer's destiny: his/her separation from the society is a dismemberment of the social group, metaphorically punishable by the dismemberment of his body. As a consequence of this belief, the first corpses offered to anatomists for dissections belonged to criminals sentenced to death.

Saints' relics were also dismembered, so that the relics could spread in the whole Christian world. In the sanctified body fragment a metonymy of the glory of God is celebrated. It was believed that the state of a corpse, even if mutilated or destroyed by time, could not prevent revival, but this belief was professed by the members of the clergy. The popular belief was that an alteration of the body could affect the deceased person's destiny in the afterlife, and, therefore, the dead body provoked fear. The body, therefore, was thought to continue to accompany the person even in death.

In a world which was governed by superstition, by popular beliefs, by magic, and which man was seen as inseparable from his body, the idea of shedding blood, even in order to treat the body, meant breaking the sacred alliance, destroying a taboo. This is why the surgeon's profession was one of the most disregarded in the Middle Ages. Surgeons are suspect characters, who generate their contemporaries' unrest. In the 12th century, the medical profession was divided into three categories: the university doctors, the clerical doctors, who were experts in speculations rather than therapy, and surgeons. The first two categories treated the body against 'external' illnesses, without touching the patient's body. Surgeons acted at the level of the interior of the body, going beyond the sacredness of the blood and the frontier of the skin. They were generally laic, despised by the clerical doctors for their ignorance in the scholastic science. Ambroise Pare, a surgeon who discovered the ligature of arteries for avoiding hemorrhages and as a consequence saved numerous lives, was ridiculed by the clerical doctors for not speaking Latin.³ It was therefore more important for a doctor to speak Latin than to cure. The doctor held the privileged position of a person who is assumed to have the knowledge, but who does not touch the impure blood, and thus his profession is not among the most despised.

A sign of the shift in mentalities which makes the individual autonomous and throws some light on the human body is the inauguration of the anatomic science in Italy in the 14th century. With the first official dissections, a huge anthropological and ontological mutation takes place: the distinction between the person and the body, man's separation from his body. Dissociated from the person, the body is studied as an autonomous reality. The treaties dating before the 16th century were based especially on the porcine anatomy, considered not to differ too much from the human. This is because until the 16th century the human body was untouchable, since man, a fragment of the community and of the universe, was untouchable.

One of the sources of our representation of the body dates back in the 16th century. Starting with Vesalius, a new anthropology develops, announcing a break with the previous one, which saw man as a part of the cosmos. But even if Vesalius (1514 – 1564) is considered the initiator of the new anatomic science, his science was prefaced by Leonardo da Vinci, who dissected around thirty bodies and who left a great number of notes and files on the human anatomy. But since Leonardo's notes were not published, Vesalius did not know of them.

The first official dissections took place at the Italian universities at the beginning of the 14th century. They were controlled by the church, whose authorization was required. Hence the solemnity of these dissections: slow ceremonies, which lasted for days. The dissections were carried out for the benefit of an audience made up of doctors, surgeons, barbers, and students. They generalize in the 16th century and their target audience changes. They turn into a form of entertainment meant for a curious and heterogeneous audience. The anatomic theatres are mentioned in the travel notes of the time.⁴

At the end of the 16th century a new feeling appears: curiosity, in close connection with individualism and with the distinction between the public and the private. Private persons create in their homes their own anatomic cabinets, where they collect unusual things associated with the human body, or even mummified bodies. Corpses and body fragments are collected for their originality or for the direct knowledge they provide, thus enriching the medical practice. As the body is dissociated from the person it used to incarnate, becoming the anonymous relic of someone who no longer exists, collecting and studying body fragments, tumours, stones, fetuses, limbs with malformations or preserving mummified bodies become legal.⁵

Besides the emergence and development of the anatomic science, another important aspect which significantly influenced the approach to the human body is the attitude towards physical pain. In the Middle Ages, physical pain was something that was supposed to concern women; men had to disregard and despise pain, he was not supposed to show he was

suffering, otherwise he risked losing his virility, degrading, being associated with the women's condition. Pain was therefore seen as degrading – a symbol of inferiority. A sign of weakness, pain was associated with physical labour – the superior categories, *oratores*, i.e. the clergy, and *bellatores*, i.e. the warriors, were not supposed to display any sign of pain or suffering – and with the inferior beings, such as the women and children. Pain was also seen as a form of punishment, and, therefore, a sign of sin. It was also, in the case of corporal punishment, a form of redemption. On the whole, pain in the Middle Ages had only negative connotations. Towards the beginning of the early modern time, physical pain was gradually valorized. First, as a result of the change in the religious discourse, which gradually emphasized Christ's physical suffering, inviting Christians to share this suffering, and then as a result to the development of the medical and anatomic sciences.

With the development of the anatomic and medical sciences, the approach to the body changes. The individual is separated from his/her body, and the body becomes an autonomous reality. Popular traditions and beliefs lose their significance. At the level of the higher social categories, the body is depreciated, objectified. Two attitudes polarize: one that depreciates the body, objectifying it, and identifying it as it actually is – different from the person it incarnates – the attitude of having a body; the other one identifying the person with the body – the attitude of being your own body.

However, the depreciation of the body is not the medieval rejection of the body as unimportant or unworthy. On the contrary, seen as autonomous, separate from the person, the body lets itself be studied, cured, taken care of, adorned, and used. It is no longer a taboo. If it suffers, it should be treated. If it is healthy, it has to be taken care of, in order not to become ill. And, since according to the early modern mentality, the body is a personal asset contributing to the public image of the self, it should also be adorned, and its image should be used.

Apart from this, the change in the structure of the family which occurred in the early modern times brought about a new approach to the feminine body. The medieval patriarchal family was gradually replaced in the early modern times by the affective family, thus giving women a much greater say in their own marriage, but also in the public realm. Women's condition started to change with the rise of individualism. Women, though still mostly confined to the household, had more access to the outside world. Within the household, their status also changes. Married women had legal existence and rights, and could benefit from some of the attributes of their status. Single women were no longer institutionalized, since the overall numbers recruited in nunneries were small and declining. Women are no longer feared, and, consequently, the woman's body is no longer seen only as a source of temptation and sin; it gradually becomes a form of beauty, which should be admired, praised, even worshiped.

The body is therefore no longer effaced, on the contrary, it is displayed and emphasized. There are new criteria for evaluating the body, from the ideal of beauty, to fashion and manners. The ideal shape of the body is reconsidered: the flesh colour is emphasized; the female body, especially, acquires a density and a flesh tint which it didn't have until then, its aspect becomes fleshier, and its contours more consistent. A discreet sensuality hints to the sap pulsating under the skin, suggesting the milk and the blood.⁶ 'Roundness' is the term most widely used to describe a beautiful body, indicating the balance between plumpness and thinness. The medieval slim shape is no longer an ideal.

The early modern idea of beauty implies a hierarchy, distinguishing the upper and the lower parts of the body. Beauty is present in the upper part, and this is why the upper part is displayed. The lower part is concealed, as it is seen merely as the support of the upper part, where beauty actually resides. The neck, the shoulders, the chest, and the arms, not to mention the face, are the actual indicators of beauty, and hence the fashion of the décolletage.

But beauty does not only involve the natural beauty of the body, but also the dress, which is meant to emphasize the body, the posture, and the manners related to the body. The body is therefore not only displayed and celebrated for its beauty, it is also used as a symbol of status. Social distance is also expressed at the level of the manners. Dress is obviously a marker of the wearer's status, but it has to be accompanied by the appropriate posture and manners.

The re-presentation of the body through fashion

The climate created by Christianity is characterised by a dual tension between divinity, which is transcendental, and human existence in the real world. Since the human being's true homeland, his/her place of redemption, is the sky, nature is regarded as a place of exile, and the body is seen as a tomb. This situation involves, on the one hand, a constant seduction exercised by nature over man, whose effect is an increasingly obvious alienation from the divine; on the other hand, it involves a constant effort – whose main instruments are religion itself and religious ethics – to escape nature's temptations.

Nature is an organism that lacks reflection, endowed with beauty and with an enormous capacity to fascinate, which creates beings and feeds them, but which eventually destroys them. On the contrary, religion represents a set of rules whose aim is to protect man from natural destruction, ensuring his indestructibility at the level of the spiritual and the transcendental. At the level of gender differentiation, the woman represents nature, while the man represents religion and its rules.⁷ This means that the more beautiful a woman is, the more she displays the marks of her natural functions (insemination, fecundity, nutrition), and the more she becomes suspect from a religious standpoint. Indeed, beauty is seduction and, consequently, a great danger for the man, who has to keep away from the defilement of sexual desire.⁸ The spirit must not be defiled by carnal pleasures. Even within the wedlock, spouses are not supposed to feel pleasure, since the only purpose of love-making is procreation. Love-making is therefore seen as a nasty duty; nakedness was not allowed even in the marriage bed. And the somatic signs of fecundity and nurturing (the thighs, the breasts) are precisely the ones that generate lust and sin. For this reason, the culture of the Middle Ages proposes its own ideal of beauty, which is opposed to natural beauty: it is the beauty of virtue, which is attained by means of despising and mortifying the body. What was always admired until the end of the Middle Ages was the woman's thin waist, her fragile and virgin appearance. The habit of the spouses sleeping naked in the marriage bed did not appear until the fourteenth century. Before that, it was not rare for a husband never to see his wife completely naked.

The history of fashion gives us valuable information in this respect. Beyond its variations, the costume has the primary function of entirely concealing the female body – including the hair. The bust has to be leveled, flat, because the ideal of virtuous beauty presupposes the absence of breasts.

The shape of the early medieval costume was characterised by extreme simplicity. Both men's and women's costumes were loose and generally not much adorned. A typical men's costume consisted of a tunic with a wide neck, three-quarter-length sleeves and embroidered borders, very loose and pouched over a belt at the waist, worn over a linen shirt and braies. The latter were loose, trouser-like items, which were held up by means of a cord running through the hem at the waist; crossed linen bands kept them secured to the lower legs. Other common elements were the semicircular cloak, sometimes fastened over a shoulder with a brooch. Shoes were very simple and high-fitting to the ankles. Armours were also very simple: a cone-shaped helmet and a hood of chain covering the head, and a coat of mail (hauberk) with short sleeves.

The only changes that emerged during this period were the appearance of the hose and the adornment of a few items. Towards the end of the twelfth century, a new style of tunic

appeared, with unusual sleeves that were wide from the elbow but narrowed to the wrist. Other new elements were the ornate girdle, the full woolen cloak, the Phrygian cap, very popular among the rich, and the boots with coloured lining.

A typical women's costume consisted of plain woolen and linen clothes, with some embroidery. The gown was similar in style to a man's tunic, very loose and with an opening at the neck. The neck, cuffs and hem of the gown were embroidered, and the gown was gathered at the waist with a girdle. A veil was used to cover the head, wound around the neck so that the hair was completely covered. The hair was not supposed to be visible, as it represented a temptation. Over the gown a voluminous woolen cloak was worn for warmth. The shoes were also very simple, with no embroidery or garments.

The style slightly changed at the beginning of the twelfth century. The gown was more or less the same, except for the fact that the sleeves became very wide from the elbow. The girdle was long and jeweled, and worn high around the waist, crossed at the back and brought forward low onto the hips. For covering their head women wore a veil and a coronet, and the hair was arranged into two long plaits bound with a silk ribbon. The rest of the twelfth century saw little change in women's clothes, except that the long plaits and the wide sleeves gradually went out of fashion. In 1170 the barrette was introduced. This was a linen band that passed under the chin and over the head. In 1190 a linen covering for the neck appeared. It was called a wimple and was tucked into the dress at the front and often veiled the chin. These items became very popular and, after a few years' respite, ladies concealed their hair once again.

Real changes in style did not appear until the first half of the fourteenth century, when revolutionary ideas were introduced and the whole silhouette was transformed. Instead of being loose and flowing, garments were made to fit the figure, emphasizing the male and female shapes, and so the tailoring began. These innovations were due in part to natural evolution, but also to the stirring of the Renaissance in Italy, where the human body was being studied and glorified in art and literature, and tailored fashions helped to display the figure better. Brilliant colours, costly fabrics, fur and fur linings, patterning, motifs and jeweled embroideries were all popular, culminating in ostentatious displays during the reign of Richard II.

The new styles developed further in the fifteenth century with an even greater variety of designs and fabrics. The most interesting change in fashion that has occurred since the late fourteenth century is the disappearance of the slim silhouette. Expensive, rich fabrics like velvet, brocade, silk, and gold and silver cloth were imported for the upper classes and beautifully woven fabrics were produced in England due to the influx of Flemish weavers who came to England under the patronage of Edward III. Fashion became more exaggerated and flamboyant: there was great scope for display and extravagance, which sometimes caused much inconvenience to the wearer. Good examples of this were the exaggerated pointed toes of men's shoes and the large, unusual headdresses worn by ladies.

However, by law, high fashion was defined as being the prerogative of the upper classes with diminishing privileges given to those in the middle and lower classes. This meant that wealthy middle-class people would not be allowed to wear clothes as sumptuous as those of the nobility. Sometimes royalty would hand down or bequeath garments to their servants, but only after the costly trimmings had been removed. The servants would later sell them to second-hand clothes dealers and eventually the same garments would be seen, worn out, on the backs of the poorer. Clothes were a mark of status and it was possible to determine a person's rank by the length of his tunic or size of her headdress. As fashions became more extravagant, strict sumptuary laws were passed in an attempt to curb any excesses. For example, it was ordained that: 1) only royalty and nobility could wear pearl embroidery and ermine; 2) cloth of gold, jewels and miniver (plain white fur) linings could be worn only by

knights and people of higher rank; 3) cloth of silver, silver girdles and fine quality wool were restricted to squires and people of higher rank; 4) commoners were permitted to wear only the coarser quality wools, and even if they could afford jewels and silk, they were not allowed to wear them.⁹

At the end of the Middle Ages a radical change occurred, which (as we have shown above) was translated into a similarly revolutionary women's fashion. The décolletage became so deep, that breasts were half visible. A novelty was the dress 'à la grande gorge', which opened at front to the navel. But, as opposed to the medieval dress code, where the body was completely concealed and effaced, the early modern permissiveness went even further: sometimes the breasts remained completely uncovered, the nipples were ornamented with red, with precious stones, and sometimes they were even pierced to allow for gold chains to be hung up. This permissiveness will later be depicted in some of Herrick's poems: 'A sweet disorder in the dress/Kindles in clothes a wantonness:/A lawn about the shoulders thrown/Into a fine distraction:/An erring lace, which here and there/Enthralls the crimson stomacher:/A cuff neglectful, and thereby/Ribbands to flow confusedly:/A winning wave (deserving note)/In the tempestuous petticoat:/A careless shoestring, in whose tie/I see a wide civility:/Do more bewitch me than when art/Is too precise in every part.' ('Delight in Disorder'). 'Whenas in silks my Julia goes,/Then, then (methinks) how sweetly flows/That liquefaction of her clothes.//Next, when I cast mine eyes and see/That brave vibration each way free,/O how that glittering taketh me!' ('Upon Julia's Clothes')

In the fifteenth century, if the topless style is only rarely adopted – Simonetta Vespucci painted by Piero de Cosimo – a new ideal of beauty emerges, which emphasizes the charms of nature at the expense of the charms of virtue. The preference for the round, ripe shapes increases with the progress of the early modern period. The lithe young men and fragile young ladies of the Trecento and Quattrocento became powerful and determined men with broad shoulders and vigorous women with ample lines in the Cinquecento, as we know them from the masterpieces of the time (Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo, Giorgione, Titian, Corregio and others). The shape of the body was sometimes revealed, and other times emphasized by clothing. This tendency will still have echoes later, in the seventeenth century. Richard Lovelace, for example, made an apology of the vigorous body in his 'La Bella Bona Roba' (a common expression for a whore, but literally meaning a pleasantly plump girl): 'I cannot tell who loves the skeleton/Of a poor marmoset, naught but bone, bone./Give me a nakedness with her clothes on.//Such whose white-satin upper coat of skin,/Cut upon velvet rich incarnadine,/Has yet a body (and of flesh) within.'

The Italian fashion in the fifteenth century was with the waist high, emphasizing the breasts. This can be seen on the funerary monument of a matron from Lucca, carried out by Jacopo della Quercia (around 1438), a sculptor of the round shaped maternity. We find the same high waist fashion in Jan van Eyck's famous painting, 'The Marriage of Giovanni Arnolfini and Giovanna Cenami'. In the sixteenth century, the Italian fashion provides for the waist down, the bust being covered by a short singlet with a square décolletage. Francesco del Cossa's fresco 'The Weavers' is a real parade of the high waist fashion; on the contrary, Raphael's portraits are proofs of the lowering of the waist and the evolution of the décolletage. There is a certain balance in this variation in women's fashion: the high waist emphasizes the breasts, which still remain covered; the low waist flattens the breasts, but the décolletage, sometimes large enough to stretch over the shoulders, reveals the upper part of the female body.

An English example of the topless fashion is to be found in Robert Peake's Portrait of Lady Elizabeth Pope. Pope's portrait shows a young lady seated under a laurel tree in a pastoral landscape. Her upper body is partially covered with a classical mantle of heavy black cloth, knotted at her shoulder. The fabric is embroidered with pearls in an elaborate feather

design. Her hat displays the same feather pattern. Her hair falls loose across her shoulders and upper arms, hiding but also suggesting the line of her exposed left breast. She is represented wearing a necklace with a pendant reaching between her breasts. Her neck is encircled by a choker whose large hanging pearl points to the pendant. The painting is an illustration of the tensions between voluptuousness – conveyed by the loose hair, the curves of the feather pattern, the uncovered breast and the relaxed and graceful position of Lady Elizabeth Pope's hands – and the more rigid codes of Elizabethan fashion and portrait convention. 'Lady Elizabeth's head is held in a precise vertical position, and the slight angle of the line between the pearl and the pendant implies that her body is not equally upright. Yet even this intimation of a relaxed pose is effectively denied by the rigid axial coordination of the necklaces and the awkward position of her arms. Both are bent, the rigid arm resting lightly on a green stump, the left stiffly away from her body.'¹⁰

In Peake's painting, with its formal and symbolic complexities, meaning is conveyed through a play of oppositions and contrasting elements: the public display of the full-scale portrait and the private experience of the miniature (the painting is designed and framed as a miniature); the heraldic flatness of Lady Pope's body and the sensuous physicality of her costume. And although her image belongs to the heraldic tradition, the depictions of movement, the display of the body, and the space and depth within the painting suggest an attempt to change the conventions of the English icon. 'Within this frontal plane, symbolic framing devices define a parameter or boundary for Lady Elizabeth's image. Laurel branches fill the top of the panel, focusing the viewer's glaze, while sheltering Lady Elizabeth within a private bower. This reframing of her image is repeated in a self-generating frame. Lady Elizabeth's arms are positioned so that a powerful circular movement through hands, arms, hair and head creates a little world of her body within that protected bower. With this enframing device Peake seems to re-create for the viewer the Renaissance conception of the human body as a miniature or microcosm of the world.'¹¹ We will come back to the discussion of the miniature and its relation to the body.

The position of Lady Elizabeth's hands suggesting modesty and passivity was typical of many Elizabethan and Jacobean portraits of women: hands are clasped together or rest at their side or on a table or a chair. However, the image of Lady Elizabeth Pope, as depicted by Peake, is a sensuous one. Despite the fact that it belongs to this tradition and to a certain extent participates in the above described convention, Peake's portrait is atypical through its sensuality. In her left hand, Lady Elizabeth feels a thick fold of cloth between her thumb and her ring finger. The material presence of the cloth is described in precise detail: each fold and drape are revealed by the distortions imposed on the pearls of the feather pattern. 'The fabric is the only real volumetrically conceived space in the painting. Its descriptive power, as Elizabeth Pope touches it, quite literally fashions her identity, and at the same moment she seems to invite the beholder to share the intimacy of that touch and to feel the palpable fabric that creates her presence.'¹² So both the materiality and the sensuality within the portrait are actually given by the fabric rather than by the body itself. The cloth complements the body, it both hides and reveals the body.

Elizabethan and Jacobean paintings have been described as 'miniatures blown up under glass'. The image appears as if it were held in hand, and the full-scale portrait resembles the miniature through the way in which it couples the real and aesthetic space. The portrait of Lady Elizabeth Pope is full-sized, but Peake has 'deliberately evoked many of the formal and associative qualities of the miniature: not only the very different physical relation between viewer and image, but also the miniature's courtly origins, its representational function and its expression of 'private' emotion'¹³. The detailed depiction of the fabric and jewels that Elizabeth Pope wears invites the viewer to compare the real and the represented, to measure and acknowledge the value of the image. In addition, this precise, detailed

description of the fabric and jewels is meant to reflect the status and wealth of the sitter. In this and other paintings, as well as in the mentality of the time, dress defined the social status of the sitter, as evidenced by the English sumptuary laws which defined the dress code for every social rank and which were designed to preserve the established order and hierarchy.

Although Peake alludes to an Italianate figure, his portrait fits in the long-established convention of English portraits: Lady Elizabeth's figure is not an object of desire, nor is it an ideal of beauty or a means of expressing or inspiring emotion. What this figure emphasizes is the voluptuous display of rank and status rather than mere eroticism. Therefore the portrait of Lady Elizabeth Pope reveals a play of contradictions and a juxtaposition of dualities: exposure and concealment (suggested by the fabric and jewels), public display and private possession (full-scale portrait, inviting public admiration of Lady Elizabeth's beauty, painted in the style of miniatures, suggesting a private exchange between lovers), voluptuousness and chastity (loose hair, exposed body). And this play of contrasts and dualities is typical to the early modern mentality, as reflected in portraits and in the art of costume and jewelry: public and private, erotic voluptuousness and the voluptuousness of status, concealment and display, permissiveness and restrictions.

The fashion at the end of the Middle Ages and throughout the early modern period display all signs of a permissiveness and even, in some cases, of a promiscuity – if we think of the mixed public baths, which were unknown until then. Literature does not deny or contradict the general impression in any way since the erotic subjects had never been treated, in the Christian age, with the straightforwardness and detachment manifested by Boccaccio, Chaucer, Rabelais. Visual arts also go through this shift in morality. The subjects inspired by the ancient mythology become – with Piero di Cosimo, Lorenzo di Credi, Signorelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo – a pretext for carrying out studies of incredibly daring female nudes. In the city of Florence, traversed by Lorenzo de Medici's Bacchic pageants, Simonetta Vespucci poses topless for Piero di Cosimo, while Raphael has no difficulty in finding models for nudes.

The reaction to sexual emancipation and to exhibitionist fashion soon made its appearance. The moralizing sermons of Jan Hus in Bohemia and Savonarola in Florence, with their huge persuasive force and effectiveness, allow us to see what is to follow, i.e. the Reformation mentality.

Wherever the Reformation is established, the morality changes. In women's fashion, this is translated into the complete disappearance of the décolletage, substituted by a bodice with a high collar, and the appearance of a double skirt aimed at avoiding the indiscreet glances during the dance. The mixed public baths, which were widespread in the fourteenth century, are almost lacking in the sixteenth century.

The German reform did not bring about any unitary fashion. After 1540, the dominant influence comes from Spain and very rapidly conquers the whole Europe, including the protestant countries. The discourse underlying Spanish women's fashion is simple and clear: the woman is nature's blind instrument of seduction, the symbol of temptation, of sin and evil. Apart from the face, her main instruments of luring are the signs of her fecundity: the thighs and the breasts, as well as every inch of skin that she exhibits. Her face has to remain unveiled; but it can be imprinted with a rigid, masculine expression. The neck may be wrapped by a high lace collar. The collar, as an emblem of discipline and restraint, is the topic reflected upon in George Herbert's poem 'The Collar', perhaps also punning on 'choler': 'I struck the board, and cried, 'No more,/I will abroad!/What? Shall I ever sigh and pine?/My lines and life are free, free as the road,/Loose as the wind, as large as store./Shall I be still in suit?/Have I no harvest but a thorn/To let me bleed, and not restore/What I have lost with cordial fruit?/Sure there was wine/Before my sighs did dry it; there was corn/Before my tears did drown it./Is the year only lost to me?/Have I no bays to crown it?/No flowers, no garlands

gay? All blasted?/All wasted?/Not so, my heart: but there is fruit,/And thou hast hands./Recover all thy sigh-blown age/On double pleasures: leave thy cold dispute/Of what is fit, and not. Forsake thy cage,/Thy rope of sands,/Which petty coats have made, and made to thee/Good cable, to enforce and draw,/And be thy law,/While thou didst wink and wouldst not see./[...]

The changed attitude towards the body is most obvious in the way in which the bust is treated, reminding of the traditional distortion of the feet that the Japanese women had to go through, but without being though as painful and damaging.¹⁴ The ideal of beauty, which remained unchanged until the end of the eighteenth century, was for women not to have breasts at all; therefore, women were very careful to prevent their breasts from growing. When the breasts began to grow, women tried to impede them by pressing them with lead plates and wrap themselves the way infants are swaddled. Thus their chest was almost completely flat.

The body becomes a taboo and a new system is invented that makes the skirt longer than the legs, and a new style of shoes is adopted, with thick soles made of wood and cork. These uncomfortable shoes are favoured by the ecclesiastical circles in Italy, as they represent an effective instrument for preventing worldly pleasures, especially dancing. Fashion certainly determines the level of sexual excitement: a permissive fashion that occasions the exhibition of all the natural charms leads to a certain degree of indifference between the sexes; on the contrary, a repressive fashion results in a proportional lowering of the level of excitement.

The only country where the Spanish fashion did not gain ground was Italy. The fact that Rome always sheltered the Vatican and the papal curia, made up of people of a remarkable intelligence and skepticism, protected Italy from the excesses of intolerance: it was actually the only province of the Church that hardly witnessed any passionate executions of witches at all. The baroque art impregnated by sensuality and the women's fashion of the Seicento are far from displaying the same rigid uniformity as in the rest of Europe.

The feminine ideal proposed by the Reformation finds its perfect expression in the Spanish fashion. This imposes the type of defeminized, masculine woman, whose role no longer is to exercise an ominous seduction over the man, but to help him through the hard way to moral perfection. Culture tends to destroy her natural charms through cruel and damaging practices: her bust is flattened with lead plates, the expressive mobility of her face is suppressed, her waist is heightened, her body is completely covered from head to toe; all attempts are made to make her look as masculine as possible.

The reformed mentality is exemplified by Andrew Marvel's poems, among which 'A Dialogue Between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure', and 'A Dialogue Between the Soul and the Body' are among the most representative, with a deeply religious character. In the former, the tempter deploys against the resolved soul all the elements of the temptation Christ was faced with in the wilderness: the senses are the first to be targeted, then follow the temptations of voluptuous sex, money, glory, and forbidden knowledge – everything that has to do with the earthly existence and with the lure of the worldly: 'Everything does seem to vie/Which should first attract thine eye;/But since none deserves that grace, In this crystal view thy face/[...]/All this fair and soft and sweet,/Which scatteringly doth shine,/Shall within one beauty meet,/And she be only thine.' Having overcome this, the Soul rejected and defeated all temptations: 'When the Creator's skill is prized,/The rest is all but earth disguised./[...]/If things of sight such heavens be,/What heavens are those we cannot see?' The victory of the Soul is in the end praised by the Chorus. The latter poem takes over and develops the idea in Galatians 5:17: 'the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary one to the other'. As indicated in the title, the poem is a dialogue between the body and the soul, which suggests the incompatibility between the two.

The body and the soul are forced to be together and to make up a whole, but there is no possible compromise between them, the contrasts and contradictions between the two are impossible to reconcile. The soul is enslaved, chained and tortured by the vain body: ‘Oh, who shall from this dungeon rise/A soul enslaved so many ways?/With bolts of bones; that fettened stands/In feet, and manacled in hands;/Here blinded with an eye, and there/Deaf with the drumming of an ear;/A soul hung up, as ‘twere, in chains/Of nerves and arteries and veins;/Tortured, besides each other part./In a vain head and double heart./[...]/What magic could me thus confine/Within another’s grief to pine?/Where whatsoever it complain,/I feel, that cannot feel, the pain./And all my care itself employs,/Constrained not only to endure/Diseases, but, what’s worst, the cure;/And ready oft the port to gain,/Am shipwrecked into health again.’ The infinite, immortal soul is confined within the finite, mortal, fragile body, subject to disease and temptation, needing the soul’s support for its survival, but destroying the soul through sin and pain. The body, on the other hand, is tortured by the ‘tyrannic’ soul: ‘Oh, who shall me deliver whole/From bonds of this tyrannic soul?/Which stretched upright, impales me so/That mine own precipice I go;/And warms and moves this needless fame,/A fever could but do the same./And, wanting where its spite to try,/Has made me live to let me die./A body that could never rest,/Since this ill spirit it possessed./[...]/But physic yet could never reach/The maladies thou me dost teach:/Whom first the cramp of hope does tear,/And then the palsy shakes of fear;/The pestilence of love does heat,/Or hatred’s hidden ulcer eat./Joy’s cheerful madness does perplex,/Or sorrow’s other madness vex;/Which knowledge forces me to know,/And memory will not forgo./What but a soul could have the wit/To build me up for sin so fit?/So architects do square and hew/Green trees that in the forest grew.’ The body is therefore completely dependent on the soul; aware of its sinful nature, the body blames the soul for the way it is designed: it needs pleasure and comfort, but these are forbidden and eventually prevented by the very soul which created them.

The natural, overflowing, voluptuous, sinful femininity is therefore banned. From now on, only witches can ‘dare’ have long thighs, big breasts, curved shapes and loose long hair. If we look at Hans Baldung Grien’s engravings we can see the vitality and the richness of representation that these ‘maleficae’ enjoy. This image of the natural, tempting and destructive femininity is opposed by the rigid and uniform silhouette and the emaciated, immobile face of the Spanish virtuous woman.

The imagery connected to witchcraft is close to the pornographic imagery: it contains all the repressed emotions of a highly restrictive age. All the possible and even impossible perversions are attributed to witches and their devilish partners. One of the many examples can be found in Hans Baldung Grien’s painting – ‘The Death and the Woman’ – where the woman stands for the voluptuous, curve-shaped, long-haired type of the temptress or witch. This woman is represented kissing Death, a hideous representation of evil, and wrapping her in an obscene embrace. The paintings representing the Sabbath contain similarly scabrous scenes, whose manifest intention is to persuade the audience of the antisocial practices of the witches. But the underlying content of all the iconography of this type is easy to grasp: using the pretext of the erotic fantasies of the marginals who surfaced on occasion of the transfer process brought about by the Inquisition, the persecutors themselves projected all their personal repressed emotions into those images.¹⁵

The approach to the body, the interpretation and representation of the body stems from the mentality of an epoch, as well as from the various discourses circulated in a given society. In the Middle Ages, the religious discourse prevailed, focusing on the spiritual ideal and insisting on the idea that the body should be hidden, concealed, effaced, as a source of sinful temptation and as an unworthy element of human experience. The early modern times witnessed the rise of individualism and the secularization of art and thought. The early

modern individual was liberated from the medieval restraints and rigidity; individualism gave him the freedom to express himself and to value, nurture and educate both his body and his mind. This triggered the interest in and emphasis on the human body as a valuable asset which should be displayed for its beauty, but also used as a form of expression of the social status of the individual. The body was therefore ostentatiously displayed and adorned with expensive fabrics and jewels. Later, the Reformation witnessed a reaction to all this ostentation, which caused another shift in the attitude towards the body: moderation and austerity.

Notes

[1] in Le Breton, *Antropologia corpului și modernitatea*, Editura Cartier, Chișinău, 2009, p. 67.

[2] in Le Breton, op. cit., p. 68.

[3] ibid., p. 77.

[4] ibid., pp. 82-84.

[5] ibid., p. 97.

[6] in Vigarello, Georges, *O istorie a frumuseții. Corpul și arta înfrumusețării din Renaștere până în zilele noastre*, Editura Cartier, Chișinău, 2006, p. 19.

[7] in Culianu, Ioan Petru, *Eros și magie în Renaștere*, Editura Nemira, București, 1999, p. 271.

[8] in Duby, Georges, *Evul mediu masculin*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1992, p. 43.

[9] in Ruby, Jenifer, *Costume in Context. Medieval Times*, B.T. Bradsford Ltd., London, 1995, p. 38.

[1] Chirelstein, Ellen, 'Lady Elizabeth Pope: The Heraldic Body', in Gent, L. and Llwellyn, N. (eds.), *Renaissance Bodies – The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540-1660*, Reaktion Books Ltd., London, 1994, p. 36.

[11] Chirelstein, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

[12] ibid., p. 38.

[13] id.

[14] in Culianu, op. cit., p. 276.

[15] ibid., p. 277.

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Portraits de la femme dans les poèmes de Dimitrie Bolintineanu

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Résumé : Notre démarche propose une mise en œuvre de quelques poèmes de Dimitrie Bolintineanu qui imposent des images-portraits des femmes, qui représentent l'éternel féminin. Les portraits surprennent des qualités situées aux antipodes (ange ou démon, jeune innocente ou femme au foyer, femme active ou mélancolique, déesse ou maîtresse, jeune fille ou mère). Les noms des femmes proviennent soit de l'espace roumain (Maria, Dochia, Zina), soit de l'espace oriental (Leili, Fatmé, Esmé, Almelaiur).

Mots-clés : femme(s), symbole(s), portrait(s), modèle, espace roumain, espace oriental.

La littérature du XIX^e siècle a représenté pour la culture roumaine l'époque des grandes influences étrangères, de la modernité et de la nouveauté. Le contact avec les littératures occidentales et la circulation des modèles venus de l'étranger ont contribué à une réévaluation de la culture ancienne, spécifiquement roumaine (folklore, livres populaires), en même temps qu'à une diversification thématique des créations littéraires. Les écrivains préromantiques et surtout romantiques ont préféré une reprise de thèmes cultivés par des écrivains renommés (A. de Lamartine, V. Hugo, A. de Musset, A. de Vigny, La Fontaine) de sorte que la société roumaine ait ressenti le besoin de s'identifier à un modèle déjà consacré.

La littérature romantique occidentale a été délibérément une littérature qui s'adressait à un public nombreux, ouvert aux aspirations et aux intentions de la culture de cette époque-là. Son influence a été rapide et assez importante, ce qui a mené au « phénomène de la mode littéraire [...] du début de l'atmosphère originale favorable au romantisme ... » (notre trad.) [1]

Dans le contexte des influences européennes, la littérature roumaine a changé « son expression » et les écrivains roumains ont créé un imaginaire poétique différent. Des thèmes romantiques tels que la nature, l'amour, la mort, le folklore, l'histoire ont été traités comme préférés, surtout au niveau des écrits en vers ; l'approche des thèmes en questions n'a pas été faite de manière isolée, mais en relation l'un avec l'autre. Le côté sensible des poètes de la génération de 1848 est bien visible dans la poésie d'amour ; le sentiment de l'amour est habituellement associé à la thématique de la nature, puisque l'amour est présenté sous ses différents aspects: innocent, joyeux, passionné. Ainsi, la naissance de la conscience lyrique des poètes de cette époque-là a-t-elle coïncidé avec la naissance de la conscience érotique.

Dans les poèmes à thème érotique, les sentiments amoureux concernent la femme, ses représentations et ses images étant nombreuses et diversifiées. Les poètes du XIX^e siècle chantent l'amour pour la femme et le sentiment érotique est considéré comme un état de crise douloureuse « racontée » dans un discours à l'amour. Les exemples sont divers et peuvent être matérialisés dans des conventions littéraires réelles.

Les poètes de la génération de 1848 ont traité les différents types de féminité. Dimitrie Bolintineanu a été l'un des écrivains qui, dans ses poèmes, a fait référence aux images de la femme, à l'éternel féminin comme sujet du thème de l'amour. Il a chanté dans sa poésie la beauté de la femme et le monde poétique qu'il s'est imaginé est fait d'une suite de tableaux et de portraits de femmes, la note dominante étant la beauté et les lignes pures. Tout est « doux, blanc, mou », les formes sont diaphanes, la sensualité et la passion sont bien exprimées (dans *Fleurs du Bosphore/ Brises d'Orient*, *Les Macédoines*, *Conrad*). La femme est vue sous ses aspects multiples: celle des sérails du Bosphore a toujours « un charme virginal », mais celle des *Légendes historiques* est une jeune vierge (*La jeune fille de Cozia*), une jeune guerrière (Maria Putoianca), une épouse (Mme Neagu) ou une mère (*La mère d'Etienne le Grand*, la mère de Michel le Brave, Théodora, Fatmé). En outre, dans *Les légendes*, elle est le symbole parfait de la féminité en s'identifiant à celui de la sagesse et de la mère digne et dure: la mère d'Etienne le Grand est catégorique dans les rapports avec son fils, la jeune fille de Cozia

refuse franchement le mariage avec le brave capitaine, Mme Neagu est une femme forte d'Etat, Marie Putoianca veut la vengeance de son père et se montre intègre devant le sultan.

Avant de parler, les femmes et les jeunes filles rougissent: la femme de Neagu (Neagoe) a

« les yeux mouillés par la rosée
Au visage rougeâtre quand elle parle [...] » (notre trad.),

mais Bolintineanu fait la théorie du pouvoir de la femme d'Etat:

« Sachez tous qu'une nation est fabriquée
Selon que les femmes veulent aimer. » (notre trad.) [2]

Eugen Simion apprécie que Bolintineanu exige que la femme soit douce avant tout ; quand il s'agit d'une jeune fille, toutes les comparaisons vont vers une virginité fondamentale. [3] Ainsi, ses poèmes contiennent-ils des portraits d'enfants ou de jeunes bien-aimées, telles que Petite Marie (du poème au même nom) ou de la sœur Anne, Petite Anne (du poème *La sœur Anne*).

Le portrait d'Esmé « trahit » l'image de la féminité caste:

« Comme la perle – blanche
Haute, fine, délicate
Son sein – poitrine de vierge » (*Esmé*) (notre trad.) [4],

tandis que le portrait de la bien-aimée est conçu sous forme d'image séraphique ; la femme semble être une fée des contes, « fière et délicate » (dans *Zina, la dame Zina-Doamna*).

Le portrait de la femme dégradée à travers le temps, celui de la vieille femme, se reflète dans la ballade *Mihnea et la Grand-Mère (Mihnea și baba)*:

« La vieille dame passe devant,
Faible, pâle, ses cheveux flottant
Des os tremblants, des dents serrant... » (notre trad.) [5]

Les images poétiques de la fin de la vie ne sont pas présentées d'une manière tragique, mais sous forme d'un lys fané (*Une jeune fille sur son lit de la mort*) ou comme l'apparition d'un « jeune enfant blanc, doux », ce qui trahit un sérieux passage symbolique au-delà des frontières de la vie (comme dans les poèmes *Le Prince Charmant et Dochia*, où la femme morte est « belle / Mais son visage est fané. »)

D. Bolintineanu veut personnaliser le modèle de la femme et la féminité fondée sur la race. Chaque femme est, selon lui, « d'une rare beauté » et le poète propose une variété de femmes comme dans *Les esclaves à la vente (Sclavele în vânzare)*:

« Une jeune fille noire [...],
Une autre d'Ispahan [...]
Jeune, douce, blanche
Comme une fleur du Liban [...]
Les yeux d'une rare beauté,
Rose au visage brûlant,
Des montagnes d'Azerbaïdjan.
Douce, belle âme,
Perfide beauté,
Serbe et Bulgare touchées
Et la belle Jeanne,
Roumaine macédoine,
Comme un parfum de fleurs. » (notre trad.) [6]

L'onomastique des poèmes de Bolintineanu comprend des noms aux consonances orientales: Mehribé ou Dilrubam font rappeler les parfums et les couleurs de l'Orient, Esmé est

« douce fleur
Avec un doux parfum », (notre trad.) [7]

la sultane Leili est

« une sultane, fleur de Bosphore !...
Les cheveux dorés, le front – fleur de lys! » (notre trad.) [8],

Almelaiur n'est que « belle », Fatmé est blanche comme les perles, elle a

« les yeux de feu et la main blanche,
La bouche, rubis gracieux;
Haute de taille, fine, délicate. » (notre trad.)

L'Eros apparaît dans *Les Macédoines* aussi ; il s'agit de l'éros pastoral comme dans *Les Roumaines de Cavaia (Românele din Cavaia)*, où les hommes

« portent leurs femmes
Blanches comme les aubes... » (notre trad.) [9]

ou dans *San-Marina* – la jeune femme et la mère: les gens ont

« des femmes aux doux charmes,
Au visage blanc,
Aux yeux de fraises. » (notre trad.) [10]

D. Bolintineanu « a créé dans la poésie roumaine un topos durable de Bosphore, comme un frôlement des sens et une catharsis de l'existence. » (notre trad.) [11] Le poète « fantaisiste » (c'est M. Zamfir qui a donné cette appellation dans la *Préface* à l'étude de Mihai Dinu *Un alt Bolintineanu – gânduri despre natura poeziei – Un autre Bolintineanu – pensées sur la nature de la poésie*) a traduit son propre volume de poèmes *Florile Bosforului (Brisés d'Orient/ Fleurs du Bosphore)* [12], son activité étant, en fait, une réécriture des propres poèmes. Mihai Dinu a réalisé une analyse comparative, avec des précisions pertinentes sur les écrits en vers de Bolintineanu (musicalité, impossibilité de traduction, langage poétique) ; il a voulu proposer des poèmes « qui ait une nouvelle forme verbale. » (notre trad.) [13]

Mihai Dinu propose dans son œuvre une analyse comparative des poèmes écrits par Bolintineanu avec des rétroversions, afin d'identifier les ressemblances et les différences des deux variantes, surtout les décalages survenus au passage d'une langue à l'autre. Ses observations visent les différences de prosodie (on passe du rythme trochaïque de la langue roumaine aux cadences iambiques dans la version traduite en roumain). L'explication de Dinu est pertinente : le passage par l'écriture d'un auteur (intermédiaire) français suppose une redéfinition des principaux paramètres de prosodie, car le système de la versification française diffère considérablement par rapport au roumain : « Pratiquement, dans une poésie en langue française, les syllabes accentuées des mots peuvent occuper toute position à l'intérieur d'un vers, tandis que la versification du roumain ne permet leur placement que dans de tels lieux, précisés par la norme du rythme en question. » (notre trad.) [14]

Un tel exemple (M. Dinu en a donné beaucoup) serait le suivant :

« Vedeți voi la umbra plină Unor sălcii ce se-nclin	« Voyez-vous tout près de la rive, A l'ombre du saule pleureur, Sur les eaux de la mer plaintive,	« În umbra salciei ce plânge Pe țărnu-ndureratei mări,
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Pe această mare lină Un corp dulce ca un crin? » (D. Bolintineanu – <i>Se scaldă</i>)	Un corps blanc et pur, douce fleur? » (D. Bolintineanu – <i>La baigneuse</i>)	Vedeți în val cum se răsfrânge Un trup, izvor de desfătări? » (M. Dinu – <i>La scăldat</i>)
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Les exemples qui souffrent des modifications tant du point de vue lexical que du point de vue prosodique sont nombreuses (*Leili, Almelaiur, Dorința/ Le désir, Odalisca/ L’Odalisque, Esmé, Fatmé*) et les commentaires des critiques ont été pertinents. T. Vârgolici faisait des appréciations sur l’univers poétique des *Fleurs du Bosphore*, tout en considérant que « D. Bolintineanu a eu la qualité de nous avoir donné une image authentique sur l’exotique oriental » (notre trad.) [15], tandis que P. Cornea observait que le volume en question « véhiculait un monde exotique de carton peint. » (notre trad.) [16]

Les poèmes de D. Bolintineanu abondent en portraits symboliques de l’éternel féminin. Les images des femmes sont nombreuses et variées, fait qui démontre leur rôle important dans la société et la famille. Ses images de jeune fille, mère, femme simple, paysanne, femme âgée, maîtresse, odalisque démontrent le fait que la femme a représenté une source d’inspiration pour D. Bolintineanu et pour les poètes de sa génération aussi.

Notes

[1] Mircea Anghelescu, *Scritori și curente*, Ed. Piața Scînteii, București, 1982, p. 69.

[2] Dimitrie Bolintineanu, *Legende istorice*, Ed. Ion Creangă, București, 1984, pp. 23-24 (texte original :

« Ochii uzi de rouă spre pământ se-nclin;

Rumenind la față ea vorbește lin:[...]

Căci să știți cu toții că un neam se face

Mare, sau se pierde cum femeii place »).

[3] Eugen Simion, *Dimineața poezilor*, Ed. Polirom, București, 2008, p. 162.

[4] Dimitrie Bolintineanu, *Opere alese*, Ed. pentru Literatură, București, 1961, p. 3 (texte original:

« Ca mărghăritarul albă

Și cu părul de ebin,

Ochi de foc și mînă dalbă,

Gura, grațios rubin ;

Naltă, delicată, fină,

Dar cu brațul rotunzior,

Sînul ei, sîn de vergină »).

[5] Dimitrie Bolintineanu, *Legende istorice*, éd. citée, p. 110 (texte original :

« Baba p-o cavală iute ca fulgerul

Trece-nainte,

Slabă și palidă, pletele-i fâlfaie

Pe oseminte »).

[6] Dimitrie Bolintineanu, *Opere alese*, éd. citée, p. 27 (texte original:

« O negresă, corp frumos,

Alta de la Ispahan,

Tînără, suavă, albă

Ca o floare din Liban.

Tip de rară frumusețe,

Roză cu arzînde fețe,

Din munți de I-Aderbaidjan.

Cu perfidă frumusețe,

Rîde cu lacrimi pe fețe,

Pe frumoasa mea Ioană,

Pe româna macedoană,

Floare cu plăcut parfum »).

[7] ibidem, p. 29 (texte original:

Ca Esmé mai dulce floare

Cu dezmierdător parfum... »).

[8] ibidem (texte original :

- « Este o sultană, floare de Bosfor !...
Păru-i este d-aur, fruntea-i e de crin !... »).
- [9] ibidem (texte original :
« Ei port femeile, dalbe ca zorile
Cele de vară »).
- [10] Ibidem, p. 127 (texte original :
« Oamenii au arme dalbe
Și femeile dulci nuri,
Cu gurițe
De lilițe,
Coame d-aur, fețe albe,
Ochii lai ca niște muri »).
- [11] Paul Cornea, *Aproapele și departele*, Ed. Cartea Românească, București, 1990, p. 211 (texte original: « ...a creat în poezia română un « topos » durabil al Bosforului, ca desfătare a simțurilor și « catharsis » al existenței »).
- [12] Mihai Dinu, *Un alt Bolintineanu – gânduri despre natura poeziei*, Ed. Spandugino, București, 2011, p. 99.
- [13] Ibidem, p. 42 (texte original : « o nouă înveșmântare verbală »).
- [14] Ibidem, pp. 47-48 (texte original: «... practic, într-o poezie franceză silabele accentuate ale cuvintelor pot ocupa orice poziție din cuprinsul unui vers, pe când versificația românească nu permite amplasarea acestora decât în anumite locuri, prescrise de norma ritmului respectiv »).
- [15] Teodor Vârgolici, *Note și comentarii la Dimitrie Bolintineanu, Opere I Poezii*, Ed. Minerva, București, 1981, p. 840 (texte original: « Dimitrie Bolintineanu are meritul de a ne fi dat o imagine autentică asupra exotismului oriental »).
- [16] Paul Cornea, *Opera lui Dimitrie Bolintineanu*, prefață la Dimitrie Bolintineanu, *Opere I Poezii*, Ed. Minerva, București, 1981, p. XXXI (texte original: « ...vehiculează un exotic de carton pictat »).

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L'aventure comme possibilité chez les personnages féminins de Marguerite Duras : *Un barrage contre le Pacifique*¹

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Résumé : S'inscrivant dans « l'espace autobiographique » (Ph. Lejeune) qui circonscrit tous les écrits de Marguerite Duras, *Un barrage contre le Pacifique* est, à une lecture de surface, un roman réaliste, violemment anticolonialiste. De fait, les aventures des personnages, dont l'authenticité est garantie par l'ancrage tant dans les réalités de l'espace colonial – l'Indochine française – que dans l'histoire personnelle de l'auteure, y sont projetées dans le mythe, à travers une écriture symbolique, hantée par les figures répétitives de la nostalgie des origines (y compris la figure archétypale de la « mère terrible », mais également « nourricière »). Condamnés à une existence tragique, dans un monde clos situé sous l'emprise de la fatalité naturelle (condensée dans le symbole de la grande marée de juillet) et humaine (l'injustice coloniale), les personnages et, en particulier, les femmes se laissent séduire par les fantasmes du bonheur, en substituant à la réalité misère des univers compensatoires, et à l'aventure réelle – l'aventure comme possibilité.

Mots-clés : roman anticolonialiste, parabole, symbole, figures mythiques féminines

Tout avait commencé avec une mort : la mort d'un vieux cheval. Pour les trois protagonistes du *Barrage contre le Pacifique* – la mère, Suzanne et Joseph -, ce « vieillard centenaire » représentait le lien avec le « monde extérieur » qui les faisait se sentir « moins seuls, [...] tout de même capables d'en extraire quelque chose, de ce monde, même si ce n'était pas grand-chose, même si c'était misérable, d'en extraire quelque chose qui n'avait pas été à eux jusque-là, et de l'amener jusqu'à leur coin de plaine saturée de sel, jusqu'à eux trois saturés d'ennui et d'amertume. C'était ça les transports : même d'un désert, où rien ne pousse, on pouvait encore faire sortir quelque chose, en les faisant traverser à ceux qui vivent ailleurs, à ceux qui sont du monde. »² Presque trois cent pages après, c'est la mère qui meurt, après une vie vouée à l'attente, à l'espoir, à la lutte et à la « folie », dans la même solitude de fin (et de commencement) de monde – le signe distinctif de cet univers de l'absence qui constitue le décor spécifique des romans de Marguerite Duras.

Commencé en 1947 et publié en 1950, *Un barrage contre le Pacifique* est considéré par les exégètes une sorte de livre-charnière qui contient et annonce tous les grands thèmes de l'œuvre durassienne, de sorte qu'on a pu parler, en ce qui le concerne, de « l'enfance du récit de Marguerite Duras »³ : l'univers féminin, l'amour et le sexe, la vie, l'anéantissement et la mort, mais surtout ce manque autour duquel s'articulera plus tard toute une poétique du vide et de l'absence dont Duras « parvient à faire [...] une épiphanie »⁴. Dans le *Barrage...*, cette obsession thématique du manque qui, par-delà son substrat autobiographique, est intimement liée, sans doute, au contexte de l'après-guerre, où les écrivains ont fait « l'expérience d'un effacement terrifiant, [...] [d']un blanc, [...] ce que l'on pourrait résumer par le motif d'une perte originaire »⁵, est visible tout premièrement au niveau de la construction des personnages, et en particulier des figures féminines.

La volonté de dépasser le tragique de l'existence qui engendre « un vide effrayant à l'intérieur d'eux-mêmes »⁶, entraîne les personnages du *Barrage...* dans une « recherche patiente et têtue de la perte d'identité ». Celle-ci aboutit, pour la mère, dans l'abandon à « cette forme de mort douce que constitue le sommeil »⁷ : « Elle avait aimé démesurément la vie et c'était son espérance infatigable, incurable qui en avait fait ce qu'elle était devenue, une désespérée de l'espoir même. Cet espoir l'avait usée, détruite, nudifiée à ce point, que son sommeil qui l'en reposait, même la mort, semblait-il, ne pouvait plus le dépasser. »

Confrontées à une nature-fatalité implacable qui règle leur existence – soit qu'il s'agit de la nature réelle, apparemment paradisiaque, de la plaine indochinoise, soit qu'il s'agit de leur nature profonde, également « sauvage », les femmes du *Barrage...* vivent des expériences déchirantes qui les font s'engager dans une quête perpétuelle des voies d'évasion.

Leurs vies se situent sous le signe d'une lutte permanente contre l'anéantissement existentiel engendré par la misère matérielle, par l'absence de l'amour, par la mort, autant d'expériences réelles dans le monde colonial, auxquelles on confère une dimension mythique.

La narration commence et finit précisément avec ce thème de la mort, après avoir dessiné une trajectoire existentielle *exemplaire* en ce qu'elle transcende le contexte réel qui s'inscrit tant dans la « grande histoire » - les réalités atroces du colonialisme (l'Indochine française d'avant la seconde guerre mondiale) – que dans l'espace-temps autobiographique (l'enfance et la jeunesse de Marguerite Duras⁸, à peine déguisées sous les masques fictionnelles), en glissant vers la parabole de la condition humaine.

Nourri de l'histoire « nue », dont les événements sont placés dans une indétermination temporelle recherchée, le récit du *Barrage...* s'ouvre vers l'écriture mythique, comme l'observe Hamida Drissi : « Le lecteur se trouve ainsi confronté à une écriture qui, en abolissant le temps ordinaire, instaure une durée mythique et tend en permanence vers l'exemplaire et l'universel. Outre cette temporalité condensée et mythique, les écrits de Marguerite Duras mettent en scène également une géographie personnelle et mythifiée, induisant une redistribution de la réalité référentielle. [...] Isolés entre la plaine, la forêt et la mer, les personnages de Marguerite Duras sont donc condamnés à vivre ou plutôt à survivre dans cet univers clos, plus souvent propice à la mort qu'à la vie. »⁹

Cette portée mythique et symbolique, fondée sur une « distorsion du réel » qui serait une constante de la poétique durassienne, est mise également en évidence par Jean-Luc Vincent dans son analyse du chronotope narratif et des personnages du roman. Tout en soulignant « le travail de brouillage » et le mouvement « itératif »¹⁰ opérés par Duras dans le plan de la temporalité narrative, Vincent observe que, dans le *Barrage...*, « les lieux sont bien inscrits dans une géographie qui semble réelle, ils font l'objet des descriptions de type réaliste, mais ils sont agencés dans l'économie globale du récit de telle façon qu'ils prennent [...] une valeur poétique » et « créent un espace symbolique, donnant ainsi une présence forte à des abstractions telles que le désir, le rêve ou la mort »¹¹.

Quant aux personnages, ils supportent le même traitement infligé par la distorsion de la matière réaliste. Prisonniers des rêves personnels qui leur assurent l'évasion (imaginaire) du monde tragique clos, ceux-ci deviennent de « figures mythiques ». C'est le cas, en particulier, de la mère : « Le roman fait de la mère une figure mythique » qui « ne vit que d'obsessions et de fantasmes (obsession de l'argent, obsession de la bonne éducation, fantasme d'une victoire possible sur l'océan), qui la mène au bord de la folie, d'une perception fautive du réel. L'amour qu'elle porte à ses enfants est violent, brutal, cruel. Il a quelque chose de primitif. La figure se rapproche du mythe parce qu'elle apparaît comme une condensation symbolique d'enjeux psychiques profonds et la réactivation d'interrogations anciennes, liées notamment à la figure de la mère nourricière. [...] Elle est symboliquement cette terre qu'elle veut à tout prix cultiver - terre nourricière et mère nourricière sont proches dans le discours mythique. »¹²

Terre et mère sont, en effet, intimement liées dans la construction de cet univers sauvage, où nature et homme - les « tigres assassins » et « leurs proies innocentes » - se confondent « dans une indifférenciation de commencement de monde », un *faux paradis*, où les enfants naissent pour mourir : « Car il en mourait tellement que la boue de la plaine contenait bien plus d'enfants morts qu'il n'y en avait eu qui avaient eu le temps de chanter sur les buffles. Il en mourait tellement qu'on ne les pleurait plus et que depuis longtemps déjà on ne leur faisait pas de sépulture. [...] Les enfants retournaient simplement à la terre comme les mangues sauvages des hauteurs, comme les petits singes de l'embouchure du rac. »

En occultant la signification nourricière originale qui unit la terre et la mère dans l'imagerie mythique primordiale, le *Barrage...* privilégie et multiplie les images de la maternité pervertie, inscrites dans « un monde agonisant »¹³, peuplé d'une humanité qui « se découvre originellement souffrante ».¹⁴ Car, dans les termes de Danielle Bajomée, « la

douleur est, pour elle [Duras, n. n.], la manifestation essentielle de l'être. » Ses personnages féminins en sont les projections en tant qu'êtres qui s'efforcent à « retrouver le sens du monde dans l'affectivité originaire, par-delà la joie et la peine. Dans la douleur d'être au monde. »¹⁵

Comportant un enjeu politique / militant, dont les personnages - et en particulier la mère - se font les porte-paroles, le roman opère un renversement à l'intérieur de la matrice mythique de référence, organisée autour de la constellation symbolique « mater-matrice-materia ».¹⁶ Mais cette imagerie du délabrement général, condensée dans la « folie » de la mère, s'y trouve « compensée » par une recherche acharnée du bonheur. Celle-ci vient contrebalancer la „vision du monde inquiète”, fondée sur „une conception désabusée” sur „l'intolérance du monde” marqué par „le manque de Dieu”¹⁷ („cette absence si présente”, dans les termes de l'écrivaine elle-même), dans une œuvre à « portée mystique », « qui manifestera jusqu'au bout l'état de dérégulation où se trouve l'homme »¹⁸. Lié à la tentative toujours renouvelée de réconcilier les contraires à travers « une écriture chercheuse »¹⁹, ce thème fondamental engendre « un pessimisme très joyeux, un pessimisme qui a le fou rire »²⁰.

Une esthétique du « gai désespoir »²¹ se dessine par-delà cette lutte perpétuelle qui transcende la mort même ; on la retrouve, résumée symboliquement dans l'expression étrange du visage de la moribonde, vers la fin du roman : « un visage écartelé, partagé entre l'expression d'une lassitude extraordinaire, inhumaine, et celle d'une jouissance non moins extraordinaire, non moins inhumaine. » Et, après la mort, dans la métamorphose de cette figure qui « cessa de refléter sa propre solitude et eut l'air de s'adresser au monde. Une ironie à peine perceptible y parut. [...] Peut-être aussi la dérision de tout ce à quoi elle avait cru, du sérieux qu'elle avait mis à entreprendre toutes ses folies. »

Victimes du « grand vampirisme colonial », prisonniers d'un univers tragique, situé sous le signe de la stérilité et de la mort, les protagonistes du *Barrage...*, la mère et ses deux enfants, s'efforcent de s'y évader à travers une quête de « l'absolu » - « un absolu qui n'a rien à voir aux mots abstraits des philosophes »²² -, tout en substituant au monde réel le rêve d'un monde possible. Pour la « mère terrible »²³, véritable symbole de la lutte contre « l'injustice humaine et divine », mais aussi de la face « terrible » de toute condition humaine²⁴, l'aventure comme possibilité est concentrée autour de l'utopie des barrages, dont la construction est reprise sans cesse par la voie de l'imagination, après l'écroulement des barrages réels, détruits par la grande marée de juillet.

C'est « une trop belle idée » qu'elle poursuivra jusqu'à sa mort et qui constitue aussi une forme de révolte contre l'absurdité de l'existence, un « geste » créateur censé transformer le *paradis dévasté* de la plaine indochinoise dans un pays du bonheur. C'est son fils, Joseph, qui éclaircit les significations profondes de cette lutte utopique : « C'était un vice incurable : „Je suis sûr que toutes les nuits elle recommence ses barrages contre le Pacifique. La seule différence c'est qu'ils ont ou cent mètres de haut, ou deux mètres de haut, ça dépend si elle va bien ou non. Mais petits ou grands elle les recommence toutes les nuits. C'était une trop belle idée.” »

C'est qu'en parlant aux paysans sur les « changements prochains de leur existence » sur les « *terres libérées* », la mère « se libérait enfin de tout un passé d'illusions et d'ignorance et c'était comme si elle avait découvert un nouveau langage, une nouvelle culture, elle ne pouvait se rassasier d'en parler. Des chiens, disait-elle, ce sont des chiens. *Et les barrages, c'était la revanche.* » [n. s.] Cette « vieille femme sans moyens qui leur disait qu'elle avait décidé de lutter les déterminait à lutter *comme s'ils n'avaient attendu que cela depuis le commencement des temps.* » [n. s.]

Ce *logos* à vertus *rédemtrices*, essentiel pour l'édification d'un monde où l'existence puisse regagner son sens, soit-il une construction placée dans un avenir incertain, devient une modalité d'abolir le tragique (sinon l'absurde), de briser le silence, de triompher de la fatalité « divine et humaine » : « Personnage excessif et allégorie vivante de l'injustice, la figure

maternelle cristallise à elle seule la lutte inégale contre la corruption administrative et les forces naturelles. [...] Et justement, la mère est un être profondément humain, qui refuse la soumission à une destinée aussi injuste qu'aveugle. Ne se résignant pas à subir la fatalité divine et humaine, elle se révolte et revendique sa liberté. »²⁵

Quant à Suzanne, en protagoniste d'un « roman d'apprentissage »²⁶, elle est aussi une perpétuelle chercheuse du bonheur (l'amour), dont la quête prend le plus souvent la forme de l'évasion dans des « paradis » imaginaires, tel que le cinéma²⁷, où elle « récupère » symboliquement la vie perdue par la mère, qui avait joué au piano, pendant dix ans, à l'Éden Cinéma, sans avoir jamais la possibilité de voir un film. Le dos tourné à l'écran, la mère avait rêvé, pendant cette période, à la concession censée leur offrir le bonheur compensatoire pour toute une vie de privations. Cet espace symbolique qui fonctionne dans le roman « comme métaphore de ce brouillage de la vérité et de l'illusion »²⁸ c'est, pour Suzanne, «[...] l'oasis, la salle noire de l'après-midi, la nuit des solitaires, la grande nuit égalitaire [...], plus vraie que la vraie nuit, plus ravissante, plus consolante que toutes les vraies nuits, la nuit choisie, ouverte à tous, offerte à tous, plus généreuse, plus dispensatrice de bienfaits que toutes les institutions de charité et que toutes les églises, la nuit où se consolent toutes les hontes, où vont se perdre tous les désespoirs, et où se lave toute la jeunesse de l'affreuse crasse d'adolescence. »

La jeune fille parvient donc à se projeter dans des « avatars » fournis soit par le cinéma ou la musique²⁹ soit par l'expérience des femmes qu'elle connaît à travers son tracé d'apprentissage : la prostituée et la femme fatale réunies dans les figures ambivalentes de Carmen – l'hôtesse de l'Hôtel « Central » (un « lieu de passage³⁰ et de passe »³¹) et de Lina – l'amante de Joseph, en tant que protagoniste d'un amour « interdit ».

En dernière analyse, il n'y a pas de hiatus entre l'utopie des barrages et les rêves d'amour de Suzanne : par-delà la vocation de la « perte de soi », dissimulée sous ce comportement « autiste » qui refuse à la fatalité (naturelle / divine et humaine) l'emprise de l'existence, l'échec des femmes durassiennes y est converti dans une revanche de la fiction personnelle sur la « terreur de l'histoire ».

Notes

[1] Cet article a été rédigé dans le cadre du projet PNII - IDEI, code 947, financé par le CNCSIS – UEFISCU.

[2] Toutes les citations sont tirées de l'édition: Marguerite Duras, *Un barrage contre le Pacifique*, Gallimard, Paris, collection Folio Plus Classiques, 2005.

[3] Simona Crippa, « Marguerite Duras, *Un barrage contre le Pacifique*. Géographie de la fuite », dans Anissa Talahite-Moodley (coord.), *Problématiques identitaires et discours de l'exil dans les littératures francophones*, Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 2007, p. 109.

[4] Aline Mura-Brunel, « Le pouvoir infini de l'infime », dans Stella Harvey, Kate Ince (éds.), *Duras, Femme du Siècle*: papers from the first international conference of the Société Marguerite Duras, held at the Institut français, London, 5-6 February 1999, Amsterdam-New York, Rodopi, 2001, p. 58.

[5] Dominique Rabaté, *L'entre-deux : fictions du sujet, fonctions du récit*, in Actes du colloque en ligne *Frontières de la fiction*, URL : <http://www.fabula.org/forum/colloque99/217.php>.

[6] Michèle Raclot, „La marginalité dans l'oeuvre romanesque de Marguerite Duras”, dans Eamon Maher (coord.), *Un regard en arrière vers la littérature d'expression française du XX^e siècle: questions d'identité et de marginalité : actes du colloque de Tallaght*, Tome 787 des *Annales littéraires de l'Université de Franche-Comté, Série Centre Jacques-Petit 107*, Besançon, Presses Universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2005, p. 178.

[7] Selon Danielle Bajomée, « dans le système de l'œuvre, la volonté d'abandon de l'adéquation de soi à soi s'effectue au profit d'une recherche patiente et têtue de la perte d'identité. La personne cherche à se défaire dans l'émiettement, l'effritement de sa singularité, ou bien encore, le plus souvent, dans cette forme de mort douce que constitue le sommeil, dans ce désir qui fait se confondre « rien », « dormir » et « mourir ». L'endormissement est pour les héroïnes de Duras, une manière de fuite, de suicide répétable. » (*Duras ou la douleur*, 2^e édition, Paris-Bruxelles, De Boeck & Larcier, Département Duculot, 1999, p. 22.)

[8] « Elle dit se placer au centre de sa création littéraire dont elle serait l'unique personnage, le plus important au moins, niant avoir une vie ordinaire en dehors de ses écrits. „Mes livres sont plus vrais que moi.” » (Marie-Pierre Fernandes, *Travailler avec Duras*, Paris, Gallimard, 1986, p. 195)

- [9] *L'œuvre de Marguerite Duras ou l'expression d'un tragique moderne*, Thèse de Doctorat en Littérature française, présentée et soutenue publiquement le 09/12/2008, Université Paris-Est, en ligne (version du 13 novembre 2009), URL: http://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/43/20/49/PDF/2008PEST0206_0_0.pdf, p. 58.
- [10] Cette structure répétitive est soulignée aussi par Hamida Drissi, qui la met en relation avec le récit « mythique » : « À travers une structure itérative et incantatoire, l'écrivain inscrit le récit du malheur familial dans la répétition, et c'est là, à en croire Claude Lévi-Strauss, une des caractéristiques principales du mythe [...] » (*op. cit.*, p. 52)
- [11] Jean-Luc Vincent, « Le texte en perspective », *Dossier*, dans Marguerite Duras, *Un barrage contre le Pacifique*, Gallimard, Paris, collection Folio Plus Classiques, 2005, p. 328, pp. 329-330.
- [12] *Ibidem*, p. 330.
- [13] Hamida Drissi, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
- [14] Michel Henry, *L'essence de la manifestation*, Paris, P.U.F, 1963, p. 828.
- [15] Danielle Bajomée, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
- [16] *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire. Introduction à l'archétypologie générale*, Bordas, 1984, p. 114.
- [17] Rodolphe Kobuszewski, *Marguerite Duras et la recherche du bonheur*, Paris, Editions Le Manuscrit, 2004, pp. 16-18.
- [18] *Ibidem*.
- [19] Alain Vircondelet, *Duras, Dieu et l'écrit* (Actes du Colloque de l'ICP sous la direction d'*Alain Vircondelet*), Editions du Koecher, 1998, p. 50.
- [20] *Ibidem*, p. 152.
- [21] Marguerite Duras, « La voie du gai désespoir », dans *Outside*, Ed. Albin Michel, Paris, [1981], P.O.L., Paris, 1984, p. 171.
- [22] Michèle Raclot, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
- [23] Pour Suzanne, la mère représente une sorte de „force impersonnelle”, comme „celle du vent, des vagues”: „La vie était terrible et la mère était aussi terrible que la vie.” Pour Carmen, elle est „un monstre dévastateur”: „Elle avait eu tellement de malheurs que c'en était devenu un monstre au charme puissant et que ses enfants risquaient, pour la consoler de ses malheurs, de ne plus jamais la quitter, de se plier à ses volontés, de se laisser dévorer à leur tour par elle.”
- [24] Hamida Drissi, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
- [25] Hamida Drissi, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.
- [26] Jean-Luc Vincent, *op. cit.*, p. 326.
- [27] « Pour Suzanne comme pour Joseph, aller chaque soir au cinéma c'était, avec la circulation en automobile, une des formes que pouvait prendre le bonheur humain. En somme, tout ce qui portait, tout ce qui vous portait, soit l'âme, soit le corps, que ce soit par les routes ou dans les rêves de l'écran plus vrais que la vie, tout ce que pouvait l'espoir de vivre en vitesse la lente révolution de l'adolescence, c'était le bonheur. »
- [28] Jean-Luc Vincent, *op. cit.*, p. 331.
- [29] Rappelons le leitmotiv du phonographe (et de la chanson aimée par Joseph, *Ramona*), véritable instrument « magique » qui permet l'évasion des deux frères au-delà du monde misère de la plaine.
- [30] Le *passage* constitue un leitmotiv de l'œuvre durassienne, comme le montrent Catherine Bouthors-Paillart et Christiane Blot-Labarrère qui le mettent en relation avec les métaphores du „métissage”: l'écriture de Duras „ [...] instaure une équivalence sémantique entre l'action de « passer » et le fantasme d'un corps à corps aveugle et anonyme. Aucun lien durable ne pouvant – et ne devant – se tisser, la rencontre sexuelle, nécessairement furtive, est vouée à l'évanescence, et en ce sens au métissage. (*Duras la métisse: métissage fantasmatique et linguistique dans l'oeuvre de Marguerite Duras*, Genève, Librairie Droz, 2002, p. 76).
- [31] Simona Crippa, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

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Reprezentări ale feminității în *Matca* de Marin Sorescu: Irina – gnoză și dialectică hegeliană

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Résumé : *La pièce Matca achève la trilogie „vouée à des personnages de la solitude” dont la „chute” réside dans le repli sur soi-même et dans la recherche de la liberté absolue. Si pour Iona, la thèse stoïcienne de la réconciliation avec les lois de l'univers trouvait son expression dans le déchargement gnostique de la matérialité, par le truchement de l'éventration, pour le Sacristain, le solipsisme offrait la solution erronée du passage vers la transcendance par le biais d'une création individuelle illusoire – la cathédrale de fumée, dans Matca, Irina symbolise l'irruption de la sagesse divine dans l'humain et l'Esprit hégélien en immanence, ayant parachevé la synthèse. L'héroïne s'avère être la représentation de l'archétype maternel dans le sens de Goethe, la Femme, le principe qui tient en balance la vie et la mort, ayant donné du sens à l'existence à travers l'enfantement et ayant sauvé l'humanité de l'anéantissement. Or, ce principe est renforcé par les symboles féminins de l'eau et de l'arbre, autant comme éléments constructifs et aussi conservatoires, en rappelant les renaissances périodiques de la nature. Entrée dans les creux du chêne en tant qu'espace d'une réclusion mystique et d'une concentration de la conscience de soi-même dirigée vers le surgissement dans le monde avec un but conscient assumé, suite à une évolution, noyée par les eaux en même temps initiatrices et destructives, Irina réussit par sacrifice personnel, l'acte créateur d'une renaissance postdiluvienne de l'humanité purifiée et régénérée en croyance et esprit, en annulant ainsi les associés au thème de la mort dans la littérature de l'aquatique: le complexe de Caron et le complexe d'Ophélie.*

Mots-clés : *l'archétype maternel, les symboles féminins, la gnose, la dialectique et l'Esprit hégélien, le complexe de Caron et le complexe d'Ophélie*

Motto: „Hegel – ce armură de zale! E și dialectic. (...) A învăța de la clasici morți nu e o vorbă în vânt. (...) Și cu asta am ajuns la problema eternului feminin, care nu se putea înțelege fără despicierea filosofiei. (...) Credeți că Gioconda n-ar mai vrea să scape din când în când – marțea și vinerea – de surâs?”

(Marin Sorescu, „Acțiunea după Hegel”

[1])

„Nimeni n-a demitizat nimic. Ce e mit e sfânt și nu se poate desfinți”

(Marin Sorescu, „A face mituri” [2])

Numai în piesa *Matca*, pe care urmează să o analizăm, personajul principal este o eroină tragică ce strălucește ca surorile ei, Antigona și Ifigenia. Este evident că feminitatea capătă, în teatrul lui Marin Sorescu, reprezentări complementare personajelor masculine; este principiul ce restabilește atât echilibrul lumii, cât și pe cel din spațiul dramatic, unde, insinuându-se fără ostentație „prin orice fisură a sufletului, aprinde, luminează, luminează până ajunge să incendieze” [3] ca privirea unei zeiță – fie Atena, Hestia, o *horai*, una dintre *parce*, zeițele ritmului cosmic, ale ciclicității temporale, veghind la echilibrul universal [4]. Opusă personajului sadovenian omonim care strălucea în lumea Bizanțului, Irina din *Matca* este reprezentarea arhetipului matern în sens goetheean, Femeia, principiul care ține cumpăna vieții înseși, dând sens existenței prin zămislire și salvând lumea de la dispariție. Menirea sa este, mitologic vorbind, să fie „dedicată păcii” sau „oferită pentru pace”, cea care primește în suflet pacea Mântuitorului [5]. Este cea aleasă pentru a trăi revelația vieții eterne, prin revărsarea Spiritului absolut în imanență, în lume – idee comună misticii augustinienne și filozofiei hegelienne. Eroina este capabilă să-și gândească prin anamneză propria naștere – traumatică părăsire a stării edenice, să nască spiritul liber (pruncul) și să se „nască” murind, iluminată. [6]

Numele eroinei amintește de Eirene, zeitate a păcii ținând într-o mână Cornul Abundenței și la sân pe Plutos (copil), fiul lui Demeter, zeul belșugului, cel orbit de Zeus pentru a explica hazardul și instabilitatea averii (aici, în piesă, a existenței materiale, căci toate „lucrușoarele” Irinei plutesc luate de vârtejurile crescând ca niște izvoare, din podele). Onomastica ce amintește de *Theogonia* lui Hesiod, complică mesajul piesei cu semnificații

legate de misteriiile Greciei antice, de miturile fecundității și renașterii periodice a naturii, deși atmosfera deluviană incită la o interpretare folcloric-religioasă a temei dominante – relația omului cu absolutul – se desăvârșește prin moartea senin acceptată. Poate că este interesant de amintit – deși analogia este poate, nefondată – că irenismul, orientare teologică ce susținea unificarea diferitelor confesiuni creștine pe baza elementelor comune, este o doctrină bazată pe studiul atent al miturilor grecești de către Sfântul Irineu, inițiatorul ei. E greu de crezut că doctrina l-ar fi putut interesa pe dramaturg, oferind-o ca o cheie de analizat relația cu celelalte piese din trilogia „căutării de sine”; și aici, ca și în *Iona* și *Paracliserul*, se răsfrâng, totuși, idei din zone mistico-filosofice variate: gnosticism, stoicism, ortodoxism, catolicism și protestantism, topite într-un raționalism idealist „răsucit”, cum spunea autorul, „cum ne taie capul” [7], doctrine despre care a căror influență în opera sa nu oferă nicăieri detalii explicite, lăsând să se înțeleagă că, în fond, echivocul receptării operei nu îl percepe ca un neajuns, ci dimpotrivă, ca o dovadă a bogăției ideatice.

Cu totul nou ca dramaturg și gânditor, chiar și pentru un public educat în aria teatrală ca cel francez, căruia i-a fost oferită prima punere în scenă a piesei analizate [8], Marin Sorescu este creatorul unei formule dramatice inedite, autodefinită ca „teatru poetic”, amintindu-ne vag de teatrul blagian. În tripticul inițial în care s-a căutat „cu multă îndărătnicie” [9], „o trilogie ce încheie o viziune, o obsesie”, în care „ultima va împinge explorarea ei pe o latură de absurd, de imposibil, grotesc, o tristețe expansivă și...donquijotescă de obsesii”, de care “trebuie să te eliberezi la timp”, finalizând „o criză existențială, a morții”[10], scriitorul transferă fiorul liric al sensibilității poetice din *Poeme*, *Moartea ceasului* și *Tineretea lui Don Quijote* în monologul însinguratului modern [11] (supraomul nietzschean, camusian prin revoltă metafizică), aflat în pericolul derivei și al alienării, care caută soluții ale ieșirii din absurdul existențial într-un dialog (ratat) cu o transcendență *absconditus*, a cărei tăcere îl determină să-și reafirme tragic umanismul prin mister, mit, gnoză, filosofie.

Eroul sorescian al trilogiei inceputurilor dramaturgice compune fenomenologic manifestările spiritului în maniera în care dialectica hegeliană a explicat sensul naturii umane în cadrul relației ontologice obiect-subiect, printr-un analogon dramatic al triadei filosofice, cu teză, antiteză și sinteză; el nu găsește salvarea în trăire, ci în cugetarea dumnezeirii, până la trufașul gând al identificării spiritului său cu Spiritul absolut. Piesa *Matca* încheie, după spusele autorului, „trilogia închinată unor personaje ale singurătății”, a căror „cădere” stă în concentrarea în sine și în căutarea libertății abstracte, dobândite prin devenire. „Fiecare dintre eroii cărora am încercat să le dau viață, spunea autorul, este un luptător pentru una din dimensiunile mari ale omului. Iona explorează zona căutărilor pe orizontală, Paracliserul caută absolutul pe verticală, iar Irina, femeia care naște, reprezintă matca originară.” [12]. Dacă pentru Iona, teza stoică a împăcării cu legile universului găsea expresia în despovărea gnostică de materialitate, dacă pentru Paracliser, solipsismul reprezenta soluția eronată a trecerii cu trup cu tot în transcendent, creația individuală iluzorie a realității „catedralei de fum” fiind modalitatea de anihilare a trupului de către un intelect/spirit conștient de sine, în *Matca*, Irina simbolizează însăși înțelepciunea divină / Spiritul absolut, sieși suficient, existență și concept pe care mintea omenească nu poate să le perceapă decât prin trăire.

Complexitatea acestei piese în două acte și șase tablouri (compoziție deloc întâmplătoare), elaborată în intervalul 1969-1973, a generat exegeze cu opinii diferite. S-au identificat „absurdul folcloric”(E. Papu [13]), teatrul ontologic [14], teatrul expresionist, propunând ca soluție a ieșirii din absurd creația, întoarcerea la primordial, recunoașterea sensului vieții (Crenguța Gânscă [15]), un teatru de tip metafizic și gnostic (Mircea Ghițulescu [16]), reminiscențe camilpetresciene (Ion Bogdan Lefter [17]) ori teatru filosofic, prin tema morții ca naștere (Valeriu Cristea[18]) și a vieții ca *iter perfectionis* (Marian Popescu [19]). Crenguța Gânscă observă că prin piesa *Matca*, „teatrul deriziunii”este adus în lume[20], dramaturgul realizând o resacralizare a ritualului cu scopul revenirii „în matcă” a lucrurilor

după împlinirea anevoioasă a soroacelor de „moarte bună” și de naștere, prin modelul sacrificiului uman, cerut de transcendență pentru reinstaurarea echilibrului, a normalității și a continuității perturbate de factori exteriori, mai ales de păcatele omenirii. Eugen Simion sublinia dimensiunea existențialistă a căutării spirituale a ieșirii în această „parabolă a dislocării universului” și a “încăpățânării de a exista” de influență beckettiană sau ionesciană [21], Nicolae Manolescu observa, cu justețe, că Sorescu n-a repetat nici formula lui Ionescu, nici pe cea a lui Beckett, renunțând atât la fabula brechtiană, cât și la “efectele de suprafață ale expresioniștilor”, pentru a exprima în fiecare piesă nu o alegorie, ci o metaforă a existenței, a înțelegerii raportului omului cu lumea, identificându-se cu ea și cu transcendentul. „Tema tuturor e rezistența omului asaltat de bizar și de irațional, afirmarea forței lui, chiar și în împrejurările cele mai tragice.” [22]

Această creație dramatică oferă, la o analiză genetică, detalii relevante pentru semnificațiile structurii dramatice și ale personajului. După spusele autorului, *Matca* are ca punct de plecare un poem inclus în piesă – *Ctitorie*, publicat în *Luceafărul*, 10 octombrie 1964, al cărui mesaj plutea, așteptând un nou text, în obsedanta arie tematică a creației și a rostului omului în univers. În „Cum am scris *Matca*”, text publicat în *Caietul program al Teatrului Mic*, stagiunea 1974-1975, republicat apoi cu titlul „Apa neîncepută” în edițiile de teatru, Marin Sorescu precizează că ideea vagă a piesei este anterioară scrierii piesei *Iona*, dar va fi scrisă după inundațiile din 1970, când scriitorul a vizitat zona sinistrată pentru a scrie un reportaj [23] și a aflat și terifianta poveste a bătrânului din sicriul plutitor, mort în timpul dezlănțuirii stihilor. [24]

O primă variantă a fost publicată în *România literară* [25] și alta în revista *Teatrul* [26], în 1973. În cea de-a doua, fiecare act are un tablou în plus, impus de apariția noilor personaje: Momâile, Vocea, Un cortegi. Piesa a fost apoi integrată în vol. *Setea muntelui de sare*, textul de aici fiind mai apropiat de prima variantă. Volumul oprit de „Direcția presei” [27] apărea la sfârșitul anului 1974. O a treia variantă, în 3 acte și 8 tablouri, a fost publicată în volumul *Matca* din colecția „Rampa”, din 1976, însoțită de prefața “Cum am scris *Matca*. Apa neîncepută”, metatext explicativ redactat după ce piesa a fost jucată cu succes, pe mai multe scene și după ce autorul însuși o regizase la Piatra-Neamț. [28]. În această variantă există și alte personaje, desprinse din lumea satului: Lelea Anica, Gaga Ioana, Titu Poantă, Silvica, dar și Prima momâie, A doua momâie (pe lângă Irina și Moșul), a căror existență a fost motivată de dramaturg după contactul cu scena, ca regizor, când a simțit „nevoia unei infuzii de magmă teatrală și de fapt aproape prozaic.” [29] În volumul *Ieșirea prin cer* s-a reprodus varianta intermediară din *Setea muntelui de sare*. [30]

Istoricul variantelor ne permite să avansăm ideea că profilul eroinei s-a definit de la început în toată complexitatea, cu amestecul interesant de influențe și elemente care au fuzionat în această piesă conferind semnificații diferite feminității și arhetipului feminin, fie din folclorul autohton, fie descoperite de autor în religie, în mituri universale, în doctrine ezoterice și în filosofie. Cât privește potențialul configurării personajului, trebuie amintită o interesantă realizare a rolului la premiera în țară, pe 19 octombrie 1974, la Teatrul Mic, în regia lui Dinu Cernescu, în distribuție fiind tragedia Leopoldina Bălănuță, cu o interpretare care oferea o construcție tridimensională a personajului feminin cu scopul relevării unei evoluții [31]. Celebra actriță a împărțit rolul cu Jeana Gorea și Ileana Dunăreanu, adică Irina I, Irina II, Irina III, lucru cu care însuși autorul a fost de acord – o altă nadă întinsă publicului și criticilor. [32] Ideea lui Dinu Cernescu ni se pare interesantă pentru explicitarea unei structuri triadice pe care Sorescu o avusese în vedere, în care se întrevăd dimensiunile specifice ale personajului: exponențială, semantică și relațională, ori mai curând funcțiile, greu de susținut de un singur actor în cazul unui personaj de complexitatea Irinei, care trebuie să asigure coeziunea piesei, să configureze psihologia acesteia și să exprime, sublimat, mesajul miracolului vieții care perpetuează, dar și al colectivității sau al epocii socialiste în înec pe care o reprezintă. Complexitatea viziunii

dramatice a fost, de altfel, o piatră de încercare și pentru alte echipe de teatru din București, Piatra-Neamț, Oradea, Brașov, Baia Mare, Brăila, Craiova sau din Helsinki ori Dortmund, dar și pentru criticii literari sau cronicarii dramatici tentați să identifice filiații.

S-a spus despre Irina că, fără să fie o inițiată, are și ea setea de absolut și de mântuire a personajelor dramatice soresciene. Ea parcurge traseul soteriologic în mod firesc, natural, esențial, prin împlinirea misiunii de a naște, fără scindarea conștiinței, ca Iona, care-și despică burta pentru a se elibera din robia materialității, fără revolta luciferică înlăturată prin anularea mentalului aprins de nebunia ignică. Irina trăiește iluminarea prin revelația menirii de mamă împlinite, care îi aduce și mântuirea, și iertarea rățacirii de a „lepăda”. Această femeie învinge singurătatea și absurdul din care Iona și Paracliserul n-au putut ieși teferi; simpla ei prezență înseamnă „echilibru, tradiție, continuitate. Sfârșit și început” [33], adică acces la cunoașterea Absolutului. După Hegel, a avea acces la cunoașterea absolută este desăvârșirea și acest lucru nu înseamnă a ști totul (Moșul crede că învățătura i-a dăunat Irinei, nu mai poate naște ușor, ca „proasta”), ci dimpotrivă, este cunoașterea „săracă, goală, abstractă” care îți dă șansa de a te elibera de lanțurile vechii lumi, gata să accepți noul. Irina e gata să renunțe la ceea ce a învățat pentru o naștere firească, adică pentru întoarcerea la înțelegerea nemijlocită, elementară, a tot ce există. Spiritul ei trece prin cele șase momente hegeliene, încriptate în tot atâtea scene în piesă: conștiința care percepe interioritatea și suprasensibilul, conștiința de sine care se analizează ca apariție, rațiunea care se raportează lucidă și pragmatică la evenimente, spiritul obiectiv, capabil să respingă superstițiile Momâilor, trăirea religiozității profunde, care permite cunoașterea absolută, când Spiritul absolut coboară, iluminând omenescul.[34] Într-un plan filosofic al căutării sensului și esenței, *Matca* este metafora sinelui regăsit, căci revărsarea deschide, paradoxal, abisul interior al omului, în care se reflectă iraționalul divin, absurdul. Camusiana ieșire din absurd din *Iona* și *Paracliserul*, fie prin sinucidere, fie prin „sinucidere filosofică” în metafizică e depășită prin cea de-a treia cale, a rămânerii în contradicție cu conștiința lucidă a întâlnirii cu finitudinea. În momentul stingerii, Moșul vorbește de o cădere pe care o putem interpreta hegelian drept concentrare în sine. Moartea este premisa nașterii și a vieții, viața este devenire [35] dialectică a Ideii/ Spiritului conștient de sine care se exteriorizează în natură, cunoaște răul [36], stadiu care poate fi imperfect, ca în cazul lui Iona, care să ruga să mai fie născut o dată și care tinde să se întoarcă în sine, ca să renască prin moartea trupească. Dialectica acestei triadice evoluții alternează și anulează diferențele dintre cunoaștere și non-cunoaștere, bine și rău, uman și divin, viață și moarte. Cel mai important lucru este contradicția – o cădere temporară, din care Spiritul se întoarce spre sine îmbogățit. „Tatăl e celălaltul fiului, iar fiul e celălaltul tatălui; în afară de raportarea sa la fiu, tatăl este doar un bărbat în general, dar nu tată, tot așa cum sus și jos, drept și stâng – afară de raportare – sunt numai locuri în general. Departe de a constitui o infirmitate, contradicția este rădăcina oricărei mișcări și vieți”[37]. Ca filosof idealist, Hegel atribuie Ideii o proprietate misterioasă, asemănătoare puterii creatoare de viață a lui Dumnezeu. În Irina se manifestă această forță, independentă de voința sa – voința Spiritului Absolut pe care eroina o intuiește, numind-o „solidaritatea lucrurilor gravide.”

Textul dramatic sorescian se hrănește, evident, din sursa vetero-testamentară. Irina adăpostindu-se în scorbura stejarului pentru a înțelege sensul devenirii sale prin anamneza propriei veniri în lume e la fel de uimită ca Avraam de arătarea divinității la stejarul de la Mamre, când cei trei călători, Sfânta Treime, îi prezic un prunc de la bătrâna Sarra, pe Issac, cel făgăduit să fie sacrificat ca semn al credinței. Pruncul Irinei este prețul cerut de divinitate pentru iertare. Fiecare nou-născut e prețul și promisiunea credinței omenești și a iertării divine. Desigur, ocultarea semnificației face dificilă interpretarea, datorită devierii acțiunii sacre și reconfigurării funcțiilor, lucru care se întâmplă frecvent în spațiul sorescian; teofania o vizează pe aceea care are în piesă misiunea sacră, nu pe soțul ei, inconștient de responsabilitatea creației, dar nu rupt de jertfă, căci și el ajută sinistrații, e dedicat Binelui, gata de sacrificiul de

sine. Dumnezeirea îi „vorbește” femeii direct, prin foc și fulger, cum n-a făcut în Biblie, unde a comunicat numai cu bărbații: cu Avraam, cu Moise, cu Noe... Familia unui Noe absent (artificiul personajului absent apare și în piesele istorice) – Irina, soțul ei, reprezentând o omenire mobilizată să țină întregi digurile, Moșul, înțeleptul, pruncul aducător de speranță – are, ca în Biblie, șansa unei salvări și a mântuirii, indiferent cum se va produce, fie prin salvarea altor vieți, fie prin păstrarea poruncilor până la moartea „de moarte bună”, fie prin redempțiune, fie prin perpetuarea vieții, prin naștere. Dar arca îi adăpostește simbolic și pe Iona, și pe Paracliser, după cum autorul însuși insinuează vorbind despre legătura dintre piesele trilogiei. Numărul ordonator 3 exprimă „emergența spiritului, verticalitatea *axis mundi*, cele trei lumi ale Tradiției, care asigură transcenderea dualității. Acesta duce la revelație (vezi momentul extatic al Irinei, înainte de moarte), odată cu moartea eului. Trebuie să te golești de tine însuși și de ambițiile deșarte dacă vrei să primești frumusețea Unului”. [38] E aici o întreagă soteriologie creștină și populară, rostită în metafore: să te lepezi de materialitate, să înfrânezi Eul, individualul, care trebuie să slujească sufletului care trăiește profund, cu înțelepciune, miracolul vieții.

Casa Irinei, rămasă fără acoperiș – simbol al sufletului legat de dumnezeire – devine, într-o “antiteză foarte hugoliană”, noua „arca lui Noe, cu sicriul tatălui leagăn fiului”, care va fi salvat de apele dezlănțuite. În acest „teatru al speranței”, „aproape un teatru religios, căci este vorba despre redempțiunea umană prin femeie”, cronicarul Michael Jörmann identifica la premiera pariziană a piesei, reminiscențe ale poeziei și viziunii escatologice senine a lui Paul Claudel, fără nicio urmă de absurd și disperare, deoarece „noua omenire este în mers”, salvată după potop prin pruncul rămas în viață. [39] Izvor al vieții, existența Irinei se pierde în final în apele distructive și zămislitoare în același timp, jertfa ei fiind actul întemeietor al unei renașteri postdeluviene a omenirii „din burta cea mare a mării”, expresia pământului purificat și a omenirii primenite în credință. Ca orice mare simbol, și apele, ca și pământul, reprezintă, pe diferitele paliere ale mesajului piesei, originile, sufletul și trupul matern.

Un alt demers de antropologie culturală ne apropie de matca unei culturi tradiționale, eternă prin principiile sale, prin legăturile transcendente, regăsită după ruperea digurilor (estetice) care au produs dezastrul (cultural).

Altă interpretare a mesajului transmis de personaj ar putea fi „năzuința reintegrării omului în mersul cosmosului”, cum ar spune Mircea Eliade. Irina, „Magna Mater”, este expresia „principiului constructiv și conservativ” „eterna metamorfoză a existenței terestre, a nașterii și creșterii, a prefacerii și nimicirii”, așa cum o relevă semnificațiile numelui mitologic. [40] Tot ea este ciclicitatea temporală care guvernează ordinea anotimpurilor, ritmurile comice, practicile agrare.

În general, prezența femeii, ca iubită, femeie, mamă sau fiică presupune legătura cu cotidianul, bărbatul fiind, în teatrul sorescian, acela interesat de metafizic, de chei soteriologice. Credem că Irina desfide această regulă, accesul ei la sacru fiind necondiționat, purificat pe deplin de determinismul subordonării față de familie (fie soțul, plecat cu barca să salveze vieți, sau cu tatăl răposat). Doar Mama și Fiul; Femininul purtând sâmburele Masculinului, pentru refacerea echilibrului pierdut al universului...

S-a vorbit adeseori despre filonul gnostic al teatrului sorescian. Din acest unghi, Irina este însăși Sophia, întru chiparea Înțelepciunii, cea iertată pentru rătăcire. Înțelepciunea nu era doar locașul lui Iahve, ci chiar „emanația sa creatoare”, „slava”, „însăși clarviziunea, în ea se regăsește întreaga capacitate de Cunoaștere și de Conștiință”, în ea „se află duh de înțelegere, sfânt, fără pereche, cu multe laturi, nepământesc, ager, pătrunzător, neîntinat, preaînțelept, fără de patimă, iubitor de bine, ascuțit, neoprit, binefăcător, iubitor de oameni, neclintit, temeinic, netulburat, atotputernic, atotvegător, și răzbătând prin toate duhurile istețe, curate și oricât de subțiri” [41] Asociată cu simbolul copacului [42], Înțelepciunea își are rădăcina în frica de Dumnezeu, în echilibrul dintre materie și spirit dobândit prin autocunoaștere și integrare

acceptată în universal.[43] „Mi-am adus în atelier stejarul falnic/ Și l-am spânzurat de un cui/ Cu coroana în jos.” spunea Marin Sorescu în poemul *Vânat*, recreând o imagine gnostică – arborele sefirotic, imagine semnificativă și în piesă. Irina intră în scorbura stejarului, spațiu al reclusiunii mistice și al concentrării conștiinței de sine spre propria ivire în lume cu un rost conștientizat, asumat, urmând unei evoluții.

Secvența finală impune o eroină tragică în tradiția antică în care coexistă imaginea celei „alese” pentru a dura „ctitoria” vieții, jertfa pentru izbăvirea întregii omeniri, femeia care se îngrijește de îndeplinirea datinei, mama care-și învață fiul firescul râsului, al respirației, al vieții, rânduiala, educatoarea care îl încurajează pe tânărul cu logodnica moartă, desprins parcă dintr-o pictură de Chagall, să creadă în speranță. Statutul său de „pacient tragic” se naște din „convertirea în sublim a morții ei premature. Ea înfruntă limita prin pruncul căruia îi dă viață și pe care îl salvează cu trupul ei – prelungire a ființei ei dincolo de limită.”[44] și prin apărarea, cu prețul sacrificiului de sine, a valorilor umane: credință, iubire, speranță. Ea trăiește în ceea ce Hegel numește „existență pură”, lipsită de orice determinare, starea în care existența nu se mai distinge de non-existență, fiind ființare în Absolut. Irina reușește actul întemeietor al unei renașteri a omenirii purificate și primenite în credință și în spirit, anulând complexe asociate temei morții în literatura dramatică a acvaticului sorescian – piesele *Matca* și *Iona*: complexul lui Caron și complexul ofelian.

Note

[1] Marin Sorescu, „Acțiunea după Hegel (rezumat conștiincios)”, în *Cinema*, nr. 5, mai 1969, p. 9, integrat în vol. *Teoria sferelor de influență*, apud Marin Sorescu, *IV. Publicistică*, Editura Fundației Naționale pentru Știință și Artă și Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2005, p. 179, notă la pp. 1496-1497

[2] Marin Sorescu, „A face mituri”, în *Luceafărul*, nr. 37, 15 septembrie 1969, p. 7, integrat în vol. *Insomnii*, apud Marin Sorescu, *Opere, IV. Publicistică*, Editura Fundației Naționale pentru Știință și Artă și Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2005, p. 270, notă la p. 1504

[3] Marin Sorescu, „Femeia ca atare” (*Teoria sferelor de influență*), în vol. *Opere*, vol. IV, *Publicistică*, ed. cit. p. 185 [4] Eunomia (Disciplina), Dike (Dreptatea) și Eirene (Pacea) sunt cele 3 *horai* care păzesc porțile Olimpului și „veghează timpul universului, în succesiunea dintre atemporalitatea primordială și timpul calculabil, uman, izbăvitorul tuturor”. Victor Kernbach, *Dicționar de mitologie generală*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1989, pp. 162, 229, 475

[5] Aurelia Bălan Mihailovici, *Dicționar onomastic creștin*, Editura Minerva, 2003, p. 299

[6] Teme ca moartea, nașterea au la Sorescu abordări paradoxale. Valeriu Cristea analizează moartea ca naștere în teatrul sorescian. Vezi Valeriu Cristea, *Ferestra criticului*, Editura Cartea Românească, București, 1987, pp. 144-148 [7] Vezi nota [1].

[8] Georges Gros, cronică la *Matca*, jucată la Nouveau Théâtre de Poche din Paris, în *Le Courrier*, 17 octombrie 1974, apud Marin Sorescu, *Opere, III, Teatru*, Editura Academiei Române și Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2003, p. 1772

[9] Marin Sorescu, „Extemporal despre mine”, în *Vatra*, nr. 4, 20 aprilie 1981, p. 4-5, apud Marin Sorescu, *Opere, V. Publicistică*, Editura Fundației Naționale pentru Știință și Artă și Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2005, p. 1050, notă la p. 1369

[10] Smaranda Jelescu, „Carnet de lucru”, în *Scânteia Tineretului*, 29 iulie 1967, p. 2, apud Marin Sorescu, *Opere, V. Publicistică*, Editura Fundației Naționale pentru Știință și Artă și Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2005, pp. 884-885, notă la p. 1360

[11] „Structura poemelor mele este foarte apropiată de monolog: nu-mi rămânea decât să fac trecerea de la monologul interior la monologul scenic sau la dialog” interviu sorescian acordat lui Boris Buzilă, „Am crezut întotdeauna că poezia ascunde un sentiment real, că nu există vers în care să nu intre o fărâmă de suflet”, în *Magazin*, 27 februarie 1971, p. 4, apud Marin Sorescu, *Opere, V. Publicistică*, Editura Fundației Naționale pentru Știință și Artă și Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2005, pp. 807-908, notă la p. 1361.

[12] Interviul acordat de Sorescu lui Carmen Tudora, „Cu Marin Sorescu despre teatru”, în *România literară*, nr. 14, 5 aprilie, 1973, p. 20, apud Marin Sorescu, *Opere, V. Publicistică*, Editura Fundației Naționale pentru Știință și Artă și Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2005, p. 937, notă la p. 1363

[13] Edgar Papu, în Caietul-program al Teatrului „Lucia Sturdza Bulandra”, stagiunea 1976-1977, apud Marin Sorescu, *Opere, III, Teatru*, ed. cit., p. 1780

[14] Valentin Silvestru, în cronică spectacolului „Matca” în regia lui Dinu Cernescu, afirma că este „o piesă despre istoria existenței”, exagerând, după clișeele epocii, interpretarea realist-materialistă prin elogiul

speranței și analiza fondului tragic prin împiedicarea exercitării drepturilor naturii umane – nașterea, moartea, nunta, piedici peste care omul contemporan trece, atestând „adevărul științific că între ontologie și gnoseologie e o unitate dialectică”. În Marin Sorescu, *Ieșirea prin cer*, Editura Eminescu, București, 1984, pp. 96-97

[15] Crenguța Gânscă, *Opera lui Marin Sorescu*, Editura Paralela 45, Pitești, 2002, pp. 124, 128.

[16] Mircea Ghițulescu, *O panoramă a literaturii dramatice române contemporane*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1984, pp. 236-238.

[17] Ion Bogdan Lefter, „Teatrul lui Marin Sorescu”, În *Steaua*, nr. 7, 1981, pp. 44-45

[18] Valeriu Cristea, „Porțile nașterii”, *România literară*, nr. 41, 9 octombrie 1986, p. 4

[19] Marian Popescu, *Chei pentru labirint*, Editura Cartea Românească, București, 1986

[20] Crenguța Gânscă, op. cit., p. 150

[21] Eugen Simion, „Teatrul lui Marin Sorescu”, (I, II), în *România literară*, nr. 4 și 5, 25 ianuarie, 1 februarie 1975, p. 6, apud Marin Sorescu, *Opere, III, Teatru*, ed. cit., p. 1775

[22] Nicolae Manolescu, „Un teatru al speranței”, în *România literară*, nr. 4, 23 ianuarie 1975, p. 9, în Nicolae Manolescu, *Literatura română postbelică*, vol. 2, *Proza. Teatrul*, Editura Aula, pp.341-342

[23] Marin Sorescu, „Până la genunchi, până la brâu, până la cer”, *Luceafărul*, nr. 21, 23 mai 1973, p. 1

[24] „A poluat cu găleata, a poluat cu fântâna”, iar „robinetele au fost uitate deschise în cer, ca la potop” și râurile „s-au răsucit pe cotoare, deschizându-se ca niște coperti de apocalipsă” Marin Sorescu. „Vânturile, valurile...” în *Cinema*, nr. 6, iunie 1970, p. 6, în Marin Sorescu, *Opere, V. Publicistică*, Editura Fundației Naționale pentru Știință și Artă și Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2005, p. 1329

[25] În *România literară*, nr. 30, 26 iulie 1973, pp. 16-18

[26] *Teatrul*, nr. 9, septembrie 1973, pp. 37-56.

[27] *Vezi Cartea albă a Securității*, 1996, p. 43

[28] În 1975, Marin Sorescu a regizat spectacolul de la Teatrul Tineretului din Piatra-Neamț, împreună cu scenograful Liviu Ciulei.

[29] „Era momentul când elaboram ciclul *La Lilieci* și eram îmbibat de lumea satului. Astfel am amplificat schema inițială, dând, după părerea mea, mai multă carne, și mai multă vitalitate verificabilă pornind de la niște fapte concrete și trăite.” Valentin Silvestru, „Cu Marin Sorescu despre temele vitale ale teatrului”, în *România literară*, nr. 7, 13 februarie 1986, p. 4-5.

[30] Marin Sorescu, *Opere, III, Teatru*, ed. cit., p. 1299

[31] Premiera absolută a piesei *Matca* a avut loc la 17 octombrie 1974, pe scena de la Le Nouveau Théâtre de Poche din Geneva, cu scenariul în traducerea Anei Giugariu, cu rolul principal jucat unitar de Leyla Aubert.

[32] În cronică spectacolului, Valentin Silvestru formula întrebări retorice cu privire la această opțiune regizorală: „Regizorul a desfăcut rolul Irinei, alăturându-i actriței alte două interprete, care-i preiau replici, dar, evident, odată cu ele, și moduri de exprimare a stărilor de spirit, pauperizând personajul unic. Celelalte două actrițe Jeana Gorea și Ileana Dunăreanu joacă mulțumitor, într-o relație cursivă cu protagonistul, dar în acest fel nu i s-a răpit acesteia ceva din prerogativa complexității ce i-a fost dăruită de text? Nu se risipesc de parte din «zicerile» importante ale textului? Să nu fi avut regizorul încredere în susținerea întregului rol, atât de dificil, de către o singură interpretă?” Valentin Silvestru, în Marin Sorescu, *Ieșirea prin cer*, Editura Eminescu, București, 1984, pp. 96-97

[33] Marin Sorescu, “Dramaturgul despre...”, în volumul Marin Sorescu, *Ieșirea prin cer*, p. 533

[34] *Enciclopedie de filosofie și științe umane*, All Educational, București, 2004, p. 425

[35] Devenirea este „neliniștea în sine” și „ceea ce mână lumea înainte e contradicția”. Grigore Spermezan, *Introducere în gândirea unor mari filosofi*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 2006, p. 116

[36] G. W. F. Hegel, *Fenomenologia spiritului*, Editura Academiei R.S. R., București, 1965, p. 440

[37] G. W. F. Hegel, *Știința logicii*, Editura Academiei R.S. R., București, 1966, p. 65

[38] Julien Behaeghel, *Biblia în lumina simbolurilor*, Editura Paralela 45, Pitești, 2010, p. 193

[39] Michael Jörmann, în *Geneve*, 21 octombrie 1974, apud Marin Sorescu, *Opere, III, Teatru*, ed. cit., p. 1773

[40] Mircea Eliade, *Mitul reintegrării*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2003, pp. 14-15

[41] Julien Behaeghel, op. cit., p. 295

[42] „Mi-am adus în atelier stejarul falnic/ Și l-am spânzurat de un cui/ Cu coroana în jos.” – imaginea ezoterică evidentă pe care Marin Sorescu o reprezenta în poemul *Vânat* este funcțională și în piesă. Irina întră în scorbura stejarului, spațiu al reclusiunii mistice și al concentrării conștiinței de sine spre propria ivire în lume cu un rost conștientizat, asumat

[43] Julien Behaeghel, op. cit., pp. 297-299

[44] Crenguța Gânscă, op. cit., p. 152

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Procédés textuels de qualification de la femme dans les poèmes courtois

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Abstract: Starting with the 12th century, the courteous society grants the woman with a new role together with the changing of gender relations. This is a deeply enrooted in the historical, social and political background from the „second feudal age and it has an aristocratic and elitist meaning. The woman’s newly acquired statute is perfectly illustrated by the collective imaginary of the 12th - 14th centuries and it stands for the main theme of troubadours’ literary creation. A brief presentation of several feminine characters from courteous lyrical texts points out the main features of the moral and esthetical doctrine set in medieval France as well as the basic aspects of an authentic and rich art.

Key words: courteous lyricism, Middle Ages, feudality, aristocracy, feminine character.

Pendant le deuxième âge féodal, la femme jouit d’une grande importance sociale. Elle réussit, par le nouveau rôle que la société courtoise lui assigne, à changer les rapports des sexes et à produire des modifications dans les mœurs. On assiste dans cette période à une prééminence de la femme dans le domaine moral et intellectuel, car, par son instruction et par l’intérêt qu’elle accorde aux arts, elle propose un nouveau style de vie à l’intérieur de la cour royale et seigneuriale. En outre, ses attributions ne se résument pas à un embellissement des mœurs et des châteaux, car elle participe effectivement à l’administration du fief. Ce terme, forgé à partir du mot latin « feodum », désigne la terre concédée par le suzerain à son vassal par un acte symbolique appelé « cérémonie d’investiture ». C’est par cette procession que s’établissent des liens personnels entre deux membres des couches sociales dominantes, pour rappeler publiquement l’existence d’une relation de féodalité entre elles. Le vassal doit servir la justice et la paix et s’oblige à aider et à conseiller son suzerain. En échange, le seigneur lui assure la possession paisible d’un fief dont le revenu lui permet de vivre noblement et de s’équiper pour la guerre.

L’adjectif « courtois » (*cortois*, de l’ancien français « court » – cour) date depuis le milieu du XIII^e siècle et désigne tout ce qui appartient à une cour, royale ou seigneuriale. Il définit tout un système idéologique fondé sur la fin’amor occitane, sur une sorte de religion de l’amour, tout en renvoyant à toutes les qualités spirituelles et physiques qui caractérisent les gens de cour : l’élégance, la politesse, la générosité, l’art de parler etc. En tant que phénomène social, culturel et littéraire à la fois, l’amour courtois (*Fin’Amors*, *Amistat*, *bon amors*, *Amor valen*) retrouve ses racines solides dans le climat historique, social et politique du XII^e siècle et représente de ce point de vue « l’aboutissement extrême du raffinement de la courtoisie » par la coordination de « l’élément féminin », de « l’élément chevaleresque » et de « l’élément savant ». [1]

L’idéologie de la fin’amor se trouve également à la base des romans courtois, sous la forme d’une soumission totale du chevalier à sa Dame dans le cadre d’un amour nécessairement adultère (*l’amor mixtus*). Ce « sentiment absolu » apparaît d’abord comme une tentative de transposer dans le domaine des relations amoureuses le respect de la chevalerie et les rapports de vassal à suzerain, « sans se confondre avec la passion fatale et aveugle, car la raison et la volonté y interviennent. » [2]

Par son essence aristocratique et donc élitiste, il s’oppose totalement à l’amour gaulois. La dame aimée et son amant ont une bonne éducation et possèdent des qualités comme : « valor » (vertu, éclat seigneurial), « ricors » (puissance), « pretz » (honneur, mérite), « paratge » (noblesse), « mezura » (contrôle de soi, patience, humilité, dont le contraire est la « leujaria » - l’imprudence, la légèreté), « blandimen » (art de complimenter), « largueza » (générosité), « jovens » (ferveur), covivensa (tolérance) etc. Tout cela engendre

le « joy » – la joie de vivre, un sentiment exaltant, de tonalité souvent mystique, qui exprime l'union des cœurs des deux amants.

L'historien littéraire Emmanuèle Baumgartner considère que ce thème de l'amour parfait, fin et délicat ne représente dans la conception des poètes courtois que « la métaphore d'une autre quête : celle du poème qui rendrait dans sa plénitude la jouissance éprouvée par l'amant du verbe à « trouver » l'expression la plus parfaite ». [3] Leur but essentiel serait donc « l'extase de l'invention poétique ».

La « canso » est la forme maîtresse de la lyrique occitane, étant considérée comme le modèle canonique du genre. Ses strophes sont construites sur des structures très variées : les « coblas unissonans » reprennent les mêmes rimes, tandis que les « coblas doblas » et les « coblas singulars » contiennent des rimes qui changent toutes les deux strophes et, respectivement, qui représentent une seule unité strophique. Sa dernière strophe s'intitule « tornada » en langue d'oc et « envoi » chez les trouvères. Cette forme poétique a donc une structure très bien définie et une thématique riche, construite sur quelques motifs essentiels : la « reverdie » (l'ouverture printanière) ; la louange de la beauté, de la « valeur » et du « prix » de la dame ; l'expression alternée de la douleur et de la joie du poète-amant ; les invectives contre les rivaux (les « losengiers », espions du couple et/ou détracteurs du poète) etc.

Il faut quand même observer que le discours amoureux « esthétisé, ritualisé et moralisé » des troubadours ne représente pas leur unique centre d'intérêt. Leur répertoire contient, au contraire, des sujets moraux, religieux ou politiques, abordés dans :

- la chanson de croisade, composée pour encourager les chevaliers à prendre part aux guerres saintes organisées contre les infidèles. Elle est inscrite dans la catégorie du sirventé et prend la forme d'un sermon chanté, dont le but vise à décourager les athées, les lâches et les débauchés. (ex. Marcabru, *Pax in nomine Domini!*, Thibaud de Champagne, *Seigneurs sachiez qui or ne s'en ira*, Conon de Béthune, *Le pèlerin d'outre-mer*) ;

- la chanson pieuse, écrite sur le modèle des chansons courtoises, pour honorer Dieu et la Vierge ;

- le planh (de « planctus » – déploration), composé à l'occasion de la mort d'un prince ou d'un autre personnage politique, chanté en décasyllabes sur une mélodie grave, aux accents tragiques. Il contient trois parties: l'expression des sentiments de douleur du poète, la présentation des mérites du personnage disparu et la demande d'aide et d'indulgence auprès de Dieu. (Ex : Gaucelm Faidit, *Planh sur la mort de Richard Coeur-de-Lion*).

- le sirventé (serventois) est un poème de circonstance mettant en œuvre des problèmes de l'actualité sur un ton souvent satirique ou moralisant. La forme des vers, les rimes et les couplets ressemblent aux traits de la chanson courtoise, mais, à l'opposé de celle-ci, il n'exprime pas un sentiment individuel, mais un état affectif partagé par plusieurs personnes. (ex. Bertrand de Born, *Ben me plaît le gai temps de Pâques*).

Les troubadours sont poètes et musiciens à la fois, dont le nom dérive du latin médiéval « trobar » ou « tropare » – « trouver ». Le sens étymologique de ce terme renvoie au développement des « tropes » [4], dès 1150, au nord du domaine occitan. Ces poètes créent des types de vers, de rimes, de modèles strophiques et des motifs littéraires qui se trouvent à la base de la poésie occidentale. Leur œuvre, surtout lyrique, chante le printemps, les fleurs, l'amour heureux, l'amour lointain ou perdu. Les historiens littéraires ont identifié l'existence de trois « classes » de troubadours, reflétant trois conceptions de l'art poétique: *le trobar leu* (composition simple, poésie facile), qui privilégie la clarté et la sobriété, supposant une versification simple et un contenu transparent, facilement compréhensible (ex. Jaufré Rudel, Bernard de Ventadour) ; *le trobar clus* (composition fermée, hermétique, art extrême, obscur, réservé aux initiés), qui exprime le raffinement des concepts liés à la courtoisie par un vocabulaire ambigu, supposant une métrique compliquée ; c'est une poésie hermétique,

énigmatique, qui se veut une meilleure traduction de l'essence de l'amour, mais qui rend le message obscur, accessible à une élite seulement. (ex. Marcabru, Raimbaut d'Orange et surtout Arnaut Daniel) et *le trobar ric* (composition riche, ayant à la base des recherches techniques virtuoses), qui envisage une correction extrême du langage et la perfection formelle. Cette dernière catégorie de créateurs porte également le nom de **trobar covert** (caché, secret) ou *trobar sotil* (raffiné, subtil). [5]

Toutes les catégories de créateurs médiévaux énumérées ci-dessus reflètent très bien dans leur œuvre l'importance que la femme acquiert dans la France des XII^e-XIV^e siècles. Dans ce qui suit, nous nous proposons d'illustrer la conception des troubadours et des trouvères là-dessus, à partir d'un corpus formé de cinq poèmes lyriques appartenant à des auteurs connus et/ou anonymes de la période envisagée. Ils ont eu le mérite de synthétiser les idées de l'imaginaire collectif médiéval pour refléter les aspects majeurs de l'idéologie courtoise, au centre de laquelle se trouve la « *domna* ».

La dame - maîtresse, « jamais vue et indifférente »

Le poème suivant prend la forme d'un « vers » – modèle pré-classique de la chanson courtoise, car on n'y peut pas faire de distinction entre la « *tornada* » et les « *coblas* ». Il appartient à un grand seigneur, Guillaume IX, duc d'Aquitaine (1071-1127), dont le domaine s'étendait de la Loire aux Pyrénées. Son œuvre marque le début de la poésie lyrique née sur le sol de France. Il est considéré de son vivant comme un grand séducteur, un provocateur sans égal, qui a mené une vie débauchée.

A la douceur de la saison nouvelle, / Feuillent les bois, et les oiseaux / Chantent, chacun dans son latin / Sur le rythme d'un chant nouveau ; / Il est donc juste qu'on ouvre son cœur / A ce que l'on désire le plus.

De là-bas où est toute ma joie, / Ne vois venir ni messager ni lettre scellée, / C'est pourquoi mon cœur ne dort ni ne rit. / Et je n'ose faire un pas en avant, / Jusqu'à ce que je sache si notre réconciliation / Est telle que je la désire.

Ce texte obéit du point de vue thématique aux conventions du lyrisme occitan (le poète exprime les sentiments ressentis devant la femme aimée et le désarroi du soupirant rejeté dans l'indifférence ou l'oubli), mais sa structure est plus linéaire que celle de la chanson courtoise. Observons dans ce sens les deux dernières strophes :

Encore me souvient du matin / Où nous mimes fin à la guerre, / Et où elle me donna un don si grand, / Son amour et son anneau : / Que Dieu me laisse vivre assez / Pour que j'aie un jour mes mains sous son manteau.

Car je n'ai souci des propos étrangers / Qui voudraient m'éloigner de mon « Beau-Voisin », / Car je sais ce qu'il en est / Des paroles et des brefs discours que l'on répand : / Mais nous en avons la pièce et le couteau. (Guillaume de Poitiers, *A la douceur de la saison nouvelle*, traduction d'Anne Berthelot) [6]

Dans la conception de Guillaume IX de Poitiers, duc d'Aquitaine, l'amour courtois reprend la structure de base du système féodal, mais place la dame dans la situation du seigneur (il interpelle la femme aimée avec les termes masculinisants « *senhal* » ou « *mi dons* » – « mon seigneur » pour suggérer qu'il est son serviteur). Il devient le vassal de « la dame parfaite », qu'il aime d'un « si bon amour » et à laquelle il parle avec une fraîcheur dépouillée, même licencieuse parfois.

La dame lointaine, distante et/ou absente (« *domna de lonh, svelte et gracieuse* »)

La femme imaginée par Jaufré Rudel ressemble à une princesse lointaine et énigmatique qui défie sans cesse le désir inassouvi du poète:

Lorsque les jours sont longs en mai / Me plaît le doux chant d'oiseaux lointains / Et quand je suis parti de là / Me souvenant d'un amour lointain / Lors m'en vais si morne et pensif / Que ni chants ni fleurs d'aubépine / Ne me plaisent plus qu'hiver gelé. (...)

Jamais d'amour je ne jouirai / Si je ne jouis de cet amour lointain, / Je n'en sais de plus noble, ni de meilleur / Et nulle part, ni près ni loin; / De tel prix elle est, vraie et parfaite / Que là-bas au pays des Sarrasins / Pour elle, je voudrais être appelé captif! (...) (Jaufré Rudel, *Chansons*) [7]

Cette belle « canso » est formée de sept unités strophiques (« coblas ») de longueur égale, suivie d'une demi-strophe finale (« tornada »). Jaufré Rudel (XII^e siècle) est prince de Blaye, seigneur de Pons et de Bergerac et vassal des comtes d'Angoulême. Il impose dans la littérature française le « thème de l'absence », en tant que forme idéalisée du sentiment amoureux. Poète de l'amour lointain, il crée également un type féminin devenu célèbre, celui de la dame absente. La mélodie de ses strophes réussit à créer une atmosphère de litanie incantatoire, qui transpose parfaitement les chimères d'un amour impossible.

La femme-vertu, source de « joy », de vie et de raison

Bernard de Ventadour, l'un des plus célèbres troubadours, est d'origine assez humble (ses parents étaient les serviteurs d'Ebles II le « Chanteur »). Après avoir quitté le château de Ventadour, il suit Aliénor d'Aquitaine (la descendante de Guillaume IX de Poitiers) à la cour d'Henri II Plantagenêt en Angleterre. L'ensemble des vers de sa « chanson de la lauzeta » (l'alouette) figurent parmi les pièces poétiques les plus connues du Moyen-Âge:

Quand je vois l'alouette mouvoir / De joie ses ailes dans un rayon (de soleil), / Si bien qu'elle s'oublie et se laisse choir / A cause de la douceur qui l'envahit, / Las! j'ai si grand envie de ceux / Que je vois joyeux, / Je m'émerveille que sur le champ/ Mon cœur ne fonde en moi de désir.

Hé! Las! Je croyais tant savoir / D'amour, et j'en sais si peu! / Car je ne peux m'empêcher d'aimer / Celle dont je n'aurai jamais aucun profit. / Elle m'a pris mon cœur, elle m'a pris à moi, / Et elle avec moi et tout le monde; / Et en priant tout, elle ne me laisse rien / Sauf désir et cœur brûlant. (...) Tristan, vous n'aurez plus rien de moi, / Car je m'en vais, malheureux, je ne sais où; / Je renonce à chanter, je renie le chant / Et je me cache loin d'amour et de joie. (Bernard de Ventadour, *Quand vey la lauzeta mover, Quand je vois voler l'alouette*, traduit du provençal en français) [8]

Dans les quatre premiers vers, le poète associe dans une atmosphère légère le renouveau de la nature et la rencontre amoureuse. Le cadre traditionnel de cette « reverdie » est le temps des Pâques, dont les éléments indissociables sont le chant des oiseaux, les feuilles et les fleurs nouvelles. La femme créée par Bernard de Ventadour est source de « soupirs profonds », de destruction psychique et même de mort physique. C'est à cause d'elle que le poète, « ce pauvre plein de désir », choisit l'exil et l'oubli définitif de ses semblables.

La « belle » des chansons de toile

La chanson de toile (chanson d'histoire, romance, chanson à filer, broder, tisser) est l'une des plus anciennes de la littérature française. C'est un poème à forme variable qui évoque l'amour malheureux d'un personnage féminin travaillant à son métier à tisser (c'est d'ailleurs ce qui donne le nom de chanson de « toile »). Elle n'est pourtant pas composée par de petites fileuses de lin, mais par des poètes et des musiciens accomplis. La belle dame s'y lamente en général sur son entrée au couvent ou sur la mort ou l'absence de son amant. Chaque strophe du poème se termine par un refrain :

Belle Douette à la fenêtre s'assied, / Lit en un livre, mais cela ne lui tient pas à cœur; / Il lui ressouvient de son ami Doon, / Qui en d'autres terres est allé combattre en des tournois. / Et maintenant en ai chagrin.

Un écuyer aux degrés de la salle / Est descendu, a déposé son bagage. / Belle Douette les degrés en descend, / Ne pense pas ouïr mauvaise nouvelle. / Et maintenant en ai chagrin. (...) (*La Belle Douette*; traduction de G. Picot in *La Poésie lyrique au Moyen Age*, tome I, Larousse, 1965) [9]

La plainte lyrique émane d'une femme simple et naturelle, dont la conception de l'amour est ramenée à des proportions plus humaines que celle de la dame inaccessible et supérieure des chansons courtoises classiques. De ce point de vue, la chanson de toile représenterait « l'antidote » du modèle canonique troubadouresque [10]. D'autre part, elle garde la forme régulière de la strophe et du refrain et la brièveté de l'ensemble de la chanson courtoise.

La « pastoure » et le motif de la requête d'amour

La pastourelle est un genre populaire qui se répand aux XII^e - XIII^e siècles dans l'aire linguistique de la langue d'oïl (donc au nord de la Loire) et plus particulièrement en Picardie. C'est un chant d'amour d'une structure strophique élaborée, qui fait alterner couplets et refrain. La pastourelle obéit à un schéma stéréotypé: au cours d'une promenade, le poète rencontre invariablement une bergère qui ne se laisse pas séduire. Le texte qui suit appartient à Marcabru (surnommé « pain perdu »), un simple jongleur :

L'autre jour, sous une haie / J'ai trouvé une bergère / Pleine de joie et de bon sens, / Portant cape et capuchon / Comme fille de vilaine, / Veste et chemise de toile, / Souliers et chausses de laine.
Je viens à elle à travers prés / - Fille, dis-je, tendre chose, / J'ai mal car vous pique le froid. / - Seigneur me dit la vilaine, / Grâce à Dieu et à ma nourrice, / Le vent peut bien m'ébouriffer, / Je suis gaie et bien portante. (...) (Marcabru, *L'autrier jost, una sebissa...*, *L'autre jour, sous une haie*). [11]

La première strophe apparaît comme un prélude narratif par rapport à la scène dialoguée de la strophe suivante. Elle contient un court portrait de la bergère, construit sur la description de ses vêtements simples et de son attitude. Par la réponse qu'elle donne à son galant amoureux, la jeune paysanne tourne en dérision l'éthique courtoise et toutes ses valeurs.

Conclusions

Les particularités sociopolitiques du monde occitan – l'importance accrue de la vie de cour, une grande ouverture d'esprit et la liberté des mœurs – ont favorisé la valorisation de la femme dans la société, surtout après la croisade contre les Albigeois (1208 – 1229).

Cette analyse des principaux traits du chant courtois, doublée d'un bref aperçu sur la création des plus connus troubadours et trouvères, illustre d'une part les éléments communs à la tradition courtoise et les aspects individuels, originaux de ces créateurs et d'autre part, fait ressortir l'image de la femme et son rôle dans la société courtoise des XII^e – XIV^e siècles.

Les créateurs présentés ci-dessus cultivent en général un code amoureux pessimiste, mais très militant et moralisateur. Les types féminins retrouvables dans leur création ont des traits physiques semblables (elles sont sveltes, élancées, elles ont la peau blanche, le teint frais), mais différent par leurs attitudes mentales. Les femmes situées au centre de la lyrique courtoise incarnent tour à tour l'indifférence totale, la tendresse profonde, la volonté droite, la dévotion aveugle ou la douleur de la séparation. Mais, en dépit de ces différences, elles reflètent parfaitement l'image d'une doctrine morale et esthétique nettement établie en France à partir du XII^e siècle, d'un système idéologique raffiné, qui a réussi à créer un art varié, riche, authentique et délicat.

Les femmes illustrent dans le mouvement culturel courtois les deux pôles de la création littéraire – la production et la réception, elles en sont l'objet et le sujet et, le plus souvent, leurs poèmes retenus par l'histoire littéraire pour leurs combinaisons rythmiques tout-à-fait remarquables rendent ces « trobaïritz » célèbres dans le monde entier.

Notes

[1] Cf. Constantin Pavel, *Genres et techniques littéraires dans la France médiévale*, Ed. Demiurg, Iasi, 1998, p. 45.

- [2] *Ibidem*, p. 49.
- [3] Emmanuèle Baumgartner, *La Littérature française du Moyen-Âge*, Dunod, Paris, 1999, p. 27.
- [4] Les « tropes » sont de « petits passages versifiés et chantés insérés dans les mélodies liturgiques » (Cf. Emmanuèle Baumgartner, *op. cit.*, p. 25).
- [5] Cf. Constantin Pavel, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
- [6] Ce texte est reproduit dans ****Littérature - textes et documents. Moyen-Âge - XVI^e siècle*, coord. Henri Mitterand, Anne Berthelot, François Cornillat, Nathan, Paris, 1988, p. 42 .
- [7] Cet échantillon textuel est extrait de l'anthologie *** *Le Moyen-Âge et le XVI^e siècle en littérature*, coord. Xavier Darcos, Jean-Pierre Robert, Bernard Tartayre, Coll. « Perspectives et confrontations », Hachette, Paris, 1987, pp. 130-131. Le poème, traduit par Albert Pauphilet, est intégré sous cette forme dans l'ouvrage *Poètes et Romanciers du Moyen-Âge*, Coll. « La Pléiade », Gallimard, 1952.
- [8] Cf. ****Littérature - textes et documents. Moyen-Âge - XVI^e siècle*, éd. cit., pp. 43-44.
- [9] Cf. *** *Le Moyen-Âge et le XVI^e siècle en littérature*, éd. cit., pp. 128-140.
- [10] Cf. P. Bec, *La Lyrique française au Moyen-Âge*, Ed. Picard, 1977, cité dans *** *Le Moyen - Âge et le XVI^e siècle en littérature*, éd. cit., p. 138.
- [11] http://lettres.ac-bordeaux.fr/moyenage/Poesie_m.htm

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Être femme sur la scène des hommes : archéologies de l'identité féminine dans *Les Enfers ventriloques* de Sylviane Dupuis [1]

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Abstract: *The protagonist of Sylviane Dupuis's play Les Enfers ventriloques (2004) is a young dramatist lacking inspiration, who descends into her past in search for her personal identity and in the past of the theatre in search for an artistic identity. Disguised as a man and guided by the Maternal Shadow, the young woman visits the masculine, paternalistic universe of the world's most famous playwrights. Her confrontations with Eschyle, Shakespeare and Brecht, but also with the characters that these authors have created help her assume herself as a writer and find her artistic inspiration.*

This paper aims at interrogating the way in which the triad identity/ femininity/ creation is inscribed into this text which turns the voyage into the one's memory (the personal and the artistic one) into a source of the reinvention of the self, both as a human being and as a creator.

Key words: *identity, femininity, francophone theatre*

Sylviane Dupuis est née à Genève d'un père français et d'une mère d'origine mi-russe, mi-italienne. Après une licence en littérature française, archéologie et grec ancien, elle choisit de se consacrer à l'écriture et à l'enseignement. Poète depuis 1985 (*D'un lieu à l'autre, Creuser la Nuit, Figures d'égarées, Géométrie de l'illimité*) et essayiste (*Travaux de voyage, A quoi sert le théâtre ?*), Sylviane Dupuis écrit sa première pièce (*La Seconde Chute*) en 1993. C'est un véritable défi, car la dramaturge se propose de créer une « continuation » au chef d'œuvre de Beckett, *En Attendant Godot* - d'ailleurs, le sous-titre de la pièce est « *Godot, Acte III* ». Créée à Zurich, Genève et Paris, celle-ci s'avère être un succès. Suivent *Moi, Maude ou la Malvivante* en 1997, *La Paresse* en 1999, *Etre là* en 2001 et *Les enfers ventriloques*, parue aux éditions Comp'Act en décembre 2004.

Cette dernière pièce a été retenue en 2004 par le jury des *Journées de Lyon des Auteurs de Théâtre* et mise en espace par Anne Courel à la Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon. L'auteur déclare dans une interview accordée à Pierre Lepori [2] que le processus d'élaboration de l'œuvre s'est étendu sur plus de sept ans, temps d'accumulations, de réflexion sur soi et sur sa création, d'interruptions, de révélations et de reprises. Le résultat de ce travail laborieux est une œuvre complexe, où l'artiste décante ses idées sur le sens du théâtre et le rôle du créateur.

Le discours didascalique, très complexe, laisse deviner le fait que la dramaturge est aussi critique littéraire. On a l'impression d'avoir affaire à une édition commentée, car le texte est accompagné d'une soixantaine de notes expliquant les citations et les allusions savantes que l'on retrouve un peu partout dans la pièce. Ces notes relèvent autant d'un souci de précision que d'une attention particulière accordée au récepteur, au lecteur moderne assez souvent ignorant de l'histoire du théâtre. Ainsi, la note no. 16 explique que Cordélia est un personnage du *Roi Lear* de Shakespeare. Sylviane Dupuis commente de la façon suivante la présence, assez inhabituelle, de telles notes dans un texte artistique :

Le lecteur est libre de se référer ou non aux notes finales, qui sont là pour *augmenter* sa lecture s'il le souhaite, et pour offrir - ou non - matière à réflexion et à imagination aux futurs metteurs en scène. Pour moi un texte littéraire suppose nécessairement un certain nombre de « couches » ou de strates de signification. Il revient au lecteur ou au spectateur, suivant ce qu'il est et ce qu'il sait, et suivant ce qu'il attend du théâtre, de multiplier les niveaux de lecture, ou de se contenter d'être pris par l'intrigue. [3]

Pourtant, ces mêmes didascalies laissent deviner le fait que la pièce est l'œuvre d'une dramaturge très intéressée par la réception de son travail dans le monde des praticiens du

théâtre. Ainsi, Sylviane Dupuis propose trois variantes de décor, dont elle commente les avantages et les désavantages respectifs ; si chez la plupart des auteurs dramatiques les indications didascaliques ont un caractère prescriptif, ici on a affaire plutôt à des suggestions, comme si la dramaturge, consciente du fait que les metteurs en scène et les scénographes pourraient ne pas en tenir compte, voulait leur offrir des alternatives.

Des enfers intertextuels

Une jeune dramaturge est en train d'écrire une pièce, mais l'inspiration se laisse attendre. Après une conversation assez violente avec un metteur en scène, auquel elle essaye d'expliquer la situation, la jeune femme est projetée, sans transition aucune, dans les Enfers du théâtre. Elle y est accueillie par Shakespeare, qui lui explique, avec bienveillance et sympathie, les lois du monde où elle est tombée. Car ces enfers ne sont pas un lieu de punition, l'opposé du paradis, mais bel et bien l'au-delà où arrivent, après leur mort, tous les auteurs dramatiques et leurs personnages. Sylviane Dupuis renverse ici le topos baroque du *theatrum mundi*, imaginant le théâtre comme un monde, un monde comme tous les autres, imparfait mais passionnant, et surtout très humain.

L'action de la pièce n'est pas difficile à placer dans le temps : c'est le 20 janvier 1999, le jour du suicide de Sarah Kane, que la dramaturge a son rêve initiatique. Et pourtant, le monde du théâtre semble se tenir dans une temporalité ambiguë, hétéroclite; on a l'impression que toutes les époques théâtrales s'entremêlent aux Enfers. Ainsi, Bert (Bertolt Brecht) fait voir à la Dramaturge des images sur un appareil de télévision gigantesque et zappe de chaîne en chaîne, mais on la fait s'asseoir sur un vieux fauteuil de théâtre et on fait sortir d'un container des objets et des décors utilisés à de diverses périodes de l'histoire du théâtre. Aux Enfers, le temps a un caractère composite, car « avec ses pièces et ses personnages, chaque auteur nous amène un peu de la nouvelle réalité du monde, dont s'augmente le théâtre » (p. 78).

L'ambiguïté de la temporalité est renforcée par l'organisation « sociale » de cet univers, qui fait penser à des époques éloignées. Les auteurs et leurs personnages ont à leur tête un monarque absolu, Shakespeare, qui ne veut pas renoncer au pouvoir. Bert essaie d'attirer la Dramaturge dans le complot qu'il monte contre le roi, et au moyen duquel il se propose d'instaurer la démocratie.

Les personnages semblent appartenir à une classe inférieure à celle des auteurs (Roméo est le secrétaire de Shakespeare) et leur montrent beaucoup de respect : même l'amoral Don Juan déclare à Sganarelle : « le seul que tu n'insulteras jamais devant moi est l'auteur à qui je dois la parole ». (p. 31). Lorsqu'on les incarne dans le monde d'en haut, les personnages reçoivent un congé et revivent sur scène le temps de la représentation.

Les parias de cette société sont les personnages inachevés, des « ombres sans visage » nées lorsque les auteurs n'ont pas fini leurs pièces ou bien ont changé de personnage en cours de route. Anonymes et turbulents, ils errent dans les cercles des enfers, sans pouvoir s'établir nulle part. Facilement manipulables, ils acceptent de s'allier avec Bert pour renverser Shakespeare.

Le travail intertextuel de Sylviane Dupuis est particulièrement visible dans la façon dont elle construit les gens qui peuplent son théâtre. On retrouve dans *Les Enfers ventriloques* des grands noms de la dramaturgie européenne (Eschyle, Shakespeare, Brecht, Artaud, Sarah Kane), mais légèrement parodiés, « désacralisés », car l'auteur veut nous faire oublier le masque du génie pour nous faire découvrir l'être humain. Ainsi, dans le quatrième tableau Bert et Eschyle s'affrontent dans un match pour essayer de montrer la supériorité de leurs arts respectifs. Avant la confrontation Bert, habillé comme un boxeur, torse nu et en shorts, exécute des mouvements d'échauffement et sautille afin de mieux se concentrer et de

dissimuler son émotion. Shakespeare, qui est l'arbitre, a du mal à masquer sa préférence pour Eschyle.

Pourtant, la pièce n'est pas une parodie. Les auteurs conservent leur identité et défendent avec passion leur vision sur le théâtre et sur le rôle du créateur. Les personnages ne changent pas de rôle, mais interagissent avec des héros d'autres pièces. Don Juan reste le séducteur professionnel, toujours prêt à de nouvelles conquêtes ; ici, il se propose de séduire Ophélie, et tente même de la violer, ce qui amène Hamlet à le provoquer au duel. En fait, une certaine fatalité règne dans ces enfers : les personnages ne peuvent pas évoluer, ne peuvent pas s'empêcher d'être ce qu'ils ont été imaginés par leurs auteurs (Roméo tombe amoureux de la Dramaturge dès qu'il la voit).

L'au-delà du théâtre ressemble donc étrangement à l'univers réel : la passion du pouvoir, l'obsession de l'argent (Don Juan promet à Sganarelle quatre pistoles si celui-ci veut bien l'aider à conquérir Ophélie) et la vanité ne sont pas disparues, mais ici chacun sait tout sur les autres, et on ne peut rien changer à sa situation, alors les vices deviennent d'autant plus risibles. Don Juan sait qu'il n'aura jamais Ophélie, mais il s'obstine à la séduire, l'argent ne peut rien acheter, mais Sganarelle s'obstine à l'obtenir, Bert est très bien renseigné sur le monde des années 2000, mais il demande à la Dramaturge si l'on joue encore ses pièces.

Parmi les ancêtres, un voyage vers soi-même

La jeune Dramaturge fait figure à part dans cet univers des créateurs du théâtre, d'abord parce que, n'étant pas morte, elle y est arrivée par hasard. C'est donc la seule vivante dans le monde des morts, un monde qu'elle doit traverser afin de retrouver son inspiration. Ensuite parce que, exceptant Sarah K, (qui d'ailleurs arrive aux Enfers après la Dramaturge), elle est une femme créateur dans une société exclusivement masculine et assez patriarcale (au moins en apparence). Dès son arrivée, Shakespeare lui demande d'un air incrédule et outragé : « Confirmes-tu ce qu'on m'a rapporté : que les femmes se seraient elles aussi emparées du théâtre... et que non contentes d'engendrer des vivants, elles prétendraient... donner vie à des personnages ? » (p. 24).

Le fait qu'on la prend pour un homme semble lui faciliter la tâche au début. Ce masque la propulse sur une position d'égalité avec les hommes qui l'entourent, et lui donne ainsi la liberté de les questionner sur leur vie aux enfers et surtout sur leur art. Car pour la plupart de son voyage, la Dramaturge est plutôt spectatrice que créatrice de spectacle. Elle écoute les opinions des grands maîtres du théâtre pour être en mesure à la fin du songe initiatique de préciser ses propres choix esthétiques.

Pourtant, à un moment donné de son parcours, la Dramaturge est amenée à s'avouer comme femme, à retrouver son identité et à en assumer les conséquences. A la fin du premier tableau Roméo est convaincu du fait que « le jeune homme » est une femme, et l'avertit : « Dès qu'ils sauront qui tu es, ils ne te laisseront plus en paix. » (p. 28). Peu à peu, les auteurs et les personnages devinent son identité : au deuxième tableau Don Juan essaie de la séduire, mais il se rend compte qu'il ne pourra jamais posséder son âme, car la Dramaturge ne veut s'attacher à personne : « avoir aimé qui nous trahit est pire que de ne pas aimer ». (p. 41). Effrayée par le fait qu'on a découvert son secret, la protagoniste dévoile son véritable identité, non pas à Shakespeare, qu'elle croit misogyne, mais à une autre femme, Ophélie, et seulement à la suite d'un piège que celle-ci lui tend. Ophélie exploite les connaissances de la Dramaturge sur *Hamlet* pour lui démontrer, à l'aide de références exactes et de citations, que le prince du Danemark, sans le savoir, est le fils de Polonius et le demi-frère de son amoureuse. Hamlet n'était donc pas capable d'agir parce qu'il ne savait pas qui il était, parce qu'il s'ignorait lui-même. Ophélie conclut que seulement celui qui se reconnaît et s'accepte comme tel peut réaliser sa tâche. Choquée par cette découverte, la Dramaturge confesse qu'elle aussi dissimule, faute d'oser être ce qu'elle est ; elle se dénude brusquement, dévoilant

ses seins. Ophélie lui explique alors qu'elle lui a tendu une course (car Hamlet est bel et bien le fils légitime de Gertrude) pour l'aider à assumer son identité et accéder ainsi au centre des Enfers, où elle aura une révélation capitale.

Le fait que la jeune femme ne connaît pas l'amour devient clair lors de sa rencontre avec l'Ombre Maternelle, qui lui reproche de ne pas s'être mariée et de ne pas avoir eu d'enfants. Il y a dans la pièce une relation douloureuse entre la création artistique et la maternité. La Dramaturge, qui a opté pour les livres, semble avoir nié par son choix un aspect essentiel de son identité : la féminité, qu'elle récupère par ce voyage initiatique. En assumant sa féminité, la protagoniste trouve sa propre voix et réussit à faire face aux dramaturges illustres qu'elle rencontre. D'autre part, l'Ombre Maternelle, qui apparaît plusieurs fois dans la pièce et tente de la protéger contre les épreuves, lui fait un aveu terrible : lors de sa naissance, elle avait failli mourir, car le cordon était trop court (« Quand on t'a arrachée de moi, on t'a crue morte. », p. 113). Le voyage s'avère donc un chemin à l'envers, qui lui permet, en découvrant le secret qu'elle portait en elle, de se détacher de ce qui la retenait du côté de la mère, et d'être enfin elle-même. « Naître, c'est comme mourir », apprend la jeune femme, et c'est justement ce qu'elle fait par sa descente aux enfers : elle traverse la mort et la douleur pour renaître à une vie nouvelle, artistique, mais aussi personnelle.

Il est facile de faire le rapprochement entre la protagoniste et l'auteur de la pièce, et de conclure que Sylviane Dupuis présente sur scène son alter ego. Pourtant, celle-ci déclare : « la Dramaturge n'est pas moi : je ne m'exprime pas comme elle, je n'ai jamais songé au suicide, et n'ai jamais éprouvé non plus l'extrême désabusement qui est le sien en ce qui concerne la relation amoureuse. (...) Contrairement à elle, qui se cherche encore et n'en est qu'au début de sa trajectoire d'écriture et de son expérience de vie (...) je me situe à un stade ultérieur (...) de ma vie et de ma pensée ». Si elle croit qu'on écrit toujours à partir de soi (parfois sans en être conscient), Sylviane Dupuis considère que le courage et la valeur littéraires ne consistent pas dans le dévoilement de son intimité, mais dans la façon dont on utilise son secret pour s'enrichir et en enrichir aussi les autres, « la forme et le savoir nouveaux qu'on tire de ce travail d'acharnement et de métamorphose ».

Une pièce sur le théâtre

Dans son songe initiatique, la protagoniste descend dans son passé pour retrouver son identité spirituelle et dans le passé du théâtre pour se construire une identité artistique. Par le moyen de ses discussions avec les auteurs, la Dramaturge explore son héritage, qu'elle transfigurera par sa sensibilité afin de trouver se trouver une voix. Tour à tour Shakespeare, Eschyle, Bert, Antonin et Sarah K exposent leurs conceptions sur le théâtre et les défendent avec passion. Ces personnages, risibles dans leurs aspirations humaines, ne le sont plus quand ils parlent de leur art.

Shakespeare apprend à la jeune écrivaine que le plaisir de la création donne sens à la vie : « les histoires qu'ils [les poètes] inventent suspendent un instant l'inéluctable, détournant les humains de trop penser à eux-mêmes, donnant un sens à ce qui n'en a pas et faisant miroiter devant nos yeux tous ces destins possibles (...) Que peut un homme, sinon s'inventer à lui-même des mondes, et se rêver plus qu'il n'en est, le temps d'un songe ? ». (p. 24). Le roi du théâtre conseille à la dramaturge de se laisser guider par les mots, car ils peuvent lui révéler des aspects de sa personnalité qu'elle ignore encore. Selon Shakespeare, l'auteur dramatique est un être doué d'une identité multiple, qui se divise dans ses personnages. Lui-même n'est pas important, il n'est que l'instrument d'une vérité qui le dépasse. Lorsqu'elle déclare écrire pour dire des vérités que les gens refusent d'entendre, Shakespeare l'approuve, mais lui dit que pour réaliser cela il faut charmer, fasciner les gens, les attirer par la magie de l'art.

Antonin affirme qu'on écrit pour s'arracher à l'enfer et que la création artistique, tout comme celle physiologique, s'accompagne de la douleur, une douleur transfigurée par l'acte même d'écrire. Pour Artaud, l'illusion mène à la vérité, tandis que pour Shakespeare l'illusion de l'art est plus vraie que celle de la vie, parce qu'elle a conscience d'elle-même.

Bert et Eschyle défendent leurs conceptions sur l'art dans le cadre d'un match rituel, auquel assistent tous les auteurs, y compris la Dramaturge. Le premier considère que l'homme ne peut pas changer, qu'il sera toujours caractérisé par les mêmes peurs, les mêmes ambitions et la même démesure, tandis que le second croit à la perfectibilité de l'homme. Selon Eschyle il est impossible de s'opposer aux dieux ; le devoir du poète est de s'étonner devant le destin et d'élever l'homme, de le sublimer. Au contraire, Bert affirme que le théâtre doit inciter les spectateurs à penser pour eux-mêmes et changer ainsi le monde.

En exposant ces idées, souvent contradictoires, la pièce devient un lieu de débat sur l'art dramatique. Dans le tableau final, intitulé *La Grande Matrice de l'illusion*, la Dramaturge est soumise à l'épreuve finale, durant laquelle tous les auteurs avec lesquels elle a discuté lui posent des questions, afin de vérifier ses connaissances sur le théâtre. Bien attendu, chaque examinateur attend des réponses conformes à sa propre vision sur le sujet en cause. Ainsi, lorsque Eschyle lui demande d'où vient la parole poétique, la jeune femme répond, avec beaucoup d'habileté, qu'elle vient de l'inspiration, qui à son tour vient, selon la mythologie des neuf Muses, selon les Grecs du délire sacré insufflé par les dieux, selon la Bible de Dieu et selon Freud de la mémoire ou des désirs refoulés dans l'inconscient. Ses réponses enchantent les auteurs, qui, tour à tour, lui accordent leur bénédiction.

Le prix de ce test est l'accès à la Grande Matrice de l'Illusion, la source de l'inspiration créatrice. Shakespeare enlève le rideau rouge qui la dissimule (citation de l'univers du théâtre) et s'apprête à ouvrir les grandes portes, lorsque à un signal de Bert surgissent les personnages inachevés, qui jettent le rideau sur le roi et le ligotent avec une corde. C'est la révolution annoncée par Bert. Ce dernier explique son geste par le fait que, depuis qu'il est venu au pouvoir, Shakespeare n'accepte plus aucun changement aux Enfers, et monde du théâtre a besoin d'une loi nouvelle : « ce que nous te demandons, c'est seulement de renoncer à la royauté. Dans la réalité comme ici, l'homme doit apprendre à se passer de Père tout-puissant, et à se déterminer lui-même ». (p ; 126). Accablé, désespéré, le roi du théâtre accepte de céder le pouvoir, mais refuse d'ouvrir les portes de la Grande Matrice, malgré les insistances de la Dramaturge ; celle-ci l'implore de répondre à la trahison de Bert avec les armes de l'amour.

Entrent alors en scène les personnages de Beckett Hamm et Clov. Hamm est assis dans sa chaise roulante, poussée par Clov, qui boitille. Shakespeare déclare qu'il aurait voulu que Beckett lui succède, mais que depuis qu'il est venu, celui-ci reste dans un coin et se tait. Hamm et Clov, images d'une humanité dégradée, ont été comparés par Jan Kott[4] au roi Lear et à Kent errant sur la lande après avoir perdu leur identité sociale. Les personnages de Beckett, tout comme ceux de Shakespeare, symbolisent l'homme dépourvu de son espoir, de ses rêves, de son humanité, l'homme réduit à la condition de clown, de pantin du destin.

Hamm et Clov entrent une deuxième fois en scène, précédés d'Antonin, qui, agité par un spasme, fait une dernière prophétie : les rois et les dieux vont mourir, et le monde périra ou bien se métamorphosera. Il tombe à terre et on le porte hors de scène comme un Christ, les bras en croix. Shakespeare a alors une révélation : il comprend que le monde doit changer et accepte d'ouvrir les portes de la Grande Matrice. On entend alors un bruit sourd, comme celui d'un cœur qui bat, et on distingue après quelques instants le masque de Dionysos, le dieu du théâtre. « la Grande Matrice libère alors le *souffle de l'inspiration*, issu d'une gigantesque soufflerie visible à l'arrière-plan » (p. 133). La Dramaturge saisit un long câble qui ressemble à un cordon ombilical et « est happée dans les cintres ».

La Grande Matrice est, selon Sylviane Dupuis, le *ventre* des enfers du théâtre ; elle explique ainsi le titre de la pièce : « le théâtre est un ventre qui parle, proférant les paroles des morts mêlées à celles des vivants ». La fin des *Enfers ventriloques* présente une cérémonie ayant à la fois un caractère sacré et profane. L'auteur précise dans les notes que Dionysos est le seul dieu mortel du panthéon grec. Le grand prêtre de ce dieu est Shakespeare et la Grande Matrice représente « le saint des saints ». Le souffle de l'inspiration est libéré par une soufflerie visible, ce qui suggère le fait que le théâtre repose sur une illusion consciente d'elle-même.

La révélation de la Grande Matrice représente pour la jeune Dramaturge le passage par le chaos qui précède la création et la renaissance : « le travail de création (...) est précisément l'un des moyens de transformer cette violence originelle, cette énergie brute qui est celle du vivant, pour lui donner un sens humain », déclare Sylviane Dupuis.

Les Enfers ventriloques est une pièce-manifeste, une méditation sur le rôle du théâtre, un art poétique (trouver sa propre voie tout en maîtrisant son héritage), mais surtout une déclaration d'amour au théâtre. Sylviane Dupuis prend plaisir à jouer avec les auteurs et les personnages qu'elle connaît si bien, et de créer à partir d'eux son propre discours. Dans un article récent la dramaturge [5] constate que, sans l'avoir projeté ni voulu, elle a préféré chercher l'autre dans le même plutôt que de rechercher l'absolument « nouveau », et construire son propos à partir de la mémoire culturelle qui la constitue.

Notes

[1] Cet article est réalisé dans le cadre du Projet Idei, 2008, no. 842, « Dynamique de l'identité dans la littérature francophone européenne », financé par le budget d'Etat, CNCSIS/UEFISCU.

[2] Interview accordée par Sylviane Dupuis à Pierre Lepori, publiée sur le site <http://www.culturactif.ch> Tous les propos de la dramaturge sont tirés de cette interview.

[3] Sylviane Dupuis, *Les Enfers ventriloques*, Chambéry: Ed. Comp'act, 2004, p. 7. Toutes les références à cette pièce seront notées entre parenthèses.

[4] Jan Kott, *Shakespeare our contemporary*, Methuen & co, London, 1967.

[5] Sylviane Dupuis, « Mémoire, imagination et création », in *Archipel*, no. 33, Lausanne, p. 27.

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“Watercolor Women”: Configuring the Chicana Female Subject

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Abstract: *Second wave feminism in the United States has brought about new voices of minority communities in the framework of literary studies. Drawing on distinctions among concepts regarding the female experience and on the standpoints of Chicana feminism as both integrative and integral part of postcolonialism, the proposed paper aims at configuring a typology of the female subject in the borderlands. By appealing to a number of literary works by Chicanas, as well as tracing some of the performative aspects of writing “as a Chicana”, the paper formulates a number of instances in which the Chicana female subject is invariably conceptualized (such as la Virgen, la Malinche, la victima, la soldadera, etc.), as well as more abstruse ones such as the threatening woman or the incestuous mistress. Furthermore, the analysis shall shed a light on the recurrence of these conceptualized female subjects within the Chicana literary environment by reasoning that the later justifies both the writers’ intentionality and their commitment to the feminist views of the movement.*

Key words: *Chicana, feminism, female subject, performativity, intentionality*

The primary concern related to the borderland territory might easily be confined to the racial debate, specific to the first and second half of the 20th century, the Mexicans occupying maybe a special place due to their mixture of Indianness, Mexicanness and eventually Americanness. The Chicano/a subject has often been referred to as being a result of this movement across the frontier, inhabiting a place that was once his/her own, and became foreign on paper, but remained rather familiar to generations following the war. That is also why the complex problematic of the female subject in the borderlands territory cannot be strictly separated from that of ethnicity, Chicana women being first and foremost ‘Mexican’ and only afterwards Chicana feminists. It is also why, when trying to identify some of the features of such a subject it is inevitable that the borderlands appear as a guiding element, both physically and metaphysically. The borderland shapes one’s becoming a Chicana and an American citizen, as well as it contributes to a feeling of “unbelongingness” to both countries, North and South of the frontier.

Somehow ignored by the more masculine Chicano movement in their approach to the ethnic status quo of the 60s, the Chicanas acted and reacted as an impulse of revolt. Therefore, the rising of voice for the female subject and the attempt to assume a different power position could be seen in terms of the more “traditional” psycho-social development of the female as “the castrated other”. However, as Chicana feminists themselves argue (Perez), this initial self-positioning as an inferior subject is what needed to be surpassed in order to be able to “speak-up” in the Mexican American community and further assume a different one. It is also the reason why Chicana feminists do not really resonate with the white feminists of the time, but rather with other voices coming from marginal spaces (such as the black or the immigrant ones).

‘Textbook’ feminism (if we consider it a synonym of the white feminism) treats the concept of ‘woman’ not as a matter of individual gender consciousness but as a political category. ‘Femaleness’ is a cultural construction created to counter oppressive male images of women; this concept functions as the basis for the social, economic and political betterment of women. Some feminists attack the psychoanalytic preference for a fragmented female subject, which is seen as free to reconstitute itself in new and liberated forms.

As a result the female subject is treated distinctively and the literary forms in which it develops are consequently strikingly different as well: ethnic feminism prefers a type of writing that represents the self as fractured and fragmented rather than the realist texts with a clear sociological context preferred by non-ethnically bound feminism.

It becomes thus imperative for the Chicana to construct a feminist voice for the women of color with which to speak to white women as well as men. Gloria Anzaldúa

explains the manner in which Chicanas are oppressed by the cultural imperative that women remain silent, unquestioning, invisible, within traditional Chicano culture; even the language that is available to these women expresses masculine rather than feminine consciousness: ‘Chicanas use *nostros* whether we’re male or female. We are robbed of female being by the masculine plural’ (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 54).

Hence, aside from being an oppressed subject in the male-female opposition of the community, the Chicana also face the issue of speaking from a discredited cultural position, in a literary environment that has been established and devised to express the lives and thoughts of men (may they be colored or white) and white (only) women. Therefore, the construction of the female subject of the borderlands follows some strategies to respond these issues, among which the attempt to re-design inherited stereotypes, the construction of an alternative literary tradition and the challenge of conventional distinctions among literary forms of expression could be mentioned. Furthermore, by an enactment of what has been called the ‘border feminism’ Chicanas also put forth the issue of performativity, in that taxonomy of female subject positions is configured through their both theoretic and literary practice.

In her *Feminist Theory and Literary Practice* (2000), Deborah Madsen argues that Chicana feminists are somewhere in between the socialist and psychoanalytic trends – that is they focus both on the social consequences of being an oppressed subject, all the while seeking to produce a third space of imagination, through their fiction writing.

This space, referred to by Gloria Anzaldúa as *nepantla* is what actually defines, in her view, the female experience of the Chicana: “the site of transformation, the place where different perspectives come into conflict and where you question the basic tenets inherited from your family, your education, and your different cultures” (“now let us shift” 548). Anzaldúa’s definition of the female subject as *nepantlera* or as a *mestiza* (“carrying all five races”) is taken further by Ana Castillo in her *Massacre of the Dreamers*, by introducing the term *Xicanista*, to stand for the politically aware female subject, in search of a voice, all the while preserving the somehow individualistic perspective and foregrounding the concern for the self.

The introduction of all these apparently striking terms functions as a re-configuring of the female subject in the borderlands, previously and traditionally associated with stereotypes of feminine psychoanalysis. The Chicana theoretical framework stands on the grounds of the previously mentioned revolt towards the stereotypical construction of the female as the “other”, with its subsequent modifiers – “the castrated”, “the colored”, “the banished-from-heaven”, “the submissive”, basically, “the inferior”. Furthermore, some Chicanas¹ even distance themselves from the colonial/postcolonial framework, while introducing a third, the decolonial, as the imaginary through which history could be re-written by paying particular attention to the experience of the marginalized, “that interstitial space where differential politics and social dilemmas are organized” and the imaginary “conjures fragmented identities, fragmented realities, that are ‘real,’ but a real that is in question” (Perez, 1999:6).

And the Chicana/feminine identity is such a marginalized instance. This marginalized position, both in the psycho-social background of the community and the Western literary tradition, has always placed the Chicana female subject under various labels. It is in fact these labels that the Chicana feminists have to deal with, before and while introducing ‘the decolonial’.

The Freudian well-known concept of the ‘castration complex’ is challenged primarily by feminists, regardless of their racial attributes, as it constitutes one of the first instances of male intellectual discriminative positions. Although largely debated upon by recent psychology, Freud’s theory of feminine sexuality² focuses on gender differentiation through the castration complex that the female manifests towards the masculine, from the earliest stages of development. The female subject is, in Freudian psychology, the ‘castrated Other’,

lacking a penis and envying the man for having one, a denominator that has raised numerous debates within the psychological environment, as well as the realm of cultural studies, of which Lacan's intervention³ is noteworthy to the evolution of the Chicana performance of the female subject.

Lacan's assessment comes against Freud's biologicistic readings in that it places an emphasis on the linguistic consciousness involved in establishing gender. In this way, gender identity is no longer rooted in nature (as was the case in Freud's theory) but rather in the constitutive force of language. Gender, in Lacanian terms, is a product of fantasy, a cultural structure that determines sexuality. He acknowledges the situation of the female subjects in a patriarchal culture and society as "unnecessary subjugation", and unlike Freud, focuses on the idea that a male/female hierarchy perpetuates itself without being mandated by a biologically determined inferiority. Women in Lacan's view are no longer castrated, but fall under the males' illusion of power (represented by the phallus). But even if Lacan recognizes the fantasy dimension of sexual difference, he still emphasizes the power of gender structures to give significance to the reality that women live in, and perpetuate it. However, the definition of women as 'lack' is perpetuated in a way, as the focus shifts from 'lacking the penis' to lacking power over the phallus.

Derrida, on the other hand, emphasizes the political significance of the way in which sexuality does not always match perfectly the gender identity. He argues that gender and sex are not identical and it is through the "performative" power of language that the woman "cannot be imprisoned in the current definitions of herself as lack, as the castrated other" (Cornell, 1992: 285). The 'definition' of the female subject as designed by the 'superior' gender, perpetuates as long as linguistic performances are re-enacted in relation to sexuality, in similar contexts. As later argued by Cornell, 'sexual identity' becomes in the context of these revisions a "cultural construction [...] which can only justify itself by an appeal to past history" (289).

The fact that the male subject was rigidly fixed in the common understanding as superior to the female subject is a result of not only the impositions of tradition, but also of the recognition of the latter as justified and 'scientifically' explainable, a characteristic which both Freud and Lacan have contributed to. In this way, the 'castration complex' might be considered to have become, throughout the scientific praise that Freud has received, an almost involuntary response to gender differentiation, a reflex.

But while Derrida struggles to deconstruct the 'arbitrary dichotomous categories' of male and female, Judith Butler offers another analysis of identity from a poststructuralist view that is helpful in discussing Chicana rewritings of gender (Butler, 1990). Instead of seeing gender identity as a result of linguistic construction, she brings forth the ideas of agency and performance, defining gender as "the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts"(33). Her aim is to justify the assumption according to which female identity is self-stylized, and that by repeated acts/performances it creates the illusion of an essentialized identity. What is even more important for the analysis of Chicana female subject is the fact that Butler relates performance to an "act of conscious affiliation", rather than natural reasons.

"The foundationalist reasoning of identity politics tends to assume that an identity must first be in place in order for political interests to be elaborated and, subsequently, political action to be taken. My argument is that there need not be a 'doer behind the deed,' but that the 'doer' is variably constructed in and through the deed" (Butler, 1990:142).

Butler's concept of gender performance could therefore be extrapolated to a series of 'deeds' that involve the construction of a specific identity, even though that identity is fragmented in itself. The 'doers' perform the fragmentation in order to render explicit their discontent with the other's performances, perpetuated by history and repetition. Performing as Chicanas, the

feminists deny the Freudian assumptions of inferiority just as much as they make a political statement of self-determination. Although they might perform their true selves (if that notion could still be maintained without essentialising it), the Chicanas do it in a mediated manner, consciously assuming the role language and previous situations have in shaping their current being. The female subject in the borderlands responds to the historical moment and the way in which it has been conceptualized by others by wearing the mask of fragmentary identity and by employing a set of strategies that further perpetuate that fragmentariness. The Chicana writers and theorists employ thus a set of female subject positions of which some are performed in response to the phallogentric order, while others are performed in an undisclosed manner, so as to contribute to the complexity of instances the feminine can manifest in. To this purpose, they employ a set of images, ‘drags’ in Butler’s terms, which may constitute a taxonomy of female subject positions characteristic to the Chicana environment.

In order to sustain the extent to which these categories respond to the previously mentioned ‘dichotomous categories’, it is however, inevitably to also look at the male configuration of the topic. Although the Chicano movement is primarily concerned with the ethnic polarization of the American society and culture, and hence the marginalization of minority subjects, there are tendencies to include or to exclude the gender performance, depending on the identity assumed at a particular moment. The male configurations of identity inevitably respond, in their turn, to the development of feminist theories within the Mexican-American environment, and while some preserve, in a ‘traditional’ manner the stereotypic female imagery, others tend to incorporate a different approach to femaleness, as they (un)willingly portray instances of empowered women.

In this context of Chicano and Chicana performances of identity, to place them together would not only help express the affiliations they establish in performing the Mexican-American identity, but also the assumption that gender differentiation is not necessarily bound to dissipate one, but rather to help perform both. As Mexican-American identity in general, and the female subjectivity in particular, is constructed on the bases of fragmentation, the slash in ‘Chicano/a’ is actually a unifying principle, however paradoxical that may sound, in that it places an emphasis on the “infinite divisions”⁴ that might actually unite.

Without purporting to the exhaustive, the discussion of the female encounters in the Chicano/a literary environment could encompass a number of recurring images. On the one hand, they serve the previously exposed principle of identity performance, aiming to establish themselves as counter-prototypes to the male dominated tradition. On the other, some of them are inferred from the constant preoccupation of female authors predominantly to issue a new terminology to define and identify the Chicana.

In this respect, Maria Herrera-Sobeck’s *The Mexican Corrido: A Feminist Analysis* (1990), based on more than three thousand *corridos* (which are considered the most traditional and representative forms of artistic expression in the Chicano environment) explores five major female archetypes: the Good Mother, the Terrible Mother, the Virgin of Guadalupe, The Lover—both faithful and treacherous— and the Soldadera. Most of these archetypes represent both positive (Good Mother, Virgin of Guadalupe, Faithful Lover) and negative (Terrible Mother, Treacherous Lover – La Llorona, La Malinche) examples of feminine prototypes that have influenced the general and (self)perception of women in the borderlands. The last one, however, reconfigures “positive female behavior” to include political agency in the form of armed struggle for the revolution. It is this *soldadera*, somehow portrayed by the corridos as a possible feminine instance that occupies most of her study, in order to show that the gender roles assigned by the patriarchal system allow for a certain praise of the woman who goes beyond traditional gender roles, even within the male-dominated community. However, she goes on to explore the ways in which this incipient form

of liberation is dealt with by male authors, apparently abandoned by strongly oriented social ones (such as Luis Valdez's portrayal of women as voiceless others) and concluding that both traditional and non-traditional gender roles are based on the assumption of heterosexuality, which generates oppression on multiple levels: as members of a minority group, as females, and as inheritors of a culture that tends to be dominated by males. In a performance of authorship, Herrera-Sobeck manages to take one first step in issuing a taxonomy of the female presence in the borderlands, all the while providing the comparative approach of 'traditional' and postmodern analysis.

When expanding this taxonomy of the female subject positions in the Chicano/a literary production, some other 'categories' can be included, depending of whether one is guided by the revisionist or the innovative principle. The revisionist performances include female legendary figures, re-discovered by the Chicana as being the initial perpetrators of the 'castration complex': La Virgen de Guadalupe, la Malinche, La Llorona and the other Catholic or Indian/Aztec deities serve as objective instances of oppression. They are symbols that the 'spectators' can easily recognize and a re-enactment of their patriarchal nature under the light of the feminist atmosphere of the movement enables the latter to re-evaluate their validity as solid figures of ideology. Furthermore, the incorporation of general terms that have been traditionally inflicted with a subaltern position (such as daughter, wife, or even mother, the lover/mistress and the female worker) functions yet as another re-enactment. By assigning the female subjects the role they have stereotypically been confined to, the Chicana female writer is trying to display the possibility of change. And in most of the cases, change is a synonym of creation, initially in terms of language, and eventually of identity. The innovative principle functions on the same level of performance, but while tradition is assumed as drag in order to strip it off, the 'new' female identities are proudly performed, at times at extensive levels. They include the *soldadera* image that Herrera-Sobeck enlarged upon in her analysis, but also Gloria Anzaldúa's the *new mestiza* or Ana Castillo's *Xicanista*, overall the prototype of the empowered, self-confident woman, able to negotiate an in-between space from which to reconfigure the male/female dichotomy. In the same creative endeavor, the issue of lesbianism seems to function as the ultimate performance that challenges the validity and consistency of the male-normative discourse. Queer theory as reflected in the works of the Chicana, interrogates not only categories of sexual orientation, but also the social constructedness of the male/female relationships and their susceptibility to change. All these purport subsequent images of the feminine principle, in order to justify the fragmentariness of an identity in the making, which is never stable yet always somehow in opposition to the 'canonic' imaginary. What is noteworthy in the realm of feminist readings by Chicana is the fact that they rarely renounce the male antagonism completely. The Chicano writer, on the other hand, rarely focuses willingly on the female stereotypes, which is why the fractured identities of women are still present, even though not emphasized. When bringing out the female in a male-dominated narrative structure, the performance is still of difference, but leaves room for undisclosed developments. In a sense, writings like Luis Valdez, Jimmy Santiago Baca or Rolando Hinojosa's contribute to the female revisionism by reinforcing the positions that the Chicanas aim at deconstructing.

The female subject re-configuring within the Chicana feminist literary tradition poses the duality of exclusion/re-integration within a traditional framework. Both narratives and theoretical texts originating in the "marginal" space of the Chicano community have been systematically excluded from the traditional American literary history. Being a Chicana feminist writer is thus another way of responding to oppression, but by forcing the 'other' (in this case tradition) to accept interventions of a different community (namely the Mexican American one).

The female subjects of the borderlands, both in their social and theoretical construction, have assumed a new position in respect to their counterparts. Although initially concerned with revising stereotypes, a feature which is still to be observed on a subsequent level in recent writings by Chicanas, contemporary literary and artistic representations of the Chicana female subject no longer comply with that initial mode of expression – the revolt. Instead, Chicanas nowadays (as writers, academics, or as characters portrayed in the books) have already reached the state of political and self-awareness which enables them to claim a different role and renounce the set of “modifiers” traditionally associated with the gendered ‘other’.

A taxonomy of the female subject in the borderlands is bound to focus thus on both the ‘traditional’ imagery, re-performed by the Chicanas in order to be deconstructed, as well as on the neo-constructivist one. By formulating theories of difference, the Chicana female subject becomes a mediator between the canonic perceptions inflicted by Freudian psychoanalysis and the postmodern approaches to gender performativity. From being a ‘traitor’ through translation⁵, the female subject regains its creativity and is able to initiate another trajectory for its further existence in the no longer male-dominated world.

Although not exhaustively, the analysis of the female subject in the borderlands has revealed a set of images that could configure this taxonomy, in both literary and theoretical writings by Chicanos/as. The categories identified correspond to the three major preoccupations of the Chicana feminists. In revising tradition, they employ legendary figures such as La Virgen de Guadalupe/ Tonantzin, La Malinche, La Llorona in order to deconstruct their patriarchal upbringing as female ‘role-models’. Revisionism also entails a different approach to the ‘regularity’ of female subject positions as mothers, daughters or wives, by striving to charge them with a new set of meanings. By writing their own ‘myths’, Chicanas go beyond the patriarchal ‘ruling’ power and issue a new code with which to denominate the female experience. Eventually, the third category of femaleness in the borderlands encompasses the new identities, fragmented and re-constructed from the perspective of a self-conscious individual. The *soldadera*, *Xicanista* or the *new mestiza* stand for the evolutionary tendencies the postmodern subject implies, all the while incorporating race, ethnicity and sexuality in defining the female.

Acknowledgements: This work was supported by the European Social Fund in Romania, under the responsibility of the Managing Authority for the Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007-2013 [grant POSDRU/88/1.5/S/47646]

Notes

[1] Such as Emma Perez in *The Decolonial Imaginary*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999

[2] As developed in Freud, Sigmund *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey. New York: Basic Books, 1962

[3] In *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the Ecole Freudienne*, Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose (eds) New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982

[4] Tey Diana Rebolledo conceptualizes the “infinite divisions” between the traditional/canonic American literature and the Chicana in *Infinite Divisions. An Anthology of Chicana Literature*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993

[5] Cf. Alarcon, Norma. "Traductora, Traditora: A Paradigmatic Figure of Chicana Feminism." *Cultural Critique* 13 (Fall 1989), pp. 57-87.

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Ursula Le Guin and the Left Hand of Feminism

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Abstract: *Feminist SF starts with Ursula Le Guin’s The Left Hand of Darkness (1969), a novel about a planet on which sexuality is constructed completely differently and where androgyny is the norm. Unaffected by the gender characteristics which shape human lives, this society without fixed gender strikes the reader by its harmony and lack of aggression, which makes it far superior to our own. The book is one of the first serious analyses of gender to be attempted in all literature.*

Key words: *science fiction, feminism, gender, androgyny, utopia*

Although, thanks to her novel *Frankenstein* (1818), Mary Shelley is the acknowledged “mother” of SF, most historical analyses do not dwell at any length on a single woman writer until the publication of Ursula Le Guin’s *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969). In the intervening years, as Patricia Monk points out, women have often written “under the cover of initials or ambisexual pseudonyms,” therefore “women writers of SF have often tended to be invisible, even when they did exist.” Monk identifies what she calls the “androcentric mystique” of SF, “a literary mystique characterized by gadgetry, adventure and androcentric thinking,” and finds it unsurprising that “women writers who have broken into the genre have, on finding it dominated by this androcentric mystique, shown a tendency to succumb and to incorporate the mystique into their own writing.” (qtd by Debra Benita Shaw in Cunningham, 2002: 65-66)

Not that Le Guin has never shown that tendency. As she explains in her essay “The Fisherwoman’s Daughter,” her change was evolutionary and for a long time she was not aware that she needed to change: “I was free – born free, lived free. And for years that personal freedom allowed me to ignore the degree to which my writing was controlled and constrained by judgments and assumptions I thought were my own, but which were the internalized ideology of a male supremacist society.” (Le Guin 1989: 233–4) Re-examination of these assumptions came in 1969, when Le Guin published *The Left Hand of Darkness*, her “first contribution to feminism” (Bucknall, 1981: 9) and “undoubtedly the most widely read of all the feminist SF canon” (Jane Donawerth in Bould et al, 2009: 485).

The plot is easily summarized: On the distant icebound planet of Gethen, also called Winter, an envoy named Genly Ai has the task of persuading its rulers to join the interstellar federation known as the Ekumen. Like Genly, the inhabitants of Gethen are human. Unlike him, they are of indeterminate sex. Only during the period known as ‘kemmer’ do they become sexually active and each individual can be either male or female. Indeed, any one individual experiences periods of maleness and periods of femaleness throughout life. Accustomed to the strict gender demarcations of his own world, Genly finds the fluid sexuality of Gethen disconcerting, even disturbing, but he is most concerned with his diplomatic mission. His greatest ally appears to be a high-ranking politician in the kingdom of Karhide named Estraven, but Estraven is summarily dispatched into exile by his king. Genly soon follows him out of Karhide and arrives in a rival political state. There he is imprisoned but eventually, after meeting Estraven once again, he escapes. Together the envoy and the exiled politician make an epic voyage back to Karhide, through the frozen and wintry landscape of Gethen. En route Genly and Estraven, who enters ‘kemmer’ during the journey, form a deep and loving relationship which is only ended, in tragic circumstances, when they approach their goal.

Obviously, the novel wrestles with one of the key tenets of feminist thought: the cultural construction of gender that is at once coercive and contingent. It is through this lens that Le Guin takes on one of the premier questions of SF: What does it mean to be human?

How much is one's humanity shaped by gender? What if gender could be removed from the social equation?

As a result of their ambisexuality, Gethenians are much less prone to the dualistic perception that is related to the permanent male/female split characterizing most other forms of humanity: "There is no division of humanity into strong and weak halves, protective/protected, dominant/submissive, owner/chattel, active/passive" (Le Guin, 1969: 93-4). Estraven, for instance, is "more occupied with the likenesses, the links, the whole of which things are a part," which makes Genly conclude, "You're isolated and undivided. Perhaps you are obsessed with wholeness as we are with dualism." (Le Guin, 1969: 222)

This Gethenian peculiarity is epitomized by the book's title, which is taken from "Tormer's Lay":

Light is the left hand of darkness
and darkness the right hand of light.
Two are one, life and death, lying
together like lovers in kemmer,
like hands joined together,
like the end and the way. (Le Guin, 1969: 222)

David Ketterer calls it "a reversed correlation of light with the left hand, given the sinister associations of left, and of darkness with the right hand," which further points to "the traditional association between the female and the left and between the female and primal darkness" (Ketterer, 1974: 81).

The embodiment of gender, the notion that one is shaped in particular ways by one's sexual biology, is fundamentally challenged by the Gethenians in ways that are profoundly linked to the question of normativity and the problem of recognition. The ways they fail to do gender – since biological sex, for them, is a temporary state rather than a permanent identity – makes them seem inhuman to Genly, while the ways in which Genly does gender, as a being in a state of permanent 'kemmer,' a state seen by Gethenians as a form of perversion, renders him less than human to most Gethenians. Genly, therefore, almost invariably misrecognizes the Gethenians by trying to impose a normative Terran gender pattern onto Gethenian behavior, stereotyping particular traits as 'masculine' or 'feminine' in ways that are meaningless on Gethen. Consequently, Genly's talent for misrecognition works on both macro and micro levels, as he misunderstands both Gethenians in general and individual Gethenians, notably Estraven. As the novel traces Genly's slow assimilation into Gethenian culture, it also tracks a kind of "undoing of gender" (Pearson in Pearson et al, 2008: 77) – or at least of Genly's perception that gender is immutable and immanent – and an alteration in Genly's perception of who is and who is not human.

Le Guin marks the novel's emphasis on Genly's function as a perceiving subject through the pun in his last name, Ai/eye/I. "The eye that sees and the I that sees cancel each other out for most of the novel" (Pearson in Pearson et al, 2008: 77) as Genly's assertion of his particularly Terran subjectivity prevents him from recognizing others as human, first Estraven and the Gethenians, then his own shipmates and colleagues, who appear to him at the end of the novel as aliens, as perverts. If seeming to have two genders but only one sex renders the Gethenians inhuman at the start of the novel, at the end it is still gender and, especially, sexuality that humanize or dehumanize for Genly Ai: "But they all looked strange to me, men and women, well as I knew them. Their voices sounded strange: too deep, too shrill. They were like a troupe of great, strange animals..." (Le Guin, 1969: 296)

The basic point about Gethenian sexuality is that the sex role does not color everything else in life, as is the case with us, but is rather contained and defused, reduced to that brief period of the monthly cycle when, as with our animal species, the Gethenians are in 'heat' or

'kemmer.' So Genly underscores this basic 'estrangement effect' of Gethen on 'normally' sexed beings:

The First Mobile, if one is sent, must be warned that unless he is very self-assured, or senile, his pride will suffer. A man wants his virility regarded, a woman wants her femininity appreciated, however indirect and subtle the indications of regard and appreciation. On Winter they will not exist. One is respected and judged only as a human being. It is an appalling experience. (Le Guin, 1969: 95)

Far from eliminating sex, Gethenian biology has the result of eliminating sexual repression:

Being so strictly defined and limited by nature, the sexual urge of Gethenians is really not much interfered with by society: there is less coding, channeling, and repressing of sex than in any bisexual society I know of. Abstinence is entirely voluntary; indulgence is entirely acceptable. Sexual fear and sexual frustration are both extremely rare. (Le Guin, 1969: 177)

If Gethen does not do away with sex, it may do away with everything that is problematical about it. Essentially, Gethenian physiology solves the problem of sex, and that is certainly something no human being of our type has ever been able to do owing largely to the non-biological nature of human desire as opposed to 'natural' or instinctual animal need. "Only a makeup of the Gethenian type, with its limitation of desire to a few days of the monthly cycle, could possibly curb the problem" (Jameson, 2005: 274). Such a makeup suggests that sexual desire is something that can be completely removed from other human activities, allowing us to see them in some more fundamental, unmixed fashion.

Le Guin's attempt to imagine human biology without desire is of a piece, structurally and in its general spirit, with her attempt to rethink Western history without capitalism. Take the description of the opening cornerstone ceremony:

Masons below have set an electric winch going, and as the king mounts higher the keystone of the arch goes up past him in its sling, is raised, settled, and fitted almost soundlessly, great ton-weight block though it is, into the gap between the two piers, making them one, one thing, an arch. (Le Guin, 1969: 4-5).

Or that of the departure of the first spring caravan towards the fastnesses of the North: "twenty bulky, quiet-running, barge-like trucks on caterpillar treads, going single file down the deep streets of Erhenrang through the shadows of morning." (Le Guin, 1969: 49) Here the premise is clearly that of a feudal or medieval culture that knows electricity and machine technology. However, the machines do not have the same results as in our own world:

The mechanical-industrial Age of Invention in Karhide is at least three thousand years old, and during those thirty centuries they have developed excellent and economical central-heating devices using steam, electricity, and other principles; but they do not install them in their houses. (Le Guin, 1969: 28)

What makes all this more complicated than the usual extrapolative projection is the immense time span involved, and the great antiquity of Gethen's science and technology, which tends to emphasize not so much what happens when we thus combine or amalgamate different historical stages of our own empirical Earth history, but rather precisely what does not happen. That is, indeed, what is most significant about the example of Gethen: namely that nothing happens, an immemorial social order remains exactly as it was, and the introduction of electrical power fails to make any impact whatsoever on the stability of a basically static, unhistorical society.

Along in those four millennia the electric engine was developed, radios and power looms and power vehicles and farm machinery and all the rest began to be used, and a Machine Age got going, gradually, without any industrial revolution, without any revolution at all. (Le Guin, 1969: 98-99)

As the author will later state:

The Gethenians do not rape their world. They have developed a high technology, heavy industry, automobiles, radios, explosives, etc., but they have done so very slowly, absorbing their technology rather than letting it overwhelm them. They have no myth of progress at all. (Le Guin, 1989: 141)

The existence of modern technology in the midst of an essentially feudal order is the gauge by which the latter's success can be measured (Jameson, 2005: 277). The miraculous presence of this emblematically quiet, peacefully humming technology is the proof that in Gheten we have to do with an alternate world to our own, one in which capitalism never happened, one in which there is precious little tension and thus no war. Le Guin herself has said that one of the initial impulses to write this novel came out of a desire to imagine a world that knew nothing of war.

At the very inception of the whole book, I was interested in writing a novel about people in a society that had never had a war. That came first. The androgyny came second. (Cause and effect? Effect and cause?) (Le Guin, 1989: 141)

Le Guin suggests that the warlessness of Gheten is possibly the ultimate function of a genderless society and, by implication, that war is nothing but a result of the fixed-gender nature of our own world. But, as Adam Roberts points out, "without the sexual distractions of gender, always referring us back to our corporeality, we too could acquire a more spiritual outlook on life." (Roberts, 2000: 117)

Is Gheten a utopia? The term 'utopia' causes Le Guin much difficulty, the author discussing it in an essay entitled "A non-euclidian view of California." According to her, utopia has been "euclidean, European and masculine," but she is perplexed as to what a non-euclidean, non-European, non-masculine utopia might be. It might, she says, possibly be imaginable by women, though it would certainly not only be inhabited by women. Using the terminology of yin and yang, she contrasts two versions of utopia:

From Plato on, utopia has been the big yang motorcycle trip. Bright, dry, clear, strong, firm, active, aggressive, linear, progressive, creative, expanding, advancing, and hot.... What would a yin utopia be? It would be dark, wet, obscure, weak, yielding, passive, participatory, circular, cyclical, nurturant, retreating, contracting, and cold. (Le Guin, 1989: 90)

The conclusion that she comes to leads her to the title of her collected essays, *Dancing at the Edge of the World* (1989). Rejecting the alternatives proposed to utopian writers, either to expose the brutality of the present world or to write escapist, consolatory fiction about a different society, she states simply that she has no idea what utopia might be. The image she uses is a metaphorical one, that of descending into the abyss, the darkness, and ultimately emerging into the unknown, "a form of spiritual death and resurrection" (Susan Bassnett in Armit, 1991: 62).

I have no idea who we will be or what it may be like on the other side, though I believe there are people there. They have always lived there. It's home. There are songs they sing there; one of the songs is called 'Dancing at the edge of the world.' (Le Guin, 1989: 98-9).

To speak of *The Left Hand of Darkness* as a feminist text, however, is not as self-evident as it may first appear. Unfortunately, *The Left Hand of Darkness* has not gone without criticism. While many have hailed the text as an important feminist text, many have also criticized the novel for its evasions. Specifically, while the text ostensibly depicts an androgynous society, some critics contend that Le Guin has effectively eliminated the female altogether and presented nothing but a male society. This assessment stems, in part, from Le Guin's use of language and, more specifically, the masculinized language of 'he' and 'him' when referring

to Estraven and other Gethenians. For instance, when Estraven is first introduced, Le Guin writes, “He is lord of a Domain and lord of the Kingdom, a mover of great events. His name is Therem Harth rem ir Estraven” (Le Guin, 1969: 5). Le Guin did anticipate this criticism and addresses this gender derivation in the novel: “I must say ‘he,’ for the same reasons as we used the masculine pronoun in referring to a transcendent god: it is less defined, less specific, than the neuter of the feminine. But the very use of the pronoun in my thoughts leads me continually to forget that the Karhider I am with is not a man, but a manwoman.” (Le Guin, 1969: 94–5)

In addition to some of the negative feminist commentary, the novel does nothing to challenge heterosexuality; in other words, ‘straight’ relationships are still advocated as the normal sexual condition. This is clearly evident in ‘kemmering,’ as Gethenians default to male/female binaries and pair up in that fashion; although there are incestuous partnerships, there apparently are no homosexual relations. Le Guin uses her essay “Is Gender Necessary? Redux” to apologize for this omission: “*In any kemmer house homosexual practice would, of course, be possible and acceptable and welcomed—but I never thought to explore this option; and the omission, alas, implies that sexuality is heterosexuality. I regret this very much.*” (Le Guin, 1989: 14)

In spite of its oversights, *The Left Hand of Darkness* remains “one of the most graceful, intelligent and thought-provoking examples of SF written from a feminist perspective” (Andrews & Rennison, 2006, 84), challenging the reader to think of gender notions in a new light, because, after all, light is the left hand of darkness, and the other way round.

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Personajul feminin – între abordarea literară și concretizările psiho-pedagogice*

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Résumé: *En prolongeant toute une série de stéréotypes interprétatifs mises en circulation par certaines exégèses critiques « consacrées » ou « canoniques », les démarches didactiques actuelles visant l'analyse des héroïnes de la littérature roumaine témoignent souvent l'asservissement à des préjugés de genre, dont l'effet est la minimisation de la complexité des personnages féminins. Dans la mesure où ces approches didactiques sont censées transmettre certaines valeurs intellectuelles, morales et esthétiques incarnées dans les figures féminines analysées et susceptibles de donner naissance à des modèles comportementaux parmi les jeunes générations, une nouvelle perspective sur le problème en question s'avère non seulement féconde du point de vue critique, mais aussi nécessaire du point de vue psychopédagogique.*

Mots-clés: *littérature roumaine, personnages féminins, stéréotypes critiques, approches didactiques*

Deși ocupă un loc important în economia epică și în rețeaua de semnificații a textelor literare prozastice și dramaturgice românești sau străine, personajul feminin nu s-a bucurat totdeauna de prea multă atenție și de prea multe studii analitice din partea exegeților literari.

Într-o literatură scrisă, predominant, de bărbați, cu personaje de prim plan aparținând majoritar acestui gen, purtătorii de sens și elementele dinamice ale textelor epice au fost căutate mai cu seamă în construcția personajului masculin.

Feminitatea, prezentă de cele mai multe ori în linia a doua, a beneficiat cel mai adesea de analize „în completare”, menite să evidențieze unele aspecte de ordin ambiental ale existenței personajului masculin și să potențeze printr-un aport uneori pozitiv, alteori malefic, destinul acestuia, marcat de cele mai multe ori de semnele excepționalității. Exemple sunt multe și ele se pot culege înseosebi din aria situațională a literaturii anterioară anului 1989. Fără a le așeza într-o ordine a importanței, amintesc aici câteva, care au caracteristica unei mai solide statuări în conștiința publică prin studiul școlar. Genialitatea lui Hyperion din *Luceafărul* eminescian, de pildă, este definită în raport cu viziunea romantică și cu preceptele filosofice ale secolului al nouăsprezecelea, dar și printr-o antiteză îngroșată cu „micimea” spirituală, „meschinăria”, „incapacitatea” Cătălinei de a-i înțelege superioritatea gândirii și a sentimentelor etc.

Alteori, ca în cazul Vidrei din drama lui Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu, ieșită din același secol al nouăsprezecelea, prezentarea feminității este făcută la fel de simplist, ca o construcție rudimentară în jurul unei ambiții puternice până la maladiv, cu ușoare circumstanțe umanizatoare înspre finalul piesei.

Trecând peste diferențele de situare temporală și spațială, semnificații vizate sau mijloace de construcție; într-un mod asemănător stau lucrurile și cu Chera Duduca sau Maria (*Ciocoii vechi și noi*), Zoe (*O scrisoare pierdută*), Veta și Zița (*O noapte furtunoasă*), Ela Gheorghidiu (*Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război*), personajele feminine, câte sunt, din *Hanul Ancuței*, Ana, Florica, Roza Lang (*Ion*) sau, mai încoace, Nineta, Căprioara, Matilda și Suzy (*Cel mai iubit dintre pământeni*). Sunt, desigur, exemple luate la întâmplare, din diferite timpuri și genuri literare, dar toate indică același tratament exegetic și, în prelungirea lui, didactic al personajelor feminine care ocupă un loc secundar în operele literare pe care le populează.

Uneori, obișnuința de a vedea personajul feminin doar ca un element ambiental cu diferite potențialități explicative și caracterizante ale persoanei masculine riscă să ducă la simplificări și schematismes aflate în flagrantă neadecvare cu statutul respectivei ipostaze a feminității. Așa se întâmplă cu Ana, din *Moara cu noroc*, văzută în marea majoritate a cazurilor ca o victimă a setei de înavuțire a lui Ghiță, care, schimbându-și comportamentul

afectiv datorită acestei patimi reprobabile, ar determina redirecționarea erotică a Anei către Lică Sămădăul. Faptul că această pasiune pecuniară nu este în nuvelă decât o circumstanță favorizantă pentru atracția erotică resimțită în mod natural de Ana față de mai marele porcarilor din regiune este rareori discutat, iar atunci când acest lucru se întâmplă enunțurile caracterizatoare, de la cele critice la cele didactice, sunt superficiale și lipsite de argumente factive.

Modelul acesta de analiză s-a impus și s-a extins pe de o parte pentru că, în general, aceasta este și viziunea criticii literare în raport cu personajul respectiv (desigur, excepțiile nu lipsesc, Pompiliu Marcea [1] fiind printre primii care tratează cu mai mare consistență această chestiune), iar pe de altă parte datorită prea îndelungatei prezențe a acestui șablon interpretativ în canoanele didactice cu efecte constrângătoare asupra predării temei în cauză. Conform cu grijă acestui canon, personajului i s-a luat dreptul la autonomie erotică pe care până și conservatorul moralist Ioan Slavici i l-a acordat în textul său, probabil fără o intenție precisă, ci doar lăsându-l să se desfășoare natural și credibil.

O sinteză degradată a acestei situații oferă numeroasele site-uri care acordă „asistență” de „specialitate” internautică gratuită elevilor și studenților amatori de „comentarii” gata făcute și propuse ca utile pentru diferite probe de examen care ar viza acest subiect. Reproduc mai jos o mostră de astfel de comentariu, în forma în care apare acesta pe pagina unuia dintre „auxiliarele” didactice respective, considerate suficiente și necesare pentru promovarea examenelor cu pricina: „Prea tânără, prea așezată, oarecum prea blândă la fire, Ana înregistrează cu durere transformarea lui Ghiță (soțul ei), înstrăinarea acestuia din momentul în care luaseră în arendă cârciuma de la Moara cu Noroc. Această ființă gingașă și iubitoare, crescută de mama ei în tradiția devotamentului față de soț și copii, se va lăsa cu greu convinsă că bărbatul ei este implicat în afaceri necurate. Mai întâi, ea încearcă cu disperare să afle ce se întâmplă în sufletul lui Ghiță, care, de când se întovărășise cu Lică, devenise tot mai tăcut, tot mai izolat, își reproșează faptul că nu a știut să fie tot timpul alături de el, să-l ajute la nevoie și să-l împiedice să devină victima lui Lică. Reacțiile lui Ghiță la încercarea Anei de a afla ce se petrece cu el, lipsa lui de încredere, la început, o întristează și o jignesc pe Ana. Treptat, iubirea Anei pentru Ghiță se stinge, fiind înlocuită de un dispreț profund. Atitudinea soțului ei o va împinge în brațele lui Lică, despre care știa că este „rău și primejdios”, dar care exercita asupra ei o atracție irezistibilă. Declarația pe care Ana i-o face lui Lică dezvăluie acest lucru: „Tu ești om, Lică, iară Ghiță nu e decât o muiere îmbracată în haine bărbătești, ba chiar mai rau decât așa.” Imoralitatea Anei este aspru pedepsită de Ghiță. Sub impulsul geloziei și al disperării, el o înjunghie pe Ana.” [2]

Unde este, cu adevărat, soția hangului în această caracterizare, care sunt resorturile ființei ei, identitatea sa feminină, elementele cumulative prin care se instituie o profundă și puternică trăire erotică pentru Lică Sămădăul, determinările organice și nu circumstanțiale ale acestei trăiri, cel puțin în momentul prim când își face loc în sufletul acestui interesant personaj feminin – comentariul considerat a avea efecte „miraculoase” în planul succesului școlar nu mai spune. Naturaletea sentimentală a personajului, nedreptățit și sancționat atât de propriul său destin cât și de critica literară, iar apoi, în prelungirea acesteia, de prejudecățile care au marcat vreme îndelungată prezența didactică a literaturii, rămâne astfel în bună măsură ascunsă. O dată cu ea, neștiută rămână și această izbândă estetică a didacticistului moralizator Ioan Slavici, care, spre deosebire de celelalte nuvele ale sale, se lasă aici condus de text, care, la rândul său, se construiește, oarecum autonom, în datele credibile ale autenticității omenești, în alte direcții ale psihologiei feminine decât cele pur etico-morale pe care le anunța incipitul nuvelei.

Sub aspectul contribuțiilor critice sau eseistice dedicate acestui tip cu certe particularități, care este personajul feminin, spațiul literar românesc a înregistrat în ultimii zece-cincisprezece ani câteva lucrări care sunt de natură să schimbe optica asupra acestui

subiect și, într-un viitor oarecare, să determine modificări și în concretizarea pedagogică a acestuia. Una dintre ele este *Alfabetul doamnelor. De la doamna B. la doamna T* [3], scriere cu caracter mai pronunțat eseistic care a avut parte de o bună primire din partea criticii literare. Chiar în anul apariției, de pildă, Alex. Ștefănescu nota: „Cititorul, dacă este bărbat, se așează surâzător în fotoliu pentru a citi această carte, în care crede că va vedea baletul mecanic al eroinelor literaturii române. Un adevărat harem livresc, pus la dispoziția sa! Însă, după lectura primelor pagini, sare în sus ca ars. Cartea este de fapt o capcană. Autoarea se amuză nu pe seama romanțioaselor făpturi, ci pe seama mentalității care le-a creat. O mentalitate androcentrică, adeseori puerilă, care a marcat aproape întreaga literatură română (inclusiv literatura scrisă de femei)” [4].

Dacă în alte locuri ale cronicii sale, criticul este sau prea encomiastic, sau destul de diluat în analiză, cu acest fragment are dreptate. Faptul de a divulga mentalitatea din care pornește creația acestor personaje și din care, aș adăuga, se revendică și receptarea lor este un merit important al cărții Ioanei Pârvulescu. Dincolo de aceste aprecieri însă, e de văzut cum s-ar putea răsfrânge perspectiva deschisă de această lucrare (și de altele, destule dintre ele fiind teze de doctorat) în aria metodologiei didactice care ar face posibilă transmiterea unor noi puncte de vedere și formarea unor noi atitudini intelectuale, morale și estetice față de personajul feminin.

***Acknowledgement:** This paper is supported by the Project PNII - IDEI, code 947, financed by CNCSIS – UEFISCU.

Note

[1] Pompiliu Marcea, *I. Slavici*, Editura pentru Literatură, București, 1965.

[2] „Caracterizare – Ana – eroină a nuvelei *Moara cu noroc* de Ioan Slavici”,

<http://www.autorii.com/scriitori/ioan-slavici/caracterizare-ana-eroina-a-nuvelei-moara-cu-noroc.php>.

[3] Ioana Pârvulescu, *Alfabetul doamnelor. De la doamna B. la doamna T.*, editura Crater, București, 1999.

[4] Alex. Ștefănescu, „Studiu savant, joc literar și poem critic”, în *România literară*, nr. 12 / 1999.

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Wide Sargasso Sea: Telling the Untold

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Résumé : *Le roman La prisonnière des Sargasses (Jean Rhys) anticipe l'action de Jane Eyre en donnant la parole et une identité au personnage précédemment marginalisé, l'épouse de Monsieur Rochester, Antoinette. On peut dire que, de cette façon, l'auteur crée simultanément un passé pour Antoinette et un avenir pour Jane. La prisonnière des Sargasses devient, donc, l'un des nombreux romans qui re-discutent les aspects présentés dans Jane Eyre, en élargissant beaucoup son champ d'interprétation et en soulignant les possibilités infinies de l'interpréter. La présente démarche se propose d'analyser Jean Rhys, sa double fonction comme lecteur du roman canonique Jane Eyre et comme auteur du roman La prisonnière des Sargasses ainsi que l'effet de son propre roman sur les lecteurs des romans discutés.*

Key words: *author, text, reader, character, woman writer*

In a time when postmodernism decreed that all art is void of originality and therefore repetitious of previous works of art, writers turned their attention to the reality of the text rather than of the external environment. They were no longer holding the mirror to the world outside them but to previously written texts. Though originality seemed an impossible aim in face of the repetition of prior symbols, metaphors and subject matter, innovation arose from the actual means and methods of revisiting canonical texts. Exemplary in this sense is Jean Rhys' novel, *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Published in 1966, it was devised as a prequel to *Jane Eyre*, shaping a story for a character that was ignored by both readers and her author, Mr. Rochester's mad wife, Bertha Mason (renamed Antoinette). Never once is Brontë's novel mentioned in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, but the latter abounds in allusions to the original novel, rewriting and remapping its metaphors to fit new purposes. Intertextuality is itself recycled in this novel as not only does Rhys revisit *Jane Eyre* so as to give voice to a previously marginalised character, she also revisits herself, overlapping her own story with that of Antoinette.

The aim of this paper is to analyse, on the one hand, Rhys' double role, as a reader of Brontë's novel and as the author of *Wide Sargasso Sea* and on the other hand, the effect the postmodern text has on the readers of the canonical one. *Wide Sargasso Sea* has been traditionally associated to postcolonialism, Caribbean literature, feminism and modernism. Though any of these is perfectly justified, the focus of this paper will be shifted towards the inner didacticism of the novel, highlighting Rhys' intention to instruct her readership what and how to read her novel and literature in general. Focus will be placed on bringing to the surface Rhys' authorial intrusions, as a means of obliquely expressing her anxieties as a person, as a reader and as a writer. From this viewpoint, *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a shadowy novel, nothing being authoritatively stated but only implied, suggested and well hidden in-between the lines. Therefore, the “untold” mentioned in the title of this paper makes reference not only to taboo truths but also to the manner Rhys chooses to include these in her novel, which is never directly and always hesitant.

Jean Rhys' life paved its way in many of her writings, including *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Born in 1890, in Dominica, as Ella Gwendoline Rees Williams, she grew up in the enclave of white Anglican Roseau. The inhabitants of Dominica, who were mainly of African descent, did not look favourably on the dominance of the British in the isles, so the atmosphere was, as expected, filled with tensions. In-between these clashes were the Creoles, who were repudiated by both the native Dominicans and the British imperialists. As an alternative, when she was sixteen, Rhys went to England where she stayed with her aunt and studied at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. Shortly after her arrival there, her father died so she could

not stay with her aunt any longer. As such, she remained alone in a place where she was constantly regarded upon as the “other”. Writing became a means to escape and amend such cruel reality. As Elaine Savory notes

the most important of Rhys’s cultural placements is that of writings itself, and in that culture, the Caribbean was the original formative space. In her maturity, she belonged to a writerly culture, one she fashioned for herself, rather than a school or a community of writers. In many ways she belonged nowhere else, feeling different and alone within her family, instinctively at war with much of the tenets of the small, embattled white Anglican community in Dominica into which she was born [...] (2004: 22).

Many critics analyse Rhys’ fiction only in connection to her Caribbean upbringing which they consider the main focaliser that filtered everything Rhys ever wrote. She is indeed a writer in whose case it is difficult not to consider autobiographical elements as well when interpreting her work as “it is only through an examination of Jean Rhys’ Creole identity as subjectivity and location [...] that the structures of Rhys’ fiction can be adequately deciphered” (Gregg 1995: 8). Though Rhys prohibited, in her will, that her biography be written, her perspectives on life and on the surrounding society are to be found in-between the lines of her novels. In an interview with Mary Cantwell, Rhys stated:

It’s hard to explain how, when and where a fact becomes a book. I start to write about something that has happened or is happening to me, but somehow or other things start changing. It’s as if the book had taken possession. Sometimes a character will run away from me, like Grace Poole, the nurse in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and get more important than I intended. It happened beyond my will. But the feelings ... the feelings are always mine (1990: 24).

Therefore, writing was a process deeply intimate for Rhys, who was convinced that it was a highly personal matter: “If you want to write the truth ... you must write about yourself. It must go out from yourself. I don’t see what else you can do. I’m the only real truth I know” (cited in Gregg 1995: 49). However, elsewhere she wrote: “I guess the invention is in the writing” (cited in Gregg 1995: 49) as if she were playing with her readers’ expectations about her personal life and her life as a writer. While many critics have plunged into reading Rhys’ novels according to her own statements and thus, reconstruct her life out of what she wrote, Rhys, the writer behind the woman, was put in the shade. Commentaries on social injustice, the marginalising of the Creoles, the silencing of women have thrived whenever Rhys’ work has been considered. The price has been marginalising Rhys’ oblique statements on writers and writings, on readers and on literature.

As a revisionist novel, *Wide Sargasso Sea* could be read as a forged preface (a paratext) to *Jane Eyre*. According to Linda Hutcheon, the aim of paratexts is “to make space for the intertexts of history within the texts of fiction” (1989: 86) as “knowing the past becomes a question of representing, that is, of constructing and interpreting, not of objective recording” (74). The subjectivity of representation and how it affects and transforms the present becomes obvious in this case:

The past is something with which we must come to terms and such a confrontation involves an acknowledgement of limitation as well as power. We only have access to the past today through its traces – its documents, the testimony of witnesses, and other archival materials. In other words, we only have representations of the past from which to construct our narratives or explanations. In a very real sense, postmodernism reveals a desire to understand present culture as the product of previous representations (Hutcheon 1989: 58).

Since the preface is itself fiction, the result is the juxtaposition of different fictional worlds whose apparent contingent referent is the Victorian society; however, the “realities” depicted

in *Wide Sargasso Sea* are in fact a reflection on contemporary English society and its continual marginalisation of the “other”. This is an instance when Jean Rhys, the author, is brought to surface, every criticism intended to Victorian society being as valid in the twentieth century as the nineteenth. The West is not ready yet for anything new and different, but then neither is the East, Rhys seems to be saying when structuring the dynamics between Antoinette and her husband. They both show reluctance to accept each other’s “otherness”:

she was a stranger to me, a stranger who did not think or feel as I did [...] but I was certain that nothing I said made much difference. Her mind was already made up. Some romantic novel, a stray remark never forgotten, a sketch, a picture, a song, a waltz, some note of music, and her ideas were fixed. About England and about Europe. I could not change them and probably nothing would. Reality might disconcert her, bewilder her, hurt her, but it would not be reality. It would be only a mistake, a misfortune, a wrong path taken, her fixed ideas would never change (Rhys 1997: 58²).

Furthermore, the narration is broken into three parts, each with its own distinctive narrator, so as to give more credit and objectivity to Antoinette’s story. Such a technique adds to the “reality” of the fictional world but at the same time points to the subjectivity of history which in this case becomes the perfect illustration of “his” versus “her” story. The first part is narrated by Antoinette, a young Creole girl who lives with her mother in one of the West Indies isles. Her mother’s mixed identity (and therefore Antoinette’s as well) is emphasised as a matter of dispute from the first lines of the novel: “The Jamaican ladies had never approved of my mother [...] She was my father’s second wife, far too young for him they thought, and worse still, a Martinique girl” (1). When their estate perishes in a fire, Antoinette’s mother goes mad and she is sent to live with an aunt who quickly arranges for her to be married. What is interesting is that Antoinette’s narration ends abruptly before her marriage and her own perspective on what follows is not actually included in the novel. The reader must infer and recreate Antoinette’s life from her husband’s account just as Jean Rhys must have done it while reading *Jane Eyre*. There is one exception, though, at some point Rochester’s narration being interrupted and Antoinette resuming her role as narrator. This is an intense episode, few pages being enough to depict Antoinette’s inner struggle between accepting that her marriage has failed and that she has to continue her life elsewhere and bearing an unhappy life with her husband out of a sense of duty and maybe love:

No. And what do I care if he does? He hates me now. I hear him every night walking up and down the veranda. Up and down. When he passes my door he says, “Goodnight, Bertha.” He never calls me Antoinette now. He has found out it was my mother’s name. “I hope you will sleep well, Bertha” – it cannot be worse,’ I said. ‘That one night he came I might sleep afterwards. I sleep so badly now. And I dream (71).

This short intervention is completed with an analeptic moment describing how their marriage had been arranged (as a financial business), an explanation which comes after the alienation of the spouses and accounts, in a way, for their lack of communication and the destruction of their marriage.

The narrator of the second part is Antoinette’s husband, who remains unnamed throughout the entire novel. On the one hand, this nameless character may be seen as a metaphor of England and everything it stands for; on the other hand, it is just a pretext for Rhys to leave yet again things untold. The reader is, thus, constantly teased; even though every detail surrounding this character links him with Brontë’s Mr. Rochester, the overall effect remains that of uncertainty. The latter enhances the polyphonic play of the voices in the novel and challenges the reality of the fictional universe of the novel. Moreover, due to the fact that Antoinette’s going mad is told through her husband’s perspective, the reader does not sympathise only with Antoinette but with Rochester, too, who is seen as just a victim of the

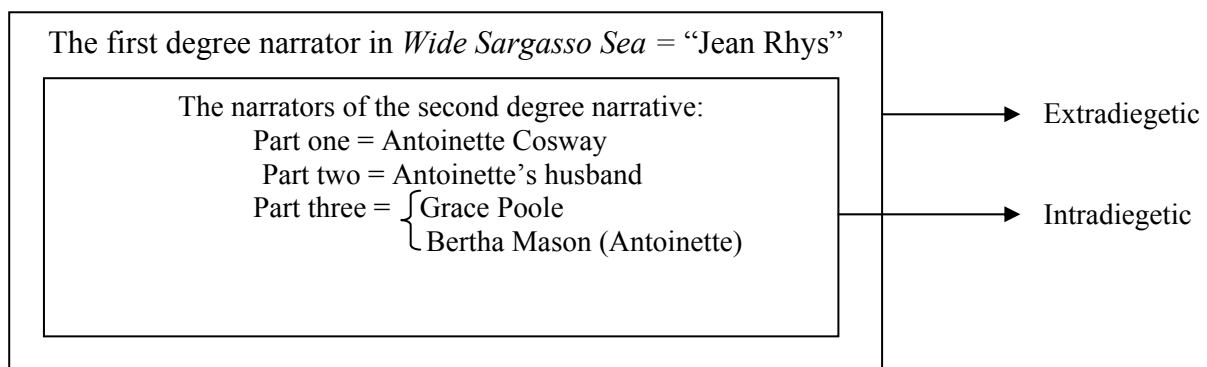
society he lives in as well. Therefore, Rhys does not create a despicable Mr. Rochester but a deeply flawed character, too weak to stand up against his father and his English upbringing and too much of a snob to accept the differences between him and his Creole wife. More than blaming him for his cruelty towards Antoinette, the reader feels sorry for him and for his ruined life which becomes obvious when considering the decaying and threatening landscape surrounding him:

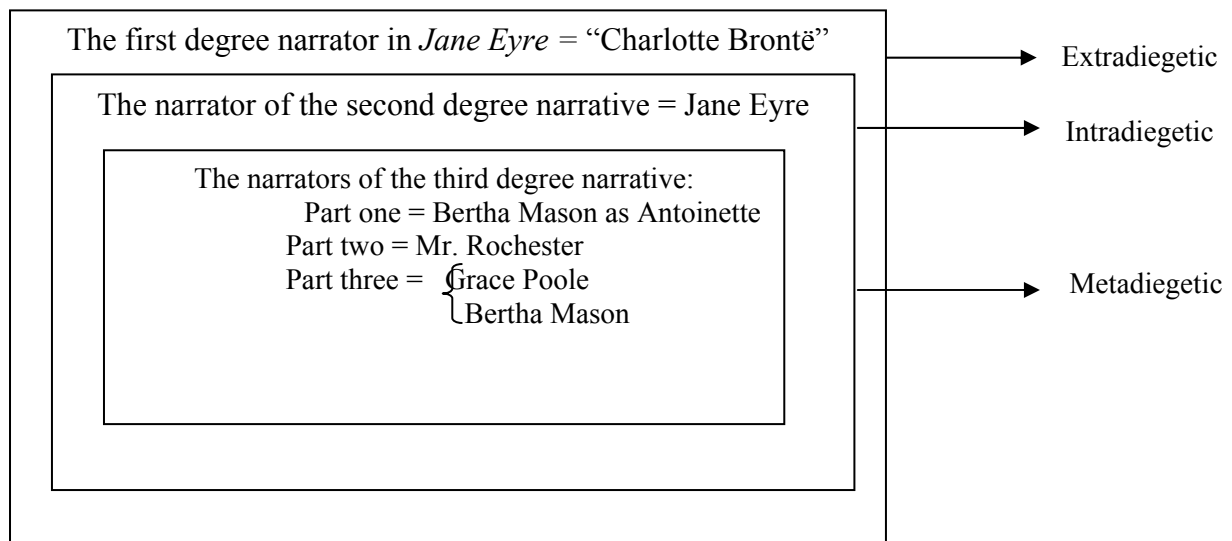
After all I was prepared for her blank indifference. I knew that my dreams were dreams. But the sadness I felt looking at the shabby white house – I wasn't prepared for that. More than ever before it strained away from the black snake-like forest. Louder and more desperately it called: Save me from destruction, ruin and desolation. Save me from the long low death by ants. But what are you doing here you folly? So near the forest. Don't you know that this is a dangerous place? And that the dark forest always wins? Always. If you don't, you soon will, and I can do nothing to help you (108).

The last part of the novel shares two narrators, Grace Poole, the nurse who is taking care of Antoinette in England and then Antoinette again, renamed Bertha by her husband in the second part. This is the moment when the connection with *Jane Eyre* is the strongest in the entire novel, the final pages resuming, more or less, the events preceding the fire at Thornfield Hall. The reader is, once again, thrown into a maze of confusion because what is known to be a fact in the classic novel is transformed into a dream in *Wide Sargasso Sea* which provides no clear-cut ending to its readers. Moreover, Antoinette's dream may have a liberating effect not only for herself but also for readers who are left with an open ending that they may interpret according to their own will:

I waited a long time after I heard her snore, then I got up, took the keys and unlocked the door. I was outside holding my candle. Now at last I know why I was brought here and what I have to do. There must have been a draught for the flame flickered and I thought it was out. But I shielded it with my hand and it burned up again to light me along the dark passage (124).

Furthermore, the fact that all three narrators (Antoinette/Bertha, Mr. Rochester, Grace Poole) have transgressed the boundaries of their original novel to write and “act” into another one reflects on the postmodernist dilemma concerning the concept of truth and its limitations. Rewriting previous canonical texts under the guise of historical truth translates the “postmodern desire to claim that history is over, that nothing original can be said, that the Real is an illusion” (Toth 2010: 128). Gérard Genette's narratological model, for example, once applied to the novels, foregrounds the discussion about the subjectivity of history and about what is real and what is not. If the connection with *Jane Eyre* were not considered, then Rhys' novel could not be seen as such a complex novel, with an elaborated narrative. However, once one takes into consideration the previously written novel, the latter instantly becomes a frame for the new novel. Thus, the illusory world of *Wide Sargasso Sea* is broken when one realizes that the characters from *Jane Eyre* and the internal homodiegetic narrators in Jean Rhys' novel overlap:





The narrative form also forwards the idea of a multifaceted truth, playing with readers’ expectations in that it engenders multiple interpretations and perceptions of the same event, symbol, character or metaphor. If Antoinette symbolically prefigures Jane’s fate (which is obvious once the connection with Brontë’s novel is made) she also retraces her mother’s destiny. Annette also married an English man whose incapacity of accepting his wife’s Creole origin and therefore the differences between them led to Annette’s spiritual and later real death (as she appeared in Antoinette’s recollections of her childhood): “She did die when I was a child. There are always two deaths, the real one and the one people know about” (81). Such symbolic repetition enhances the effect Rhys meant her novel to have: to make readers aware that there are always hidden “truths” about any “truth”, that no story is ever complete or completely objective. Any hint of happy-end readers might find in *Jane Eyre* is forever shattered when Antoinette’s fatal pattern is applied to Jane or when Mr. Rochester’s deeply flawed and weak character is revealed.

Not only Antoinette is subject to various interpretations; the practice of “obeah” enters the same realm of different perceptions. What is traditionally known as a sorcery able to “turn people into zombies through spirit theft, leaving them as the living dead” (136) is first distorted when Christophine is depicted. She is another instance of hasted and preconceived judgement against the “other”:

I couldn’t always understand her patois songs – she also came from Martinique [...] Her songs were not like Jamaican songs, and she was not like the other women. She was much blacker – blue-black with a thin face and straight features. She wore a black dress, heavy gold ear-rings and a yellow handkerchief – carefully tied with the two high points in front. No other negro woman wore black, or tied her handkerchief Martinique fashion. [...] The girls from the bayside who sometimes helped with the washing and cleaning were terrified of her. That, I soon discovered, was why they came at all – for she never paid them” (7).

More than a malign witch, which everyone assumes she is, Christophine is a protector against such evil practices; the only moment when she performs witchcraft (which is not actually witchcraft but the effect of some plants), she does it to help Antoinette win her husband’s love back: “You don’t have to give me money. I do this foolishness because you beg me – not for money” (71). Reversing the pattern works as far as “obeah” is concerned as well; as such, it is not Christophine who uses it, “obeah” being symbolically performed by Antoinette’s husband who, through his actions (renaming her Bertha, refusing to accept her identity, to

listening to her side of the story), enacts her spiritual death: “Her hair hung uncombed and dull into her eyes which were inflamed and staring, her face was very flushed and looked swollen. Her feet were bare. However when she spoke her voice was low, almost inaudible [...] Bertha is not my name. You are trying to make me into someone else, calling me by another name. I know, that’s obeh too” (93 – 94).

Moreover, one can consider Jean Rhys herself a practitioner of “obeah” since her novel denounces the universe of *Jane Eyre* and exposes it as bare fictionality. Reading *Wide Sargasso Sea* automatically casts new meanings on *Jane Eyre*, the latter being constantly considered in retrospect of the former. Ironically, thus, though written later, it is Rhys’ novel that influences the canonical novel, rather than the other way round. This transfer of meaning points to Jacques Lacan’s presentation of the self and the language. In this matter, the focal point was the commutability of the signified, that is “the capacity of every signified to function in turn as a signifier” (Sarup 1993: 10), which means that “any signifier can receive signification retrospectively” (1993: 11). In Lacan’s view “only the last word of a utterance retrospectively establishes the full sense of each word that came before” (Sarup 1993: 11) which is why “meaning emerges only through discourse” (1993: 10). Lacan’s perspective should also be taken as a reminder that *Wide Sargasso Sea* is only another facet to the story in *Jane Eyre* which is revisited and reinterpreted whenever any of these two novels is read. In one of her oblique authorial intrusions, Rhys openly discusses the same matter under the guise of a conversation between Antoinette and her husband:

‘He tells lies about us and he is sure you will believe him and not listen to the other side.’

‘Is there another side?’ I said.

‘There is always the other side, always.’ (82)

Rhys’ commentaries on how reading should be performed are also hidden in the dynamic of the relationship between Antoinette and Mr. Rochester the failure of which being induced by a traditional lack of thorough and sincere communication between the two of them. At the beginning Rochester’s English cautiousness makes him “so blind, so feeble, so hesitating” (56) that he cannot bring himself to bridge the gap between him and his wife. He considers her a stranger who does not feel and thinks as he does and blames her for her having preconceived ideas about England and Englishness, not realising, thus, that his opinions of her are just as preconceived and distorted by external stories: “I was certain that nothing I said made much difference. Her mind was already made up” (58). Later on, Antoinette herself lacks confidence in her husband and instead of telling him the truth she asks Christophine to help her. Through such flawed interaction, Rhys warns her readership against insincere reading; the communication between the reader and the text should be honest and open to new interpretations and suggestions. If one reads a novel only to discover a specific pattern or technique or ideology in it, his or hers is a failed reading, Rhys seems to suggest, both by the story in her novel and the implications it has on a previously written text.

Therefore, Jean Rhys has revisited a previously written text, the practice of writing itself and her own story only through hints, allusions and oblique commentaries well hidden in-between the lines. Nothing is clearly stated but, as proved above, a single word or event engenders multiple interpretations and connections. This is why, more than a distressed woman, though well represented in the novel (Annette, Antoinette, Rhys herself), *Wide Sargasso Sea* reveals a complex thinking displayed through an intricate Chinese-box structuring which also implies the previously written novel. In the face of such an elaborate text, the social commentaries on the discrimination of the “other” and of women seem just a frame for Rhys’ didactic purposes. As such, her novel may be considered a preface to *Jane Eyre*, one to alert readers and invite them to intelligently reading what follows. More

importantly, they should be aware that *Wide Sargasso Sea* is just Jean Rhys' side of the story and thus, that the possibilities of interpreting both hers and Bronte's novel are infinite.

Notes

[1] The work of both students is supported by Project SOP HRD - TOP ACADEMIC 76822.

[2] All future references from the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* are to be made to the edition of 1997 and, as such, only the page number will be marked in the text, from this point on.

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Ofensiva feminității în cultura europeană a secolului al XX-lea

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Abstract: *Women have always been objects of pleasure in a men's world. Obligated for millenia to shut up and listen, in the last century they succeeded to overcome their limitations. They became heads of state, prime-ministers, journalists, scientists, writers, artists, sportswomen. The offensive of femininity demanded of them a double struggle: with their own weaknesses and with the mistrust of a misogynous world. Strong personalities emerged from the shadows of anonymity and wrote everlasting pages of history and world culture. They were victorious because they wanted to avenge the thousands of women condemned to obedience and because behind any strong man there is always a strong woman.*

Key words: *femininity, European culture, feminine roles, cultural models*

În secolul al IV-lea î. Hr., Praxiteles imortaliza chipul Afroditei – model de perfecțiune care a bântuit conștiința oamenilor mai bine de două mii de ani. Într-o lume a bărbaților plecați mereu la războaie, femeile au luptat pentru o iluzorie egalitate cu armele lor: frumusețea, tăcerea, pudoarea, exercițiul înfrumusețării și discursul de alcov. Tăcerea femeilor însemna de fapt absența lor din cultura umanității. Retorica politică, ceremonialul religios, discursul legal, știința, artele erau apanajul bărbaților. Accesul femeilor a fost restricționat de tabuuri sau de tirania tradițiilor. În spațiul public femeile riscau să fie ridicole sau ignorate. Marginalizarea acestora le-a transformat în personaje „mute” ale istoriei și a dus la masculinizarea spațiului public. Orice încercare de ieșire din tipar a fost aspru sancționată de o lume misogină, unde până și accesul la educație s-a făcut greu, din teamă că femeile vor fi mai puțin supuse. Canonul literar-artistic a fost fundamental patriarhal. Scriitura femeilor trebuia să stabilească un discurs „altfel”, o reinventare totală a stilului literar sau a limbajului – așa cum promovau Hélène Cixous sau Julia Kristeva. Femeilor le-au lipsit curajul, respectul de sine, asertivitatea din cauza subordonării față de bărbat, dar secolul al XX-lea, cu marile sale conflagrații, a scos femeia din casă și i-a dat rol social.

Femeile au lucrat în fabricile de armament, au mers pe front, au luat locul bărbaților și au înfrânt prejudecățile. Un pas înainte, un pas uriaș. O lume modernă s-a deschis femeilor, cu un nou mod de gândire. A fost intuiție? A fost chemare? Nu! A fost o nevoie de impunere fizică în ziare, reviste, apoi a fost o impunere culturală dictată de conjuncturi imediate, prin acțiuni de excepție, uluitoare. Pentru femeile secolului al XX-lea industrializarea, cucerirea dreptului la vot, participarea la evenimente literare, artistice, politice, egalitatea șanselor au fost vârfuri de lance care le-au asigurat câștigarea unor drepturi, dar nu oricum, ci prin luptă.

Europa secolului al XX-lea a fost dominată de prezențe feminine unicat: femei de stat precum Simone Veil, Margaret Thatcher, femei cu influență în rol de prime doamne: Jacqueline Kennedy, Grace Kelly, Lady Diana Spencer. Françoise Giroud s-a dedicat jurnalismului, iar Lucie Aubrac a fost un simbol al Rezistenței franceze. Femei de acțiune precum Hélène Boucher, Jeannie Longo sau Florence Arthaud, alături de femei de știință: Marie Curie, Hannah Arendt, Simone de Beauvoir, Françoise Dolto, Ana Aslan sau Maria Montessori au completat ipostaze diferite ale feminității.

Femei de litere au reușit să-și impună scriitura – Marguerite Yourcenar, Virginia Wolf, Karen Blixen, Marguerite Duras, Agatha Christie sau Colette, iar femei iubitoare de artă au schimbat percepția asupra frumosului: Sarah Bernard, Edith Piaf, Ingrid Bergman, Brigitte Bardot, Maria Callas, Nadia Comăneci, Anna Pavlova, Ariane Mnouchkine, Coco Chanel, Camille Claudel, Marlene Dietrich și Romy Schneider completează galeria femeilor importante care au schimbat percepția europeană asupra statutului femeilor.

Lumea femeilor din țările cu democrație populară a fost de departe diferită de cea a femeilor din țările cu democrație liberală. Omogenizarea forțată, „egalitatea” în folosul

statului (femeia-tractorist, mama-eroină sau eroina muncii socialiste), paternalismul statului socialist, promovarea pe criterii ideologice, idealul bolșevic al sexualității oculte (entuziaste muncitoare stahanoviste), vizibilitatea ostentativă (40% dintre secretarii de partid, comisii, comitete erau femei) și egalitatea exclusiv retorică a șanselor s-au contrabalansat prin diferența sexuală liber-asumată, inegalitatea de facto (tinere fără obligații); patriarhatul capitalist, promovarea pe criterii de competență profesională, o sensibilă reducere a participării la muncă (cote dramatice ale șomajului printre femei), explozia corporalității în publicitate, modelul superwoman (reificarea femeii în programele de televiziune) egalitatea de tratament profesional.

Și România are personalități deosebite în galeria femeilor care au influențat cultura europeană. Amintim pe Marta Bibescu, Ana Blandiana, Elisabeta Bostan, Smaranda Brăescu, Angela Gheorghiu, Constanța Buzea, Nina Cassian, Otilia Cazimir, Haricleea Darcle, Lucia Demetrius, Zoe Dumitrescu Bușulenga, Mariana Nicolesco, Milița Petrescu, Catinca Ralea, Sanda Rosetti, Lucia Sturdza Bulandra, Grete Tartler, Ileana Vulpescu, Ana Aslan, femeia care a vrut să câștige nemurirea și multe, multe altele.

Singură în inima furtunii, Simone Veil (născută în 1927) va fi omul politic francez care va păstra în suflet deportarea într-un lagăr nazist la vârsta de 17 ani. În 1975 s-a aflat la originea legii avortului, iar mai târziu a devenit prima femeie președinte al Parlamentului European (1979-1982), o militantă activă pentru o Europă federală și socială, ministru al sănătății (1974-1976). *Nouvel Observateur* a declarat anul 1975 „Anul Simone Veil”, pentru curajul acesteia de a purta o bătălie de a face legal avortul. Adversarii săi politici nu au încetat a compara acest lucru cu crimele naziste, dar Simone a luptat pentru dreptul femeilor la planificare familială.

Despre Margaret Thatcher (n. 1925) s-a spus adesea că a fost „o doamnă de fier cu mânuși de catifea”. De origini modeste, își dorea să devină ministru de Finanțe, dar, din 1979 devine prima femeie prim-ministru al Marii Britanii. Ultraliberalismul și virulența ei împotriva comunismului îi atrag supranumele „Doamna de Fier” din partea sovieticilor. Ajunsă în structurile de comandă ale statului, nu-și pune între paranteze feminitatea. Dimpotrivă, ținute elegante, discursuri grav calibrate, inflexibilitatea opiniilor vor domina Downing Street.10. Prezența feminină de excepție îl va face pe François Mitterand să opineze despre ea ca fiind „singurul bărbat al guvernului englez, cu ochi de Caligula și gura lui Marilyn Monroe.” Va demisiona în 1990 și va ieși de pe scena politică plină de demnitate și mulțumită că a putut trăi să vadă căderea comunismului în Europa, prăbușirea „ursului” rusesc. Benazir Bhutto a sfârșit asasinată departe, într-un Pakistan prea fragmentat de lupte politice. Golda Meir sau Indira Gandhi au scris, de asemenea, istoria națiunilor lor, dar Margaret Thatcher și-a dirijat destinul cu eleganță.

Despre Eva Durante Peron sau Jacqueline Kennedy s-a scris de pe la mijlocul secolului. Erau în roluri istorice. Prime doamne ale unor prinți consorti. Orele lor astrale au atins străluciri de diamant. Și totuși nu numele lor vor rămâne în istorie. Lady Diana Spencer va înțelege asta, după cum va înțelege și rolul Maicii Tereza. Va încerca să-i semene, se va angaja într-o acțiune umanitară de excepție, dar pasiunea îi va aduce sfârșitul prematur. Evita este și astăzi o sfântă pentru argentinienii care au respins dominația engleză, Jacqueline va decădea la rolul de soție a miliardarului Aristotel Onassis, dar va influența moda secolului printr-un stil aparte. Deși americană prin naștere, Grace Kelly (1928-1982), actrița consacrată de Alfred Hitchcock va deveni soția lui Rainier al III-lea de Monaco. Va muri în 1982, în urma unui accident de mașină dar, cât a trăit, a fost pe prima pagină a revistei *Paris Match*.

Una dintre cele mai apreciate jurnaliste din secolul ce s-a încheiat a fost Françoise Giroud (1916-2003). Armele ei s-au numit tenacitate, verbul acid, suplețea replicilor. A cochetat și cu literatura, dar și cu politica. A publicat *Dacă mint* (1972), *Comedia puterii* (1977), *A patra putere* (1984) și *Cea mai mare dragoste* (1994). S-a format ca jurnalistă la

ziarul pentru femei *Elle* apoi a fost fondator pentru *L'Express* (1953), pe care îl conduce apoi până în 1971. Secretar de Stat pentru problemele femeilor până în 1976 și secretar de Stat la Cultură până în 1977. Editorialistă la *Nouvel Observateur*, acordă premii literare femeilor.

Despre femeile de acțiune se vorbește întotdeauna cu respect. Din partea bărbaților. Helene Boucher (1908-1934) va dori să zboare. Pe 10 august 1934 va stabili un record mondial de viteză cu aeroplanul, 445 km/h. Dar cea mai titrată femeie din sportul francez a fost Jeannie Longo. Dominația lui Eddy Merckx în ciclismul mondial a fost pusă în umbră de formidabila putere a acestei iubitoare de sport.

Florence Arthaud (n. 1957) va pleca la 4 noiembrie 1990 din Saint Malo în *Cursa Ronului*. După 40 de zile va trece triumfătoare linia de sosire de la Pointe-a-Petre. Era prima femeie care câștiga de una singură o cursă transatlantică. În 1997 câștigă și *Transpacificul*.

Și Lucie Aubrac a fost o femeie de acțiune. Ea a luptat în Rezistență la Lyon. După război a rămas angajată politic, luptând pentru păstrarea memoriei celor care au luptat pentru libertate.

Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) a fost un portdrapel al culturii franceze. „Cea mai frumoasă existențialistă” au spus americanii când au cunoscut-o. Primise Premiul Goncourt pentru *Mandarinii* în 1954, era atrasă de socialism și milita pentru drepturile femeilor. Celebră a devenit abia în 1949 cu *Al doilea sex*, operă reprezentativă pentru militantismul feminist.

Hannah Arendt (1906-1975), filozof american de origine germană, a fost nevoită să părăsească Germania, evreică fiind, din cauza nazismului. A fost discipol al lui Martin Heidegger, cu care a împărtășit o frumoasă poveste de dragoste. Acesta din urmă a aderat la nazism și a devenit, ca răsplată, rector al Universității din Freiburg, iar Hannah plecă în America. În 1951 scrie *Originile totalitarismului*, o atentă observație a regimurilor totalitare – hitlerist și stalinist – ceea ce-i aduce notoritate.

Françoise Marelle Dolto (1908-1988) a fost pasionată de comunicarea între copii și adulți. Deși a dorit să fie medic-educator, a sfârșit prin a se ocupa de psihanaliză. A fost cofondator al Școlii Franceze de Psihanaliză (1953).

În 1906, Pierre Curie murise din cauza unui accident. Soția sa Marie a rămas să continue singură cercetările. Expunerile prelungite la substanțe radioactive îi distrug lent sănătatea. Dar Marie nu renunță. Devine prima femeie titulară a unei catedre la Sorbona. A obținut Premiul Nobel pentru fizică în 1903 și pe cel pentru chimie în 1910.

Femeile s-au simțit totdeauna bine scriind. Era modul lor de a contura o lume virtuală, o promisiune pentru o altfel de existență. Fiică de critic literar, Virginia Wolf (1882-1941) va fi continuatoarea lui Marcel Proust, încercând să puncteze în scrierile sale impresiile trecătoare și să respingă tradiționalul povestirii. *Valurile*, *Orlando* și *Doamna Dalloway* fac din Virginia Wolf o figură remarcabilă a scriiturii engleze.

Peste Canalul Mânecii, Marguerite Yourcenar (1903-1987) va fi atrasă de studiul limbilor și al civilizațiilor antice. Mixează istoria cu autobiograficul cu măiestrie și *Memoriile lui Hadrian* se vând bine în întreaga lume. Deși s-a stabilit în S.U.A. în 1939, va fi prima femeie admisă sub cupola Academiei Franceze, în 1981. Se va ocupa și de traduceri din limba greacă. Și Sidonie Gabrielle Colette (1873-1954) cunoscuse recunoașterea publică. În 1949, Colette este prima femeie aleasă președinte al Academiei Goncourt. Seria de romane *Chaudine*, publicate sub semnătura soțului ei Willy îi asigurase independență, glorie și libertate. După 1918 scrie romanele psihologice *Cheri*, *Grâul în floare*, *Sido*. Literatura polițistă se îmbogățește cu un personaj care avea să devină mit, Hercule Poirot. Agatha Christie (1890-1976), soție de colonel britanic infidel, va deveni una dintre cele mai mari scriitoare de romane polițiste, de talia lui Arthur Conan Doyle, creatorul lui Sherlock Holmes. Maestră a suspansului, scriitoarea dispare fără urme, la 3 decembrie 1926. Este căutată de toată poliția engleză. Unsprezece zile mai târziu e găsită într-un hotel dintr-o stațiune

balneară. Se pretinde amnezică. Nimeni nu va ști adevărul acestor zile, niciodată. O misterioasă problemă pentru Miss Marple și Hercule Poirot. A scris *Moarte pe Nil*, *Zece negri mititei*, *Crima din Orient Express*.

A trăit 101 ani și timpul i-a permis să ajungă cu imense sacrificii în orașul interzis Lhasa din Tibet. Alexandra David Neel (1868-1969) a părăsit Franța în 1911. Deși femeie de litere, va iubi depărtările, va călători în Asia Centrală și China, iar romanele sale se vor bucura de succes. Tot în Extremul Orient își va petrece copilăria și Marguerite Donnadieu (1914-1996). Va deveni scriitoare, dramaturg, jurnalist. În 1983 primește Marele Premiu pentru Teatru al Academiei Franceze iar în 1984 Premiul Goncourt pentru romanul *Amantul*. Maria Montessori (1870-1952) este prima femeie din Italia care și-a obținut diploma în medicină. Se va orienta spre psihiatrie și va inova pedagogia secolului. Iar Maica Tereza (1910-1997) va deschide o școală pentru copiii săraci ai Indiei. În 1979 va obține Premiul Nobel pentru Pace.

Arta este apanajul femeilor. Dansul, muzica, canto-ul, spectacolul nu ar avea farmec fără ele. Ariane Mnouchkine va crea, în 1964, trupa de teatru *Soleil*, care va relaționa diferit cu publicul spectator. Fondează o asociație internațională pentru restabilirea libertăților intelectuale încălcate de totalitarism. În 1906, eleva Școlii Imperiale din Sankt Petersburg, Anna Pavlova Matfeieva devine prima balerină a țării. „Baletul rusești” prezentate Parisului vor face din ea steaua mondială a dansului. Peste ani, va fi cunoscută Galina Ulianova iar mai aproape de timpurile noastre, Maia Plisețkaia. Anii celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial vor fi străbătuți de vocea inegalabilă a Editei Piaf, care cânta despre viața trăită cu pasiune până la limita disperării. Mai aproape de noi, la Marea Egee, cântăreața greacă Maria Callas (1923-1977) va fi cea mai mare soprană a epocii. Un suflu nou apare în arta lirică prin tragismul pronunțat al interpretării. La fel de zgomotos a cunoscut și eșecul. Deși a trăit puțin în secolul al XX-lea, Sarah Bernhardt devine actrița cea mai celebră din lume. I s-a spus *Divina* și a atras atenția unor mari scriitori. În 1905 i s-a amputat o gambă, dar și-a continuat activitatea scenică încă douăzeci de ani, până în 1923. Karen Blixen și-a trăit prima parte a vieții în Africa. S-a întors apoi în Danemarca pentru a se dedica literaturii. Scrie în 1937 *Ferma africană*, devenind cunoscută. Emblema modei mondiale va rămâne Coco Chanel (Gabrielle Bonheur, 1883-1971). Hainele și parfumurile ei o aduc în prim-planul atenției mondiale. Va avea o revenire în forță în 1954, la vârsta de șaptezeci și unu de ani. Camille Claudel va deprinde tainele sculpturii de la Alfred Boucher și Auguste Rodin. Parte din lucrările sale s-au pierdut, iar sculptorița și-a petrecut ultimii treizeci de ani din viață într-un azil de alienați mintal. Arta cinematografică a avut femei frumoase. Mai ales frumoase. Greta Garbo, Ingrid Bergman, Marlene Dietrich sau Sophia Loren au făcut să freacă inima a mii de oameni. Scenarii scrise la repezeală au creat filme de neuitat, precum *Casablanca* în 1942 în regia lui Michael Curtiz. Puțin film, puțină iluzie și cântecul blând al lui Joan Baez au adus liniștea în inimile milioane de oameni.

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Symbols of Femininity in John Fowles's *A Maggot*

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Résumé: *A Maggot*, le dernier roman de John Fowles, nous propose une des représentations les plus fascinantes de la féminité de toute son oeuvre. A côté de Rebecca, le personnage féminin principal de ce roman qui est une de plus complexes héroïnes de Fowles, une autre figure féminine impressionnante est La Dame en Argent (*The Lady in Silver*) qui est représentée comme une trinité féminine personnifiant la Sagesse de l'Univers ou Magna Mater. Beaucoup d'autres symboles de la féminité (comme la description du paysage en termes féminins ou l'utilisation métaphorique des fleurs) se trouvent au long du roman et invitent le lecteur à décoder leur sens pour gagner son droit d'accès au mystérieux 'espace' féminin imaginé par Fowles.

Mots-clés: *féminité, le Moi, anima, Magna Mater, paysage féminisé, le symbolisme des flowers, mandala*

In all his fiction, Fowles seems to promote femininity as an essentially creative and civilizing force. A number of times he expresses his admiration and acquiescence to what he calls 'the womanly way of seeing life'. In his 1976 interview with James Campbell Fowles says: 'I feel that the universe is female in some deep way' (Fowles in Vipond 1999: 42). That this is true it can only be proved by looking at one of his most fascinating representations of femininity in his novels. Perhaps there is only need to think of Rebecca the feminine protagonist in *A Maggot* or to the fact that in the same novel the wisdom of the universe is embodied by a protective figure portrayed as a powerful numinous female triad (*The Lady in Silver*). In his last novel *A Maggot*, besides these representations of femininity, Fowles uses other symbolic images of womanhood, such as feminized landscape, flowers as metaphors which are associated with the main characters, particularly Rebecca and *The Lady in Silver*, and the mandala figure of the Dolling's Cave.

The novel based on the mythical pattern of the hero's quest for self places at its centre Rebecca, a complex feminine figure whose role in Mr. Bartholomew's journey to Devon points to her archetypal status of 'goddess' and anima. The three main characters, Mr. Bartholomew, Rebecca and Dick Thurlow, prove in the end to be the facets of one and the same personality, special emphasis being laid on the feminine protagonist who fulfils a crucial task in the events. Following Jung who sees the subject as made up of the conscious, the shadow, the anima/animus and the self, Fowles presents the hero's struggle to reconcile these inner forces in order to achieve cosmic integration and transform from Man to Anthropos, a superior being. In order to do so, Mr. Bartholomew needs Rebecca who stands for his anima potentialities, for the feminine elements within the Self. Rebecca is portrayed in the novel as a 'human oxymoron' and she embodies both the prostitute and the virgin. Being this time factually a famous whore from London, Rebecca will undergo a radical transformation after the events that she witnesses in the Dolling's Cave. In the beginning of the journey she is presented as the 'maid Louise' but soon she proves to be an utterly different person whose name is not Louise. As in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Fowles chooses to set his novel in a remote historical time from ours, the eighteenth century, but the writer addresses the subject of identity from a twentieth century perspective. The idea that identity is shifting and unstable, a relative not absolute notion like all other human concepts, stands out in the way Fowles delineates Rebecca and all the other four characters taking part in Mr. Bartholomew's journey. The five travellers are presented at first under a certain identity, but the reader will soon find out that neither of these travellers is what he or she seems to be. The pretty maid called 'Louise' proves to be a prostitute known as Fanny or 'The Quaker Maid', but whose 'real' name is Rebecca Hocknell (later, after her marriage, she will become Rebecca Lee). 'Mr. Brown', the merchant who appears to be the uncle of the younger gentleman who rides in front of the group and guides it to its destination, turns out to be an actor whose name is

Francis Lacy as Rebecca will discover later. She and her companions will be told at first that 'Mr. Brown' is the doctor who will 'cure' Mr. Bartholomew. Thus Lacy will play several roles, impersonating at the same time a doctor and a merchant. The bodyguard, Sergeant 'Timothy Farthing', is a minor actor, David Jones. The young gentleman called 'Mr. Bartholomew', Mr. B., Mr. Smith or Philocomoedia is not Mr. Brown's nephew, but the youngest son of an anonymous lord. He is the one who hired the rest of the group, gave them roles in order to accompany him during his journey and whose purposes remain mysterious until the end. From all the five travellers, only the deaf-mute Dick Thurlow is what he seems to be, the inseparable servant of Mr. Bartholomew. Rebecca herself speaks of this puzzling issue of the travellers' identity:

His Lordship told me that evening previous we should meet them, and they would come with us, Mr. Brown and his man. And told me who he should pretend to be, a City merchant, tho' in truth he was the doctor he had spoke of; yet I must pretend I did not know such a thing, and take him for what he seemed. Which I did, yet so it happened I had seen him before, two months before in a playhouse where I was, tho' I could not mind me his name, notwithstanding his person and voice well enough. And that day as we rode Jones came up, and I knew by some gross hints he made that he likewise suspected I was not what I seemed ... (*A Maggot*¹: 311).

Rebecca's complex identity is made up of the multiplicity of selves she is able to present to others. Her 'histrionic' nature is emphasized by Hannah Claiborne, her 'mistress', who, in her deposition to Henry Ayscough, tells about 'Fanny' (the name 'Madam' Claiborne uses to refer to Rebecca) 'that she had as well been actress as whore' (*A Maggot*: 152) and that she can play 'innocence, prude, modest sister, Miss Fresh-from-the-country, Miss Timid Don't-tempt-me, Miss Simple' (*A Maggot*: 152). Her 'tricks' made Fanny (Rebecca) famous in London where she passed also under the name 'The Quaker Maid'. Despite her debasement, her playing of the *meretricum regina initiarum lenis* (182), as she is described to Ayscough by a certain Lord B---, Rebecca suffers because she considers herself 'a great sinner, my soul harder than flint. Yet it was not dead, quite dead ... Most of my sisters in that house were blind, they knew not what they did; yet I was not in their case, I knew I was on the path to Hell' (305). She also suffers because she feels caught up, trapped in that 'house' and in the role she must play in order to obey Claiborne's will and men's will. In fact she wants to escape a false identity, to throw away her masks which others make her wear. She bravely tells Ayscough, not trying to find a justification for her behaviour, but simply revealing her feelings and acknowledging her condition, the condition of an eighteenth century woman, that: '... I pray thee remember we women are brought up to do men's will in this world' (305). This is the reason why she accepts Mr. Bartholomew's proposal to pretend she is the maid Louise and join him in his journey, though she does not know his intentions or his purpose. Rebecca sees in this unexpected event a way out from her prison, a way to renounce to her former life and finally a way to escape a false identity:

It had become strong upon me that I must change my life, now saw I his Lordship was my prison's key. For when he came out with his scheme to take me away to the West, where I was born, I felt a great flutter in my heart, a new light and hope, and I knew my chance was come to flee where I was (305-306).

Following the events of the Dollings's Cave Rebecca will become a new person, and, as the feminine nature of the place she enters suggests, she will re-born. Her spiritual rebirth, her illumination is determined by her vision of a world she metaphorically renders as June eternal where she encounters a powerful feminine figure she calls first 'the Lady in silver' and then 'Holy Mother Wisdom'. It is this Lady in Silver, described by Rebecca as 'young and fair to see, with full dark hair (351) and dressed in plain silver, that had no pattern to it, nor flowering' (350), who leads Rebecca into the cave. Inside the cave Rebecca sees a sort of

machinery to which she refers as a huge ‘maggot’, but which in Ayscough’s terms ‘is no true maggot nor living creature, but something of artifice, a machine or engine’ (360). It is from this machinery that the Silver Lady appears in front of Rebecca divided into three female figures:

Now one appeared in the door, she in silver we had seen before. And in her hand she carried a posy of flowers, white as snow. Smiled she and came brisk down the steps that led from the maggot and stood before us, but there she did turn her face, for of a sudden above her did appear another lady, dressed as her, but more old, her hair grey (360) [...] For this second lady did the like come down the silver steps, and no sooner was she upon the cavern’s floor, than yet another lady appeared in the doorway, as ‘twere in her train, that was old; her hair white, her body more frail (361).
[Then] Both young and old that stood beside she in the centre, they did turn towards her and made as a step to be the closer. And by some strange feat, I know not how again, were joined as one with her, or seemed to melt thus inside of her (361-362).

In the image of the Silver Lady/Mother Wisdom (or in Jungian terms *Magna Mater*) who appears at first as a young woman and then as a woman who splinters into three different women and merges again in one, Fowles uses the symbolism of the numinous female triad linked to a mysterious (and dark or profane) fourth – Rebecca (see Onega 1989: 157-158). This joining of the feminine triad is expressed in the passing of the posy of flowers to Rebecca which is a symbol of her newly achieved identity: a new, better, because now illuminated, self. The feminine protective figure, Holy Mother Wisdom who has the power of being ubiquitous, will show Rebecca, as by magic, a wholly different world from that in which Rebecca lives. It is this dream-vision that forces Rebecca to turn inward and see as in a mirror her true self. Deep inside she wishes for harmony, stability, wisdom and moral cleanliness, a set of values according to which she will struggle to live her life after her experience in the cave. In order to do so Rebecca willingly accepts to suffer each day for her dissent. It is this spiritual cleanliness and decent life she longs for that reputable society wants to prevent her from getting since people of her condition do not deserve to live up to such standards. In the eyes of ‘respectable’ people like the Duke and Henry Ayscough, Rebecca stands for the Other that has to be banished from society because different and not willing to conform to the established rules.

Fowles’s vision of the universe as female is completed by a feminine gendering of the landscape. The place where Rebecca prepares herself for the great encounter with the Lady in Silver assumes female characteristics. At a first glance, *A Maggot* offers a gloomy variant of ‘the sacred combe’. Rebecca and Mr. B. lead by Dick have to climb to a place situated somewhere high on a mountain. There is only one description of this place in David Jones’s deposition before Henry Ayscough. Jones, who secretly followed Rebecca and the two men, is the only witness who sees them climbing. At first Jones is not able to see the path which leads to the place then he realizes it was ‘a shepherd’s path, to gain the summer grazing upon the mountain above’ (212). He calls the place the ‘cwm’ and describes it to Ayscough.

Q. Where led this path?

A. To a desert place, sir, narrow and steep and strewn with stones and great rocks among the trees. It lay on a curve, as a new moon, so, and ever upwards to the mountain. ‘Twas melancholy, sir, despite the shining of the sun. I marked no birds that sang, as is their nature at that time, as if all had forsook it, which made me afeared... (212).

The ‘cwm’ (the Welsh term for ‘valley’) has nothing of the luxuriant vegetation of the combe and there are no singing birds or insects. It is an isolated, stony place, which inspires sadness and fear (at least to David Jones). It is apparently the exact opposite of the sacred combe, but a careful reading proves that despite the misleading appearances, the ‘cwm’ presents the features of a symbolic Garden of Eden. First of all, the ‘cwm’ is located near the summit of a

mountain which means it is, like the Garden of Eden, a sort of an ‘axis mundi’, an omphalos or the centre of the universe, a place where the celestial energies meet with the terrestrial ones. It is clearly a feminine place since it has the shape of a new moon, and the moon is a symbol of femininity linked with the symbolism of water and fertility. The metal with which the moon is associated is silver, which foretells the apparition of the Lady in Silver. It is not after all an arid place since it has a stream flowing near by which Mr. Bartholomew calls ‘Jordan’ and where Rebecca bathes before entering the cave. And finally the place has its ‘serpent’ to which Jones makes reference when he tells Ayscough that ‘the cwm’s end was twain and forked like a serpent’s tongue ...’ (213). The way is described in *A Maggot*, the ‘cwm’ stands for birth or re-birth, in fact Rebecca’s awakening to a new life.

Other symbolic ways of representing femininity in *A Maggot* are the metaphors of the flowers which become an emblem for Rebecca and for Mother Wisdom (The Lady in Silver). The main symbolic flowers used in the novel are the violets and the June pinks. The violets are present from the very beginning of the novel representing a part of the landscape depicted by Fowles. The landscape described in the novel lacks the green, lavish vegetation of the Undercliff in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* or Mount Parnassus in *The Magus*. Instead of it, a ‘bleak landscape’ stretches ahead the group of five travellers. The overcast sky is ‘grey’, the woodlands are ‘dark’ because ‘still more in bud than in leaf’ (3). There are very few instances in which the vivid green of vegetation or the purple colour of the violets comes out from the dominant grey and dark shades of the background. Once, the group passes by ‘a fast and furious moorland stream and greener vegetation: more violets, wood-sorrel, first ferns, nests of primroses, emerald young rushes and grass’ (8). The brief reference to ‘more violets’ must be linked to a previous one when Rebecca gathers (like Alison in *The Magus*) a bunch of violets. Earlier on, during their journey, Rebecca picks up some flowers she finds near the track they follow.

Unfastening the top of her cloak, and likewise the kissing-ribbons, she goes beside the track a little ahead and stoops where some sweet-violets are still in flower on a bank. Her companion stares at her crouched back, the small movements of her hands, the left one picking, ruffling the heart-shaped green leaves to reveal the hidden flowers, the right one holding the small sprig of deep mauve heads she has found. [...] the girl straightens and comes back towards him, smelling her minuscule posy ... (7).

In this fragment Rebecca is obviously linked symbolically with the violet. The main reason is again the violet’s connotations of love and death. Rebecca’s ‘minuscule posy’ is a mysterious ‘minuscule’ sign which foretells her symbolical death and re-birth after the ‘maggot’ vision in the Dolling’s cave. Being a flower that stands for erotic love, the violet is also symbolic of Rebecca’s status of ‘goddess’ of love. This must be the reason why Fowles has Rebecca ‘tuck her violets carefully inside the rim of white cloth, just below her nostrils’ (8).

For her gesture, Rebecca will be rebuked by Mr. Bartholomew (who alludes in this way to the symbolic use of the violet):

“... Dost think me so blind I did not catch that look of thine at the ford?”
 “It was but a look, sir.”
 “And that tuft of flowers beneath thy nose but violets?”
 “Yes, sir.”
 “Thou, lying jade.”
 “No, sir.”
 “I say yes, sir. I saw thy glance and what it spake: what stench in the nostrils thy damned violets were for.”
 “I wore them for themselves, sir. I meant no else.” (42)

There is also the other meaning of the violet with which Fowles plays here. As already mentioned above, the violet can also be a symbol of chastity, of virginity. Rebecca’s attitude

calls to mind a line from Meredith who makes the violet a symbol of virginity: 'She breathed the violet breath of maidenhood' (*Modern Love*, XL) – which can be said also of Rebecca who arranges the violets under her nostrils. It is evidently ironic to associate violets as a symbol of chastity with one of the most depraved whores in London! But Fowles has it both ways, since the symbol of violets works in two directions. It points ironically to Rebecca's playing of the 'Quaker Maid' to attract her clients and at the same time to her future condition, her new identity. Her new condition will be that of chastity, of moral purity because she will change from a prostitute into a fervent believer, a member of the Shaker community.

But Rebecca's posy of violets and her gestures are also symbolic in a different way. After smelling herself the flowers, she turns to Dick, her deaf and mute companion, and 'gravely holds the purple flowers, with their little flecks of orange and silver, out and up for him to smell as well' (7). Rebecca's attitude becomes a metaphor for the kind of relationship which will develop between her and Dick, but it anticipates also Dick's real death and Mr. Bartholomew's mysterious disappearance. After the group leaves the town of C., Lacy and Jones go separate ways, Mr. Bartholomew vanishes and Dick is found hanged from a tree ... with a bunch of violets in his mouth. The symbolism of the flowers speaks for itself. Dick passes from life to legend being referred to as 'the violet man' (66). Besides the Jungian and archetypal significances attributed to Dick (he is Mr. B's Shadow and often alluded to as a 'dog'), Dick is associated with Attis, the Phrygian god of vegetation (see Tarbox 1988: 145). According to the variant of the mythological story discussed by Tarbox, Cybele, Attis's mother, asked him to kill himself, which he did, in a forest, under a tree. In another version of the same story, Attis went hunting and he was killed by a wild boar. Violets grew from his blood as violets sprang from Dick's mouth. This symbolic aspect of vegetation mythology, the cyclic life and death pattern, with life springing from death, is also expressed by Dick's violets 'still bloomed as green as on a bank, because the plant took sustenance from the flesh, finding it soil at heart' (67). The violets in Dick's mouth may be also interpreted as a final message to Rebecca in the silent, secret language by which they used to communicate.

Other flowers assigned symbolically to Rebecca are the June pinks from which is made the posy of flowers that Mother Wisdom gives her. These pinks are described by Rebecca as those 'that grow upon the Cheddar rocks at midsummer' (364). The symbolism of the June pinks, known today as the cheddar pinks, must be interpreted in connection with carnations since they are a species of carnations. Carnations are rich with symbolism, mythology and there is still much debate over the significance of their name. While some scholars suggest that their name derives from the word *corone* (flower garlands) or *coronation* because of its use in Greek ceremonial crowns, other scholars consider that the name is derived from the Latin *carnis* (flesh) referring to the flower's original pinkish-hued colour or *incarnacyon* (incarnation) referring to the incarnation of God(ddess) or God(ddess) made flesh. However very few think today that the name of the genus is *Dianthus* and that this name comes from the Greek words *dios* (god) and *anthos* (flower) which means 'the flower of gods'. The symbolic association of Rebecca with the flower of gods stresses Rebecca's archetypal status and points to her transformation into a superior, celestial being. To this interpretation must be added the quality of the cheddar pinks (in Greek, *Dianthus gratianopolitanus*) of being one of Britain's rarest flowers and its evergreen foliage which (like all other evergreen plants) stands for the soul's immortality.

Another important element of the representation of land as female is Fowles's use of a mandala figure which appears in the novel as the Dolling's cave, the place where Rebecca has her 'third-degree' encounter with the Lady in Silver descending from the 'maggot'. This is also the place from where Mr. Bartholomew is taken away by the enigmatic beings of the white maggot and where Rebecca is shown the extraordinary vision of what she calls 'June

eternal'. Having the shape of an egg and a feminine name (*Doll-ing*), the cave has clearly the characteristic features of a mandala. The meaning of mandala comes from Sanskrit and its main sense is that of 'circle'. Like any mandala figure, the Dolling's cave has a concentric structure and appears as a manifestation of the feminine wisdom energy as the apparition of the Lady in Silver/Mother Wisdom points out. It also offers balancing visual elements like the signs that are marked on one of the maggot's walls and described by Rebecca as a bird, a wheel and a rose. The goal of such a mandalic place is to serve as a site of passage and as a tool in someone's spiritual journey, in this case Mr. Bartholomew's and Rebecca's, as it symbolizes cosmic and psychic order. Reuniting in itself the celestial (represented by the beings in the 'maggot') and the chthonic energies (a cave is always symbolic of the entrance into the underworld) the cave stands for both tomb and womb. It is a place for the renewal of life, with life springing from death, a place where the old Rebecca (together with Mr. Bartholomew) dies and from where a new Rebecca emerges into the world, and this is why the Dolling's cave may be considered also a metaphor of the power of transformation inherent in any mandalic figure.

Fowles was fascinated by the mysteriousness of women and acknowledged the impossibility to fully understand, to fully know them and his fascination is passed to his male protagonists. Aware of his stance as a man and a writer, Fowles keeps a sort of distance from women, equating his endeavour to depict women ... with the voyage of a stranger in a distant and unknown land: *Like most male artists, I have a strong female component in my character... This may help us in creating characters of the opposite sex, but of course we're always, finally, no more than sympathetic visitors in a foreign country ... not natives.* (Fowles in Vipond, 1999: 61) Thus Fowles implies that despite all his efforts, a man could never fully estimate and express a woman's standpoint, since as a voyager in a foreign country he can only try to familiarize with this foreign space. His attitude seems to reveal a desire not to invade and 'possess' this territory of the feminine Other by adopting an admiring but somehow distant stance.

Notes

[1] All references will be made to the 1986 Totem Books edition of John Fowles's *A Maggot*.

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Teatrul politic cu teză și proba timpului: Lucia Demetrius

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Résumé : *La mémoire des œuvres permet la reconstitution de l'horizon d'attente en rapport avec lequel l'œuvre a été créée et reçue. Les textes montrent avec quelle attention ou avec quelle passion leurs auteurs répondent à des implications et à des circonstances politiques. En même temps, l'univers du lecteur actuel, dont les attentes ont changé, permet une juste mise en balance de l'idée du succès de l'œuvre, grâce à l'adhérence au discours officiel, et l'idée de la valeur, en elle-même. Telle est la situation actuelle des écrivains dont les œuvres reflètent les clichés et les thèses du réalisme socialiste. Les pièces de théâtre de Lucia Demetrius puissent-elles résister à l'épreuve du temps?*

Mots-clés : *discours officiel, thèses du réalisme socialiste, l'épreuve du temps*

Din memoriile Luciei Demetrius (*Memorii*, București, Albatros, 2005) se vede că, după o perioadă de porți deschise din partea teatrelor, a caselor de creație, a editurilor, trăiește intens drama uitării, a nerecunoașterii. Publică în continuare, însa nimeni nu-i mai recenzează cărțile (*Primăvara pe Târnave*, 1960-1963, *Lumea începe cu mine!*, 1968, *Triptic*, 1981-1984, texte românești aflate între schematismul specific literaturii epocii, și păstrând disponibilitățile scriitoarei în conturarea unor drame sufletești feminine). Se adaugă aproape douăzeci și unu de volume de nuvele, publicate în perioada 1939 – 1987.

Făcându-și bilanțul acestei activități prolice (*Cumpăna*, 1949, *Vadul nou*, 1951, *Oameni de azi*, 1952, ultimele două încununete cu Premiul de Stat, *Trei generații* (1956, *Arborele genealogic*, 1957, *Vlaicu și feciorii săi*, 1959, *Răscrucea fără fântână*, 1972), Lucia Demetrius se confesează cu amărăciune : „Mi-ar fi rușine ca, la vârsta mea, de teama să nu fiu socotită «depașită», să alerg după forme noi. Când am debutat, am fost socotită «nouă». Nu se va întâmpla nimic dacă astăzi sunt socotită «veche». Vreau să rămân eu însămi, să am cel puțin meritul onestității, autenticității mele.” Autoarea avea de explicat schimbarea de ton și de tematică, din creațiile de după 1944 : „Înțelegeam că pentru a sluji partidul ca scriitor trebuia să-mi modific scrisul.”

În 1944 nu era o necunoscută, având în vedere că între cele două războaie mondiale publicistica sa apărea în *Vremea*, *Adevărul literar și artistic*, *Cuvântul liber*, și cronici dramatice în *Rampa*, *Evenimentul*. Vorbind despre primul ei volum de proză, Eugen Lovinescu spunea: „Rareori un debut (...) a putut da impresia unui mare destin literar ca *Tinerețe* (1935) a Luciei Demetrius.”

În *Dreptatea* (seria a II-a, an. I, nr. 33, 1944), la rubrica „Perna cu ace”, Oscar Lemnar anunță apariția revistei *Democrația* și prezintă piesa Luciei Demetrius *Turneu în provincie*: „Nu e multă vreme de când la „Cercul Lovinescu” domnișoara Lucia Demetrius a cetit o piesă în trei acte intitulată *Turneu în provincie*. Pentru că am asistat la lectură, trebuie să mărturisesc că autoarea a izbutit să realizeze o piesă bine încheată, foarte frumos scrisă redând printr-o intrigă interesantă atmosfera ciudată și turburătoare a vieții actorilor.”

Autoarea însăși își explică aderența la noul climat social și ideologic în presa epocii, exprimând un tip de entuziasm, prea declarativ ca să se potrivească formației sale: „(...) Partidul, în marea sa înțelepciune, îndeplinesc acest act revoluționar, capital pentru doborârea exploatareii din cea mai importantă parte a industriei ca și pentru economia țării, pentru creșterea producției, pentru posibilitatea planificării.” (Lucia Demetrius, „Naționalizarea”, *Gazeta Literară*, nr. 24 / 1959); „(...) Pentru fiecare dintre noi, care trăim și muncim în țara asta, vizita delegației de partid și guvernamentale ale Uniunii Sovietice în frunte cu tovarășul Nichita Serghievici Hrușciiov (...) aduce solia optimistă, luminoasă, a comunismului, a biruințelor lui, cheazășie a biruințelor noastre viitoare.” (Idem, *Gazeta Literară*, nr. 34 / 1962).

Eugen Luca, într-un articol cu titlu sugestiv, „De la comanda socială la realizarea artistică” (*Teatrul*, nr. 2 / 1956), comentează deschiderea autoarei către noile realități, în chiar anul apariției celei mai cunoscute piese a dramaturgiei Luciei Demetrius, văzând ca o caracteristică esențială „(...) facultatea de a sesiza probleme etice pe care transformările sociale le ridică în fața contemporanilor noștri. Totdeauna interesante, adesea subtile, problemele acestea sînt abordate curajos de autoare, iar operele ei, chiar atunci cînd nu sînt pe deplin realizate, aruncă un fascicul revelator de lumină asupra sufletului omului modern. Cum, în esență, aceasta e o problemă majoră a dramaturgiei noastre noi, contribuția pe care Lucia Demetrius o aduce la dezvoltarea literaturii noastre dramatice nu poate fi sub-apreciată. Ea are conștiința problemei majore a noii noastre dramaturgii: zugerăvirea omului modern, care, pentru prima oară, dobîndește o justă înțelegere a vieții, sentimentul adevăratei demnități; oglindirea contradicțiilor sufletești ale acestui om în care se ciocnesc tendințe izvorînd dintr-o mentalitate veche, perimată, dar încă puternică, și altele, ce se datoresc unei concepții avansate asupra vieții și omului; reflectarea acestor contradicții și a felului cum sînt ele soluționate, sau cum reapar, pe un alt plan, superior, fiindcă viața e într-o continuă mișcare, iar societatea pune în fața individului mereu alte probleme care presupun, în alte forme, aceeași ciocnire între elementul nou și cel vechi, sortit pieirii.” Autorul analizează modul cum este condus conflictul dramatic și implicarea socială a personajelor din *Trei generații*.

În numărul aniversar pe luna august, 1959, aceeași revistă *Teatrul*, făcînd un bilanț, la 15 ani de la Eliberare, notează, în articolul de fond, că acest moment aniversar „înseamnă și pentru arta dramatică un drum istoric de adînci, revoluționare transformări și victorii”, citînd în marile modele dramatice: munca minerilor și oțelarilor pusă în scenă de Mihail Davidoglu sau anul revoluționar al naționalizării evocat de *Cumpăna* Luciei Demetrius (...).

Schimbarea de paradigmă culturală se făcea simțită, pentru că, în același număr, Liviu Ciulea semna articolul cu titlu semnificativ „De la teatrul emoțiilor spontane, la teatrul de idei” (*Teatrul*, nr. 8 / 1964, „După douăzeci de ani”), dar nu evident la nivelul creației teatrale, care nu are mari modele de propus.

În nota de prezentare din antologia apărută în 1964 (*Dramaturgia română contemporană*), Valeriu Rîpeanu caracteriza contribuția Luciei Demetrius la dezvoltarea teatrului de actualitate printr-o serie de aspecte „care au dat o imagine concludentă a unei epoci de tumultoasă prefacere socială”, punînd în evidență o trăsătură a modului de abordare a unei teme clasicizate deja, destrămarea familiei burgheze, „conflictul nereducîndu-se la urmărirea unui proces de disoluție morală sau la destrămarea unui mit (familia ca instituție sacră și inviolabilă), ci dezbate atitudinea oamenilor în fața unor întrebări etice esențiale”.

Criticul remarca și „perspectiva socială și psihologică (...), momentele de mare încordare, conflictele emoționante ce comportă numeroase implicații sufletești”, elemente importante în asigurarea succesului unei piese de teatru. Antologia selecta nouă piese de teatru, patru aparținînd unor autori dramatice care și-au continuat activitatea și după 1944, îmbrățișînd noile orientări sociale. Alexandru Kirițescu, Victor Eftimiu, Camil Petrescu și Mircea Ștefănescu, Lucia Demetrius, Mihail Davidoglu, Al. Voitin, Aurel Baranga, Paul Everac sau Al. Mirodan reprezentau „piesele românești în care începeau să se dezbată problemele morale specifice ale acestei epoci, personaje cu o stare civilă și o structură morală necunoscute în dramaturgia noastră de pînă atunci”.

În același an, sub titlul „Teatrul cu punțile reconstituite”, Ana Maria Narti (*Teatrul*, nr. 2 / 1964), analizînd realizările dramatice românești din prima jumătate a secolului XX, comparate cu marile elanuri și înnoiri etice postbelice, apreciază că *Trei generații* descrie cu subtilitate psihologică și o bună cunoaștere, tipuri și medii sociale legate de sfărîmarea citadelei familiei burgheze sau moșierești, realizînd o cronică a vieții sociale românești din anii marilor evenimente revoluționare.

Mișcarea criteriilor de apreciere a textelor Luciei Demetrius este evidentă dacă urmărim studiile asupra teatrului românesc postbelic (notăm că, de exemplu, Nicolae Manolescu, în *sa Istorie critică a literaturii române. 5secole de literatură* din 2008, nici măcar nu o amintește).

În 1971, când apare un dicționar „dedicat fenomenului literar din ultimul sfert de secol, un omagiu închinat aniversării a 50 de ani de la înființarea Partidului Comunist Român”, autorul, Marian Popa, apreciază că „unei lumi noi îi corespunde o nouă literatură”. Luciei Demetrius i se alocă trei pagini, din care selectăm câteva observații importante pentru receptarea autoarei în epocă: „Teatrul Luciei Demetrius este în întregime axat pe dezbateri politice, etice și sociale contemporane, chiar atunci când sunt aduse în scenă momente din trecut. (...) Tipologia individuală reflectă bine marcat poziții de clasă. Tensiunea dramatică este obținută prin construcții antitetice sumare, dar decisive. Familii în proces de dezagregare și recristalizare permanentă ilustrează conflicte acute între generații”.

La acest tip de observații, criticul adaugă o sugestie a valorii de conjunctură a teatrului Luciei Demetrius : „Depășit prin manieră și chiar prin idei, teatrul acesta rămâne una din cele mai importante atestări ale unei epoci de mutații sociale esențiale”.

În 1975 apare volumul de studii *Teatrul românesc contemporan. 1944-1974*, sub egida Academiei de Științe Sociale și Politice a R.S.R., în care un studiu intitulat *Relația individ-societate în drama socială*, sub semnătura Anei Maria Popescu, analizează piesele publicate între 1946-1956, punând în evidență aspecte legate de construcția dramatică, ilustrate cu referiri la dramaturgia etalon pentru epocă, printre care și Lucia Demetrius: „Într-o primă etapă, dramaturgii, fie din dorința de a exprima concludent și explicit conflictul social, esența acestuia, fie dintr-o cunoaștere superficială a noilor realități, s-au desprins greu de o anumită schemă; conflictul, desfășurarea lui, urmărea cu fidelitate o schemă care împărțea lumea și teatrul în eroi pozitivi și negativi, cu reacții adesea identice. Dintre piesele publicate, reprezentate în această perioadă cele mai multe păstrează, după ani, doar o valoare documentară, vrednică de a fi luată în seamă pentru că a asigurat acumularea de experiență, care a permis ulterior saltul valoric.”

În trei numere succesive ale revistei *Teatrul*, din 1983, Ion Cristoiu publică sub titlul *O posibilă istorie a literaturii dramatice contemporane* analize ale teatrului de epocă, ajungând la concluzia că epoca i-ar fi determinat pe scriitori să lase loc în piese și conflictului social, chiar dacă nu aveau vocație în această direcție. Ceea ce este important în analiza lui Cristoiu este abordarea rătăirii textului dramatic din perspectiva tiparelor și clișeele compoziționale și de idei pe care spațiul socio-politic le imprimă ca o condiție a ieșirii la rampă a autorului.

Într-un studiu intitulat „Literatura oportunistă” (*România literară* nr. 26 / 2008, *Comentarii Critice: Literatura oportunistă II*), Ion Simuț, după ce urmărește impactul opțiunilor politice asupra literaturii, apreciază că „În dramaturgie, tezismul este la fel de devastator ca și în poezie. Nimic nu se salvează din teatrul primelor două decenii (...). *Trei generații* (1956) și *Arborele genealogic* (1957) de Lucia Demetrius mizează pe opoziția dintre lumea aristocratică, degenerată, și cerințele actualității comuniste (...). Abia Marin Sorescu, Dumitru Radu Popescu și alții, după 1960-1965, vor aduce un suflu nou, demn de luat în seamă la un nivel valoric apreciabil”.

Acest tip de reevaluări de texte dramatice permite punerea față în față a mai multor cronici dramatice, situate la distanță în timp, pentru a măsura nivelul de așteptări ale publicului, dar și criteriile cronicarilor / criticilor teatrali, dependente de „est-etica” epocii. Autorul însuși își poate pregăti receptarea spectacolului : „Am scris piesa *Trei generații* în vara anului 1955. Noile condiții de viață ale femeii, care favorizau dezvoltarea deplină a capacității ei intelectuale și morale, se aflau sub ochii mei. Trecutul ei îl cunoșteam, mi-l aduceam bine aminte. Contrastul dintre acel trecut și prezent era izbitor, era de netăgăduit.

(...) Nimeni nu scrie pentru sine, scrie cu intenția de a transmite un mesaj, scrie pentru ceilalți”.

La momentul montării piesei *Trei generații* avem mai multe cronici care pun în evidență aspecte ale temei sau ale subiectului, simțite în concordanță cu valul dramatic al epocii : „Lucia Demetrius a scris de fapt pe tema înfrângerii visurilor de fericire ale femeii trei piese, o mică trilogie (...). Fiecare dintre aceste piese, fiecare act, cu alte cuvinte, se susține pe propriul său conflict (V. Mîndra, *Gazeta literară*, nr. 5 / 1956).

Interesant este că, deși așteptările estetice erau altele în 1974, Traian Șelmaru (*Informația Bucureștiului*, 13, IX / 1974), remarcă tocmai acele aspecte mai puternic atinse de trecerea timpului în piesa Luciei Demetrius: „Am revăzut aseară, după mulți ani, *Trei generații*, pe aceeași scenă (...). Examenul a fost trecut cu succes, transpunerea scenică reușind să dea textului întreaga semnificație socială și umană : drama unor existențe pierdute în vechea societate românească, unde viața și dragostea erau supuse tiraniei familiei și intereselor burghezo-moșierimii. (...) până în anii puterii populare când cea mai tânără generație își poate alege nestingherită drumul (...)”.

În 1998, *Dicționarul Scriitorilor Români*, analizând varietatea aspectelor activității Luciei Demetrius, notează preferința autoarei pentru „avatarurile sufletului feminin” și apreciază că „După 1944, fundalul politic, social și moral devine un revelator permanent, echilibrând, dar și ideologizând manifest proza și dramaturgia autoarei. Căutarea propriului adevăr e dublată de angajarea socială și politică, iar descoperirea libertății ia locul destinului într-un teatru realist, de idei, ce se transformă cel mai adesea în teatru ideologic.”

Atenuând opțiunile autoarei, autorul articolului (Doina Uricariu) încearcă o frază-concluzie care să reprezinte portretul unei personalități între vremuri : „Recită acum, ea reprezintă mai mult decât expresia unui romantism feminin și travestirea unei situații lirice a vieții; acestor trăsături, relevate de Pompiliu Constantinescu, li s-au adăugat o canava realistă, receptivă la mutațiile istorice și la evenimente.”

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La femme et le livre à la fin du Moyen Age

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Zusammenfassung: In Zusammenhang mit dem Ende des Mittelalters, ist die Entstehung einer weiblichen Autorin in künstlerischen und intellektuellen Landschaft noch über wiegendmännlich, nicht nur sehr wichtig, sondern auch warnend. Die Rolle der Frau verändert sich, von einem bloßem Objekt der Lust in einem gefürchteten Konkurrent der Männer. Die Tatsache, das König Karl den V. wählte Christine de Pizan als seine persönlichen Biographin beweist, das sie über das intellektuelle Niveau der Männer gestiegen ist. Das Buch besetzt von nun an eine Spitzenposition im kollektiven Bewusstsein. Sobald die Stufe der Vertrautheit der Receptoren mit der Literatur in Mundart überwinden wurde, nimmt das Buch selbst eine andere Dimension. Es ist wichtig zu betonen, dass die Beziehung Frau-Buch wird von diesem Moment an berechtigt und lebensfähig.

Schlüsselwörter: Buch, Autorin, Mittelalter, Darstellung, Volkssprache

Le Moyen Age est une sorte de plaque tournante dans l'évolution de la mentalité en général et des mutations intellectuelles et artistiques en particulier. Pour la première fois, les femmes changent de rôle, de statut et de préoccupations. Malgré leur image configurée dans *le fin amor* – celle d'objet d'adoration masculine – elles montent pour la première fois vers un autre niveau, prouvant leur capacité intellectuelle. Une des premières femmes-auteur connue à partir de la fin du Moyen Age est Christine de Pizan, une véritable « pionnière » dans un univers artistique exclusivement masculin. Femme de lettres remarquable, la biographe de Charles V - Christine de Pizan aime le livre et enseigne les autres à l'aimer d'une manière particulière. Pour Christine, les femmes ne sont pas moins intelligentes que les hommes, mais simplement moins instruites, n'ayant pas accès aux études : et de les appeler à se prendre en main.

Et c'est une femme qui, justement, prend la destinée du royaume en main : les dernières lignes de Christine sont un *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*, au cours duquel elle apostrophe le roi qu'elle rappelle à ses devoirs, et Paris qu'elle appelle à se soumettre. Suivant depuis son cloître les étapes du conflit mais quittant cette terre avant que ne s'allume le bûcher de la pucelle, Christine achève son œuvre sur un éclat de rire et de lumière qui fait écho à l'espoir qui caractérise fondamentalement son œuvre. Ernst Robert Curtius nous révèle l'importance du livre et de son symbolisme au Moyen Age: « Le livre reçut sa consécration suprême du Christianisme, religion du Livre sacré. Le Christ est le seul Dieu que l'art antique représente avec un *volumen* » rappelle le critique (1). Dans la voie ainsi ouverte, l'enquête s'est poursuivie et l'on pourrait citer d'excellents travaux. L'ouvrage de Jesse M. Gellrich *The Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages* (2) dresse, pour les années 1980, un bilan. Ce n'est pas la question du symbolisme du livre que j'aimerais examiner, mais celle, plus modeste, et pourtant fondamentale, de la représentation du livre, de ses images en littérature et de ses usages. La question ne sera donc pas de savoir comment on se sert du livre pour penser autre chose: la nature, le monde, la conscience; mais *de s'interroger sur la manière dont on pense le livre, français, à une époque bien précise qui est celle de l'avènement du français comme langue de culture et de pouvoir, c'est-à-dire, au XIV e siècle.*

Le trait caractéristique du XIVe siècle est que l'amour du livre déborde les milieux cléricaux et qu'il s'attache aussi au livre en langue vernaculaire, au livre français. La royauté française, qui manifeste depuis l'avènement des Valois un goût pour le livre, comprend, avec Charles V, l'utilité politique de ce dernier. Le livre devient un instrument de gouvernement, un instrument de travail. La constitution de la bibliothèque du Louvre, confiée à la charge de Gilles Mallet, l'encouragement donné aux traductions, la réalisation d'inventaires en portent témoignage (3). Christine de Pizan, la biographe de Charles V, rappelle, dans tout son œuvre, cet amour du roi pour les livres:

car souverainement amoit livres, dont il en avoit à merveilles grant quantité, et de toutes manieres. (Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre de la Paix* (4) 3ème partie, chap. XVIII, p. 142)

Cette « grant multitude de livres » ne va pas sans inquiéter ceux qui détenaient jusqu'alors le pouvoir lié à la lecture: les clercs. Dans le *Songe du Vergier* (5), ouvrage commandité par Charles V, le clerc et le chevalier qui dialoguent sur les pouvoirs respectifs, ecclésiastiques et temporels, débattent de la question de savoir s'il est bon « que les Roys aient grant multitude de livres ». (Livre I, chap. 132 et 133, t. I, pp. 226-228). Le clerc ne le pense pas qui allègue l'autorité de Sénèque, le Chevalier défend le point de vue contraire à l'aide de plusieurs auteurs dont saint Jérôme:

Certes, nul ne puet estre bien lettrayé sanz plusieurs livres, car se le Roy n'avet que un livre ou deux, ce seroit le prestre Martin, qui ne se recognoit que en son livre. (Le Chevalier, Livre I, chap. 133, t. I, p. 227.)

La multiplication des livres, leur abondance, selon le mot de Pétrarque, dérangent aussi les érudits par les nouveaux usages qu'elles induisent. Ce dernier dresse un inventaire ironique de ces usages, qui ne sont pas tous neufs, dans son ouvrage *Remèdes de la bonne et de la mauvaise fortune*. Il met l'analyse dans la bouche de la Raison:

Car si quelques-uns amassent des livres pour s'instruire, il en est d'autres qui les recherchent pour leur plaisir et par vanité. Il en est qui ornent leurs chambres de ce genre de mobilier inventé pour orner l'esprit, et qui s'en servent comme des vases de Corinthe, des tableaux, des statues et autres objets sur lesquels nous venons de discuter. Il y en a qui, sous le couvert des livres, servent leur cupidité; ce sont les pires de tous, car ils estiment les livres non à leur juste valeur, mais comme des marchandises. Ce fléau dangereux, mais récent que les goûts des riches ont fait naître dernièrement, ajoute un instrument et un art à la convoitise. (pp. 5-7) (6).

On le voit, ce que déplore Pétrarque est qu'il y ait maintenant un marché du livre. *Le livre ne sert plus uniquement à l'instruction, mais au plaisir, à la vanité, à la cupidité*. Plus grave encore, cette abondance affecte non seulement les usages du livre, mais ceux de la lecture même. On se prend aux dires de Pétrarque à feuilleter les livres, non à les assimiler:

De même souvent celui qui aurait lu avec fruit un seul livre en a ouvert et feuilleté plusieurs inutilement. (*op. cit.*, p. 25).

Une nouvelle manière de lire

La nouvelle manière de lire se caractérise par un vocabulaire particulier. Je m'arrêterai sur quelques termes. Ainsi du verbe *chercher*. Le sens premier du mot, « parcourir », dérivé de son étymologie (le mot vient de *circà, circum*, « autour ») illustre un mouvement qui est à la fois celui de la quête du livre et celui de la lecture. On « querait » au XIIe siècle des aventures, on « cherche » au XIVe siècle des livres, à tous les sens du terme. On cherche des livres à travers l'Europe, parcours des humanistes et des bibliophiles qu'incarnent des personnalités comme celle de Richard de Bury ou du Pogge (7). Pour Christine de Pizan, cette figure trouve un répondant illustre, un garant, une autorité, dans celle de Platon qu'elle présente ainsi dans *Le Livre du Corps de Policie* (8):

Et qu'il aimast science bien le monstra, car il aloit par tout en cerchant livres et toutes doctrines, mesmes en Ytalie, dont Valere dit de sa tres-grande diligence et desir de sçavoir qu'il prenoit de concueillir livres par tout estoit que science fust par lui espandue et dilatee par tout le monde. -3 ème partie, chap. IV, p. 178.

Image de la collecte, « concueillir », naissance de la figure du collectionneur.

On « cherche » aussi sa bibliothèque, parcours immobile du lecteur faisant son choix. Tel est le tableau que présente Christine de Pizan à l'ouverture du *Livre de la Cité des Dames* (9):

Et comme adonc en celle entente je cerchasce entour moy d'aucun petit livret, entre mains me vint d'aventure un livre estrange, non mie de mes volumes, qui avec autres livres m'avoit esté baillié, si comme en garde. (1 ère partie, chap. I, éd. Curnow, p. 616)

On « cherche » les livres, enfin, on les parcourt, on les « reverche », on les fouille, imaginaire spatial de la lecture curieuse qu'illustre là encore, excellemment, Christine de Pizan. Elle fait dire à Dante s'adressant à Virgile dans *Le Livre du Chemin de Long Estude* (10):

... Vaille(11) moy long estude
Qui m'a fait cerchier tes volumes
Par qui ensemble acointance eusmes.

Elle présente ainsi Socrate dans *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames*:

...il eust plus grant cure de cerchier et reverchier les livres que de pourchacier a sa femme choses souefves et curieuses. (II ème partie, chap. XXI, pp. 836-837)

De même, Alain Chartier ouvre son *Quadrilogue invectif* (12) sur ces mots:

...et ay curieusement encerchié par les discours des Sainctes Escriptions les faultes et les punicions de noz peres et des primerains... (p. 5, lignes 1-3)

Un autre verbe signale cette nouvelle pratique de la lecture, déplorée par Pétrarque: **viseter**. Dans une stratégie de mise en scène très concertée, Christine de Pizan présente sa lecture de Matheolus, qui, dit-elle, lui tombe entre les mains par hasard:

Visitant un pou ça et la et veue la fin. (*Le Livre de la Cité des Dames*, p. 617)

Lecture sautillante qui ne s'appesantit pas mais va de l'avant, lecture cursive qui peut prendre les deux formes du délassement ou de l'avidité au savoir. Examinons la pose de la récréation. On la rencontre, de manière ironique, chez Christine de Pizan:

Adonc ouvert celluy, je vy en l'intitulacion que il se clamoit Matheolus. Lors en soubriant, pour ce que oncques ne l'avoye veu et maintes fois ouy dire avoye qu'entre les autres livres, celluy parloit bien a la reverence des femmes, me penssay qu'en maniere de solas le viseteroye. (1 ère partie, chap. I, pp. 616-617.)

Les livres sont un espace où il fait bon se promener. On lit en un livre, on s'y repère, on s'y déplace. Guillaume de Machaut se présente maniant un livre pour se désennuyer, contact physique où la main relaie l'œil dans la prise de possession d'un objet qui est aussi un texte:

Si que pour moi desanuier
Prins un livret a manier
Qu'on appelle Fulgentius,
Si trouvai Tytus Livyus
Qui de Fortune descrisoit
L'ymage, et ainsi disoit.
Voir Dit, éd. Paul Imbs, vv. 8183-8188 (PP, vv. 8233-8238) (13)

Martin Le Franc, un siècle plus tard, adopte une pose identique au début de la *Complainte* (14) que son livre lui adresse:

Advis m'estoit dedens le lit,
En la fin de mon premier somme,
Que pour tressingulier delit

Entray en mon estude, comme
Cil qui, pour se faire bon homme
Et aux biens vertueux penser, Tournay maint livre et mainte somme,
Et ne fut que pour temps passer. (strophe 3, vv. 17-24)

Sous le même régime de la lecture rapide, non forcément linéaire, *visiter* peut être le signe d'un autre usage du livre, celui de la lecture compulsive, haletante, née d'un désir de savoir de catégories nouvelles, accédant, grâce au français, à la connaissance: les femmes. Là encore, Christine de Pizan peut servir de guide. Elle présente ainsi Probe, *la Rommaine*, dans *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames*:

Car adoncques la ditte femme, moult desireuse d'acomplir sa pensee, mist la main a l'euvre et maintenant par *Bucoliques* et puis par *Georgiques* ou par *Eneydes*, qui sont livres ainsi appelés que fist Virgille, ycelle femme couroit, c'est a dire visetoit et lisoit. (1 ère partie, chap. XXIX, p. 726)

Probe représente la figure de la lecture telle que la pratique Christine de Pizan qui retrace son itinéraire intellectuel en ces termes:

Adonc cloy mes portes, c'est assavoir mes sens que plus ne fussent tant vagues aux choses foraines et vous happay ces beaulx livres et volumes et dis que aucune chose recoveroye de mes pertes passees. (*Avison Christine*, 3 ème partie, chap. X, éd. Towner, p. 163) (15).

Il s'agit de la théorie de la compensation. De même que la mort a happé avidement, animal affamé, les êtres chers, ainsi d'Etienne le mari: "Quant la mort le vint haper" dit Christine dans le *Livre du Chemin de Long Estude* (v. 771), Christine happe en retour les "beaulx livres et volumes" et il passe dans ce geste la violence d'un désir:

pour laquelle science de poesie, Nature, en moy resjoye, me dist: « Fille, solace toy quant tu as attain en effait le desir que je te donne »

Happer, c'est au sens premier, "saisir brusquement d'un coup de mâchoire", geste animal, premier, radical. La boulimie de lecture de Christine fait pièce à la mort. Elle mange les livres et, ce faisant, s'incorpore le savoir de son roi, de son père, de son mari, qu'elle n'avait pu saisir en sa prime jeunesse. Par le biais du livre, elle fait de leur chair, sa chair. On le voit, il est déjà question pour Christine, dans la lecture, d'incarnation. De ces dernières et de l'expérience doivent naître de nouvelles lectures:

ains volt que par l'engendrement d'estude et des choses veues nasquissent de moy nouvelles lettres"

La lecture chez Christine procède d'un double mouvement: mouvement violent de désir que dit le verbe *happer* (Amour a un grappin, une *aggrappe* dans la pièce XLVIII des *Autres Balades*(16), avec lequel il happe les coeurs) et mouvement lent d'incorporation que rend le mot de *ruminacion*, "ce mâchonnement médiéval du mot" (17) comme dans la lecture de la Bible, qui fait que l'on en vient à savoir le texte sacré "par coeur", qu'on se l'est incorporé:

Adonc par solitude me vindrent au devant les ruminacions du latin et des parleures des belles sciences et diverses sentences et polie rethorique que ouy le temps passé au vivant de mes amis trespassez, pere et mary, je avoie de eulx. (*Avison Christine*, 3 ème partie, chap. VIII, éd. Towner, p. 161.)

Et de même Philosophie parlant à Christine de son père:

et plus te proffite la ruminacion de son savoir qui demouree t'est que quelconques avoir, non obstant que t'en plaigne, que il te peust avoir laissié. (*Avison Christine*, 3 ème partie, chap. XVII, éd. Towner, p. 173)

Il s'agit d'une conjonction de deux usages de la lecture: un usage ancien, la rumination, un usage nouveau, l'engloutissement.

Le rapport au savoir chez Christine est affaire de désir et de plaisir, coup de dent haletant et manducation délicate. On passe d'une poétique du désir sexuel, telle que l'expose Jean de Meun, à une poétique du désir du Livre, dans la lecture:

en tant comme desir se peut estendre en amour d'estude

dit Christine de Pizan dans *Le Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*(18). Et cette poétique se dit à travers le réseau métaphorique du sens du goût.

L'écriture

Les scènes de lecture qui hantent l'œuvre de Christine tout comme les scènes d'incarnation qui s'y rencontrent et qui leur font pendant (cela est vrai dans *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames*, dans *Le Livre du Chemin de Long Estude*, dans *Le Dit de la Rose* (19)), manifestent et magnifient une conception de l'écriture. Il y a, pour Christine, dans tout acte littéraire, événement et construction, miracle et travail.

Le modèle de cet avènement à l'écriture pour la femme est celui de la Vierge lectrice, à l'instant de l'annonciation. Modèle complexe, La Vierge est à la fois image des dispositions qui doivent être celles de l'écrivain au moment de la naissance de l'œuvre, humilité, réceptivité, mais aussi savoir (la lecture), et image spatiale de l'œuvre à venir. Christine fait entendre cette complexité dans la langue. « Chamberière » et « ancelle » de Dieu, la Vierge devient par là-même, « chambre » et « celle », lieu du divin incarné, modèle de l'œuvre, « bibliothèque copieuse », même, dans la formulation du Marquis de Santillane (20). Cité, chez Christine, dans une vision optimiste de la lecture conquérante, le livre devient un siècle et demi plus tard, chez Marguerite de Navarre, prison:

Une prison bien forte j'edifiay (...)
Par grand labeur et par long travailler,
Par maintes nuictz estudiant veiller,
Tous mes pilliers de beaulx livres je fiz,
Dont je receuz maintz plaisirs et prouffitz (Livre III, v. 24 et 33-36.)

dit le héros de son livre *Les Prisons*(21), prison que l'on doit apprendre à quitter.

Mais au XIVe siècle, la « grant et copieuse multitude » des livres selon la formule de Jean Corbechon (22), traducteur du *De proprietatibus rerum* de Barthelemy l'Anglais, crée de nouvelles fonctions et induit de nouvelles manières d'écrire en français. Puisqu'un seul homme ne peut tout lire, il faut que certains se chargent de faire des extraits, des recueils, des florilèges:

Et pour ce que la vie d'un homme ne souffiroit mie pour lire les livres que vostre noble desir a assemblez,

dit ce dernier à Charles V, justifiant le projet de sa traduction. Écriture du recueil, homologique de cette nouvelle manière de « concueillir » livres. Écriture de compilation, et non d'imitation, d'assimilation, que déplore Pétrarque. Syntaxe et syncope, cette dernière rendant possible une esthétique du fragment. Nous sommes aux antipodes de l'image de l'abeille butineuse qui transforme les sucs qu'elle a prélevés, image que l'on trouve dans la littérature latine du Moyen Age, chez Macrobe, par exemple, dans *Les Saturnales* (23):

De même moi, tout ce que m'ont fourni mes différentes lectures, je le ferai passer par ma plume qui y introduira de l'ordre et le fondra en un tout. (Le mot en latin est *digerente*.)

L'esthétique des XIV^e et XV^e siècles n'est pas celle de la digestion mais de la construction, art de la citation exposée.

Christine de Pizan défend la diversité des livres. Elle rappelle dans *Le Livre du Corps de Policie* une anecdote où Platon, là encore, lui sert de caution:

Si parut bien a sa mort l'amour qu'il avoit toujours a toutes manieres de livres, car on trouva emprés lui les livres d'une femme poete qui avoit nom Sapho qui escrivit d'amours en vers joyeux et gracieux; ce dit Orace. Si les avoit veuz pour cause, par aventure, de plaisir prendre en ses plaisans dictiez. (3^e ème partie, chap. IV, pp. 178-179)

Testament indirect, l'anecdote sur Platon autorise, en quelque sorte, pour Christine, le plaisir que l'on peut prendre aux livres, et aux livres les plus divers: la poésie lyrique pour le philosophe. Elle permet aussi l'éloge de la femme écrivain.

Les nouveaux usages du livre s'accompagnent de nouveaux rapports des écrivains en français au livre. On assiste dans la littérature française des XIV^e et XV^e siècles à une théâtralisation du livre, à sa mise en scène et à sa mise en jeu. Le livre devient un personnage, un acteur. Il peut jouer trois rôles, celui de mère (il abandonne celui de père au livre en latin), celui de fils, celui d'amante. Dans les trois cas, ce qui frappe est que le livre est une personne et qu'il a une personnalité.

La figure du livre en tant que mère

Cette figure incarne une des fonctions traditionnelles du livre: l'enseignement, mais elle dit cette fonction par le biais d'une image charnelle, familiale. Dans le *Philobiblion* de Richard de Bury, les livres se mettent à parler et invectivent ainsi leurs enfants, les « clercs dégénérés »:

Ignorants comme des enfants, complètement grossiers et oisifs, vous vous traîniez vers nous, et comme des enfants qui s'éveillent, vous imploriez quelques gouttes de notre lait. Touchés de vos larmes, nous vous donnions à sucer la mamelle de la grammaire, que vous pressiez sans interruption de la langue et des dents jusqu'au moment où, abandonnant votre langage étrange, vous commenciez à exprimer dans le nôtre les oeuvres magnifiques de Dieu. (p. 32).

On fait référence à l'apprentissage du latin. Significatif est le nom que reçoivent alors les manuels qui enseignent le français en Angleterre: *feminae*. La dénomination est ainsi justifiée:

Ce livre est appelé *femina* parce que de même que la femme enseigne à l'enfant la langue maternelle, ainsi ce livre enseigne aux jeunes à bien parler le français. (*Femina* (24), p. 28).

La figure du livre en tant que fils

Mais le livre au XIV^e siècle est aussi un enfant: *liber*. Les auteurs jouent avec l'étymologie qui dit l'écorce et qui dit le fils (*liber* et *liberi*). Comme un père, le poète l'apostrophe alors, l'invective, lui impose un titre comme on baptise un enfant. A époque ancienne, le titre, au contraire, peut être le fait du copiste. Baptiser le livre est ce que fait l'auteur du *Banquet du Boys*, poésie de la fin du XV^e siècle, sur le thème de Franc Gontier, de la vie idyllique des bergers. Il conclut ainsi son ouvrage, jouant sur le latin et le français, dans un dialogue avec son livre:

Or çà, mon livre, *si vis baptisari*,
Si dy: `` *Volo* ", et on te nommera;
Quo nomine vis ergo vocari?
--Il est muet; jà mot n'en sonnera.
Au fort aller, qui le demandera,
Sans tant tenir les chiens aux abois,
Velà son nom: C'est le *Banquet du Boys* (éd. Anatole de Montaiglon et James de Rothschild, t. X, p. 222) (25).

De manière plus grave, d'autres auteurs réfléchissent sur le processus de l'écriture, sur l'engendrement du livre et sur le mystère de son incarnation, telle Christine de Pizan. Le livre prend alors une autonomie et mène une vie propre. Il est diffusé, copié, multiplié, « ventilés et portés en diverses places et regions », selon le mot de Christine de Pizan. (*Le Livres du Corps de Policie*, 3^{ème} partie, chap. II, p. 169). Commence alors sa vie de souffrance, pour les auteurs qui défendent la diffusion restreinte des livres, et sa vie de combats. Souffrances physiques. Les livres se plaignent ainsi chez Richard de Bury:

Notre dos et nos côtés sont travaillés par la maladie; atteints par la paralysie, nous gisons çà et là sans que personne ne nous procure quelques cataplasmes émollients. Cette blancheur native et éblouissante par sa lumière qui caractérisait notre nature, s'est changée en jaune ou en gris, au point que les médecins qui nous rencontrent ne doutent nullement que nous ne soyons atteints de la jaunisse. Plusieurs d'entre nous souffrent de la goutte, comme leurs extrémités recoquillées le laissent assez voir. La pluie, la fumée, la poussière dont nous sommes infectés continuellement, affaiblissent la vivacité du rayon visuel et procurent une ophtalmie à nos yeux déjà chassieux. Les violentes coliques de nos intestins épuisent nos entrailles, que les vers affamés ne cessent de ronger. (*Philobiblion*, pp. 40-41)

Souffrances morales également:

Chaque jour des compilateurs, des traducteurs et des transformateurs ignorants abaissent notre noblesse en nous donnant de nouveaux noms d'auteurs. Cette antique noblesse changée, nous dégénérons de plus en plus toutes les fois que nous renaissions dans nos nombreuses copies; on nous fait écrire malgré nous des mots employés par les mauvais auteurs, et on enlève aux fils les noms de leurs véritables pères. (p. 44)

Le livre, dans l'adultération possible que lui font subir ses différentes copies, devient alors un comparant possible pour le roi. Alain Chartier écrit dans *Le Livre de l'Espérance* (26):

Et se le roy est le livre ou le peuple doibt prendre enseignement de vie et amendement de meurs, quant l'original en est corrompu, les copies en sont faictez faulsez. (Discours de Foy, Pr VII, p. 45.)

Pour le livre en français commence alors la bataille. *La Complainte du Livre du Champion des Dames a maistre Martin Le Franc son acteur*, texte superbe et peu connu, est, de ce point de vue, exemplaire. Martin Le Franc avait envoyé son *Champion des Dames*, livre à la défense des femmes, au duc de Bourgogne Philippe le Bon, sans doute dans les années 1442. Le duc, certes, avait daigné toucher le livre:

D'honneur m'a fait plus que ne vaulx,
Car il m'a touchié de sa main" (strophe 17, vv. 129-130)

mais il ne se l'était pas fait lire. Le livre revient en songe auprès de son auteur et se plaint. La dimension du songe est importante et distingue l'écriture en français de l'écriture en latin, où l'on peut imaginer un livre se plaignant sans le biais du songe. Le livre se présente ainsi:

Et, comme acoustumé j'avoye,
Deliberation me vint
De lire en Amours droicte voye,
Quant mon dit livre la survint,
Crepy en feuilletz plus de vingt,
De grifs et de couteaux navré,
Et en ma presence devint
De tous ses membres dessevré". (strophe 4, vv. 25-32)

Retrouvailles émouvantes du père, l'auteur, et de son fils:

Plus longuement je n'atendy:
A mon livre se complaignant

Incontinent la main tendy
Comme par ung grant bienvegnant,
Et si lui dis, en l'estraignant
Entre mes bras: ``Ha! mon filz tendre,
Qui les horyons va craignant
Il ne doit la guerre entreprendre. (strophe 8, vv. 57-64)

Ce rapport de père à fils pour l'auteur en français et son livre est important. Il dessine une figure nouvelle de l'écrivain, lié d'un rapport intime à sa production, conscient de l'originalité de son travail et de sa fonction. Son activité n'est plus comparable à celle des autres producteurs (paysans, marchands) ou des guerriers. Ceux-ci recueillent aussitôt la récompense de leurs travaux; lui doit compter sur le temps, la reconnaissance des générations à venir. Le poète dit à son livre:

Car moy mis en terre, les vers / Et les feuilles te flouriront. (str. 43, vv. 339-340)

Les vers, c'est-à-dire les rameaux verts, mais aussi la versification. Nouvelle importance accordée à la gloire, à la Renommée (27). Aussi, en ces siècles où l'on a beaucoup couronné les poètes, dans les Puys du Nord comme sur le Capitole à Rome, dans le cas de Pétrarque, voient en dernière instance, le livre se substituer au poète pour recevoir la couronne. Philosophie parle ainsi de Boèce dans le livre de l'*Avision Christine* de Christine de Pizan:

et les fleurs d'ycellui je ay cueillies et appliquees yci a ton propos pour faire d'une sorte un gracieux chapel avec les ditz des sains docteurs pour ton livre a la fin comme victorieux couronner". (3^{ème} partie, *Conclusion des choses sus dites et ancore de ce*, p. 187)

Souveraineté du livre, il porte couronne, victoire de ce dernier.

La figure du livre en tant qu'amante

Le livre enfin peut prendre la figure de l'amante dans le rapport de désir qui unit son auteur à ce dernier, qui unit l'écriture au livre. L'utilisation de l'exemple de Biblis, qu'on trouve dans l'*Ovide Moralisé*, où Biblis devient la *Bible*, est caractéristique. En effet pour l'*Ovide Moralisé* (28), le frère de Biblis dont elle est amoureuse ne s'appelle pas Caunus, mais Cadmus et c'est ce couple incestueux de Cadmus (l'inventeur de l'alphabet) et de Biblis que reprennent les auteurs de l'époque et en particulier Guillaume de Machaut (29). La métaphore qui assimile au livre le sexe de la femme est fréquente; elle est chez Eustache Deschamps:

Les tableaux de son livre ouvri (t. VI. ballade 1169, v. 33) (30)

Elle s'épanouit chez Jean Molinet. Ainsi dans le *Sermon de Billouart* (31), le saint « que aucunes gens nomment Chouart/ et aucunes aultres Priapus » (vv. 27-28) entre dans le couvent « nommé Le Motte » (v. 127):

Son bonnet tout jus deffula,
Vint visiter la librerie" (vv. 181-182.)

L'acte sexuel trouve un analogue dans l'acte de lecture. *La Pronostication des cons sauvages* (32), monologue parodique de 1527 enseigne:

Et si cil qui a le livre
Veult feuilleter la librerie,
Lui fault un cierge d'une livre
Sans le droit de la confrarie. (vv. 37-40)

Où l'on retrouve les gestes que nous analysions en commençant: *visiter, feuilleter*. De même, le verbe *reverchier* se rencontre dans les deux registres, sexuel et textuel, en particulier chez Jean de Meun dans le *Roman de la Rose* (33).

Un rapport sensuel également lie le destinataire du livre à son toucher, à son offrande. Le livre ne se dissout pas uniquement en un enseignement, une série de préceptes à suivre, de modèles à imiter. Le livre survit à la lecture. Il y a un plaisir du livre, de la matérialité du livre, si critiquable cet aspect des choses apparaisset-il aux yeux des moralistes. Les livres de Richard de Bury se plaignent ainsi:

Nous ajouterons un dernier article à la longue série de nos plaintes, mais qui sera fort court, d'après ce que nous avons à dire. Nous voulons parler de l'usage naturel, devenu contre nature, qui nous détourne du but dans lequel nous devons servir. En effet, nous qui sommes la lumière des âmes fidèles, nous devenons, entre les mains des peintres et des enlumineurs ignorants, un réceptacle de feuilles d'or au lieu d'être une source de sagesse divine. Nous sommes réduits injustement en la puissance des laïcs, puissance plus cruelle pour nous que la mort, car ils nous vendent, sans en recevoir de prix, à nos ennemis, qui deviennent nos juges. (pp. 46-47)

En français, il s'institue une relation amoureuse dans l'offrande du livre, de l'auteur au destinataire. Examinons une de ces scènes, celle de l'offrande par Jean Froissart à la fin de sa vie, en 1395, d'un manuscrit de tous ses poèmes au roi Richard II d'Angleterre:

Il l'ouvry et regarda ens, et luy pleut très grandement et bien plaire luy devoit, car il estoit enluminé, escript et historié et couvert de vermeil velours à dix clous attachiés d'argent dorés et roses d'or ou milieu, à deux grans frumaux dorés et richement ouvrés ou milieu de roses d'or. Adont me demanda le roy de quoy il traittoit. Je luy dis: ``D'amours." De ceste reponse fut-il tous resjouys, et regarda dedens le livre en plusieurs lieux et y lisy, car moult bien parloit et lisoit le franchois, et puis le fist prendre par ung sien chevalier qui se nommoit messire Richard Credon et porter en sa chambre de retraite, et me fist de plus en plus bonne chiére et bon recueillotte à merveilles. (T. XV, livre quatrième, p. 167) (34)

Dans la poésie lyrique du XII^e siècle, l'oiseau était une figure du poète et de son chant. Pour l'écriture littéraire du XIV^e et du XV^e siècle, le livre devient une des figures du poète et de sa survie. Martin Le Franc le dit dans une image surprenante, jouant du mot *aisselles*, les ais de bois qui enserrant le livre et les ailes de l'oiseau:

Ce dit, il escout ses aisselles,
Et, sans faire aultre parlement,
Comme ung oiseau volant des elles,
En l'air vola hastivement". (strophe 60, vv. 465-468)

Clin d'oeil superbe à la tradition, espoir puissant dans le pouvoir du livre comme instrument de combat et outil de la gloire.

Notes

[1] Ernst Robert Curtius, *La Littérature européenne et le Moyen Age latin*, traduit de l'allemand par Jean Bréjoux, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1956, p. 378.

[2] Jesse M. Gellrich, *The Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages. Language Theory, Mythology, and Fiction*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985.

[3] Voir, entre autres, François Avril, *La Librairie de Charles V*, Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1968 et Serge Lusignan, *Parler vulgairement*, Montréal/Paris: Presses de l'Université de Montréal/Vrin, 1986.

[4] Ed. Charity Cannon Willard, La Haye: Mouton, 1958. Et déjà dans *Le Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*, éd. Suzanne Solente, t. II, Paris: Champion, 1940, chap. XII ``Cy dit comment le roy Charles amoit livres...".

[5] Ed. Marion Schnerb-Lièvre, 2 tomes, Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1982.

[6] Pétrarque, *De l'abondance des livres et De la réputation des écrivains*, traduit du latin par Victor Develay, Paris: Librairie des Bibliophiles, 1883.

- [7] Voir *Two Renaissance Book Hunters. The Letters of Poggius Bracciolini to Nicolaus de Niccolis*, translated from the Latin and annotated by Phyllis Walter Goodhart Gordon, New York: Columbia University Press, 1974 [réimpression 1991].
- [8] Ed. Robert H. Lucas, Genève: Droz, 1967 [T.L.F. n 8 145].
- [9] Ed. Maureen C. Curnow, Vanderbilt University, 2 vols., 1975.
- [10] Ed. Robert Püschel, Berlin: Damköhler, Paris: Le Soudier, 1881.
- [11] Les manuscrits A, B, E, G ont: *Baille*.
- [12] Ed. Eugénie Droz, 2ème édition revue, Paris: Champion, 1950.
- [13] Edition préparée par le regretté Paul Imbs, et continuée par nos soins (à paraître). Nous donnons entre parenthèses, précédées du sigle PP, les références de l'édition de Paulin, Paris, *Le Livre du Voir-Dit de Guillaume de Machaut*, Paris: Société des Bibliophiles Français, 1875.
- [14] Gaston Paris, "Un poème inédit de Martin Le Franc", *Romania*, 16, 1887, pp. 383-437. La *Complainte* se trouve aux pages 423-437.
- [15] Ed. Sister Mary Louis Towner, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1932.
- [16] Ed. Maurice Roy, *Oeuvres poétiques de Christine de Pisan*, t. I, Paris: Firmin Didot, 1886 [SATF], p. 262, vv. 13-14.
- [17] La formule est de Dom Jean Leclercq, *L'Amour des Lettres et le désir de Dieu*, Paris: Ed. du Cerf, 1957, p. 76.
- [18] Ed. Suzanne Solente, t. I, Paris: Champion, 1936, 1ère partie, chap. I, p. 5.
- [19] Le *Dit de la Rose* se trouve au tome II des *Oeuvres poétiques de Christine de Pisan*, éd. Maurice Roy, Paris: Firmin Didot, 1891 [SATF].
- [20] "oeuvre par Dieu écrite... bibliothèque copieuse, texte d'admirable glose. --*Cancionero castellano del siglo XV*, Madrid, 1912, n 8 218, strophes 1 et 5.
- [21] Edition et commentaire par Simone Glasson, Genève: Droz, 1978 [TLF n 8 260].
- [22] Jean Corbechon, *Le Livre des propriétés des choses*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, manuscrit f. fr. 22531, f. 12 d.
- [23] Ed. et trad. H. Bornecque, Paris: Garnier, 1937, vol. I, Livre I, p. 5: "Nos quoque quicquid diversa lectione quaesivimus, commitemus stilo, ut in ordinem eodem digerente coalescat".
- [24] *Femina*, dans K. R. Lambley, *The Teaching and Cultivation of the French Language in England during Tudor and Stuart Times; with an introductory chapter on the preceding period*, Manchester: The University Press; London, New York, etc.: Longmans, Green and Co., 1920.
- [25] *Recueil de Poésies françaises des XV e et XVI e siècles, Morales, Facétieuses, Historiques*, réunies et annotées par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et James de Rothschild, t. X, Paris: Daffis, 1875.
- [26] Ed. François Rouy, Paris: Champion, 1989.
- [27] Voir l'article "Fama et les preux: Nom et renom à la fin du Moyen Age", *Médiévales*, n 8 24, 1993, pp. 35-44.
- [28] Ed. C. De Boer, Martina G. De Boer, et Jeannette Th. M. Van 't Sant, t. III, Amsterdam: N. V. Noord-Hollandsche Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1931, livre IX, v. 2075 et suivants.
- [29] Le *Voir Dit*, complainte de la dame: "N'aussi Biblis Cadmus, nē Helaine, Paris N'amerent tant, soies ent fis, Com je t'aim". vv. 5835-5838 (PP, vv. 5567-5570).
- [30] Ed. Queux de Saint-Hilaire, *Oeuvres complètes d'Eustache Deschamps*, t. VI, Paris: Firmin Didot, 1889 [SATF].
- [31] *Les Faictz et Dictz de Jean Molinet*, éd. Noël Dupire, t. II, Paris: SATF, 1937, pp. 558-566.
- [32] Ed. Jelle Koopmans, *Le Moyen Français*, 24-25, 1989, pp. 107-129. On se reportera à la page 113.
- [33] Ed. Félix Lecoy, 3 vols., Paris: Champion, 1965, 1966, 1970, voir t. II, vv. 9673-9676:
 Et se nus li envoie lestre,
 il ne se doit pas entremestre
 du lire ne du reverchier
 ne de leur secrez encerchier.
 et t. III, vv. 21692-21695:
 Ce fu quant dedanz l'oi toichié
 por les fueilletes reverchier
 car je vouloie tout cerchier
 jusques au fonz du boutonet".
- [34] Ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, *Chroniques*, t. XV, Livre quatrième, *Oeuvres de Froissart*, Bruxelles: V. Devaux et Cie, 1871.

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The Feminine Ideal in John Fowles' Vision

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Résumé: Les romans postmodernes de John Fowles apportent un éclairage différent sur la problématique controversée du rôle de la femme dans le cadre du processus complexe d'individuation souffert par les protagonistes mâles. Le lecteur est confronté non plus aux aspects anciens du rapport homme-femme mais à une nouvelle perspective concernant l'idéal féminin. Chez John Fowles le rôle de la femme acquiert une importance capitale et représente la source intime de toutes les métamorphoses auxquelles sont soumis les mâles. L'idéal féminin est illustré par l'écrivain sous la forme de plusieurs hypostases, s'embellissant de nouvelles nuances avec chaque représentation. Il apparaît sous le visage d'une muse – Erato- qui interfère avec la configuration du texte, il est incarné dans la personne d'une femme mystérieuse – Sarah Woodruff – qui dévoile un des côtés secrets de la féminité, il est à retrouver dans une lumière bipolaire, voire le cas de Julie/June dans *Godgame* ou il s'enrichit d'un rôle rédempteur comme dans le cas de Rebecca Lee du roman *A Maggot*.

Mots-clés : métamorphose, Anima, individuation, féminité, rôle rédempteur

The feminine figure has always been very controversial in the literary history. Most of the times, her role was misunderstood or misrepresented. Embodied in an angelic character or sharing demonic features, the feminine character had to cope with male power, which seemed difficult to avoid in a patriarchal society. This is also the case of John Fowles' novels where the feminine characters are always to blame for the decay of the masculine figures, and paradoxically they are also the very ones who contribute to the transformation of the male protagonists. Being represented by a muse – Erato – who interferes with the configuration of the text, a mysterious woman – Sarah Woodruff – who reveals a new side of womanhood, the bipolar status of Julie/Lily in the *Godgame*, the redeeming role of Rebecca Lee, the issue of the woman is rendered in a different new light with each novel.

There are many approaches that can be used in the exploration of such a complex issue. For instance, researchers such as: Hélène Cixous (*The Laugh of the Medusa*), Julia Kristeva (*Women's Time*), Sandra M. Gilbert (*Literary Paternity*), Alice A. Jardine (*Gynesis*) etc. present the women writers in a new light. Although we deal with a male writer, one might easily apply the feminist theories to the female characters. Taking into consideration Hélène Cixous's study – *The Laugh of the Medusa*, Rebecca Lee, one of the protagonists of the novel *A Maggot*, stands for the idea that the phallogocentric order can be “reordered”, in a world in which there is a series of relationships that suppress the feminine – the history of writing, the history of reason, the phallogocentric tradition, and the dominating syntax and grammar.

The novel highlights the strenuous effort of Henry Ayscough to discover the truth by rational methods, truth which is in fact represented by plural truths, each character coming with his/her own perspective on the events. As a consequence, the deposition of Rebecca Lee has to overcome all the impediments of the subjectivity of the other characters. Even if “the feminine is impossible to define, for definition captures the feminine in the masculine phallogocentric order” [1] Rebecca tries to reveal her new self – her redeemed personality, by explaining to Ayscough the degree in which all the experiences that she had undergone with His Lordship changed her from a *maggoty whore* in a *winged saint*. The metamorphosis can be observed also at the textual level where the meaning opens itself in another meaning which opens itself in another meaning, just like a Chinese box.

Rebecca Lee, a prostitute at Claiborne's brothel in London, is hired as a personal mistress by a Lord in order to serve his interests. However, the journey into unknown will present a defenseless woman who has to make her way out of the situation. The purpose of the journey is kept secret and nobody knows where exactly they are heading to. The narrative does not help very much the reader because it stops, and the truth about the events is revealed in a Q/A form. The questioning of Rebecca confuses Ayscough, who cannot make head or tail

from the story she tells. The woman tells the clerk that they (His Lordship – Bartholomew, Thurlow – Dick, and Rebecca) reached the cave where the master was looking for the healing waters for his impotency. They were welcomed by the Holy Mother Wisdom, who showed Rebecca June Eternal – where she had the possibility to meet Jesus and God. After this encounter His Lordship went back to his place – June Eternal, and Dick – his servant and alter ego – committed suicide. In a few months from that journey, she has become a true Shaker and got married to a preacher. Before this experience, Rebecca was unable to bear children, but at the time Henry finds her she is pregnant with Dick's baby.

Therefore, the protagonist has to fight the stereotypes of the eighteenth-century society. The heroine is subject to class discrimination – illustrating the poor and change, while Ayscough is identified as the representative of the rich and of conservatism. As a female she also has to deal with the lawyer's sexism and with the rigid patriarchal society. Her deposition brings forth this idea:

“A: ... As I was used when whore, so I may be used still. And all women beside.

Q: How, all women are whores?

A: Whores in this. We may not say what we believe, nor say what we think, for fear we might be mocked because we are women. If men think a thing be so, so must it be, we must obey. I speak not of thee alone, it is so with all men, and everywhere.” [2]

In the lawyer's eyes she is not only a working-class girl but also a dissenter (her Quaker family from Bristol). The fact that she is married at the moment determines a mocking attitude in Henry towards Rebecca's changed marital status. This is also supported by the fact that now she comes forward as a Shaker prophetess who foretells change, and the self-conscious narrator reminds us that the belief of the age was "that change leads not to progress, but to anarchy and disaster. *Non progredi est regredi* runs the adage; early Georgian man omitted the *non*." [3]

In addition, the facts speak for themselves: what was in the beginning a journey to heal His Lordship becomes in the end a therapeutic experience for Rebecca, who is now pregnant, arguing that she is bearing the new Christ – a girl. She probably borrowed the idea from her religious faith which considers that the second coming of Christ will be under the form of a woman. Of course, for Ayscough this is a blasphemy. But Rebecca does not obey his advice and continues to support her idea. This is the point where, apart from the norms of her society, the heroine speaks her mind freely, ignoring consequences – an aspect of utmost importance for a woman living in that age. For her, speaking represents the possibility of change, heralding the transformation of social and cultural structures. In her former stage, preceding metamorphosis, she was used to unveil her body in front of men, in the latter stage she lays bare her spirit through words. In fact, Rebecca materializes in the form of a baby her religious views. As Hélène Cixous encouraged women writers to inscribe what they are saying, Fowles brings forth a character that chooses to signify her truth with her body.

The title itself alludes to the change that is going to take place in the protagonist – she evolves from a larva to a saint. *A Maggot* is the first of Fowles' novels in which a man, even if unintentionally, has the function of leading a woman towards self-awareness or authenticity. Thus, her individuation process reaches its full development, because Rebecca manages to achieve her goals. On the other hand, the other novels focus on protagonists for whom the individuation process is unattainable under all features.

The Mary/Magdalene hypostasis of the heroine presents her as a round character, fully developed, that succeeded in separating her spirit from the mundane desires, after being their most ardent representative. Her angelic face does not lure Ayscough, who has a clear, sharp thinking. But the science fiction features of Rebecca's story overcome his power of understanding, being unable to give a coherent impression over all she is saying.

On the other hand, *The Magus*, another novel of the same author, depicts a male character that undergoes the same intricate process of individuation. Nicholas Urfe desperately tries to make peace with his inner demons but his attachment to women is refused, being unable to complete his individuation. All women in his life bring him sorrow and confusion. Individuation, a Jungian concept, describes the complex process undergone by a human being in order to develop his/her personality, and it usually starts at mid-life. This process manifests itself in “realizing the existence of a collective as well as personal unconscious by experiencing the archetypal nature of images and dramas at the core of constellated complexes, and gradually diminishing identification with the ego and opening to the influence of the self, the archetype (original form) of wholeness at the core of the personality.” [4]

Not coming to terms to his mother, he cannot establish a durable relationship with all women in his life, unconsciously searching for his *Anima* on the deserted island of Phraxos. The insularity atmosphere gives him the feeling that he can actually round up his split self. However, all the events result in a deep confusion for Nicholas Urfe, who is unable to make a clear picture of his wishes, being tormented by his desire for several women – Lily/Julie, Alison. For him, Alison is just another woman, not the one, because they do not share profound feelings. So, once again the woman has to deal with a world established on patriarchal laws which do not grant her the possibility of defining her *Animus*. Lily and her twin sister are just characters in Conchis’ masques and their role is to lure the protagonist into the deepest side of his personality. They are the women who help him understand the true nature of the feminine personality and its importance in a man’s psychic life. From this point of view, these women are somewhat independent, having the opportunity to express freely their emotions and feelings. This is what gives him the impression of freedom, of time immemorial. Yet, Lily/Julie and June are just feminine figures created by Conchis (both Alchemist and Magician – *i.e.* the Magus) in his orchestration of events.

Later on, the protagonist finds out that Lily is in fact Julie and that she has a twin sister. Just as Rebecca was named Louise and Fanny, the reader is also misled by the narrator, who is in both cases unreliable. The female characters in *The Magus* Lily/Julie and June share the same situation with Rebecca Lee – they all have been hired for a role. In the former case, the women were brought on the island in order to perform in a play, but they were not given any details about what was going to happen. With respect to Rebecca Lee, she was hired for personal pleasure. All in all, they were all hired to serve some higher purpose - Lily and June serve as *Anima* figures in Nicholas Urfe’s process of individuation and Rebecca’s soul is redeemed by her encounter with Holy Mother Wisdom, and at the same time she has a major contribution to His Lordship’s master plan.

The *Anima* archetype represents a mediator between the conscious and the unconscious psyche. It appears personified in fantasies, dreams, and visions. The *Anima* is the personification of all female psychological tendencies in the psyche of a man, including feelings, moods, intuition, receptivity for the irrational, the ability for personal love, a feel for nature, and the man's attitude toward the unconscious. This image becomes conscious by real contacts with women, especially the first woman he encounters in his life. Normally this first woman is his mother, who is the most powerful image which shapes him. Therefore, Urfe’s projection of the feminine ideal is quite complicated because of the difficult relationship he had with his mother. As a grown-up, the protagonist projects the image of his *Anima* onto the women that attract him. Unfortunately, he is not aware of the fact that his projection does not correspond with who the woman is in reality. Nevertheless, this projection appears at an unconscious level.

The archetype quality of the *Anima* is embodied by the characteristics that appear throughout the ages. She is an eternal figure, wise but not overpowering, looks young, has the

feeling of being special, or having a secret knowledge. She is often connected to the earth or water and can have great power. She has both a light and a dark aspect. She can be the pure, good, noble figure, almost a goddess, but she can also be a prostitute, a seductress or a witch. The dark aspect will most likely appear when a man has suppressed or underestimated his female nature, treating women with contempt or carelessness. In mythology and literature she continues to appear as a goddess and *femme fatale*. His *Anima* helps him to tune himself to the correct inner values and thereby helping him to open the door to his inner world. Thus the *Anima* takes the role of guide and mediator in his inner world. This is why Nicholas has to take seriously the feelings, moods, expectations and fantasies sent by his *Anima*, and fix them in one form or another. However, his job does not help very much with this, because he only finds pleasure in the mysterious ways of the enigmatic character – Conchis, who plays with his mind and soul.

On the other hand, in *A Maggot*, Rebecca's personality seems to be split between her *Shadow* and *The Great Mother* archetypes. The *Shadow* would represent her life before the experience in the cave and the latter archetype reveals her changed self. The *Shadow* represents the unknown or little known characteristics of the ego. When Rebecca Lee is forced to cope with her *Shadow*, she becomes conscious and often ashamed of the characteristics and impulses that she denies in herself but sees clearly in other people, for example: egotism, spiritual laziness, unreal fantasies, intrigues, indifference etc. After her encounter with the Holy Mother Wisdom she is changed. Her metamorphosis is a result of the influence of this divine Mother upon her soul. In a woman the archetype of *The Great Mother* acts in a similar way to the *Old Wise Man* in a man. Any woman possessed by this archetype, believes that she is gifted with an unlimited capacity to love and to understand, to help and to protect, and she will exhaust herself in service to others. The archetype can be destructive when the woman is fixated on the belief that anybody within her sphere of influence are 'her children' and therefore they are helpless or dependent on her.

Unlike her masculine counterpart in *The Magus*, Nicholas Urfe, Rebecca evolves and manages to unlock the hidden powers in her personality. Therefore, she is granted access to the ultimate archetype – The *Self*, which enables her to achieve individuation. This is a very complex process that is not easy for a woman, especially in the eighteenth century, because there are a lot of paradoxes and many stereotypes. Nevertheless, it is necessary for the female protagonist to accept the superior and the inferior, the rational and the irrational, the order and the chaos, light and darkness, Yin and Yang.

The *Self*, according to Jung, is not a kind of universal consciousness. It is rather an awareness of our unique nature and our intimate connection with all life. This life is not only human but also animal, with plants and minerals, and even the entire cosmos. It gives us a sense of 'unity' and acceptance of life as it is, and not as we might think we want it to be. The *Self* is symbolized in the form a child, Christ, Buddha etc. In dreams it can sprout forth from an animal or an egg. The hermaphrodite, an often used alchemical image, is another symbol by joining the opposites of male and female. Other images are the difficult to obtain treasure, a jewel, a flower, a golden egg or golden ball, a chalice like the Grail, and all fourfold images like mandalas.

Rebecca bears a child who in her vision represents the second coming of Christ. In her evolution, the protagonist goes through several stages, and most important she finds a way to put together the paradoxes in her life, to tame her *Shadow*, to listen to the voice of the *Great Mother* inside of her soul, and to guide the voice of her *Self* towards the world through her prophecies and through her baby.

This is the specific point in which the postmodern feminine character differs from the regular characters of the age she is placed in. An eighteenth century character would not have access to such a spiritual development in a clear cut patriarchal society. Not only that the

novel is among the few which display such a complex character, but *A Maggot* is the only novel in which a feminine character reaches her fullest development. The hardship she had to endure is clearly stated in the novel when the narrator highlights the differences between the lawyer who questions Rebecca and her own beliefs:

“In truth these two were set apart from each other not only by countless barriers of age, sex, class, education, native province and the rest, but by something far deeper still: by belonging to two very different halves of the human spirit, perhaps at root those, left and right, of the two hemispheres of the brain.” [5]

Fowles’ narrator then goes on to explain that those, such as Ayscough, who are left-lobe beings (right-handed) are "rational, mathematical, ordered, glib with words, usually careful and conventional; human society largely runs ... because of them." [6] Conversely, those, such as Rebecca, who are right-lobe beings (left-handed) must be considered "poor at reason, often confused in argument; their sense of time (and politic timing) is often defective ... They confuse, they upset, they disturb. So truly are these two human beings of 1736. They speak for opposite poles, though long before such physical explanations of their contrariness could be mooted." [7]

All in all, by achieving individuation, the heroine places herself among the very few characters of John Fowles who evolve from an incipient state to a very developed stage of their personality. Nonetheless, the most important aspect is represented by gender. The novels of the British author deal mainly with men’s spiritual development. Thus, the fact that the development of a female character is focused on in *A Maggot* delineates that she is the representative of the Fowlesian womanhood, which reaches its climax with Rebecca Lee. In the end, the woman gains the freedom of speech and the redemption she has longed for all those years, when she was forced to prostitution in a society with no rights for women. Rebecca becomes a symbol for her time, a hint that change is possible as long as it is pursued.

Notes

[1] Hélène Cixous, “*The Laugh of the Medusa*” in Adams & Searle (eds) 1990, *Critical Theory since 1965*.

Tallahassee: Florida State UP, pp. 309-322;

[2] John Fowles, *A Maggot*, Cape, London, 1985, pp. 421;

[3] John Fowles, *op.cit.*, pp. 234;

[4] Carl Gustav Jung, *The structure and dynamics of the psyche*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1960, pp. 92-104;

[5] John Fowles, *op.cit.*, pp. 430;

[6] John Fowles, *op.cit.*, pp. 431;

[7] John Fowles, *op.cit.*, pp. 432.

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Negotiating Femininity and Nation in Three Plays of the Irish National Theatre Movement

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Abstract: *One common locus for the Irish dramatic tradition has proved to be the almost obsessive preoccupation of finding the proper formulae and images through which national identity can be projected. Due to Ireland's vexed colonial past, and the ensuing nationalist decolonization politics, the Irish theatrical scene has often been marred by the interplay of diverse ideologies aimed at defining an authentic Irish identity, which have also subsumed representations of femininity, symbolically merging womanhood and nation within the collective mentality. Through the broad lens of cultural studies, but focusing the angle in keeping with feminist and reception theories, the paper aims to investigate the dramatic productions of the Irish theatrical movement prior to the foundation of the Abbey Theatre, in order to highlight the close interconnection between cultural image and its scenic projection. The chosen corpus of plays includes three key texts in this tradition (W. B. Yeats's *The Countess Cathleen* and *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, and J. M. Synge's *In the Shadow of the Glen*), which allows us to underscore the dynamics of the relationship between the three participants in the theatrical act – subject matter, author and audience –, and demonstrate how the representations of femininity and nation are negotiated by the latter on the pre-Abbey Irish stage.*

Key words: *Irish theatre, identity, cultural representation, gender roles, reception*

Preliminaries

In her introduction to a collection of essays suggestively entitled *Women in Irish Drama: A Century of Authorship and Representation*, the Irish drama and feminist scholar Melissa Sihra asserts that:

Throughout the course of the twentieth century, theatre in Ireland has been a highly charged and controversial space of cultural enactment regarding notions of woman and gender. Since Augusta Gregory's and W. B. Yeats's 1902 drama *Kathleen ni Houlihan* it is important to interrogate the signification of 'woman' as idealized trope of nation and to look at the ways in which the work of later Irish dramatists either contests or perpetuates this legacy. The social and cultural position of woman has historically been one of symbolic centrality and subjective disavowal as both colonial ideology and nationalist movements promoted feminized concepts of the nation, while subordinating women in everyday life ... [1]

This conveniently summarises the first premise that informs the present paper. In the same order of ideas, it can be further added that, if the colonial discourse is based on a binary model of thought predicated upon the basic opposition established between self and other, in terms of gender, the colonial project has often been metaphorically constructed as the attempt “of the *male* colonizer to subdue and penetrate the *female* territory of the colonized people”[2]. Very often, the western imagination has translated the conquered territories of India or Africa, for example, into images of exotic women, “seductive, seducible, and ultimately at the mercy of the masculine forces competing for domination over them”[3]. In response to this colonial feminization, the colonized have attempted to “produce a reverse discourse of overdetermined masculinity”[4], in which the land becomes a “mother forced into penury by foreign invaders”[5], requiring her sons to fight the oppressors in order to restore her former possessions. Ireland, though placed in the paradoxical position of being at once Western and a colony, has not escaped being culturally cast as “other” and “female” in both colonial and countercolonial contexts. As such, in the principal discourses of Irish nationalism, the two main feminine figurations for Ireland were: the *Spéar-bhean* (literally meaning a ‘sky-woman’), a beautiful maiden queen in search for a redeemer for her occupied nation, or as the *Sean Bhean Bocht* (the ‘Poor Old Woman’), a sorrowful mother summoning her sons to protect and defend her homestead. As can be seen from the above, nationalism itself remains a gendered world, tributary to the patriarchal system in which it operates. Woman is turned into

a national abstraction, defined and utilized by men for the ideological naturalization of their countercolonial agenda, which serves a further function: namely of containing and neutering the female agency. Discussing the use of the feminine trope of Ireland in the writings of the Irish Revivalists, Joseph Valente has suggested that though their texts try to avoid the gendering imposed by British colonialism, what they ultimately achieve is to reinforce another set of gender stereotypes from an internal Irish origin [6].

It is this latter aspect that provides an introduction to the second premise on which the paper is based, namely that according to which Irish writers (in general) and playwrights (in specific terms) are noted for their obsessive engagement with the issue of national self-representation and authenticity. Nicholas Grene introduces his study on *The Politics of Irish Drama* in the following words:

As long as there has been a distinct Irish drama it has been so closely bound up with national politics that the one has often been considered more or less a reflection of the other. [...] The Irish national theatre movement was an integral part of the broader cultural nationalism of the turn of the century which sought to create for a long-colonised Ireland its own national identity. [7]

Nevertheless, the same author further draws our attention to the fact that one should be aware of the dangers of equating what can be labeled as “the politics of Irish drama” with the “theatrical mimesis of the national narrative”, because what one has to deal with is “a complex act of negotiation which is the image of Ireland on stage,” involving thus “a three way set of relationships between subject, playwright and audience.” [8]

The Irish national theatre movement

The story of the foundation of the Irish national theatre movement is by now a well-documented and familiar one. Stemming from the upsurge of nationalistic fervour characterising Ireland during the last decades of the 19th century, it was one of the many forms of cultural nationalism that vied for power after the political collapse of Parnell and his death in 1891 had shifted the ground on which the cause of Irish independence was to be fought from the parliamentary arena to the cultural one. Among the most active intellectuals and artists associated with the Irish cultural revival, William Butler Yeats was to become the seminal figure, associated with the foundation of the Irish Literary Society in London (1891), the Dublin-based National Literary Society (1897), and, finally, the Irish Literary Theatre (1899), conceived as a writer’s theatre, meant to provide an alternative to Dublin’s popular stage by reflecting the literary and artistic developments of the day, such as the models offered by André Antoine’s Théâtre Libre in Paris, or J. T. Grein’s Independent Theatre Society in London did. In 1901, due to lack of funding, this project ended, but a year later the Irish National Dramatic Company (1902) took over its role, the latter merging with the Irish National Theatre Society, founded in 1903. and which, in its turn, gave way to the Abbey Theatre, also known as the National Theatre of Ireland, officially opened on 27 December 1904 in Dublin.

Nevertheless, the odyssey culminating in the creation of the National Theatre included a series of performances that were to become not only cultural events of the decade, but were also to demonstrate the opposing literary and theatrical strains which had their bearing on the future Abbey Theatre. Moreover, these performances act as proof of the Irish stage acting as a terrain of negotiation over the meaning of the plays and their “*articulation of the people-nation*” [9]. In their representation of what Benedict Anderson has referred to as the “imagined community” of the nation [10], they are further illustrative of the controversial re-enactment of femininity and its cultural roles, a process which was to involve not only the playwrights’ visions and personal inclinations but also politics and cultural nationalism. Taking 1899 and 1903 as convenient points of departure and, respectively, destination,

Yeats's *The Countess Cathleen* and *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, as well as John Millington Synge's *In the Shadow of the Glen* provide our focus of interest for their productions may be taken as exemplary for the charged relationship of Irish theatre and national politics in the complex act of negotiation between playwright, subject and audience over the representation of femininity and the nation on stage.

The Countess Cathleen

William Butler Yeats's *The Countess Cathleen* was first staged by the Irish Literary Theatre on the 8th May in the Antient Concert Rooms in Dublin. The play was based on a story, *The Countess Kathleen O'Shea*, he had collected and included in his *Fairy and Folk Tales of Irish Peasantry* (1888) which had seemed suitable at the time to be the subject of a poetic drama [11]. The simple plot, set in a mythical Ireland, hinges on the morality play theme of self-sacrifice. The Countess, finding out that the peasants in her lands are selling their souls to two demons for money and food during a famine, decides to save them by bargaining her own soul, pure and much more precious, in spite of the pleas of her old nurse, and those of the young bard, Aleel. The devils accept and the peasants are redeemed, but after the sudden death of the countess, an angel appears to announce that she too is saved, because God looks on the motive not on the deed.

In its author's reading the play was "symbolic: the two demons ... are the world ... the Countess herself is a soul" [12], while literature itself is the expression of "universal truths" [13]. But behind this aesthetic argument, the text provides grounds to more ideologically laden readings. The first one is in Yeats's preferred Celticist note, considering the playwright trying to "spiritualise the patriotism and drama" [14] of Ireland by highlighting the power of the pure soul (Celtic) to transcend the snares of materialism (Saxon). This is the obvious conclusion to the encounter between the Irish Countess, the embodiment of Celtic spirituality and the demons, strangers to the land, who are suggestively transformed in the play from the supernatural villains into a pair of Merchants, operating on the principles of free trade, and coming from the East, a geographical location which embraces the English imperial centre. Nevertheless, such a representation that links femininity (Cathleen) with the nation (Celtic) remains tributary to late nineteenth century imperialist representations of Ireland, which typically drew upon Matthew Arnold's construction of the Celt as sensible, exalted and thus "peculiarly disposed to feel the spell of the feminine idiosyncrasy"[15], figuring thus Ireland "within the frame of Victorian ideals of the domestic feminine"[16].

Moreover, Yeats can be considered to make recourse to the Protestant myth of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy and vindicating its idyll of the social harmony between the (Protestant) landlord and the (Catholic) peasant. In accordance to the ethical scheme of the play, its chief virtue is generosity, "a quality most accessible to the rich [while] [t]he main virtue to which the poor may aspire is gratitude – as in the one blameless peasant character, Maire, who shows exaggerated respect and thankfulness to the Countess, then dies of starvation" [17]. In accordance to this, the Countess herself witnesses a transformation from a human benefactor, as she appears in the first act, when, having entered by accident the peasant cottage of a starving family she offers them her charity down to her last coin, to a supernatural donor at the end of the play when she has made the supreme sacrifice for the sake of the peasants, who all but one have proved unable to resist the deceits of the demons.

This image of the nation where Celticist spirituality became the corollary of Ascendancy supremacy caused an uproar among audiences. The controversy over the play had actually begun before its production, with the publishing of F. Hugh O'Donnell's pamphlet, *Souls for Gold*, in which Yeats was accused of depicting the peasantry of Ireland as a "sordid tribe of black devil-worshippers" [18], while "the demented female, Countess Cathleen, who exhibits her affection for the soul-selling and soup-buying Irish

people by selling her own soul to supply them with more gold and soup ... is rewarded for her blasphemous apostacy by Mr. W. B. Yeats, dramatist and theologian, by being straightway transmigrated to heaven"[19]. Cardinal Archbishop Logue, representing institutional Catholicism, further assailed the play instructing the faithful to shun the heretical play, for "an Irish Catholic audience which could patiently sit out such a play must have sadly degenerated, both in religion and patriotism" [20]. Thirty-three members of the Royal University, including the important future radical nationalists Francis Sheehy-Skeffington and Thomas Kettle, signed a letter objecting to the play which demeaned the Irish peasants by portraying them as irreligious and immoral [21], for the small cast featured a peasant who stole, a woman bent on fornication, and one iconoclast who destroyed a shrine of the Virgin Mary after struggling with his wife, all of which were perceived as clear attacks on the Catholic Nationalism's ideal of the Irish peasant and Irish womanhood.

Cathleen ni Houlihan

Written in collaboration with Lady Augusta Gregory, Yeats's *Cathleen ni Houlihan* was performed for the first time by the Irish National Dramatic Company on 2nd April 1902. In a note dated 1903 Yeats describes the dream which inspired his idea for the play, later scripted into text largely by Gregory:

... a dream almost as distinct as a vision, of a cottage where there was well-being and firelight and talk of a marriage, and into the midst of that cottage there came an old woman in a long cloak. She was Ireland itself, that Cathleen ni Houlihan for whom so many songs have been sung ... and for whose sake so many have gone to their death. I thought if I could write this out as a little play I could make others see my dream as I had seen it. [22]

The resulting play was located with naturalist precision during 1798, the time of the historical French landing at Killaloe, which signalled the beginning of the United Irishmen Rebellion, taking place in the cottage of the Gillane family where their eldest son, Michael, is about to be married the next day. Its simple plot introduces an old woman, who arrives at their cottage. Taken for a beggar at first, she starts talking of the four green fields that have been taken from her and the sacrifices young men have made for her across the ages, becoming thus a supernatural figure embodying the ideals of martyrdom and national liberty, so that Michael decides to forsake his family and bride in order to go and fight for Ireland. The old woman is seen leaving, but she is changed into a young girl, with "the walk of a queen". [23]

As Adrian Frazier has argued, seen as "a miracle play, in realistic dialogue, about a major political issue that drives men to deeds", *Cathleen ni Houlihan* fulfilled the aesthetic and political demands set out by the Irish National Dramatic Company [24]. Its impact was certainly increased by the ideological significance carried over by the performance of Maud Gonne, a revolutionary feminist [25], in the leading role, described by those present at the event "as the very personification of the figure she portrayed on stage" [26], leaping thus into public consciousness as a secular myth legitimating the republican struggle for independence. Connor Cruise O'Brien cites admirers of the play who testify to its importance in becoming an inspirational text for nationalists and creating recruits for the 1916 rebellion [27], and the political meaning generated by the play made Stephen Gwyn wonder "whether such plays should be produced unless one was prepared for the people to go out and shoot or be shot" [28]. As Nicholas Grene proves, this meaning worked surprisingly even with the most moderate in their political convictions, as Shaw's reaction to the 1909 London performance of the play records: "When I see that play I feel it might lead a man to do something foolish." [29].

Nevertheless, the power of the play derived not only from its immediate and direct political message, but mainly because it “drew upon an archetype in Gaelic and nationalist tradition: that of Ireland imagined as the *sean-bhean bhocht*, an idealised persona of the land who suffers historic wrongs and requires the sacrifice of a few in each generation in the hope that the recurring heroic failures to eject the invader will finally prove successful. The transformation of the “poor old woman” into the youthful *spear-bhean* (sky-woman), one rendition of a pre-Christian goddess, Eire, the “queen” of Irish sovereignty may be thus seen to have accomplished “an act of translation, whereby emblems and figures out of the Irish cultural memory were carried over and given immediate and shocking relevance [30].

In the Shadow of the Glen

Synge’s *In the Shadow of the Glen* was a further acid test of Yeats’s commitment to the independence of art in the theatre. Staged by the Irish National Theatre Society on 8th October 1903, the play introduces us to the characters who live in the shadow of the long dark Wicklow glen of the title. They are Nora Burke, her much older husband, Dan Burke, and a younger sheepfarmer, Michael Dara, neighbour to the two. At the beginning of the play the husband lies in bed, apparently dead, and Nora lets a passing tramp in, to be the first guest at the old man’s wake. Her evocation of the grim environment of wind and rain functions as the dramatic externalisation of her relationship to Dan: “Maybe cold would be no sign of death with the like of him, for he was cold, every day since I knew him, - and every night, stranger” [31]. Driven into marriage by economic necessity, the cost of security has proved too high: childless, she is at an age when time seems cruelly inexorable and her own life a waste. Yearning for warmth – which she describes in explicitly sexual terms, - it is implied that she has found some satisfaction with the now dead Patch Darcy, a great wild shepherd who used to visit her, and has similar intentions with Michael Dara. The latter has turned up just in time to make plans for his marriage with Nora, but solely in view of the material advantages secured by the dead man’s money and pasture. The audience is allowed to contrast Nora’s needs and despair with Michael’s inadequacy and lack of understanding, but, because the woman remains largely unaware of these discrepancies, it is left to the action of the play to bring them to her full perception. When old Burke suddenly rises from the bed and ejects Nora from the house for the infidelities brought home to him while masquerading as a corpse, self-preservation becomes Michael’s priority, losing interest in the woman once she has lost her pastures. It is the Tramp, who, in the meantime, has come to empathise with Nora, who stands up to her and, in a lyrical final speech, offers her the promise of a new life in which, by his side, she can enjoy the freedom and vitality of the open road. As Nora leaves with the Tramp, the community (represented in microcosm by Dan Burke and Michael Dara) settle back into the security of their former existence, congratulating each other over a glass of whiskey.

As Cairns and Richards remark, in its acknowledgement and even celebration of female desire the play collided with the nationalist trope of Ireland as “Woman” and “Mother” which necessitated that the purity of that image be maintained beyond the physicality suggestive of other darker demands and drives [32]. Moreover, focusing on a patriarchal community in which sexuality was regulated and subordinated to economic necessity, *In the Shadow of a Glen* was engaging with the codes of the idealised rural Catholic Ireland, which were far from vindicated by Nora’s revolutionary exit, in an assertion of the sensual and free female individual. Of course, at another level, by making a heroine of a rebellious wife and naming her Nora, the play had an obvious Ibsenite thrust which Yeats did not fail to see [33].

All in all, the play caused furore in the press as well as in the ranks of the theatre itself. Maud Gonne walked out in protest on the first night of the play and resigned her position as

vice-president of the Society. Her example was followed by Dudley Diggs, a leading actor with the company, and his wife, Maire Quinn, one of the leading actresses who left the Society [34]. The idea that a young wife would leave her elderly husband was considered by the *Daily Independent* as “nothing more or less than a farcical libel on the character of the average, decently reared Irish peasant woman” [35]. In the pages of *The United Irishman*, Arthur Griffith mounted a damaging attack on the play accusing Synge of using a story from a “decadent Roman source”, namely the Widow of Ephesus tale found in Petronius and Boccaccio, in which a young widow hard upon the death of her husband takes a soldier for a lover [36]. Yeats, committed to Synge’s rescue, counterattacked pointing out as source a folk version of the tale borrowed from the Aran storyteller Pat Dirane, in which the motif of the husband’s feigned death to test his wife’s faithfulness is present, but which ends in adultery and murder. As Frazier remarks, “the question of the plot’s derivation was crucial, because Irish folklore was universally accepted as the incorrigible record of the national genius” [37].

Instead of conclusions

In 1904, when the Abbey Theatre opened, Yeats’s response to the struggle over the authority and ownership of the national images came as follows:

Our friends have already told us, writers for the Theatre in Abbey Street, that we have no right to the name, some because we do not write in Irish, and others because we do not plead the National cause in our plays, as if we were writers for the news papers. I have not asked my fellow-workers what they mean by the words National literature, but though I have no great love for definitions, I would define it in some such way as this: It is the work of writers who are moulded by influences which are moulding their country, and who write out of so deep a life that they are accepted there in the end. [38]

As if to further ground his statement, in the first bill of the Abbey Theatre *In the Shadow of the Glen* featured alongside *Cathleen ni Houlihan* – two contesting images of womanhood and nation, juxtaposing thus their relative positioning on the margins or centre of the nationalistic project.

Nevertheless, as if unimpressed by Yeats’s argument, Griffith published the same year in the pages of his *The United Irishman* a one-act play (which he may have written himself) entitled *In a Real Wicklow Glen* [39]. This play is entirely consonant with the ethos of rural Ireland: patriarchal, puritanical and house-proud. The “nationalist” Norah is exemplary. Though forced by economic necessity to reject a poor lover and accept an elderly but more wealthy husband, ten years after the event when the young man returns and pleads the wife for a kiss, Norah rejects his advances as an insult to her married status and swears that he shall never see her face again. Morality is thus the prerequisite of maintaining the purity of Irish womanhood enforced not only by the codes of behaviour evolved by rural Ireland, but also by the Catholic ethos, the other major component of the identity of the class which was the bedrock of the nationalist movement. As Cains and Richards sum up:

Dedication to the nationalist cause involved commitment also to a complex matrix of supportive interpellations which constituted a unified ideological discourse. The potential for disruption of the nationalist movement, however allowed no deviation from the totality of that matrix whose cement was Catholicism – the very proof of Ireland’s purity and the sanctity of the nationalist cause. As in the case of Yeats’s *The Countess Cathleen*, to transgress those values was to risk being vilified as one who denigrated Ireland and, by implication, supported her continued subjugation.[40]

Needless to say that it was the latter matrix that was to win the battle in the cultural contest heralded on the newly-established Abbey theatre, soon to be taken over by a play marked by realism and focus on the contemporary rural world in the form of the Irish peasant drama

Notes

- [1] See “Introduction. Figures at a window” in Mellisa Sihra (ed.), *Women in Irish Drama: A Century of Authorship and Representation* with a foreword by Marina Carr, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 1.
- [2] Peter Flynn, film review of *Some Mother’s Son* in *Bright Lights Film Journal*, Issue 29 (Fall 2000), available at <http://www.brightlightsfilm.com/29/somemothersson1.html> (accessed 25.08.2010)
- [3] Susan B. Taylor, “Irish Odalisques and Other Seductive Figures: Thomas Moore’s *Lalla Rookh*”, available at <http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/containment/taylor/taylor.html> (accessed 30.09.2004).
- [4] Brendan Flemming, “Re-Gendering the Nation: Representations of Ireland and the Figure of the New Woman in George Moore’s *A Drama in Muslim* and George Meredith’s *Diana of the Crossways*” in *BELLS*, edited by Mireia Aragay and Jacqueline A. Hurlley, Barcelona, Universitat de Barcelona, 1999, p. 41.
- [5] Peter Flynn, op. cit.
- [6] see Joseph Valente, “The Myth of Sovereignty: Gender in the Literature of Irish Nationalism” in *ELH* 61(1994), pp. 193-4.
- [7] Nicolas Green, “Introduction” to *The Politics of Irish Drama: Plays in context from Boucicault to Friel*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999 [reprint. 2002], p. 1.
- [8] Ibid.
- [9] a term favoured by David Cairns and Shaun Richards. See *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture*, Manchester, Manchester U.P., 1988, p.59.
- [10] In his *Imagined Communities* (2nd edition, London and New York: Verso, 1991) Anderson defines nationalism as the capacity for imagining a whole community of individuals as sharing similar attitudes, ideas, practices of life, creating thus the idea of the nation as a binding unity.
- [11] see A. Norman Jeffares, “Introduction” to W.B. Yeats, *Selected Plays*, London and Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1964, p. 2.
- [12] Quoted in David Cairns and Shaun Richards, op. cit., p. 72.
- [13] Quoted in Adrian Frazier, *Behind the Scenes: Yeats, Horniman and the Struggle for the Abbey Theatre*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990, p. 13.
- [14] Robert Hogan and James Kilroy, *The Irish Literary Theatre 1899-1901*, Dublin, Dolmen Press; Atlantic Highlands, N.J., 1975, p. 51.
- [15] Quoted in David Cairns and Shaun Richards, op. cit., p. 48.
- [16] Brendan Flemming, op. cit., p. 41.
- [17] Adrian Frazier, op. cit., p. 10.
- [18] Quoted in Robert Welch, *The Abbey Theatre, 1899-1999: Form and Pressure*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 1999, p. 6.
- [19] David Cairns and Shaun Richards, op. cit., p. 73.
- [20] Robert Hogan and James Kilroy, op. cit., p. 43.
- [21] See Philip Edwards, *Threshold of a Nation: A Study in English and Irish Drama*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 200.
- [22] W. B. Yeats, *Selected Plays*, op. cit., pp.273-274.
- [23] Ibid., p. 256.
- [24] Adrian Frazier, op. cit., p. 58.
- [25] Gonne was the leader of the patriotic women’s organisation *Inghinidhe na hEireann* (“Daughters of Ireland”), which had set off as the women section of a dissident nationalist group of the Gaelic League, *Cumann na nGael*, founded by Arthur Griffith. Apart from organising the activities and the theatrical productions of the organisation, Gonne was also an active writer, publishing frequently in *The United Irishman*. While living in France, her involvement in the Irish liberation cause there led her to edit and publish a French newsletter, *L’Irlande Libre*.
- [26] In Christopher Murray, *Twentieth-century Irish Drama: Mirror Up to Nation*, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 2000, p. 21.
- [27] Conor Cruise O’Brien, *Ancestral Voices: Religion and Nationalism in Ireland*, Dublin. Poolberg, 1994, p. 63.
- [28] In Nicholas Grene, op. cit., p.69
- [29] Ibid., p. 70.
- [30] Robert Welch, op. cit., p. 16
- [31] John Millington Synge, *Plays, Poems and Prose*, London, Dent, 1958, p. 4.
- [32] David Cairns and Shaun Richards, op. cit., p. 77
- [33] In a letter to John Quinn, Yeats wrote that the fight for Synge would in future be like that “over the first realistic plays of Ibsen”. Quoted in Christopher Murray, op. cit., p. 77.
- [34] See Brenna Katz Clarke, *The Emergence of the Irish Peasant Play at the Abbey Theatre*, Ann Arbor, Michigan, UMI Research Papers, 1982, p. 160.

- [35] Elizabeth Coxhead, *Lady Gregory: A Literary Portrait*, London, Secker and Warburg Ltd., 1966, p. 68.
- [36] Brenna Katz Clarke, op. cit., p. 161.
- [37] Adrian Frazier, op. cit., p. 83.
- [38] Quoted in Philip Edwards, op. cit., p. 211
- [39] Robert Hogan and James Kilroy, *The Modern Irish Drama: A Documentary History*, Vol.2: *Laying the Foundations 1902-1904*, Dublin, Dolmen Press, 1976, p. 145.
- [40] David Cairns and Shaun Richards, op. cit., p. 79.

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Stereotyped Images of Women on the Moroccan Public Space: Ideological implications

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Résumé : *L'usage idéologique du stéréotype – entant qu'idée fixe, fiction idéologique- est encore plus courant dans le domaine de la représentation visuelle qu'il ne l'est ailleurs. Les stéréotypes qui perpétuent le plus dangereusement certains aprioris du comportement social sont générés par les mass média et constituent le trait principal du discours non-égalitaire, que ce dernier soit sexiste, colonial ou propagandiste. La présente communication interpelle le premier, et se veut une analyse interdisciplinaire de deux images stéréotypées de la femme marocaine en milieu urbain, images représentatives du discours sexiste sur la féminité, la masculinité et les relations genre au Maroc. Elle étudie également les retombées idéologiques des deux images en question : l'adolescente aux cheveux blonds et à la silhouette svelte, et la femme voilée. Ma démarche se situe au carrefour de la théorie culturelle sur la représentation (Michel Foucault 1984, 1988), la presse écrite marocaine (Miss, Citadine, Femme Actuelle), la recherche anthropologique (Leila Hessini 1990, Ghaleb Bensheikh 2005) et la littérature féminine (Fatema Mernissi 1997,2003).*

Mots-clés : *féminité, modèles sociaux, représentation, idéologie, fondamentalisme, différence*

1. The cognitive structure of stereotype in object-relations theory:

We all have stereotypes. We all create and use them in the process of our ego formation. Stereotype arises when self-interrogation is threatened, that is when our perception of, and control over, the world is shuffled or destabilized. Anxiety and instability arise when the child comes to distinguish between the self and the world: they result from a perceived loss of control over the world (securing food through the part-object of the breast; securing warmth and comfort through the first object of desire- the mother). As a reaction against this sense of loss, the child begins to combat anxieties associated with the failure to control the world by adjusting its mental picture of people so that they can appear “good” even when their behaviour is perceived as “bad”. The object-relation theorist Melanie Klein analyses this adjustment vis-à-vis the mother as both object of love and of hate. Klein analyses this adjustment in terms of a movement from mourning for loss of the loved object, provoked by the child's destructive impulses, through guilt for such destruction, to love in the experience of reparation. Reparation here takes the form of sympathy with the mother as a whole separate self with its own anxieties.

In the first stages of this development, the child's sense of its ego is shaped to fit this pattern of “good” or “evil”. The child's sense of itself splits into a good self, blessed with the sense of complete control over the world, in the anxiety-free world of the pre-oedipal; and a “bad” self, unable to control the world and thereby exposed to anxieties. In object-relations theory, this ego splitting is connected to the splitting of the mother as an object. In the words of Patricia Waugh,

Splitting is connected to the idealization of the “good” breast, the ideal object and, if the persecutory anxieties become overwhelming, idealization may increase or be projected on to the persecutor. If this fails, the ego may disintegrate and parts of it projected on to objects in the world (as phobias, extreme paranoia or hypochondria). (Waugh 1989:66)

Idealization, glorification, fear and hatred are manifestations of our first stereotypes. They are crude type-castings of the ego and the world into good and evil. And they mark one stage in the development of our personality: the “bad ” is distanced , made an “other”, to save the self from any confrontation with the contradictions present in the necessary integration of the “bad” and “good” aspects of the self. We may, therefore, say that the deep structure of our ego is built on our very first stereotype or illusory image of us /good and them/bad. The line drawn between the two is dynamic and responds, positively or negatively, to stresses

occurring within the psyche. This normally results in paradigm shifts in our mental representations of the world, moving from loving to hating, fearing to glorifying.

While in the pathological personality, the initial crude distinction of the world into “good” and “bad” triggered by the split is there all the time, in the normal personality, stereotypes exist in parallel to our ability to create more sophisticated rational categories that transcend the crude line of difference present in stereotype. Therefore, stereotype is useful ‘momentary’ coping mechanism if it is used and discarded in time.

2. Stereotyped images of women on the Moroccan urban scene: case studies

2. 1. The thin fair teenager myth

A street-style image of femininity which has become increasingly vogueish of late on the Moroccan street is one made of a combination of slender bearing, slight tight dress - especially jeans and décolleté tops- and light dyed-blond, red or golden hair. This image is used in TV commercials, displayed on the fashion corners of women’s magazines and on shop windows and interiors. It is tempting of course to consider this image as the making of a historical juncture marked by globalization and the influence of electronic mass media. Michel Foucault, however, taught us to mistrust such phenomena as historically determined, and to examine the regimes of representation behind them. In one of his late interviews, Foucault expresses his new interest in what he calls “practices and techniques of the self”. He maintains that it “is not enough to say that the subject is constituted in a symbolic system. It is not just in the play of symbols that the subject is constituted. It is constituted in real practices. There is a technology of the constitution of the self, which cuts across symbolic systems while using them.”(Rabinow 1984:369) In “Technologies of the Self”, Foucault sketches out the history of the different ways in Western culture whereby humans develop knowledge about themselves; he identifies four main types of technologies: of production, of sign systems, of power and of the self. Technologies of the self, he argues,

permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality (Foucault 1988:18)

Foucault recommends that such knowledge of the self be not accepted at face value, but analysed as a quasi-science, a specific “truth game” related to specific techniques that human beings use to understand themselves.

If we advance, as I am arguing here, that one of the popular models of femininity on the Moroccan street within the last decade is built on the myth of the fair, slender teenager as an image of the new Moroccan woman, it is worth examining the regime of representation underpinning such a stereotype. Here are a few facts:

- Most city centre women’s wear shops bear European or American names. In the address corner of one of the *Femmes du Maroc* magazine issues, only one of the twenty six women’s wear shops in Casablanca bears a Moroccan name, while two have neutral names. The rest have exotic or vogueish-sounding names: “Mango”, fashion Victim” “Big Follies”, “No-Kiss”...etc

- In the years 2003-2008, it became extremely difficult to find dresses or skirts, the new fashion for women being jeans or slim trousers. More lately, miniskirts or medium-length pyjama looking blouses are worn on top of jeans. The fashion is now turning more and more to a hodgepodge of contrasts where the glorious 30’s are forced into postmodern fusions with avant-garde fashion styles. Slim tight trousers remain a constant within these variables.

- To find your size when you do forty and above, you have to go to specialized, haute- couture shops, the norm in the fashion market being 36-38. “ Taille 38: le harem des femmes

occidentales”, the end chapter of *Le harem européen* by Moroccan writer and sociologist Fatéma Mernissi, relates humorously the writer’s predicament in one of the temples of consumer culture in New York, the women’s wear shop; She was unable to find a fitting skirt on account of her large hips.

-If you go into a re-looking centre downtown with dark hair, you can be 75% sure to get out of it with medium length or *effilé* –cut hair dyed blond, red, or golden-meshed. The re-looking corner in any of the new women magazines bears witness to this tendency.

Whether the above techniques are simple, voguish tendencies that are historically constructed or the wilful instruments of a technology of the self enforced through a regime of representation whose geo-economic objective is to invade new world markets, will depend on how one reacts to the following readings:

- The 21st century is a period when economic powers based on consumer culture (China and the USA, and now other emergent third world economic powers) are looking for new world markets. Such wear shops as “Zara”, “Stradivarius” and “Mango” are examples of cunning global market strategies, where economic powers are creating global selves in their consumer cultural image.

-The polar stereotype based on skin colour determinism, one that identifies goodness with the fair-skinned and “wickedness” with the dark-skinned is a long-standing western stereotype. Anglo-Saxon culture, whose values are exported with the fashion styles, is replete with versions or derivations of this stereotype. Even classics which are innocent of colonial or racial typecasting, such as *Pride and Prejudice*, contain residues of this myth.

- Shop space itself is made a privileged place for performances of techniques of the self associated with the new woman imagery: the use of display services such as mannequins on shop windows; display boards with photos of top models wearing make-up, perfumes or dress. The use of lighting, interior decoration and the placing of mirrors all reflect a willed strategy to fix certain cultural values and meanings round garment: in the main, these values remain pro-American: white, middle-class and capitalist.

In the construction of this street style femininity, the mass media, the written press (*Miss, Citadine, Femme Actuelle...*etc) play an important role in constructing regimes of looking. Foucault’s work remains crucial in understanding the relation between techniques of looking and practices of the self as a means of institutionalizing certain images as historical identities. The institutional underpinnings of this regime of representation lies in the cultural significance attached to this imagery. Frailty, youth and vulnerability are sanctioned as traits of true femininity; fairness is approved as a standard against which other skin colours look suspect, and so are distanced as “other”: they are mistrusted, glorified or sexually fetishized.

2. 2. The veiled woman myth

Another public image of femininity increasingly in vogue on the Moroccan urban scene, all life sectors included, is the figure of the wrapped, veiled woman as a symbol of the chaste, morally worthy woman. Casablanca first initiated the tradition of creating specialized shops for veiled women (i.e. “*Al Emirate*”, “*Top Mode*”); other cities followed suit very soon. Some of the shops are haute-couture places. They work in parallel to audio-visual and electronic mass media and also to some Arab consumer magazines (i.e. *Zahrat El Khalij*) to construct a regime of representation around the figure of the veiled woman: a strongly built, generously rounded, manicured, loud-perfumed woman with a heavy make-up and the unfailing “*muhtajiba*” costume. Fineness of material and harmony of colours distinguish the dress. The veiled women’ wear shops try to live up to the women’s concern with their femininity and sexual appeal.

In parallel to this image, we see chador or burka- dressed women, often very young and accompanied by children and older husbands with long beards. Or they walk with women

similarly dressed. One is at a loss to decide whether the difference between the two veiling costumes is one of appropriateness, authenticity or of sect membership. The nuance between *Hijab* and “*Suphur*”, widely disputed the 20th century by reformists Islamist thinkers, has, oddly enough, totally disappeared from the debate vista.

In an analysis of the significance of the veil for Moroccan women, which the Egyptian anthropologist Leila Hessini made from a poll she cast on literate urban women between 1986 and 1990, Hessini demonstrates that the wide-spread use of the veil among literate women fails to reflect a consensus on the reasons behind its use. Wearing the veil turned out to be surrounded by many ambiguities: first is the ambiguity relating to the legal status of the veil: whether it is compulsory (*Wajib*) or desirable (*Mustahab*). Some of us still remember the charge that Egyptian lawyer Nabih Wahsh raised against some Egyptian movie stars, accusing them of *ridda* (apostacy) for having discarded the *Hijab* after wearing it for some time. Uncertainty also covers some of the literate women’s attitude toward the *Hijab* in its relation to the social order. For some, *Hijab* is a sign of adherence to an authentic system of social values and a refusal of occidental fashion. The same women, however, acknowledge and tolerate the ambiguity surrounding the gender/space issue, in a context which favours division rather than co-habitation. They generally believe that women should access the employment market on account of the demands of modern living, but that the division of space must itself remain unquestionable (as in the space of prayer). The wearing of the veil, therefore, translates both their sense of guilt for trespassing their legitimated space limits, and a compromise as regards the status quo, ending thereby in being out and in at the same time.

Hessini’s analysis also points to the contradictions characterizing women’s bodies and their sexuality. The women wear the veil to hide their bodies because the female body is entirely *aawra* and, as such, generator of *fitna* among males; they thereby enrol within the logic which deems Arab males unable to control their sexual appetites. The latter male trait is perceived as a sign of authentic virility rather than a weakness of character. Menstruation is advanced by the same women as an evidence of their lesser worth of spirituality as compared to males’. What these arguments show is the women’s lack of pedagogical insight and distinction in dealing with what is temporal (reproduction, gender roles) and what is spiritual (faith, communion with God). There is in fact confusion between the two.

In “L’Islam, est-il laïcissable ?” a conference presented on France TV, Ghaleb Bencheikh declares that Islam is the religion which is most compatible with democracy and secularism; the problem lies in that Muslim society adopts a line of thought characterized by fundamentalist closure and ideological opportunism. Using laicity as a cover concept, fragile Arab regimes try to gain more legitimacy by using the spiritual in the service of the political; the State issues pro-government readings to be delivered at the Mosques during the Friday communal prayer. Another problem lies in that the Muslim lay person thinks that the concept encourages free (seen as irresponsible), anarchic thinking. Laicity is therefore used as a foil division of the temporal from the spiritual. Bencheikh believes that the Muslims “ *doivent faire preuve d’une extrême pédagogie et de discernement tout en gardant à l’esprit qu’ils ne sont pas les seuls dépositaires de la vérité absolue (should make use of extreme pedagogy and discernment , while keeping in mind that they are not the only detainers of absolute truth)*» (L’économiste Nov.2005)

All in all, the wearing of the Hijab among Moroccan urban women reflects these women’s cognitive dissonance. This cognitive dissonance is the result of contradictory impulses: on the one hand, the need for employment and emancipation; on the other, the will to perpetuate fundamentalist practices since these are believed to safeguard the family unit and to protect the social order. The poll conducted by Leila Hessini also reflects the Moroccan urban women’s acute sense of ethics (and of guilt) as the safeguardians of social morality. Men are spared this difficult task. It also proves that Moroccan women, despite their literacy,

generally lack the sense of personal identity and personal rights. They are part of a social or communal consciousness. They fail to see themselves as separate, autonomous selves with dreams, motivations and goals. By wearing the *Hijab*, they show readiness to sacrifice their rights as persons, in favour of group membership. The consequences of such guilt-ridden, contradictory attitudes on women's lives and their empowerment are obviously drastic.

3. Towards a Cross-Cultural Analysis of Coded Feminine Religious Behaviour

It is interesting to note that the case of the veil has been lately located at the centre of the Arab socio-political scene with the same intensity that the case of the abortion was placed at the centre of the political scene in the USA of the 70's. The manipulation of key religious concepts by conservative movements around the world is one of the questions that *Fundamentalism and Gender* (1994) by John S. Hawley examines. In one of the essays of this edited work, Karen McCarthy Brown draws attention to the incoherencies that the Anti-Abortion Movement (or Pro-Life Movement) in the American 70's was observed to have. The same group that engaged in heated debate about the protection of life showed indifference to children's lives outside of the womb. They neither created nor supported social programmes focused on child abuse, day care or juvenile drug abuse. Their overriding concern was with maintaining boundary lines between the "good" and the "bad" in society, the righteous and the sinful, the life and death sentences. They are, in other words, wholly concerned with the perpetuation of a social order.

Dealing with fundamentalism cross-culturally, Karen Brown evokes the example of the "sati" of Roop Kanmar- the young Hindu Woman who was immolated on her husband's funeral; Brown argues that the targets of fundamentalist ideology are not only the poor and the marginalised, but the people caught off balance-the disoriented. That is why fundamentalism thrives in postcolonial or historically fragile contexts. She also argues that the sati practice in Modern India should be considered with regard to two arguments: the economic condition of women and the fear of the woman's body. First, as most Indian women depend on marriage for their financial security, it goes without saying that a woman performing sati at a funeral shrine avows respect and conformity to social codes, but she also takes her life on account of the financial insecurity awaiting her. Object-relations theory may help elucidate the second argument. Dorothy Dinnerstein explains that "*the crucial psychological fact is that all of us, men and women, fear the will of Woman.*" She adds that *male dominance and privilege are social constructs built on "a terror that we all feel: the terror of sinking back wholly into the helplessness of infancy"* (Dinnerstein 1976: 161) Fear of the woman's sexuality conditions our attitudes towards women not only in myths, but also in religious practice and in daily secular interactions. A woman is one moment a goddess, the next a monster. The sati practice in Modern India may find an explanation in the fear of the woman's will and the woman's body, and in the relief that both men and women feel when these two creative sources are disempowered.

It is tempting, in the present context, to push Karen Brown's cross cultural analysis further and draw affinities between the three key religious concepts seen above: Anti-abortion, the veil and the sati. The three, in my opinion, target the weak and the disoriented; social insecurity and lack of moral rectitude are in each projected onto the body of woman. For the Anti-abortion Movement of the American 70's, this body is sublimated and confined to reproduction. For the Pro-Hijab fundamentalist movement in the modern Arab world (and in Morocco by way of example) it is hidden on account of its unruly drives and sinful impact on the male ego; for the pro-sati movement the body, being the devouring body of the goddess, is immolated and a pure, spiritual woman is enshrined instead. In *Rêves de femmes*, Fatema Mernissi has the little girl narrator wistfully compare the Germans' imposition of the

yellow badge on Jews in WWI to the Muslims' imposition of veil on women. The mother explains then that it is fear of difference that makes people behave weirdly.

4. Conclusion

Whether they are triggered by institutional or by ideological forces, and whether they proceed to the “nakedness” or to the wrapping of woman, the models of street style femininity we have seen reflect a sexual politics in terms of which women are “othered”, fetishized, and unquestionably disempowered. In spite of their literacy, Moroccan women without a gender consciousness tend to adopt the knowledge of the self inherent in such models at face value. In the North African context, where women suffer as much from stereotyped representation as they do from under representation, gender and feminist studies should help us unveil the incoherencies and injustices of non-egalitarian regimes of representation, and access women to the counter knowledge of how to be fully human.

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Le personnage d'Odette. Proust et la peinture

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Abstract: *Within a large analysis, which studied the painting references in the A la Recherche du Temps Perdu by Marcel Proust, we have found an important issue about the analysis of the character of Odette through the painting references concerning her. If some of literature has studied for years which real persons are hidden in the fictitious characters in the Recherche (Painter, 1966), we have studied which characters of the art history and which artists have been used by Proust to describe his feminine characters. The usage of art by Proust is functional to the narration, it is not limited to the pure description, but it has often a role of moral elevation of the character concerned in the artistic similitude. Then we must not be surprised if the artist who has been often associated to Odette is the Botticelli of the Venere and even of the Madonna Del Magnificat. The art has been used to give a valid certificate of morality to the beauty of Odette. Just when Swann sees her resemblance with Séphora, la figlia di Jetro, Botticelli's character, he begins to feel something for Odette. Proust, through the eyes of Charles Swann, holds Odette of a moral purity that only art can give to her.*

Key words: *painting, Marcel Proust, Botticelli, woman, beauty, image*

L'élaboration de cet article est née d'une réflexion sur les références à la peinture dans l'œuvre de Marcel Proust. Nous avons procédé de façon très méthodologique en nous basant systématiquement sur les seules données inhérentes au texte. Après les avoir recueillies, nous les avons classifiées par macro-catégories en créant de telle sorte une fiche de regroupement.

En ce qui concerne l'analyse du matériel recueilli nous avons préféré effectuer un choix de caractère quantitatif. Nous avons plutôt considéré les artistes les plus cités par rapport à chaque catégorie. En effet, nous sommes convaincus que Proust n'a jamais rien fait par hasard dans son œuvre et que l'importance quantitative des données est une clé de lecture qui pourrait fournir des réponses de qualité.

Les parallélismes entre la vie de Marcel Proust et celle qui vit le narrateur de *La Recherche* sont sous les yeux des tous depuis la publication du roman, mais il ne faut pas penser que l'œuvre soit tout à fait intelligible. Proust écrit un véritable roman et, comme tout roman, l'invention créative l'importe dans chaque page. Il est évident, quand même, que cette œuvre est une «instantanée» parfaite du temps vécu par l'écrivain. Il nous présente une admirable description du monde de la Paris des salons et de la bourgeoisie qui essaie d'arriver au prestige de la noblesse. L'œil de Proust arrive jusqu'à la campagne et aux lieux liés à son enfance. Une place de choix est réservée à la description de l'univers féminin, ses personnages sont chargés d'une importance et d'un poids narratif, souvent majeurs que les personnages masculins.

Les personnages dans le roman sont presque toujours liés à des modèles que Proust a connus dans sa vie. La correspondance, toutefois, n'est jamais univoque, en effet, pour créer un personnage Proust prend comme point de référence de personnes différentes.

En ce qui concerne le personnage de Odette par contre, les personnes qui donnent vie à ce personnages sont plusieurs et surtout des amies de Proust ; parmi les autres il y a sans aucun doute Léonie de Clomesnil, qui dans une lettre de l'auteur est comparée à une *Venere* de Botticelli¹. Donc Odette est Léonie lorsque Swann établit la même similitude avec les œuvres de Botticelli.

Le monde de la peinture est présent sous aspects différents dans l'œuvre de Proust. Dans *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* les peintres cités sont plusieurs et des périodes différentes.

Les similitudes féminines, c'est à dire les références qui mettent en relation un peintre ou une œuvre d'art à un personnage féminin du roman, sont les plus nombreuses parmi les références à l'art dans le roman. On analysera donc dans cet article cette typologie des références et surtout les références au personnage d'Odette.

Les peintres les plus cités sont: Botticelli, Giotto, Moreau, Carpaccio, Leonardo, Tiepolo, Titien et Rembrandt.

Comme nous avons déjà vu, la critique s'est déjà largement occupée du rapport entre l'œuvre de Proust et la peinture, en suivant différents points de vue selon les années de son écriture. Dans sa biographie approfondie sur Marcel Proust, George Painter² s'occupe de retrouver les liens entre la création narrative et la vie vécue ; la peinture n'est pas seulement un objet d'analyse, mais elle en devient souvent un instrument, car elle offre une source certaine dans le monde réel face au monde raconté par Proust. La peinture est donc un moyen qui permet à l'auteur de retrouver les parallélismes entre les personnages et les personnes connues par Proust ou de retrouver dans la description de la *Vue de Delft* de Vermeer la visite de Proust au Jeu de Paume pour admirer ce tableau. En effet il s'agit d'un sous-texte qui raconte encore plus des détails que le simple premier niveau de narration.

Dernièrement Paola Placella Sommella s'est occupée du rapport entre l'œuvre de Proust et les courantes artistiques d'avant-garde³.

En 1999 Lorenzo Renzi⁴ s'occupe d'un épisode spécifique de la *Recherche*: la morte de Bergotte; il s'en occupe non sous le profil narratif mais il conduit une analyse ponctuelle pour repérer dans l'œuvre admirée par Bergotte avant de mourir un petit détail : un petit pain de mur jaune autour duquel toute l'histoire se déroule.

En 2005, Sara Guindani analyse la présence des arts figuratifs dans l'œuvre de Proust. En partant du principe que la critique précédente a voulu retrouver les personnages réels cachés dans les personnages du roman, elle essaie de retrouver la vraie identité d'Elstir, en arrivant à la conclusion qu'Elstir représente beaucoup d'artistes en même temps⁵.

Nous analyserons le personnage de Odette dans ses références à l'art et nous verrons comment ce personnage clé de toute l'œuvre de Proust, surtout des premiers volumes de la *Recherche*, est représenté à cet autre niveau de narration. Ce que l'on remarque est que le peintre le plus cité dans les premiers volumes de l'œuvre est Botticelli. On ne trouve des références au peintre de Florence que dans le premier livre *Du côté de chez Swann*⁶ avec cinq références et dans le deuxième livre, *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleur*⁷. Toutes les fois que Proust cite Botticelli il le fait pour comparer ses œuvres au personnage d'Odette. Il utilise les figures féminines peintes par Botticelli pour réaliser autour d'Odette, à travers Charles Swann, une conception compacte et gentille de la personne qu'il aime. Tout cela s'inscrit dans l'habitude que l'auteur donne à Swann de vouloir trouver dans les personnes qu'il connaît les personnages de la peinture, comme s'il voudrait mieux les insérer dans le monde du critique d'art. Donc Swann, qui au début ne prouve aucune attraction pour Odette, est bouleversé par une puissante passion vers la jeune femme lorsqu'il reconduit sa beauté à un niveau plus haut, celui de l'art, et plus précisément à la figure de Botticelli.

Les œuvres les plus célèbres du maître florentin reconduisent au milieu néo-platonique de la fin du XV^e siècle. Ce milieu se développe autour de la famille Médicis, à la suite de la traduction en vulgaire des œuvres de Platon et du besoin de concilier les idées du philosophe grec avec le monde chrétien. Dans Botticelli donc, l'idéal de beauté est lié à la pureté et à l'*humanitas* chrétienne, dans ses œuvres il y a une finalité morale. Une grande importance est jouée par la ligne et le dessin. En effet, comme la philosophie de Platon le dit, les idées ont la suprématie sur le monde réel ; donc, comme le monde, le dessin de l'œuvre d'art est fondamental par rapport à la peinture qui occupe un autre niveau de raisonnement.

Nous analysons donc la première référence à Odette et à Botticelli en *Du côté de chez Swann* :

Debout à côté de lui, laissant couler le long de ses joues ses cheveux qu'elle avait dénoués, fléchissant une jambe dans une attitude légèrement dansante pour pouvoir se pencher sans fatigue vers la gravure qu'elle regardait, en inclinant la tête, de ses grands yeux, si fatigués et maussades quand elle ne s'animait pas, elle frappa Swann par sa ressemblance avec cette figure de Zéphora, la fille de Jéthro,

qu'on voit dans une fresque de la chapelle Sixtine. Swann avait toujours eu ce goût particulier d'aimer à retrouver dans la peinture des maîtres non pas seulement les caractères généraux de la réalité qui nous entoure, mais ce qui semble au contraire le moins susceptible de généralité, les traits individuels des visages que nous connaissons : ainsi, dans la matière d'un buste du doge Lorédan par Antoine Rizzo, la saillie des pommettes, l'obliquité des sourcils, enfin la ressemblance criante de son cocher Rémi ; sous les couleurs d'un Ghirlandajo, le nez de M. de Palancy ; dans un portrait de Tintoret, envahissement du gras de la joue par l'implantation des premiers poils des favoris, la cassure du nez, la pénétration du regard, la congestion des paupières du docteur de Boulbon. Peut-être ayant toujours gardé un remords d'avoir borné sa vie aux relations mondaines, à la conversation, croyait-il trouver une sorte d'indulgent pardon à lui accordé par les grands artistes, dans ce fait qu'ils avaient eux aussi considéré avec plaisir, fait entrer dans leur œuvre, de tels visages qui donnent à celle-ci un singulier certificat de réalité et de vie, une saveur moderne ; peut-être aussi s'était-il tellement laissé gagner par la frivolité des gens du monde qu'il éprouvait le besoin de trouver dans une œuvre ancienne ces allusions anticipées et rajeunissantes à des noms propres d'aujourd'hui. Peut-être au contraire avait-il gardé suffisamment une nature d'artiste pour que ces caractéristiques individuelles lui causassent du plaisir en prenant une signification plus générale, dès qu'il les apercevait déracinées, délivrées, dans la ressemblance d'un portrait plus ancien avec un original qu'il ne représentait pas. Quoi qu'il en soit, et peut-être parce que la plénitude d'impressions qu'il avait depuis quelque temps, et bien qu'elle lui fût venue plutôt avec l'amour de la musique, avait enrichi même son goût pour la peinture, le plaisir fut plus profond et devait exercer sur Swann une influence durable, qu'il trouva en ce moment-là dans la ressemblance d'Odette avec la Zéphora de ce Sandro di Mariano auquel on donne plus volontiers son surnom populaire de Botticelli depuis que celui-ci évoque au lieu de l'œuvre véritable du peintre l'idée banale et fautive qui s'en est vulgarisée. Il n'estima plus le visage d'Odette selon la plus ou moins bonne qualité de ses joues et d'après la douceur purement carnée qu'il supposait devoir leur trouver en les touchant avec ses lèvres si jamais il osait l'embrasser, mais comme un écheveau de lignes subtiles et belles que ses regards dévidèrent, poursuivant la courbe de leur enroulement, rejoignant la cadence de la nuque à l'effusion des cheveux et à la flexion des paupières, comme en un portait d'elle en lequel son type devenait intelligible et clair.

Il la regardait ; un fragment de la fresque apparaissait dans son visage et dans son corps, que dès lors il chercha toujours à y retrouver, soit qu'il fût auprès d'Odette, soit qu'il pensât seulement à elle, et bien qu'il ne tint sans doute au chef-d'œuvre florentin que parce qu'il le retrouvait en elle, pourtant cette ressemblance lui conférait à elle aussi une beauté, la rendait plus précieuse. Swann se reprocha d'avoir méconnu le prix d'un être qui eût paru adorable au grand Sandro, et il se félicita que le plaisir qu'il avait à voir Odette trouvât une justification dans sa propre culture esthétique. [...] Le mot d'«œuvre florentine» rendit un grand service à Swann. Il lui permit, comme un titre, de faire pénétrer l'image d'Odette dans un monde de rêves, où elle n'avait pas eu accès jusqu'ici et où elle s'imprégna de noblesse. [...] Il plaça sur la table de travail, comme un photographie d'Odette, une reproduction de la fille de Jéthro. Il admirait les grands yeux, le délicat visage qui laissait deviner la peau imparfaite, les boucles merveilleux des cheveux le long des joues fatiguées, et adaptant ce qu'il trouvait beau jusque-là d'une façon esthétique à l'idée d'une femme vivante, il le transformait en mérites physiques qu'il se félicitait de trouver réunis dans un être qu'il pourrait posséder. Cette vague sympathie qui nous porte vers un chef-d'œuvre que nous regardons, maintenant qu'il connaissait l'originel charnel de la fille de Jéthro, elle devenait un désir qu'il suppléa désormais à celui que le corps d'Odette ne lui avait pas d'abord inspiré. Quand il avait regardé longtemps ce Botticelli, il pensait à son Botticelli à lui qu'il trouvait plus beau encore et, approchant de lui la photographie de Zéphora, il croyait serrer Odette contre son cœur.⁸

Odette est comparée à Zéphora, la fille de Jéthro, présente dans la fresque nommé *La vie de Moïse* : la similitude a ses thèmes dans la peinture et dans le regard de la jeune fille, dans le portement qui établit une ressemblance physique qui se décline dans une description détaillée et précise des traits du corps de Odette. Pourtant, nous pourrions penser que le choix du maître florentin n'ait pas été faite par hasard : tout comme Botticelli lie la beauté du corps à une entité morale supérieure, on peut conclure que l'on retrouve cette même conception en Swann, qui pendant toute la durée de son amour pour Odette ne veut pas séparer la beauté physique de la femme de sa beauté spirituelle, bien imaginée, à vrai dire. L'idéal de Swann habilite Odette et la fait devenir une personne meilleure aux yeux de son homme ; il y a donc un obscurcissement de la réalité et une supériorité de l'idée que l'on a d'elle, procédée bien connue de la philosophie néo-platonique.

Dans le récit dédié à la similitude entre Odette et *Zéphora, la fille de Jéthro*, nous trouvons aussi la description générale de l'habitude de Swann d'associer aux personnes qu'il connaît des œuvres des peintres célèbres.

Le narrateur donne l'explication qui suit: à cause du remord de avoir consacré toute sa vie aux plaisirs mondains et avoir donc oublié l'étude et sa passion pour l'art, Swann vit comme une sorte de pardon indulgent donné lui par les grands artistes, de reconnaître leurs œuvres d'art dans les personnes qui vivent avec lui.

Le narrateur donne une autre possible explication de cette habitude de Swann : peut-être que sa nature d'artiste lui impose d'établir des similitudes avec les figures d'une œuvre d'art car les personnes qui appartiennent à la vie réelle ont besoin d'une habilitation d'un niveau supérieur, que ce n'est que l'art peut leur donner. Il serait bien cela ce qui se passe dans la relation entre Charles Swann et Odette.

À travers une reproduction de la fresque qui montre *Zéphora*, qui se trouve sur la table de travail de Swann, il admire son amoureuse, mais c'est bien cet image, et non la femme réelle, qui nourrit sa passion.

Dans la deuxième référence à Botticelli en *Du côté de chez Swann* nous trouvons Odette comparée à différentes œuvres du maître de Florence :

Il élevait son autre main le long de la joue d'Odette ; elle le regarda fixement, de l'air languissant et grave qu'on les femmes du maître florentin avec lesquelles il lui avait trouvé de la ressemblance ; amenés au bord des paupières, ses yeux brillants, larges et minces comme les leurs, semblaient prêts à se détacher ainsi que deux larmes.⁹

La femme est comparée «aux femmes du maître florentin». Surtout son visage, et encore plus précisément son regard, décrivent un «air languissant et grave» qui pourrait se transformer en larmes.

Nous pouvons reconnaître ces adjectifs dans le regard de la *Primavera* et de la *Venere*. Swann trouve dans le regard d'Odette les caractéristiques les plus précises de la conception esthétique de Botticelli : une beauté gentille et calme qui ferme en elle-même ces qualités morales de pureté et intelligence qu'on ne peut pas séparer.

Dans la troisième référence à Botticelli et à Odette en *Du côté de chez Swann*, l'homme forme Odette dans ses mouvements pour qu'elle puisse adopter les mêmes formes et les mêmes lignes de la figure féminine de Botticelli :

Ou bien elle le regardait d'un air maussade, il revoyait un visage digne de figurer dans la Vie de Moïse de Botticelli, il y situait, il donnait au cou d'Odette l'inclinaison nécessaire ; et quand il l'avait bien peinte à la détrempe, au XV^e siècle, sur la muraille de la Sixtine, l'idée qu'elle était cependant restée là, près du piano, dans le moment actuel, prête à être embrassée et possédée, l'idée de sa matérialité et de sa vie, venait l'enivrer avec une telle force que, l'œil égaré, les mâchoires tendues comme pour dévorer, il se précipitait sur cette vierge de Botticelli et se mettait à lui pincer les joues¹⁰.

L'idée que la représentation qui se trouve sur une fresque de la Sixtine soit par contre là, dans sa même chambre avec lui, fait augmenter sa passion et ne marque pas la différence nette entre la réalité de la femme et la création de l'œuvre d'art, qui en ressortent confuses dans une seule entité, qui vit dans le cœur de Swann grâce à cette confusion.

Dans la référence suivante revient le sujet du regard languissant et grave des femmes de Botticelli:

Elle rappelait ainsi plus encore qu'il ne le trouvait d'habitude, les figures de femmes du peintre de la Primavera. Elle avait en ce moment leur visage abattu et navré qui semble succomber sous le poids d'une douleur trop lourd pour elles, simplement quand elles laissent l'enfant Jésus jouer avec une grenade ou regardent Moïse verser de l'eau dans une auge.¹¹

Le regard de Odette est comme celui de Marie qui voit jouer l'enfant Jésus ou celui de *Zéphora* qui regard «Moïse verser de l'eau dans une auge».

Même si le nom de la mère de Jésus n'est pas explicité, la référence semble assez claire : nous sommes devant une dichotomie évidente entre le premier et le deuxième terme de similitude : sous le profil moral aucune similitude ne peut s'établir entre la Vierge et Odette. Bien que cette référence offre l'occasion de parler de ce sujet, nous ne sommes pas devant à une nouveauté : les similitudes déjà analysées posaient de la même façon le problème entre l'idéal de beauté physique et l'idéal de beauté morale, nous pouvons donc affirmer que la dichotomie entre Odette et les personnages féminins des œuvres de Botticelli existe sans solution de continuité. Cette dichotomie nourrit la passion de Swann pour Odette, mais au même temps cette procédée est nourrie pas cette passion.

Dans la dernière référence à Botticelli en *Du côté de chez Swann* il n'y a pas une similitude directe entre Odette et les œuvres de Botticelli déjà citées : *La Primavera*, *Bella Vanna* et la *Venere*. Proust par contre, utilise ces œuvres pour nous dire que Swann voudrait connaître le passé de Odette pour mieux la comprendre, comme un esthéticien voudrait interroger les documents pour tâcher de comprendre les œuvres de l'artiste florentin.

et il eût mis à reconstituer les petits faits de la chronique de la Côte d'Azur d'alors, si elle avait pu l'aider à comprendre quelque chose du sourire ou des regards – pourtant si honnêtes et si simples – d'Odette, plus de passion que l'esthéticien qui interroge les documents subsistants de la Florence du XV^e siècle pour tâcher d'entrer plus avant dans l'âme de Primavera, de la bella Vanna, ou de la Vénus, de Botticelli.¹²

Même dans ce passage au lieu d'une similitude apparente nous assistons en effet à un jeu d'éloignement entre Odette et les œuvres qui lui ont été associées. Si on enquêtait sur le passé d'Odette on trouverait la vraie femme avec tous ses problèmes de moralité, tandis que si on interrogeait les documents de Florence au XV^e siècle pour découvrir l'âme des œuvres de Botticelli, on trouverait le néo-platonisme, la supériorité du monde des idées sur la réalité, que dans la synthèse de la traduction de Marsilio Ficino est liée à la supériorité de la beauté extérieure et intérieure, à une beauté sans aucun péché qui répond aux idéaux du Christianisme.

Tout cela est connu par l'écrivain, qui avait traduit l'œuvre du célèbre historien de l'art Ruskin, et tout cela est connu dans la narration par Swann aussi qui est un critique d'art.

Dans le deuxième livre qui compose *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleur*, la première référence à Botticelli met en relation Odette avec la *Vergine del Magnificat* et la *Primavera*.

Mais sans doute Swann, fidèle ou revenu à une conception différente, goûtait-il dans la jeune femme grêle aux yeux pensifs, aux traits las, à l'attitude suspendue entre la marche et l'immobilité, une grâce plus botticellienne. Il aimait encore, en effet, à voir en sa femme un Botticelli. [...] Swann possédait une merveilleuse écharpe orientale, bleue et rose, qu'il avait achetée parce que c'était exactement celle de la Vierge du Magnificat. Mais Mme Swann ne voulait pas la porter. Une fois seulement elle laissa son mari lui commander une toilette toute criblée de pâquerettes, de bluets, de myosotis et de campanules d'après la Primavera du Printemps. Parfois, le soir, quand elle était fatiguée, il me faisait remarquer tout bas comme elle donnait, sans s'en rendre compte, à ses mains pensives le mouvement délié, un peu tourmenté de la Vierge qui trempe sa plume dans l'encrier que lui tend l'ange, avant d'écrire sur le livre saint où est déjà tracé le mot «Magnificat». Mais il ajoutait : «Surtout ne le lui dites pas, il suffirait qu'elle le sût pour qu'elle fit autrement.»¹³

Swann veut encore chercher dans la beauté et dans les mouvements d'Odette la même beauté exprimée à travers les figures féminines de Botticelli. Pour poursuivre ce résultat il essaie d'habiller Odette d'une façon qui puisse accentuer cette ressemblance. Dans cette référence nous pouvons voir quel est l'attitude de Odette vers cette procédée : elle s'oppose à tout cela.

Il suffirait qu'elle aperçoive l'insistance de Swann pour qu'elle commence à faire autrement pour se détacher de ce modèle botticellien.

Nous pouvons dire alors que Swann ne voit pas la réalité tandis qu'Odette est bien consciente de ce qui se passe dans la tête de l'homme qui désormais est devenu son mari.

Dans la dernière référence à Botticelli qui se trouve dans le deuxième livre de l'œuvre de Proust, nous trouvons encore une similitude avec *Zéphora* :

*Seulement, elle ne pouvait pas m'être de plus d'utilité, entourée de sa ceinture rouge et hissant, à la moindre houle, le drapeau qui interdit les bains (car les maîtres baigneurs sont prudents, sachant rarement nager), qu'elle ne l'eût pu dans la fresque de la Vie de Moïse où Swann l'avait reconnue jadis sous les traits de la fille de Jéthro.*¹⁴

À partir de ce moment dans la *Recherche* on parlera encore de Odette et de Swann mais sous différents aspects. Odette sera surtout la mère de Gilberte, et on retrouvera Swann chez Mme de Guermantes. Leur histoire d'amour ne sera plus mentionnée et il n'y aura pas des références à Botticelli.

S'il est vrai que Botticelli est utilisé pour parler d'Odette, il est aussi vrai qu'Odette est comparée à d'autres peintres aussi. Un de ces peintres est Gustave Moreau, la première référence à lui dans *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu* se trouve dans le premier volume :

*la femme entretenue – chatoyant amalgame d'éléments inconnus et diaboliques, serti, comme une apparition de Gustave Moreau, de fleurs vénéneuses entrelacées à des bijoux précieux – et cette Odette sur le visage de qui il avait vu passer les mêmes sentiments de pitié pour un malheureux, de révolte contre une injustice, de gratitude pour un bienfait, qu'il avait vu éprouver autrefois par sa propre mère, par ces amis...*¹⁵

Odette donc n'est pas une femme claire et sereine, comme dans les références à Botticelli, mais elle est une femme complexe et obscure, qui a les caractères reveux et profonds du symbolisme, comme dans une apparition de Gustave Moreau. La comparaison n'est pas faite pas hasard : la femme a un côté obscur lié à son passé.

Un autre peintre lié à la figure d'Odette est Leonard de Vinci :

*La Joconde se serait trouvée là qu'elle ne m'eût pas fait plus de plaisir qu'une robe de chambre de Mme Swann, ou ses flacons de sels.*¹⁶

La présence d'Odette pour le narrateur devient plus importante que la *Joconde* de Leonardo. La similitude peut sembler blasphème même. En rebaisant la valeur d'une œuvre d'art, le narrateur augment la valeur de Odette. L'art donc a encore une valeur d'habilitation.

Les caractéristiques du tableau de Leonardo, sa façon de peindre et le regard énigmatique de la *Mona Lisa*, rappellent sans aucun doute les caractéristiques que Marcel Proust attribue à Odette. Même si nous avons lu des références bien plus explicites que cette dernière nous pouvons affirmer que la représentation la plus précise d'Odette est dans le tableau de Leonardo.

Un des sujets qui occupe une place de choix dans la *Recherche* est sans aucun doute la mode de l'époque vécue par le narrateur. Au centre de ce thème la figure d'Odette est l'une des plus importantes avec le personnage d'Albertine et de Mme de Guermantes.

Odette est montrée pour la première fois «en robe de soie rose avec un grand collier de perles au cou» dans l'appartement de l'oncle Adolphe, en mangeant un mandarin. Les réponses coupées et évasives du oncle du narrateur qui ne s'attendait pas l'arrivée du neveu, l'étonnement du jeune narrateur face à la femme élégante dont la conversation, disséminée de mots anglais nous racontent tout de suite le statut de cette femme: la demi-mondaine.

Le nom de «dame en rose» fait penser à deux œuvres de Manet qui ont le même titre. Dans une de ces œuvres en outre il y a une autre analogie : il y a par terre une peau d'orange qui rappelle la couleur de la robe du personnage féminin peint sur le tableau¹⁷.

Les autres références concernent directement la mode des vêtements d'Odette et des peintres, comme Rembrandt :

lui décrivait la silhouette d'Odette, qu'il avait aperçue, le matin même, montant à pied la rue Abatucci dans une «visite» garnie de skunks, sous un chapeau «à la Rembrandt» et un bouquet de violettes à son corsage. [...] il se promettait de lui demander où elle allait, à ce moment-là, comme si dans toute la vie incolore – presque inexistante, parce qu'elle lui était invisible – de sa maîtresse, il n'y avait qu'une seule chose en dehors de tous ces sourires adressés à lui : sa démarche sous un chapeau à la Rembrandt, avec un bouquet de violettes au corsage.¹⁸

Le chapeau à la Rembrandt est le détail qui permet à Swann de reconnaître Odette et qui le rend jaloux lorsqu'il voit quelqu'un comme elle dans la rue.

Un autre peintre qui est comparé à la mode est Tiepolo, à cause surtout de ses couleurs brillantes. Dans *À l'ombre de jeunes filles en fleurs* il est cité à propos de la robe de chambre de Odette, couleur «rose Tiepolo» :

la merveilleuse robe de chambre de crêpe de Chine ou de soie, vieux rose, cerise, rose Tiepolo, blanche, mauve, verte, rouge, jaune unie ou à dessins, dans laquelle Mme Swann avait déjeuné et quelle allait ôter.¹⁹

Cette couleur est associée au désir quand elle est se réfère à Odette et à Albertine, tandis que une autre couleur utilisée par Tiepolo associée aux robes de Mme de Guermantes a une signification tout à fait différente.

En ce qui concerne le processus de purification auquel sont soumis les personnages mis en relation aux œuvres d'art, nous remarquons que ce processus est toujours présent pour le personnage d'Odette, associée aux femmes de Botticelli pour créer l'image d'une femme tranquille et élégante. L'idéal de la figure d'Odette créé par Swan habilite socialement Odette et la fait devenir une personne meilleure aux yeux de l'homme qui l'aime. Surtout, en ce qui concerne l'idée de beauté physique liée à l'idée de beauté de l'âme : on a donc un obscurcissement de la réalité et une supériorité de l'idée que l'on a d'elle.

Ce processus trouve son espace dans l'habitude de Swann de retrouver dans les personnes qu'il connaît des ressemblances avec les figures des œuvres d'art. Cette habitude est nécessaire pour habiliter moralement les personnes connues par Swann, une habilitation que ce n'est que l'art que peut lui donner. Ce processus ne finit pas avec Swann mais continue dans le narrateur dans la *Recherche* entière surtout pour Albertine. À ce processus de purification fait de contrepoids l'inévitable contraposition qui se crée entre le personnage et l'œuvre d'art.

Nous pouvons donc conclure que le recours à la peinture est choisi par Proust pour donner un sens immédiat aux sentiments et pour nous permettre d'adopter une clé de lecture qui puisse aller au delà du premier niveau de narration confié aux mots.

Notes

[1] George D. Painter, *Marcel Proust*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1966.p. 73.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] P. Placella Sommella, *Marcel Proust e i movimenti pittorici d'avanguardia*, Roma, Bulzoni Editore, 1982.

[4] L. Renzi, *Proust e Vermeer, Apologia dell'imprecisione*, Bologna, Il mulino, 1999.

[5] S. Guindani, *Lo stereoscopio di Proust. Fotografia, pittura e fantasmagoria nella Recherche*, Milano, Mimesis, 2005, p. 34.

[6] M. Proust, *Du côté de chez Swann*, Paris, Gallimard, 1988.

[7] M. Proust, *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, Paris, Gallimard, 1988.

- [8] M. Proust, *Du côté de chez Swann, œuvre citée*, pp. 219-220, pp. 221-222.
 [9] *Ibid.*, p.229
 [10] *Ibid.*, pp. 234-235
 [11] *Ibid.*, p. 276
 [12] *Ibid.*, p. 308
 [13] M. Proust, *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs, œuvre citée*, pp 186-187
 [14] *Ibid.*, p 253
 [15] M. Proust, *Du côté de chez Swann, œuvre citée*, p. 263
 [16] *Ibid.*, p. 98
 [17] C. Pasquali, *Proust, Primoli, la Moda*, Roma, Ed. di storia e letteratura, 1961, p. 66.
 [18] M. Proust, *Du côté de chez Swann, œuvre citée*, pp. 236-237
 [19] M. Proust, *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs, œuvre citée*, p. 111

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Feminist Theories on Technology

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Abstract: *This paper looks at the ways in which Feminist thinking combines with cultural theories on technology. Starting from the viewpoint according to which technology causes cultural and social mutations, we are looking to outline a working theory regarding the role of technology in creating or modifying gender identity. From a feminist point of view, the consequences of technology are numerous and, sometimes, paradoxical: as a product of scientific thinking, technology is often associated to masculinity. To that extent, women were considered technophobes. Still, technology played a decisive role in women emancipation (home appliances), in enhancing gender differences (plastic surgery), or even in annulling them (hybrid identity in posthuman theories).*

Key words: *feminism, technology, gender identity, emancipation, gender stereotypes*

The relationship between feminism and technology stands out as being a relatively newly approached one in the range of topics addressed by our contemporary intellectuals. The necessity of interweaving the two fields of study has been sensed mainly in the last 30 years: on the one hand, due to the development of the cultural theories related to the influence of technology on our life; on the other hand, as a result of the diversification of the feminist approaches. As an inherent part of our daily life, technology brings back into discussion the semantic area of human subjectivity, and, by way of consequence, a re-positioning in relation to the gender distinctions. In this context, our paper is aimed at seizing the way in which the relationship between humanity and technology markedly impairs the gender identity.

The studies devoted to technology, more precisely to its cultural impact, are quite numerous. One of the most noticeable theoreticians in the field is Arnold Pacey, the author of several studies of the cultural dimension of technology, *Technology in the World* (1991), *The Maze of Ingenuity* (1992) or *Meaning in Technology* (2001). He argues that technology cannot be neutral from a cultural viewpoint, its presence engendering a series of transformations at a social level. A similar point of view is expressed by Andrew Feenberg, in *Questioning Technology* (1999). Standing apart from the previous theories, that see technology either as neutral from a social viewpoint, either as an autonomous determinist force, Feenberg presents technology as utterly dependant upon the context, namely upon the types of relationships it establishes with society. This gives rise to a wide range of national contextualisation, to different ways in which each cultural universe, relying on a national organicity, encompasses and is shaped by the various technological acquisitions.

The main name in the field of the theories combining feminism and technology is Judy Wajcman, who argues that the technology is conceptualised as both a source, and a consequence of the gender relationships. She highlights the fact that this relationship must be observed and analysed in terms of practical immediate implications, and not at a philosophical epistemological level. Most often, the critical theories promoted in this area undermined the binary thinking, that operates with oppositional pairs, *masculine-feminine*, *nature-culture*, even if at the core of the feminist thinking lies the very preference for the term *feminine* from the above-mentioned binary pairs. In her attempt at defining technology, the researcher opts for a definition on three levels: technology seen as: 1. Form of knowledge; 2. Form of practical experience; 3. Collection of objects.

The relationship between feminism and technology will be analysed starting from these three levels. The extremely vast field of theories and their lack of ideological unity render this correlation particularly difficult. Yet, there are a few types of correlations which, once developed, present the interweaving of the two fields.

Does Technology Have a Gender?

If we look up “technology” in the Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language, we see it defined in a particularly neutral way: “The ensemble of processes, methods, procedures used to obtain a product”; no gender distinction made whatsoever. In addition to this, the definition bears a particularly restrictive nature, as it does not encompass the numerous cultural implications of this phenomenon.

Perceived as a prolongation of the scientific universe, the technological universe is the masculine territory by excellence. Defined as a world dominated by the stronger male thinking, technology seems to be the manifestation area of the male force, the engineer being its emblematic icon. All throughout the XIX-th century, and in the first half of the XX-th century, the scientific thinking and, hereafter, all the discoveries making up the technologic universe, could only be associated with masculinity. Since the technology is the result of the trust in the power of the intellect, of the progress, of the objectivity, all these being masculine features, this identification could not but operate successfully. Consequence of the stronger modernist thinking, a kind of thinking founded on the myth of the permanent progress, technology and its representations are not compatible with the instinctive behaviour, fragility, unpredictability usually associated to women. The physical work implied by the hard parts of technology does not seem to suit the feminine fragility. And the sustained physical effort is seen as annihilating the very essence of femininity, fragility, sensitivity. The arguments according to which the woman is impaired from a scientific and technological viewpoint are, as it was said, another modality of limiting women’s choices and opportunities.

Considering that in women’s case the natural prevails and that they lack the necessary practical abilities to manoeuvre the more or less complex technologies, there is a clear-cut gender delineation in accordance with the type of technology referred to. This is also obvious in the labour division according to the gender: there are many jobs women usually do not practice: work on the construction sites, in factories, in places requiring physical force. Women opt for/are directed towards jobs requiring patience, carefulness etc, attributes said to be peculiar to femininity. This gender delineation is also highlighted by the advertising discourse, in accordance with the target public it is addressed to. The advertisements for cookers or washing-machines are bound to feature a female character, while other home appliances like the television set, the stereo and even the refrigerator will “benefit” from the presence of a male character. If the emphasis is laid on aesthetic features, on the design of certain technologies meant to be only functional, this also proves the interest taken in the female target audience.

Actually, this is exactly what the feminists’ criticism is levelled at, namely the strong tendency of valuing women for being consumers and not producers of various technological mechanisms. Thus, the women’s experience does not have a veto right in the male producers’ fortress where any female contamination could be utterly rejected. Women are rather objects subjected to the technological progress, than subjects generating the very technological progress. As the technology also has an inherent cultural value, the feminists consider that the promoted products perpetuate a phallogentric model, consolidating the male supremacy.

In terms of cultural representations, there is also another stereotype at work: women being more technophobe than men. Being closer to nature, they feel rather threatened by the alienation provoked by technology, by the distortion of the unmediated human communication through various technological means. Within the very diverse feminist movements there is one called eco-feminism, which militates for the eradication of the polluting technologies, for the recovery of the simplicity of the life of yore. Even if their ideas were considered to have evolved around a particularly strong primitivism, the way in which they are trying to encourage the use of the alternative energy forms for the life preservation is

noteworthy. The scepticism attached to the scientific objectivity is another direction approached by feminists, contaminated by the undermining of the strong concepts promoted by postmodernism.

If the *hard* part of technology, the one attached to the mechanical engineering, especially, is considered mainly masculine, the women daring to specialize in this field being relatively few, the recently emerged computing technologies are seen as a field related to the female nature. The *soft* part of these technologies features many resemblances with characteristics usually attributed to women. Due to their inherent fluidity, the information technologies have been associated to the female nature; hence the pairs: masculine – feminine/ hard – soft. Many of the cyberfeminists (Sadie Plant) consider that, as the digital technologies annihilate the distinction between the human being and the machine, the gender distinctions become even more inoperative while the virtual medium gives way to women's liberation. Equating the masculine with 1 and feminine with 0, Plant analyses the symbolism of this binary opposition, having as main character Ada Lovelace, the first female programmer in the world. In her popular essay, *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century*, Donna Haraway militates for the same blurring of boundaries between the human being and the machine, considering that the significance of the cyborg, both as a fictitious element and undergone experience, will alter the perception of what it feels like to experience femininity, for the cyborg symbolises a *post-gender* world. Since the "microelectronic mediates the translations of labour into robotics and word processing, sex into genetic engineering and reproductive technologies, and mind into artificial intelligence and decision procedures"¹, speaking about gender distinctions in a traditional sense is nothing but a superfluous enterprise.

On the other hand, it has been noticed that women seem to be greater consumers of digital information than men, manifesting the tendency to get lost in the cyberspace more often than men do. It is but possible that the immersion in a virtual universe be a different form of escapism, a complex rendered famous by Madame Bovary. Born from a sharp sense of unfulfillment in real life, the desire to invent different biographies for oneself in the virtual space may lead to severe long run consequences. This accounts for the unprecedented development of certain network games, up to their becoming social phenomena, like *The Second Life*, where virtuality tends to replace reality, just as Baudrillard foreboded. Generated by the incapacity to cope with the various problems of the daily existence - particularly stressing for a woman, and also for a man -, the more and more frequent immersions in the virtual space translate and give a dire warning about the danger of alienation fuelled by information technologies.

A product of the scientific thinking, technology is a form of power, used by men, according to feminists, with a view to deliberately keep women in ignorance. A modality to undermine patriarchal thinking is to bring to light women's contribution in this men's world. Furthermore, in the Western area, there have been published a series of books written by one author or by several writers that brought to the public attention the women's scientific activity in various domains: chemistry, engineering etc. Embracing a mild perspective, Judy Wajcman notices that "The nature of women's inventions, like that of men's, is a function of time, place, and resources"². These efforts are meant to invalidate the gender stereotypes claiming that women are devoid of scientific and technological vocation. Most often, the study premise was that women react in a peculiar way in the scientific field, practising a different kind of creativity - the resulted technological products testifying this. This is why the exploitation of the results obtained by women through their scientific work will lead to a wider range of technological products. The historic studies oriented on these aspects have proven that women have succeeded in using to their advantage different technological discoveries, bringing new highlights to the game for power with masculine forces.

Another way to envisage the relation between *feminism* and *technology* is in terms of the linguistic implications, namely of the technological terminology. What gender do the terms from the technological field have? Can we speak of a delineation according the field of activity, considered as being either mainly masculine or feminine? Are there gender differences between the language of origin and the language where the term in question enters at one point of its existence? What does this say about the collective mentality (sexist, less sexist) of a people? This is a series of questions approached by the linguists preoccupied with the way in which the gender distinction is regarded at the level of language and speech.

Technology as an Element Contributing to Woman's Emancipation

Numerous studies approaching the relation between *feminism* and *technology* notice the huge importance held by different technological products in alleviating women's existence. The washing machine, the dishwasher, the systems of monitoring a little baby, of sanitizing baby bottles etc. are all factors that have contributed to woman's emancipation, enabling her to benefit from more spare time. Once freed from the burden of household chores, the woman had more time to devote to career, to prove that many of the gender clichés were false. At the same time, the existence of a specialised machine for the household drudgery led to the man's involvement in carrying out the household chores. The role of technology in woman's emancipation also comes out from the discrepancies between the women in the developed countries and the third world women, a discrepancy highly accentuated by the obvious disparity in terms of financial resources.

But the invention of these time-saving mechanisms was accompanied by the invention of the reverse mechanisms, the time-consuming ones: the telephone and the television set. Once more, a series of stereotypes have emerged relative to the way in which women waste their time talking on the telephone or follow with obstinacy their favourite soap opera. These habits can be subsumed to the need of escapism that more than often seems to be defining for the feminine gender. The computer is considered a great ally for women in their fight for emancipation, as it empowers them as users or practitioners in the field. Unlike in the case of the traditional hard engineering, the studies have demonstrated that there are much more female system engineers, even if the hacker communities, for instance, tend to be mainly masculine.

A special statute is also held by other forms of technology having contributed to woman's emancipation: the contraception and the *in vitro* fertilisation. Extremely controversial, especially from a religious point of view, they offer much liberty to women. It was even said that the true liberation of women started with their sexual liberation, more precisely, with their right to decide when and if they want to procreate. Obviously, the ethical implications are extremely complex. The same principle operates in the case of *in vitro* fertilisation, where the man is nothing but a sperm donor. This procedure enables lesbian couples to have children, once more an extremely controversial issue, especially on account of the fact that it demolishes the family cell with two parents of opposite sex. It is hard to name the exact consequences at the mental level on the children who grow up in such families, just the way it is difficult to foresee the growth and development in a bi-parental family, with parents of opposite sex, but dysfunctional. The male researchers' camp reacted extremely harshly to the idea of the *in vitro* fertilisation, for they sensed, argue the feminists, the imminent change in terms of the newly promoted values: the new technologies of biological reproduction set in the foreground a set of feminine values, instead of the traditionally masculine ones. At the same time, there is a category of feminists considering that the encouragement of the reproduction technologies is deeply sexist, reducing the woman to the traditional role she has been trying to escape from, that of child bearer.

Technology as an Element Highlighting the Gender–Based Distinctions

Confronted by the information explosion, the human being is, implicitly, assaulted by elements that highlight the gender distinctions. The digital area often becomes a place where the sphere of intimacy is encroached upon, and the sexuality, in all its forms, points out to the gender differences. The unprecedented development of the pornographic industry on the internet leads to the alienation of the adolescents' emotional sensitivity, they seem to be encouraged to start their sex life a lot earlier, making a clear-cut distinction between love and sex. The on-line pornography encourages deviant social behaviours, very often women (but also men, the mature ones and also the children) being the physical victims of virtual sexual violence. The implications will be both short-term (given the fact that a prolonged contact with digital pornography influences the normal sexual behaviour, this accounting for the domestic rapes and sexual abuse), and long-term (leading to the change of the sexual habits of entire generations).

A civilisation based on the power of sex cannot but lead to the promotion of this particular kind of power. Numerous young women are changing their body image, wanting to meet the physical standards of their times. By way of consequence, they resort to plastic surgery, use contact lenses (not for medical purposes, but for the sole goal of changing the colour of their eyes), resort to silicone implants, breasts and lips enhancement etc, in order to render themselves as desirable as possible. This is an attempt at heightening the native gender features, by virtue of which technology substitutes itself to nature, and the individuals err in taking as a reference point for their lives a model of physical perfection.

Technology as an Element Invalidating the Gender Distinctions

Given the fact that it blurs the boundaries between the human being and the machine, between what is biological and what is artificial, the virtual reality also blurs the boundaries between man and woman. Entering the digital area, the human beings can reinvent themselves, a man can introduce himself as a woman, and a woman as a man. Since we deal with a hybrid identity, human-being–machine, belonging to a certain gender has lost its relevance. And here we think of all the theories related to the virtual reality and to the way in which human sensitivity is altered, be it feminine or masculine. The posthumanist theories related to the abandonment of one's corporality through prostheses render null the dissociation focused on the difference of a biological order.

A radical form of the way in which technology distorts the gender distinctions is the sex change operation, for the elements of nature are being improved by the scientific breakthrough. Once more, the effects on the human being are difficult to gauge. What is noteworthy is the fact that all those who are subjected to such procedures must undergo psychological therapy, the shock of the change being such that the person cannot cope with this burden by themselves. Under these circumstances, technology contradicts the will of the very divinity, if we were to embrace a deist perspective.

To draw a conclusion, we can notice that the fact of bringing together the feminist theories with the ones linked to the cultural impact of technology resulted in the theoretical growth of both domains, this relation implying mutual shaping. The elements of the material life will forever influence women's evolution and self-consciousness, the use of one type of technology or another determining either a change in the relations of power between the two genders, or rendering these relations inoperative.

Acknowledgment: This paper was supported by the project "Progress and development through post-doctoral research and innovation in engineering and applied sciences– PRiDE - Contract no. POSDRU/89/1.5/S/57083", project co-funded from European Social Fund through Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources 2007-2013.

Notes

- [1] Haraway, Donna, *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century*, in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, New York, Routledge, 1991, p. 165.
- [2] Wajcman, Judy, *Feminism Confronts Technology*, Pennsylvania, Penn State Press, 1991, p. 22.

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Sasha Comaneshteanu – the Portrait of a Romanian Lady

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Résumé: *Ce papier a comme sujet la brève présentation de Sacha Comanéchtëanou, un personnage clef de la littérature roumaine et une de ses premières héroïnes romanesques. Bien amiée par son entourage tout comme par le lecteurs du roman, elle est une des figures proéminentes du roman La vie a la campagne, écrit par Duiliu Zamfirescu, une des personnalités remarquables du commencement du vingtième siècle roumain. Docteur es loi, avocat, procureur, et puis engagé dans le service de la diplomatie roumaine, Zamfirescu a contribué à la culture roumaine pas seulement avec ses œuvres originaux (nouvelles et romans, volumes des poèmes et même une pièce de théâtre aussi que des discours politiques) mais aussi avec des traductions de la littérature italienne en roumain. Des tous ses mérites on y mentionne celui d'avoir été le seul auteur roumain qui a synchronise son œuvre littéraire avec les tendances européennes de son époque.*

Mots-clés: *roman fleuve, chronique, féminité, fresque sociale*

A preamble

Among the Romanian writers, Duiliu Zamfirescu is remarkable above all for being the first author to have synchronized the cycle of the Comaneshteanu family, his major literary creation, with the trends in the European literature. His merits in literature have still remained a matter of debate, since some critics (Vianu 1941, Ibrăileanu 1928, Săndulescu 1969, Manolescu, 1980) appreciate his production while some others indicate to its drawbacks. Although his fame is closely connected with his novels, he also authored poems, short stories and even a play, which was acted on the stage of the National Theatre in Bucharest.

The saga of the Comaneshteanu family is “the first materialized project of an ample Romanian perspective on the national society and spirituality”¹ (Goci 1993: ix). This is a convincing enough reason for the following presentation which foregrounds Sasha, who has come to be acknowledged as an icon² of the Romanian lady. She is a positive and practical woman who takes care of her siblings and who looks after the estate (Ibrăileanu 1928, apud Zamfirescu 2009: 413). “She is our variant of the type of ideal woman, that is of the woman wherein due to heredity and the environment features of a mother, a wife and a lady of the house have combined harmoniously, features which natural selection has developed into a woman along the evolution of the species, but which can be so rarely found in that state of purity and dosed in that particular proportion capable to produce a Sasha Comaneshteanu” (Ibrăileanu 1928, apud Zamfirescu 2009: 414)³.

Equally, this literary chronicle backgrounds a wide and comprehensive image of the Romanian rural universe which is populated with people as the author saw them to be: “good and bad; boyards, lessees and peasants” (Gafița 1970: 15), and which is here and there spotted with glimpses of the urban society. “Zamfirescu’s peasants, those who live on Dinu Murguleț’s estate are not people who live on the boyard’s estate, they are not servants or serfs but owners themselves of their lands and neighbours to Dinu Murguleț’s estate; by way of consequence, they settle back in his own rights a person who had been dispossessed and cheated by the same usurper – Scatiu”⁴ (as they had also been) (Gafița 1969: 505).

An accurate observer, an in-depth analyst of the human nature and social existence and, to some extent, a controversial writer, I do hold Zamfirescu to be actually unique among the Romanian writers. His uniqueness arises from his style which reveals “a certain perception of precise forms, without digressions and intended picturesqueness, an elegance which comes from simplicity and discretion, an obvious self-imposed temperance, a judicious mixture of the current language of an educated person, without excesses of specialization, with neologisms and archaisms which come from their own place and melt together into a soluble mass, a tone of respectful detachment from the object, of self-respect and respect towards the

reader, a combination of apparent coldness and contained passion, a fluidity which hardly confounds easily with frivolity and turn this style into a work of art”⁵ (Lovinescu 1936, quoted in Omăt 1998: 291). His uniqueness equally arises from his attitude as a theorist of the novel which he overtly expressed in all favourable occasions.

Călinescu (2001: 192) admits that “Zamfirescu deserves praises for the fineness of some analyses, for the creation of the mundane atmosphere and finally for the stylistic temperance and his intuitions related to the novel writing technique,” in spite of his not being “a great novelist”. He equally emphasizes Zamfirescu’s opinions as a theorist concerned with the narrative techniques, and who is willing to observe “the significant authentic both in deeds and in words” Călinescu (2001: 191).

This is why, I consider life in Zamfirescu’s novels to be more realistic rather than idealistic; his characters speak and behave the way I witnessed it to happen half a century ago, in my childhood. People used to be more respectful towards each other, for they treated everybody as a human being not as a child, or as a person not deserving their respect; they used to show more common sense and compassion in their everyday life and they seemed to be polite, helpful and thoughtful then they do now. As time went by, I could easily discover much of my childhood world in Zamfirescu’s novelistic universe.

Duiliu Zamfirescu, a complex personality

Few are the writers in the Romanian literature to belong to one of those rare families with a century-long and lasting reputation as Zamfirescu’s, who sometimes mentioned the representatives of two generations in his family who had been schooled abroad⁶. He was born in 1858, brought up and educated in a climate favouring scholarly preoccupations. Aware of the values his (extended) family cherished, he continued the tradition and studied law in Bucharest. He reached the climax of his institutional education with the defense of his doctoral thesis in law.

After an eight-year interval of practice as a(n obscure) prosecutor, an advocate, later on as an attaché, and then, as a secretary of legation, he was sent abroad to work as a diplomat. With his diplomatic mission, he actually continued the tradition initiated by Vasile Alecsandri, an exponent of the late 19th century generation of Romanian writers, who also activated as a diplomat in Paris.

During his eighteen years abroad, he worked in Rome, Brussels, Paris and then in Budapest. In 1906 he came back to Romania and worked as a secretary general at the ministry of external affairs. In 1912, he was promoted a plenipotentiary minister and a few years later, in 1920 he was elected senator, thus becoming a member of the parliament.

That very year, the marshal or General Alexandru Averescu, who served as Prime Minister, appointed him minister of external affairs. Although after this appointment he could have dedicated much of his brains and energy to his political career, his life ups and particularly downs must have deeply affected him for they soon took their ultimate toll, with his death, in 1922, a year after his youngest son had died in a duel.

The writer

In parallel with developing his career, Zamfirescu showed and later on developed his propensity for literature. He expressed his ideas through various literary genres and species and affirmed himself as a poet, journalist, translator, prose writer and dramatist. He made his literary debut with a poem “dedicated” to Miss Niculescu Aman in “Ghimpele” (the Thorn). This was a satirical magazine which lived a short life, between 1866 and 1879 and which included articles whose authors would preferably sign with their pen names.

Beginning with 1880, he exercised his hand as an “apprentice” journalist and contributed to dailies and weeklies, and sustained the column *De las Palabras* (changed to

Palabras) in the publication entitled *România liberă*⁷ (Free Romania). For this same journal, he initiated the column *Tipuri și portrete* (Types and Portraits), and he must have been appreciated as a columnist and a journalist since, in 1882, he became the director of this journal.

He tried his hand with poems which were published in the contemporary fashionable literary journals or reviews (such as *Literatorul*, *Războiul* and *Convorbiri literare*⁸). Zamfirescu published six volumes of poems, i.e. *Fără titlu*⁹ (1883), *Alte orizonturi*¹⁰ (1894), *Imnuri păgâne*¹¹ (1894), *Poesii nouă*¹² (1899), *Pe Marea Neagră*¹³ (1919) and *Poesii alese*¹⁴ (1922).

While he was in Italy, he had two translations from Italian into Romanian published in his native country. His long stay in Italy must have inspired him to write his impressions as a traveller, under the title *Scrisori din Italia* (Letters from Italy), which were published in *Convorbiri literare*, in 1887.

His interest in short story writing is mirrored by his four volumes, *Novele*¹⁵ (1888), *Novele romane.Frica*¹⁶ (1895), *Furfanțo.Trei nuvele*¹⁷ (1911) and *O muză*¹⁸ (1922). As a playwright, he indulged himself into having his play *Prea târziu* (Too Late) staged at the national theatre in Bucharest in 1884.

As a novelist, his literature was both remarkable and controversial. It was remarkable through the characters he outlined, through the interest in cultivating the national values and through his particular interest in contributing to the development of the Romanian literature. Controversial because he was not only accused of plagiarism, in the case of his first novel, *In fața vieții*¹⁹ (1894), but he was also severely criticized by Dobrogeanu-Gherea and Ollănescu-Ascanio (Goci 1993: xiv). The contemporaries must have had a full picture of the episode, but details are not described in the easily accessible literature.

Nevertheless, this situation seems to have hardly had long-term consequences as Zamfirescu is the author of nine novels. They reflect the superiority of Zamfirescu's theories as compared to those of his contemporaries and which consider the novel as a literary species, revealing him as a "genuine pioneer" in novel writing (Călinescu 1985: 538). They also show him to be an endowed analyst, a painter of personalities and landscapes rather than of things (Vianu 1941: 185).

The Romanian literary criticism avows Duiliu Zamfirescu to be the founder of the national contemporary novel in our literature (Constantinescu 1971: 255). In addition to *In fața vieții* (1894), *Lume noua, lume veche*²⁰ (1895) and *Lydda. Scrisori romane*²¹ (1911), which is considered to be the first epistolary novel of ideas, Zamfirescu authored the first series of novels in the Romanian literature, which is known as *Ciclul* or *Romanul Comaneshtenilor* (an appropriate English version would be the Saga of the Comaneshteanu Family). This family chronicle consists of five novels, most of them first published in installments in the literary periodicals of the time.

Besides revealing himself as a successful prose-writing a practitioner, he also expressed his concerns for theoretical aspects of literature. He voiced his views in several articles, communications and speeches. One such illustration is the maiden speech delivered in front of the members of the Romanian Academy, *Poporanismul în literatură* in 1909, upon his becoming a member of this institution.

The experience he must have accumulated between 1886 and 1887, when he held a series of conferences at the Romanian athenaeum in Bucharest, probably served him considerably in the next two communications he delivered in the Romanian Academy, *Metafizica cuvintelor și estetica literară*²² in 1911 and *Bosforul și Dardanelele față de interesele românești*²³, in 1915, respectively.

The last two decades in Zamfirescu's life brought him two new personal accomplishments: he was elected president of Societatea Scriitorilor Români (Society of

Romanian Writers), in 1916 and two years later, he became vice-president elect of the Romanian Academy.

He also enjoyed the position of president of Camera deputaților, one of the two houses in the Romanian Parliament.

The novels of the Comaneshteanu Family

Acknowledged as the “the saga of the Comaneshteanu Family”, this is a “purely Zola-type novel” for the object of the scrutiny is not the individual but the family and through it, the nation” (Călinescu 2001: 191).

This series consists of the following volumes: *Viața la țară* (Life in the countryside), *Tănase Scatiu*, *În război*, *Îndreptări* and *Anna*. In the Preface to the fourth edition of *Viața la țară*, the author mentions his intention to write *Romanul Deduleștilor* (The Novel of the Dedulescus), a sixth and final volume of the family chronicle.

The opening novel of the family chronicle, *Viața la țară*, was first published in installments in *Convorbiri literare* (between 1894 and 1895). A few years later, in 1898, a publishing company in Bucharest, Editura Carol Müller took over the risks and published it. The novel was so successful that between 1899 and 1922 (the year when Duiliu Zamfirescu passed away), 50,000 volumes were sold. Morar (2009: 16) rhetorically asks “How many of his contemporaries were able to have 50,000 copies of one novel sold between 1899 and 1922, the year when to author went into the other world?” and he also provides the answer. “Few, of course. But a simple calculation indicates that out of the literate people of the time, a high percentage not only felt like reading it but to have it as a prized possession on their bookshelves”. Prefaced by Marcu Berza and translated into English by Lucy Bing, the novel was published under the title of *Sasha*, in London, in 1926.

Tănase Scatiu, also made popular through the installments published in *Convorbiri literare* in November 1895, came out in 1907 as a product of another publishing company in Bucharest, Editura Alcalay.

The third novel in the series, *În război* (Times of War), has a story which is different from the preceding ones: it was translated in French and first published under the title “*Temps de guerre*” by Ollendorf in Paris, in 1900. Two years later, the Romanian version of the same novel is marketed by Clementa publishing house.

Îndreptări, the novel described as “... non-conflictual and unfinished” (Goci 1993: ix), was also first published in installments, in N. Petrascu’s review *Literatură și artă română* in 1901 and as a novel in 1908 by the Alcalay publishing company in Bucharest.

The last in the series, *Anna*, which is a “social” novel in the sense of “life at the top” (Goci 1993: ix), and like many of the preceding editions of the Comaneshteanu Family novels, it was prefaced by its author. Although many editions of the Comaneshteanu saga had been published ever since their first appearance, it is only in 1970 when the only chapter of the novel of the Dedulescus is included in the volume of Zamfirescu’s complete works edited by Mihai Gafița.

Viața la țară (or *Sasha*, by its English version title)

In the preface to the first edition of *Viața la țară*, the author critically described his own views regarding the novel. Wanting to highlight members of that social stratum of property-loving Romanians, such as Dinu Comaneshteanu in this novel are, or to create portraits of lessees, such as Tănase Scatiu, or peasants embodied by Micu, wanting to personify in Milescu and Mihai Comaneshteanu the race of several families of unaltered Romanian extraction, who “made their way through the Phanariot fog” (Călinescu 2001: 191), in other words wanting to emotionally mark the point wherefrom a new epoch in the history of our nation starts, as Zamfirescu himself had stated, his focus was on people. This accounts for a

wide gallery of people from all walks of life and of different ages, carefully placed against a well-defined background, that of Ciulniței and Comănești, two villages in the infinite southeastern fields of Bărăgan, in (present-day) Romania.

Thus, Dinu Murguleț, an epitome of the Romanian boyards, is depicted with the different sides of his personality. In the first novel he masters the moral harmony between a boyard and peasants, who not only loves his lands but he also loves the peasants either toiling for him or neighbouring his estate. In *Tănase Scatiu*, the same boyard appears "...elderly and ill", sequestered in his house by that unwanted, hated and despised person "who in the meanwhile had become his son-in-law", as Dinu himself would say it.

Lady Diamandula, the loving mother who, in her old age, is waiting for her son to come back from studies abroad, Tinca, the adolescent on her way of becoming a young lady, Sasha, the orphan in charge with her siblings, who gradually turns into the lady of the house and the protector of the poor people living on her property. Micu, the shepherd and the poetic nature, who, like the majority of the Romanian peasants, portrayed in our literature, knows everything about constellations and stars and shows his ancestral knowledge of astrology. Matei, lady Diamandula's son is an impressive person who, after spending (seven) years abroad to complete his education and professional training (which was traditional with the richest boyards' sons) comes back from France and tries to find his way, make a family and live a life his own country.

Tănase Scatiu, whose presence is stronger in the novel than his existence in his own family, is the son of a bailiff. Such a humble bailiff his father used to be that "even a gypsy" had once dared to humiliate him. *Tănase* embodies the type of the uneducated but well-determined upstart, who is particularly careful towards his mother, but mean and rude towards the rest of his family, and even brutal and inflexible towards the peasants working for him. Although he reaches his life climax with his being elected a member of the parliament, he can hardly meet sincere appreciation from the people he lives close to. His evolution ends dramatically as he is killed by his land-working peasants, whom he had repeatedly ill-treated and humiliated.

Besides these iconic representations in the foreground of the novel, the gallery of portraits exhibits in its background a few episodic presences, most frequently, officials often surrounded by 'faceless or nameless' peasants. While Buză-tăiată (Cut-lip), the priest, Ms Sharp, the English governess in charge with Sasha's siblings education, Hans, the German in charge with the threshing machine, are described in rather negative tones, other heroes are simply decorative elements of the rural countryside landscape. This would be the case of Aronovici, the mayor, or that of the subprefect and of the two magistrates whose names are not even mentioned. A colourful portrait is that of Stoica, the gypsy stoker, as well as that of Chim, a gypsy who had gradually changed his social position from that of a former horse thief into the "respected" owner of a countryside pub. The next three novels in the series mainly speak about all sorts of military (from general to the simple soldier) who are in the battlefield fighting for Romania's independence from the Ottoman Empire. The novels also canvass the ladies in the lives of the military, their everyday life concerns and preoccupations as well as the younger and the new generation in Sasha's family, her brother, Mihai and her son, Alexandru, respectively. The war brought about death, sorrow, unhappiness, widowhood and sadness in Sasha's family. Nevertheless, her two sons developed their own careers and built their own families. Now and then, particularly around Christmas, they would experience several days in the presence of their lonely father who went on with his life in the countryside, at his family's estate.

In spite of its shortcomings, such as the lack of narrative inventiveness, indicated by the author himself, the novel still is accepted as a "classical work of the Romanian epic prose", where "Duiiliu Zamfirescu holds the position of founder of the contemporary national novel

through all his endeavours of theorization, through the suggestions and his vivid passion for aspects of the modern novel, as profoundly as he could understand and bestow them by means of his critical brilliance” (Constantinescu 1971: 255).

Sasha, an icon of the Romanian lady

Although so many characters animate Duiliu Zamfirescu’s family chronicle, very few of them had indeed meant to their creator as much as Sasha had, and even fewer “have enthused the critics” (Săndulescu 1969: 78). In one of his letters addressed to Titu Maiorescu, in January 1893, Zamfirescu confesses “For one and a half years have I lived in my imaginary world, in such a close friendship, that I now feel sorry to part with her. Sasha, a person of this world, will be introduced to you. My feelings for her were good, so good that I had already fallen in love with her” (Zamfirescu apud Gafița 1974: 279).

Literally present in three of the five novels, Sasha embodies an ideal type of femininity. In Zamfirescu’s own words, Sasha is the most graceful of all women, but paradoxically, she is at the same time, a “lady of property who is full of practical spirit” (Manolescu 1980: 127) and conversant with accounting, contract making and estate administration “whose private life eventually accomplishes itself in the homely happiness she had long awaited for” (idem).

Sasha, a young lady whose parents lived in a countryside mansion, was born and brought up in the close vicinity of her father and of his deeply-rooted ideas of love for her grandfather’s lands. As an orphan, “Sasha becomes the mother of her siblings and the guardian of the name and fortune she has inherited from her parents” (Zamfirescu 2009: 53). She lives a happy and quiet life in the countryside, looking after the crops, the family income and the peasants working her lands. She not only knows the ways of life and is happy with what she has, but she is also willing to share her knowledge with Matei whom she is ready to teach how to manage his properties so successfully as not only to make them prosperous but also to bestow his generosity upon the needy and the poor living close to their estate.

She is a traditionalist who chooses to live her life in the countryside (Romania being basically a rural civilization), even if she preserves her parents’ house in Bucharest the way it used to be during their life, and where she rarely goes in winter. In addition to her major concern in the wellbeing of her property, she is permanently supervising her siblings, Victoria and Mary, the two girls as well as Mihai, her only brother. In this endeavour, she also relies on the help coming from Miss Sharp, the children’s governess. Sasha is well aware of the people around her and although she seems to know a lot about peasants, their character and behaviour, she tells Matei, her would-be fiancé, what to expect from them. She advises him to expect a peasant to drink the wine he is given, to dance the dance he has it paid for, not to pay back his debt to his borrower and not to come to work for him when he is asked to” (Zamfirescu 2009: 66).

Nonetheless, she is friendly and supportive with the peasants working her lands, she approaches them differently; she accepts to forgive a man whose animal had caused some damage he was supposed to pay for. On the other hand, she wants to be a good Christian who goes to church on a regular basis and when the service is over she usually has brief conversations with the women there, asking them about their family members, the chores they are busy with, etc. The same feeling of religiousness lies behind her taking part in a special service organized to invoke the falling of the rain, when she asks Matei to kneel by her side “to give good examples” ((Zamfirescu 2009: 109), while she “seemed deep in humility” (idem).

Sasha’s femininity is noticeable in her interest in fashion; when she comes back from Paris she brings Matei a few gifts which are “the latest fashion ... for an engaged couple”. (Zamfirescu 2009: 176).

Sasha is also a daydreamer who imagines how happy they will be after getting married (Zamfirescu 2009: 177). Sometimes Matei joins her in prospecting their future: “They both looked in the distance, in the white horizon searching for a personal meaning to that grandiose human nature. ... Sasha, red with cold, a lace twisted above her cap, would smile her eyes of a happy woman... everything seemed settled down for a long, calm and clear life to which their a bit expensive natures would lend a slight shade of ideal” (Zamfirescu 2009: 179).

Although in the novel *Viața la țară* Sasha’s name is rarely mentioned, the whole novel is imbued with her personality. Little does the author say about her. “He shows her living her life” (Ibrăileanu 19).

Now and then, she lives her moments of loneliness, playing the piano, and she gradually gets the courage to admit she would need a change in her monotonous life when she admits her love for Matei. At the end of the first novel, the two get married, to their friends’ and family’s content. They share their life’s ups and downs with their friends, and they all witness radical transformations in the world around them.

In *Tănase Scatiu*, the second novel in the series, Sasha’s presence is extremely scarce: she appears only three times, two of which happen under inauspicious and very sad circumstances when she comes to attend Tincuța’s funeral (Zamfirescu 2009: 219 and 255).

The third episode of the family chronicle, *În război* (Times of War) happens during times of war, when the novel canvasses the 1877 war for Romania’s independence. Sasha’s presence is more frequent here, for she not only comes into her brother’s mind (Zamfirescu 2009: 304), but she also lives bits of her life admiring him for real (Zamfirescu 2009: 217), spending some time in an empty room (Zamfirescu 2009: 292), discussing with her brother (Zamfirescu 2009: 294), smiling with content (Zamfirescu 2009: 347), or sitting by her brother’s hospital bed (Zamfirescu 2009: 403), and finally accompanying her son to the military school in Iași (Zamfirescu 2009: 406).

Therefore, the tribute Sasha has to pay is huge: Mary, her sister, becomes a widow with her husband dead at war, and Mihai, her brother, is wounded in battle at Grivița and finds his death on a hospital bed.

Noticeably, Sasha’s presence grows rarer and rarer as the chronicle keeps unfolding. There is only one reference to Sasha in each of the last two chronicle novels. Thus, the second chapter of the fourth novel reveals Sasha’s days as an elderly lady who was shuddered by her brother’s untimely death and who “lived few more years like a story image, heading for the whispers of an unseen world as good and kind as she had always been until she discreetly faded away into disappearance (Zamfirescu 2009: 432). Her husband outlived her in admiration for their son, Alexandru. Although gone from this world, Sasha still lives in her relatives’ and friends’ souls. Thus, in *Anna*, Alexandru is asked by Natalia Canta, a former of Sasha’s acquaintances, who had been in love with Mihai, whether he is Sasha’s son. And when Natalia leaves the room she takes Sasha away with her, never to be brought back among her descendants.

The chronicle novels bring forward the Comăneșteanu family second generation. Alexandru is now a mature person who enjoys life to its full.

Sasha’s whole evolution unfolds her through the first three novels, in different roles: “a mother-woman, a sister-woman, a lover-woman joining together the freshness and warmth of a feeling with maturity, equilibrium and thoughtfulness” (Al. Săndulescu 1969: 78). Literary criticism has praised her virtues for almost a century. Out of the rich literature discussing both Duiliu Zamfirescu and his literary productions, we only mention a few monographic studies (Gafița 1969, Nicolescu 1980, Oprișan 2008), which examine both the writer and his representative heroes and characters.

Ibrăileanu must have felt about Sasha the same as Zamfirescu had, when following the trend, he drew a parallel between Tolstoy and Zamfirescu. Admitting the possibility of the

Russian influence, he states overtly that “there is nothing Russian in Sasha.” I should modestly add that the very name is quite frequent in Russian but it is used for men and not for women. She is *our* (Romanian, my emphasis) variant of the ideal type of woman, that is of the woman wherein, due to heredity and the environment, there have harmoniously combined the features of mother, wife, and housekeeper: features which selection has developed in women all along the evolution of species, but which can be so rarely found in this degree of purity and quantified in such a proportion as to result in a Sasha Comaneshteanu. She is so *ours* (Romanian, my emphasis), that we can easily distinguish her social class and age.” (Ibrăileanu quoted in Zamfirescu 2009: 414). Ibrăileanu assimilates Sasha to the same typology of women as those of the literature signed by Brătescu-Voinești, who love like ‘sisters’, for their love is purely human, that is with much soul involvement. And hence, in this kind of love, psychology is superior to physiology. And such a kind of love is not only possible but it is deep and touching as well.

Ever since its publication, Zamfirescu’s literature has been welcome by the Romanian readership, and it has been steadily and continually admired. It equally exercised an impact upon literary criticism and it has had its critical moments or episodes. Thus, even if in the case of his first novel, Zamfirescu had to face the accusation of plagiarism, which has not been mentioned as to have been confirmed by the specialist literature, his prolific talent was fully revealed not only to the Romanian readership, but also to the speakers of English who benefitted from Sasha as early as 1926.

Conclusions

The Romanian criticism has but rarely, and I should say rather superficially, approached Zamfirescu’s literature, in general and his heroines, in particular. Controversial and debatable, convincing and reliable, Zamfirescu’s personality has been the object of not only consistent monographic studies (Gafița 1969, Niculescu 1980, Oprișan 2008, Săndulescu 1969) but chapters in histories or at least entries in the specialist dictionaries (DCRR 2004²⁴, DGLR 2009²⁵) of the Romanian literature.

As much as Sasha is concerned, one and the same idea appears here and there, i.e., in Ibrăileanu’s studies (who actually seems to have launched it, for chronology shows it) and without any reference to this critic’s words, other more recently published studies consider one and the same aspects.

Sasha was created to be a wonderful creature: she is full of solicitude with people who live in the same village with her and work her lands. She is thoughtful and caring to her siblings, understanding with her friends, respectful and supportive with the elderly, such as lady Diamandula and polite with those whom she hardly considers (Scatiu’s mother, for one example). She knows how to manage an estate, how to keep the book and how to use the finances to a profit. She can also teach others how to do all these and to get accustomed to life in the countryside after along stay in Paris, and the examples could still continue.

She is a good orthodox who goes to church regularly, thus observing the basic ways of the church; she visits families who live on her property to see the ill children and to help them the best she can. She knows most of the people in the village and calls them by their names. She is familiar with their concerns and sufferings, their problems and their trouble, and lives part of her life to serve them. She is a practical landowner who eventually finds her happiness in her family life. But in her family life does she also carry the burdens of her sorrows and painful losses of her dearly beloved to be finally thrown into oblivion by her son, who above all, is her very image, as Sasha’s acquaintances let him know.

Notes

- [1] This is my translation of Aureliu Goci's opinion who emphasizes that "[...] saga Comăneștenilor este primul proiect concretizat al unei ample viziuni românești asupra societății și spiritualității naționale", Goci, p.ix.
- [2] in one of his letters, Zamfirescu himself points to his idea that he was extremely fond of his heroine "I lived with her on very special terms, so special that I had almost fallen in love with her", my translation for "Eu am trăit cu dânsa în foarte bune raporturi, așa de bune încât mai de nu mă înamorasem de ea".
- [3] The Romanian text reads: "E varianta noastră a tipului de femeie ideală, adică a femeii în care, datorită eredității și mediului, s-au combinat armonios însușirile de mamă, nevastă și gospodină: ănsușiri pe care selecția le-a dezvoltat în femeie de-a lungul evoluției speciei, dar care se găsesc atât de rar în acea stare de puritate și dozare în acea proporție, încât să rezulte o Sașa Comăneșteanu".
- [4] The original text reads: "Țărani lui, cei care trăiesc pe moșia boierului Dinu Murguleț, nu sunt oameni de pe moșia boierească, slujitori sau iobagi, ci stăpâni ei înșiși pe pământ și vecini cu moșia lui Dinu Murguleț, prin urmare, ei restabilesc "în drepturi" un om deposedat, înșelat de aceiași uzurpator - Scatiu".
- [5] The literary critic says: "Un simț al formei precise, fără digresiuni și pitoresc voit, o eleganță ieșită din simplitate și din discreție, o reținere evidentă, un amestec judicios al limbii curente a omului de cultură generală, fără excесе de specializare, cu neologisme și arhaisme venite din locul lor și topite într-o masă solubilă, un ton de detașare cuviincioasă față de obiect, și de respect de sine și de cititor, o îmbinare de răceală aparentă și de pasiune conținută. O fluiditate ce nu se confundă cu ușurința și frivolitatea fac din acest stil o operă de artă...".
- [6] Anastasie Lascar, the son of his father's brother, had defended his doctoral thesis in medicine at Leipzig in 1832, while Ion Mincu, his mother's brother was a famous architect.
- [7] *România liberă* is a newspaper which was founded in 1877.
- [8] *Convorbiri literare* was the publication issued by Junimea, a literary society which had its headquarters in Jassy, where it had been founded in 1863. This monthly publication appeared first in Jassy (between 1867 and 1886), and then in Bucharest (between 1886 and 1944). Almost a century later, this monthly publication is resumed again in Jassy, under the editorship of Cassian Maria Spiridon.
- [9] *Fără titlu* or *Without a Title*
- [10] *Alte orizonturi* or *Other Horizons*
- [11] *Imnuri păgâne* or *Pagan Hymns*
- [12] *Poesii nouă* or *New Poems*
- [13] *Pe Marea Neagră* or *At the Black Sea*
- [14] *Poesii alese* or *Selected Poems*
- [15] *Novele* or *Short Stories*
- [16] *Novele romane. Frica* or *Roman Short Stories. Fear*
- [17] *Furfațo. Trei nuvele* or *Furfațo. Three Short Stories.*
- [18] *O muză* or *A Muse*
- [19] *În fața vieții* or *Facing Life*
- [20] *Lume nouă, lume veche* or *Old World, New World*
- [21] *Lydda. Scrisori romane* or *Lydda. Roman Letters*
- [22] *Metafizica cuvintelor și estetica literară* or *The Metaphysics of Words and Literary Aesthetics*
- [23] *Bosforul și Dardanelele față de interesele românești* or *The Bosphorus and The Dardanelles with regard to the Romanian interests*
- [24] *Dicționarul cronologic al romanului românesc*, Editura Academiei, București, 2004, p.86
- [25] *Dicționarul general al literaturii române*, Editura Univers enciclopedic, București, 2009, pp. 487-490

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Discursive Practices and Constructions of Womanhood

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Résumé: *Les discours sont des pratiques sociales comportant une dimension politique, qui concernent des faits et des actions, des objets et des êtres et qui, par conséquence, reflètent les divers aspects de la réalité. Cependant, la réalité change toujours, et, de la même façon, les discours changent eux-mêmes. L'objectif de cet article est d'analyser les côtés sociaux et politiques de la (re)construction de la réalité par des pratiques discursives et en même temps le rapport entre la réalité et le discours, entendu comme relation dialectique entre les deux (relation qui implique l'influence de la réalité sur le discours et la modification de la réalité par le discours). Cet article se propose aussi d'analyser le rôle des pratiques discursives dans l'exercice des rapports de pouvoir impliqués par tout échange verbal, avec une attention particulière accordée à la manipulation. Dans ce contexte, l'accent sera mis sur la construction de la féminité dans le film *Occident*, de Cristian Mungiu. L'approche choisie est celle de l'Analyse Critique du Discours (Critical Discourse Analysis). Cette approche combinée permet de mettre en valeur les éléments caractéristiques du système social roumain (par cela on comprend les attitudes, les valeurs, les représentations mentales, les idéologies, l'éducation, le contexte culturel et historique concernant le statut de la femme) et aussi la manière dont tous ces éléments fonctionnent dans le processus de la communication interculturelle.*

Mots-clés: *discours, féminité, (re)construction*

1. Premise. Argument. Method

Problematic as they may be, the concepts of discourse and reality have always been central to the various discussions on and approaches to the world around. Capturing that world into words, having reality acquire a linguistic formulation was deemed impossible by twentieth century thought, which emphasized the relativity, subjectivity, politics even, of representation and mediation. Brought forth were “the linguistic turn”, “the turn to discourse” and “the critical turn” [1], which posited that: language should be perceived as a fully fledged meaningful system rather than as expressing meanings which pre-exist their linguistic formulation; representation cannot be taken for a more or less direct reflection of reality, but needs to be understood as a form of signification in its own right; meaning and signification systems are constructed in and by history, society, culture – which also contaminate the analyst and the analysis.

Furthermore, what deserves special consideration is the inner dynamism propelling the modes and manners of representation, in close connection with the modifications at the heart of the historical, social and cultural frames/realities. In short, if one accepts that social reality changes in time, then one also needs to accept that the representations of each reality multiply and change, and that the discourses used for each representation of reality change also.

In view of tackling the aspects mentioned above and of seeing them at work in Cristian Mungiu's *Occident*, one of the interpretative grids of Critical Discourse Analysis [2] will be used in what follows. The choice was motivated by the fact that CDA:

- combines linguistic theory, social theory and cultural studies, focusing on language text (spoken or written), discourse (text production, distribution and consumption) and discursive events (mirroring socio-cultural practices) – in order to examine ideologies and power relations
- provides the researcher with the necessary tools for carrying out “a discourse analysis focused upon variability, change, and struggle: variability between practices and heterogeneity within them as a synchronic reflex of processes of historical change which are shaped by struggle between social forces.” [3]
- places “qualitative emphasis on political discourse, mostly media texts and news reports” and interprets “narrative or the construction of reality perspective, the ideological and political functions of the media.” [4]

Critical Discourse Analysis is therefore appropriate for developing on filmic discursive practices and their politics of representation, on the artistic act as manipulative communication, on the role and specificity of the multimedial support – in connection with issues of womanhood that emerge from the Romanian context and address the present day situation.

One of the theories supporting CDA and outlining the interpretative grid to be applied in what follows is Michel Foucault's discursive approach to language and representation [5]. According to the French philosopher, discourse is a system of representation, a way of producing knowledge about a particular topic at a particular historical moment, essentially through language, and of influencing social practice, which thus emerges as being of a discursive nature. His thesis is that physical things and actions exist outside discourse, but they only take on meaning and become objects of knowledge within discourse. Another point he is making is that the discursive formation of social events occurs in history, undergoing changes but preserving a common nucleus, recognisable in the cultural intertext holding them together.

To exemplify this constructionist theory of meaning and representation, Foucault resorts to a concrete case [6], that of the subjects of "madness", "punishment" and "sexuality" – which only exist meaningfully within the discourses about them, and whose analysis should include the following elements: *statements* about them, offering a certain kind of knowledge; the *rules* which impose certain ways of talking about them and exclude others; the *subjects* who are seen as personifying the discourse; how the *knowledge* about the topic acquires authority; what the practices of *institutions* are with regard to the subjects; acknowledging that, at a later time, a *different discourse* will supplant the existing one, producing other truths about these subjects.

The case of the present paper will be tackled along the lines mentioned above, in view of identifying the constructions of womanhood emerging from public discursive practices, with special reference to the filmic ones in *Occident*.

2. Under focus: *Occident*

Due to its complex structure and content of ideas, Cristian Mungiu's *Occident* (2002) allows for a twofold interpretation: on the one hand, the film includes a global perspective, "rewrites preconceived migratory maps" and "subtly dismantles them by negotiating the migrant identity within a border dynamics which shifts the predictable contours of notions like Home and the West" [7]; on the other hand, it focuses on the local context and looks into the reasons having determined the migration. The women it stops to consider facilitate the discussion on the reproduction and subversion of the legitimisation of power by dominant groups and institutions. Socially marginalised and abused on gender bases, they attempt a journey inwards, towards the male governed centre, but are rejected and end up as cultural and national fringes elsewhere.

From the standpoint of CDA, social power presupposes "the control exercised by one group or organisation (or its members) over the actions and/or the minds of (the members of) another group, thus limiting the freedom of action of the others, or influencing their knowledge, attitudes or ideologies." As for social power abuse, or dominance, it is that "legally or morally illegitimate exercise of control over others in one's own interests", which "often results in social inequality." [8] Involved in a mediated relationship with the social reality it represents, the film bears traces of the latter's previous constructions in public discourses (where film now holds first place, together with television), whereby the Romanian situation in general and that of the Romanian women in particular have been portrayed in dark tones. Discursively mediating dominance and inequality, *Occident* at once brings to attention

recurrent patterns of social interaction which give women a secondary role, and avenges those trapped inside.

Set in the years immediately following the 1989 Revolution and Romania's entering its post-communist phase, *Occident* narrates on the social realities of the time, illustrated by two individuals, whose paths cross and whose destinies overlap. [9] The central characters, Sorina and Mihaela, embody opposing prototypes of women, yet are constructed similarly, in terms of marriage, men, money, career and home – that is in terms of “recognisable roles, images, models and labels” which “occur in discourse in response to specific social imperatives”. Their filmic construction carries the traces of “dominant modes of ideology” and of “a politics of control that representation both signifies and serves.” [10] In short, the *statements* generally made about women in public discourse are reinforced by the film's narrative and converge towards their representation as financially dependent on men, as having a subordinate role in society, as objects of sexual transactions or as inscribed within a domestic environment.

By looking into the inertia governing the historical moment described and thus showing the present as contaminated by the recent past, *Occident* also seems to invite at considering the narrower notion of taboos, which still exist, and of the politically correct, which is still the exception rather than the norm. In Foucault's terms, this sheds light on the fact that the *institutions* regulating women's existence (family, marriage) function according to pre-existing, earlier constructed truths. Moreover, it emphasises that, despite the *rules* dictating the way in which the topic of women and womanhood is approached having changed historically (whereas communist discourses gave women priority in accessing positions in the social hierarchy, while at the same time enforced wifhood and motherhood on them, post-communist discourses posit women on an equal footing with men, but continue to discriminate them on biological grounds), the *subjects* themselves, women, are still struggling to overcome the attributes they are determined by (passivity, acceptance, innocence, frailty, beauty etc). When the lines are crossed, the *knowledge* which has acquired authority is dismantled and replaced with another – carrying the weight of a criticism of outmoded patterns of thought and behaviour, but not necessarily facilitating the expected change in mentality.

Through its central female characters, the film may therefore be taken as both representing a *different discourse* on the topic and as anticipating future ones, opening up discursive formation and producing new discourses with the power and authority, the truth, to regulate social practices in new ways. Dynamic Sorina takes an active stand, opting for painful change instead of deadly acceptance. Apparently happy, with a teaching job and a loving husband, she uses the pretext of improper living conditions to leave everything behind and go to France with a man she had recently met. Passive Mihaela is abandoned by her groom, struggles with unemployment and, at the initiative of her parents, accepts to be married in Italy to someone she has only seen once or, when that fails, to be simply sent to Germany, accompanying a complete stranger.

Featuring Sorina and Mihaela as disempowered by their incapacity to access valued social resources like wealth, jobs or status, the film symbolically empowers them through communicating their situations and through constructing itself as public discourse around the two metonymic characters. At a deeper level, the drama is illustrative of the two women's silence, of their impossibility of accessing discourse. Their decisions are either made by others (Mihaela is under the control of her mother, her father's mistress, her policeman-father) or after consultations with others (Sorina's dead father). They do not speak much and, when they do, they address personal issues, in private circumstances. The “institutionalised constraints which serve to silence women in terms of public speaking” are operative and show that “discursive practices are sites where power struggles are played out”. [11] The men are more competitive discursively, and this comes out especially through Mihaela's father talking

his future son-in-law into fleeing from the wedding and, later, using his position to secure his daughter with a companion on her journey abroad.

In the Romanian conservative and patriarchal society, it is difficult for the two protagonists to oppose pre-established gender identities. Presenting Sorina and Mihaela as torn between the communist inheritance of the 'strong woman' and the newer, western emancipatory waves, the film uses the motif of the journey (migration) to suggest their searching for a way out, synonymous with the quest for a more stable identity rendered meaningful by access into discourse. This is, of course, yet another instantiation of the discursive formation of the Eastern mirage of the West and, if the numerous public discourses on the matter are had in view (from newspaper articles, to TV documentaries and parliamentary debates – all centring around individual stories of migration gone terribly wrong and inducing a negative image of Romanianness world wide), announces anything but a happy ending.

The intertext of *Occident* places it, indeed, within the category of discourses which construct “the woman migrant within traditional encodings of femininity which equate it with the passive object, victimhood and sexuality” [12], but it also reveals filmic representational practices governed by the rules of representation characteristic of the genre, thus discouraging interpretations based simply on the idea that what it does is hold up a mirror to the immediate social context having generated it. Apparently conforming to norm and tradition, in its depth structure the drama resists the various forms of power reproduction (from the artistic to the socially induced), obliquely but pertinently opposing structures of authority and rendering (the notion of) control ineffective.

The dichotomic horizontal patterning of *Occident* revisits clashing views, at once underlining and subverting enforced representational moulds: the realities of the East are no match for the fictions of the West, woman is encoded as subjected to man, passivity dominates the few attempts at activity, the private overshadows the public. Supporting the verbal and ideological content, the iconography of *Occident* (forwarding a succession of sordid settings, exploiting sombre visual signs, inserting key sounds of the city and its streets, staging kinaesthetic icons to induce appropriate reactions) communicates non-verbally that which escapes linguistic formulation and remains outside the dialogue, as does its cinematic techniques (the camera moves and frames, the environment and strategies which go into the sequencing, frequency and order of events within the narrative). In other words, the multimodality of the film is used to round up the context of situation (immediate context) and the context of culture (implicit, hidden context). Constructing an intricate interplay of possible, negotiated social, cultural, personal and gender meanings and thus envisaging insider/outsider and ideal viewers, it opens up the discussion on the variables of constructing identities in discourse, produces knowledge by bringing several truths together and, in turn, influences future discursive social practices.

3. Concluding lines

Cristian Mungiu's *Occident* represents and thus mediates a series of changing realities involving women, whose movement westward signifies the historical, social and political changes that Romania has gone through at the turn of the twenty-first century, remaining to be deciphered in future and acquire other meanings as they further shape the evolution of a nation. Resorting to communicative means specific to film, that is complementing language with the visual, sonorous and kinetic, it constitutes itself into a cultural text whose production, distribution and consumption contributes to inscribing it within the chain of truth-building discourses. The discursive events it covers mirror social practices and carry ideological weight, exposing a system where the attitudes towards women are still dictated by traditional values, where education has not managed to produce the break with the past, where the insider

complies with (and thus reinforces) outsider views. The discursive strategies employed serve to disclose the power relations which operate in connection with all these constructions, meaningful objects of knowledge subject to change and determining change.

Notes

- [1] T. Locke, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, Continuum International Publishing Group, London, 2004, pp.11-12
- [2] Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) emerged in the late 1980s. It was promoted by the Lancaster School of Linguistics through academics like Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak, and by a group of researchers in the Netherlands represented by Teun van Dijk and Theo Van Leeuwen among others, revisiting the revolutionary writings in sociology, philosophy, psychology and cultural anthropology of Jürgen Habermas or Michel Foucault. Representative contributions: Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (1992), *Analyzing Discourse* (2003); Ruth Wodak, *Disorders of Discourse* (1996); Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (eds) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (2009); Teun van Dijk, *Discourse and Society* (2006), *Discourse and Power* (2008); Theo van Leeuwen, *Discourse and Practice. New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis* (2008).
- [3] N. Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 36
- [4] O. Feldman, C. De Landtsheer (1998) *Politically Speaking. A Worldwide Examination of Language Used in the Public Sphere*, Praeger Publishers, London, 1998, p. 11
- [5] in *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* – 1972
- [6] in M. Wetherel, S. Taylor, S. J. Yates, *Discourse Theory & Practice*, Sage Publications, London, 2001, p. 73
- [7] I. Mohor-Ivan, 'Border-crossings: Representations of Home, the West and the Migrant in Romanian Film', in *Communication Interculturelle et Litterature*, Nr. 3 (11), ed. by Nicoleta Ifrim, 2010, p. 141
- [8] T. Van Dijk, 'Discourse, power and access', in *Texts and Practices. Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. by R. Caldas-Coulthard, M. Coulthard, Routledge, London, 1996, pp. 84-85
- [9] A young couple, Luci and his fiancée, Sorina, are evicted from their home in the sordid outskirts of Bucharest, leading to their separation. The rest of the story focuses on the young man's desperate efforts to win back Sorina, who has moved with the Frenchman Jerome. Luci is offered shelter by Aunt Leana, whose son had immigrated to Germany during Communism, and is forced to work as a beer bottle mascot, befriending Mihaela, his fellow telephone advertiser. When a policeman arrives with news that Nicu, Aunt Leana's long estranged son, has died in Germany; the old woman dies in shock and Luci runs to tell Sorina that they can move back together in Aunt Leana's flat, only to find that his fiancée has already left for France. On the eve of her marriage, Mihaela, is deserted by the groom. Desperate to find a replacement, the mother visits a matrimonial agency and arranges blind dates for her daughter, while Mihaela gets a job with an advertising agency, where she meets Luci. The two are drawn to each other, but Mihaela decides to leave with Luigi, the black Italian that comes to meet her. Mihaela's father, a retired police officer with old Securitate-style attitudes and tactics, discovers his daughter's groom drunk and scares the young man off both his bottle and the marriage. He is then reluctantly convinced by his wife and his mistress that he needs to set things right for his child by consenting to a foreign marriage. Later on, he meets Nae, returned from Germany to bring news of a friend's death to his mother and requiring police assistance. Shocked by the prospect of seeing his daughter leave with Luigi, he asks Nae to do him a counter favour and take Mihaela to Germany with him. (M. Praisler, I. Mohor-Ivan, 'Film's Historically Situated Discourse. The Case of the Migrant Romanian', in *Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity in Language, Literature and Foreign Language Teaching Methodology*, Aeternitas, Alba Iulia, 2010, pp. 428-429)
- [10] R. S. Rajan, *Real and Imagined Women*, Routledge, London and New York, 1996, p. 129
- [11] S. Mills, *Discourse*, Routledge, London, 1997, p. 97
- [12] I. Mohor-Ivan, 'Border-crossings: Representations of Home, the West and the Migrant in Romanian Film', in *Communication Interculturelle et Litterature*, Nr. 3 (11), ed. by Nicoleta Ifrim, 2010, p. 135

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Filmography

Occident, Dir. Cristian Mungiu, Romania, 2002; DVD: Voodoo Films – W327787

Recycling the Past. Women on Screen

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Résumé: *Au long des années, les constructions sociales féminines ont constitué le sujet favori des romanciers et des producteurs de films. Les uns les ont reflétées, les autres les ont narrées de manière réfractaire, mais ils ont tous ajouté une critique plus ou moins nette de la femme en tant que sous-culture de l'entier patriarcal. D'un roman à l'autre et du livre au grand écran, les images de la féminité se sont constamment métamorphosées, aspect que ce travail se propose de dévoiler. Les cas soumis à l'analyse sont ceux qui sont présentés dans Orgueil et préjugés, remanié dans Le Journal de Bridget Jones, et Madame Dalloway, repris dans Les Heures. Sapant la stabilité du canon, dont la centralité a imposé une nouvelle zone marginale aux femmes, les stratégies exhibées dans le texte et le film expriment de la colère et invitent à considérer la politique qui domine sa composante stylistique.*

Mots-clés: *femmes, représentation, intertexte, roman, film*

1. Opening lines

Despite the fact that they usually go under the label of fiction, of unreality therefore, literary and filmic discourses are primarily social practices with a political component, which both reconstruct and influence the reality of societal systems. The way in which they are produced and reproduced depends on the characteristic elements of any societal system, namely the attitudes, values, mental representations, ideologies, education, cultural and historical background that define the structure of human organisations.

The construction of women in these types of discourse, along the lines of roles, images and models, may thus be seen as a response to specific social imperatives. Under patriarchy, this becomes a political process in essence, one which allows representation to be “naturalised and ultimately coercive in structuring women’s self-representation”. [1]

In other words, the way in which women have been socially constructed has then been taken up by the canonical (ergo male) literary text which, in turn, has left imprints on the understanding of womanhood. Nevertheless, the male produced literature has increasingly been counteracted by women’s writing (and only exceptionally by that of men), which offers a fresher perspective and parodies the outmoded formulations of femininity from traditionally masculine standpoints. Furthermore, besides the changes brought about by the gender shift and by diachrony, additional changes have been allowed by the intermedial genre crossing, in particular from the page to the screen.

2. Case studies

Under focus here are *Pride and Prejudice* and *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Hours* – novel and filmic texts functioning as cultural intertexts. In one way or another, they all recycle the past and bring women to the foreground of contemporary discussion, but their consideration in pairs seems more appropriate in view of outlining immediate interconnections and older traces visible on the present day palimpsest.

2.1. *Pride and Prejudice* vs *Bridget Jones’s Diary*

Jane Austen’s novel of 1813, *Pride and Prejudice*, centred round Elizabeth Bennet, discusses the importance of family and environment with reference to a young woman’s character and evolution. In spite of her wisdom and her wit, the twenty year old protagonist is crippled by her social status and by a prejudice which is not necessarily hers, but borrowed from the wider context of the time. Being governed by the principle of having young ladies of modest condition marry (preferably well) in order to have a position or, better still, to mount the social hierarchical stair, Elizabeth’s world revolves around machinations targeting

possible liaisons. The plot building difficulties are a result of the fact that love is sought, as a cure for the illness of being trapped inside this network. If women are expected to marry as they 'should', finding someone to love (not necessarily to be loved by) is the minimum condition they pose. Elizabeth's quests involve others, however; she always seems to come second. Her Darcy is initially no more than a challenge, which she engages in via intellectual meditation and debate. Expectedly, as long as her dominating principle is reason (male, by definition), she is incapable of love. It is only when she allows her heart (the female ingredient) to make the decisions that she manages to form a couple with the notorious Fitzwilliam Darcy.

Bridget Jones, the Elizabeth Bennet of Helen Fielding's novel (1996) is, like the latter, single and in search of a male partner. Thirty something years of age, with a career and a life of her own, Bridget is still very much under the influence of her parents who, for the sake of their own friends and acquaintances, want to marry their daughter off respectably. Not necessarily wanting to get married and rejecting her parents' intrusion, she desperately tries however to procure a boyfriend. Initially infatuated with her boss, Daniel Cleaver, and dismissing her parents' choice, Mark Darcy, she ends up being cheated on by the former and falling madly in love with the latter. The twentieth century version of the early Victorian Austenian character, Bridget Jones, is unhappy with her freedom and emancipation, on the one hand because her private life is bland, and on the other because prejudice still works against single women with a will and a way. Moreover, she is crushed under the burden of the dictates of contemporary culture, as promoted by glossy women's magazines. Portraying the bitter reality of women in society in a comic mode actually serves to rewrite the literary past as well. What remains a constant is the oblique criticism formulated against suffocating structures of authority imposing secondariness on women and silencing their attempts at rebellion, the diary form of the novel chosen being significantly used to this end.

The film adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* and of *Bridget Jones's Diary* create even more memorable characters than do their novel sources. Keira Knightley (as Elizabeth) and Renee Zellweger (as Bridget) act out their parts convincingly, addressing the contemporary viewer as much as the problematics under the lens. As compared to Elizabeth's progress (accepted and acceptable because associated with the past), Bridget's is at once recognisable and reprimandable because of the inertia involved and the past's contamination of the present. The Elizabeth-Bridget metamorphosis is justified by broader world views, but also by the obvious, financially-determined shift in gender roles:

HF: Austen did say the only thing that renders a single woman pitiable is poverty, in *Emma*, I think. Now it's no longer necessary to be married in order to be well off. I think it has to do with others' perceptions. People who feel sorry for single women tend to feel less so if the women are wealthy, but of course that doesn't mean the women are happier. I just think it's a good idea not to be bigoted. (*An interview with Helen Fielding by Ashton Applewhite*) [2]

Few instructions on decoding the present day representation of womanhood embodied by Bridget are needed, or given for that matter. Despite the fact that it is customary for the official DVDs to offer explanatory notes and additional information which contextualise the productions, reflect their making and, more importantly, illustrate the literary heritage supporting the films, the DVD with *Bridget Jones's Diary* only contains 'An Audio Commentary with Marleen Gorris' and 'An Interactive Quiz', "Who's Your Ideal Man – Mark or Daniel?". Interaction rather than instruction seems to hold first place, otherwise symptomatic for the contemporary scene and its cultural game.

In the case of the DVD with *Pride and Prejudice*, it also includes the following chapters: 'The Politics of Dating', 'The Stately Homes of *Pride and Prejudice*', 'The Bennets', 'The Life and Times of Jane Austen', 'On Set Diaries', 'Audio Commentary with

Director Joe Wright', 'Galleries of the 19th Century', 'Pride and Prejudice Family Tree', 'Alternate US Ending'. This time, guidelines are given to support viewers in their interpretative enterprises and to draw the outlines of society in nineteenth century England, while simultaneously formulating excuses for the artistic reproduction of previous modes and manners.

2.2. Mrs Dalloway vs The Hours

Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* foregrounds Clarissa, the middle-aged, upper middle class woman struggling to cope with post war twentieth century trauma and nineteenth century patterns of thought. Practically embodying Everywoman, Clarissa muses upon her condition while carrying on with the nothingness of daily routine. Married but not in love, socialising but alone, she uses men as mirrors to reconsider her past and glimpse at her future. Her husband, Richard, is probably the most opaque, due to his only being drawn in terms of a parliamentary seat and a conventional demeanour. A former love, Peter Walsh, on the other hand, is the mirror she sees herself as young and pulsating with life in. As for Septimus Warren-Smith, the young man she barely crosses paths with, he is the perfect looking glass for a Clarissa that is as troubled deep down as he. The conveyor belt of the protagonist's life pictures women as aesthetic and domestic, thus emphasising yet another feminine myth. Nevertheless, the novel's mute ridicule, its silent anger, its intertextual references and its metafictional implications obliquely underline the exact opposite of the overt statements made. This subtle dialogism, together with the symbolical open endedness of the book rounds up the portraiture of Woman intended, connoting in the direction of complexity, multifaceted personality, wealth of imagination and profundity of reasoning powers.

From the London of the early forties, Michael Cunningham's *The Hours* takes the reader to the New York of the early twenty first century, in the life and adventures of a replica of the Woolfian character. This Clarissa is the independent, liberal minded book editor with a family of three (women). Her friend Richard (the poet) is built on Septimus, and her old friend, Louis, on Peter. All three rewrite Woolf's biography, from the experimental and misunderstood artistic to the unbalanced and homosexual personal. The shift from the woman as novelist (Virginia Woolf) to the woman as reader (Laura Brown) and to the woman as character realising fiction in a way (Clarissa Vaughan) is clearly emphasised, *The Hours* thus reading as a fictionalised version of an otherwise quite real literary credo. Its three narrative levels bring to attention three stereotypes and their transmission, highlighting three extraordinary women, who dread the quotidian and the banal, refusing to conform to pre-established moulds or be part of the mainstream. Virginia chooses death (as the preferred alternative to the benefits of civil married life in the absence of children), Laura chooses life (which she equates with abandoning her husband and two children, together with their perfectly ordinary existence), while Clarissa balances the two and adopts her own mix, paying the price of marginalisation for her otherness.

Interviewed in 1998, just before the publishing of his novel, Michael Cunningham declares his passion for Virginia Woolf and everything she stands for, stressing its underlying core:

LH: I think it's brave and wonderful that you're writing a book about three women. It's daring.

MC: Well, I do it with some slightly strange combination of... a sort of brio and real nervousness. [...] The farther afield you move from your own experience, the greater the chances that what you write will be fraudulent, will just be... fake, and wrong. [But] I feel like I get these women; I feel like I am them.

LH: So when this book comes out, what do you hope people will get out of it? What do you think its... essence is?

MC: It's a book about human beings, and it's also a book about a book. (*An Interview with Michael Cunningham by Lorri Holt*) [3]

With regard to the novel's transition to the screen, Cunningham remarks:

MC: I knew, of course, that the novel was going to have to lose weight in its transition to screen. There's nothing that's been cut that I think was a mistake to cut. (*An Interview with Michael Cunningham by Rob Blackwelder*) [4]

The actresses chosen to play the part of young and old Clarissa Dalloway in the film adaptation of *Mrs Dalloway* are Natascha McElhone and Vanessa Redgrave, who perform impeccably and, being role models themselves, construct newer, impressive images of globally recognisable cultural heroines. As for the main cast of *The Hours*, it includes famous names like Nicole Kidman (as Virginia Woolf), Julianne Moore (as Laura Brown) and Meryl Streep (as Clarissa Vaughan) – strategically selected in view of bringing to life and of closely scrutinising different hypostases of femininity.

The DVD with *Mrs. Dalloway* offers more space to the details regarding the women involved in the production of the novel/film than any before, also including the following chapters: 'Play Trailer', 'Play Making of Featurette', 'Production Notes', 'About Virginia Woolf and Mrs. Dalloway', 'Director Marleen Gorris Biography', 'Screenwriter Eileen Atkins Biography', 'Vanessa Redgrave Biography', 'Natascha McElhone Biography' and 'Rupert Graves Biography'.

The DVD supporting *The Hours* comes with its own set of supplementary material: 'The Music of The Hours', 'Three Women', 'Filmmakers Introduction', 'The Mind and Times of Virginia Woolf', 'The Lives of Mrs. Dalloway', 'Theatrical Trailer', 'Storyboards', 'Audio Commentary with the Director and Screenwriter', 'Audio Commentary with the Cast'. As may be observed, again the predilection is for instructions on how to read the past and understand its recycling, with special reference to mind frames and reconstructions of womanhood.

3. Concluding lines

Leaving traces that determine the cartography of present day culture, myth making / myth breaking novel and filmic texts like the ones under focus allow looking into the whys and hows of the social constructions of women and the latter's attempts at deconstructing them. Trespassing temporal boundaries and crossing genres, images are imported and exported, undergoing a process of change. Women, on the other hand, continue to go through similar experiences and thus provide a constant reference point. Turned into fictional characters and then re-identified in the world that is, women are "made", which only suggests that they may be "unmade" or "made differently", avoiding social and cultural determinism and locating "the liberatory space for resistance". [5] Reading *Pride and Prejudice*, *Bridget Jones's Diary*, *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Hours* in this key unveils not only the endless chain of artistic (re)production, but also the politics of stereotyping and its influencing strategies.

Notes

[1] Rajan, R. S. (1996). *Real and Imagined Women*. London and New York: Routledge (p. 129)

[2] see http://www.bookbrowse.com/author_interviews/full/index.cfm/author_number/236/Helen-Fielding

[3] see <http://www.pifmagazine.com/1998/12/michael-cunningham/>

[4] see <http://splicedwire.com/02features/cunninghamhare.html>

[5] in Rajan, R. S. (1996). *Real and Imagined Women*. London and New York: Routledge (p. 130)

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Filmography

Bridget Jones's Diary (2001), Dir. Sharon Maguire, UK – DVD 823 106 4 11

Mrs. Dalloway (1997), Dir. Marleen Gorris, UK – DVD ART 157

Pride and Prejudice (2005), Dir. Joe Wright, UK – DVD 823 912 5 11

The Hours (2002), Dir. Stephen Daldry, USA – DVD D888844

Squaw, Mistress or Princess? – Stereotypical Representations of Native American Women in Hollywood Narratives

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Abstract: *This paper investigates mainstream visual representations of Native American women in several films belonging to different historical periods: John Ford's My Darling Clementine (1946) and The Searchers (1956), Delmer Daves's Broken Arrow (1950), Terrence Malick's The New World (2005), Disney's animation Pocahontas (1995), as well as James Cameron's Avatar (2009). The narratives within the dominant discourse have stereotypically delineated the American Indian women as the “squaw”, a household drudge and beast of burden; the seductive (mixed-blood) mistress; or the Indian princess, a modest, but exotically beautiful maiden, usually the chief's daughter. My aim will be threefold: firstly, the analysis of the prevalence of these clichés in films produced at certain points in time. Second, the paper will focus on gender construction, as well as on the male-female/white-Indian dynamics and on the issue of miscegenation. Finally, the paper will analyze the construction of gender and ethnicity in the contemporary American mainstream cinema.*

Key words: *film, Native American, gender, (mis)representation, miscegenation*

In her 1975 essay *Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema*, Laura Mulvey argues that Hollywood cinema provides a position highly detrimental to women; since the female characters' role is as “bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning”, the visual medium renders woman as image and man as bearer of the look. The woman's image seems “to be looked at” from a male perspective and the female character develops and evolves only in relation to the male protagonist (Mulvey 163). Women are therefore objectified, a fact that reinforces male domination. This gender-biased filmic perspective couples in the case of Native American women with a racially distorted imagery employed by the male Euro-Americans for their own purposes. This essay aims at pointing out some of these stereotypes, constantly focusing on the motivations of those holding the camera.

Feminist criticism constantly scrutinized women's positioning within the patriarchal social structures. Though often criticized by feminists, Claude Lévi-Strauss' perspective on the role of women in the formation of social bounds proved influential in the evolution of feminist thought. In *Elementary Structures of Kinship* Claude Lévi-Strauss considers marriage as the archetype of exchange; exogamy becomes the basic law in primitive societies, awarding every man sexual access to a woman. This male right to choose a wife will result in strong social bounds among men. Consequently, women become the most valuable goods that need to be guarded in order to ensure the survival of the clan. In long term, the social structures solidified the women's role in a binary classification as either virgin (high exchange value) or whore (no exchange value since it is available to all men). This dichotomy was at its highest in the patriarchal Victorian society. And, since the Anglo-Saxon mentality had an important contribution in shaping the newly founded American society, the virgin-whore dichotomy was even more exacerbated under colonialist imperatives of conquest and subordination. The gender-based taxonomies, corroborated with the racist classifications of the American Indians as either noble or ignoble savages [1] categorized the native woman as Princess (the female equivalent of the noble savage) or as Squaw Drudge [2] (Stevenson 57) and sometimes as a prostitute (as the female counterpart of the ignoble male Indian savage).

The former stereotype became the most prominent in Hollywood productions, being labeled by critics as the “Pocahontas type” (Smith 1987, 65). It featured the native woman as a virginal maiden, childlike, naturally innocent, of a ravishing beauty and of high social status, inclined to civilization and conversion to Christianity and to European customs. This Indian Princess, or *la belle sauvage* as French Enlightenment labeled her, has been present in the literary Euro-American imagination since the “discovery” of the American continent. The

latter stereotype, that of the Squaw, was less frequent in the Hollywood narratives, mostly in westerns released in the second half of the twentieth century.

Squaws for Sale

The Squaw Drudge was characterized as a “squat, haggard, papoose-lugging drudge who toiled endlessly”, “lived a most unfortunate brutal life” and fought enemies with a vengeance and thirst for blood unmatched by any man (Smith 1987, 65). In contrast to the positive representation as an Indian Princess, the Squaw Drudge is often delineated as sexually licentious, has repulsive physical features (ugliness suggesting her racial inferiority) and is invariably portrayed as a beast of burden and a slave to men, be them white or native as Janice Acoose suggests in her influential work *Iskwewak - Kah'ki yaw ni Wahkomakanak: Neither Indian Princesses nor Easy Squaws*. Outlined as visibly inferior to her white sister who despises her (irrespective of their common position of subordination under patriarchy), the squaw is subjected to a double oppression, that of race and that of gender, which places the native woman at the bottom of the social scale. There is little surprise then that in the mainstream narratives the Squaw Drudge is invested with almost no value.

For instance, John Ford's *The Searchers* (1956) outlines one of the most negative images of the native women in United States cinema. The film is considered even today one of the most accomplished Hollywood westerns, even if it was intensely criticized by the ethnic studies critics for its explicit racism. The film mirrors common perceptions of the squaw in the American society in the nineteenth century (when the events in the film unfold) and in the twentieth century (being a cultural artifact, the film inherently bears traces of mentality of the historical moment when it was produced and released). Even though the film doesn't explicitly focus on how native women are treated by both the native and the white men, there are enough elements to sustain the analysis of the genderly and racially biased social prescriptions identifiable beneath the fictional layer of the film.

The economy of the film leaves little space to the presence of native women on screen: fleeting images of what the white mentality deemed as “squaws” catch for a moment the viewer's eye, only to return to the white protagonists' adventures. The film renders on the silver screen the “traditional” squaw, while, at the same time hints to the fate of the white women kidnapped by the Indians who also becomes squaws and are considered to be better off dead than living as Indians, as Ethan Edwards' thinks about his niece Debbie whom he is trying to find for several years after she was kidnapped as a young girl. The reason behind his tireless search is not returning her to the white world, but killing her, since the Indian ways she adopted corrupted her irredeemably (as happened to the crazed white women kidnapped by the Indians and retrieved after the white soldiers slaughtered the tribe and brought them back to the fort). Another fleeting appearance on screen is that of the Indian prostitutes traveling along with the army, as well as the Indian women and their children taken prisoners and hoarded to forts after their husbands were killed by the army. As numerous historical accounts state, native women were forced into prostitution through either physical violence or due to economic circumstances (no other means of sustenance). All native women in *The Searchers* are treated like second-class citizens, retaining almost no value (for instance, Martin Pawley unknowingly buys a wife for two bowler hats, thinking that he bought a blanket), being rendered as “racial objects” (Marubbio 155) rather than human beings.

Wild Goose Flying in the Night Sky (Look) is outlined as the “traditional” [3] squaw in *The Searchers*. Actually, in the era, most native women in Hollywood productions were part of the Indian crowd, delineated as part of the landscape rather than as real human beings. The short appearance of a native woman in the film is notable, even if it is not realistic objective representation, but it is employed for entirely different purposes (the idea I will tackle on later in this essay). Also, the actress who played the part [4] is the only Native

American actress in the film [5]. Though it is a rather small role, it is quite significant since at the time native women were rarely represented in Hollywood productions.

The Indian squaw's appearance in *The Searchers* has two main functions, the former as a comic relief for the tense and strenuous adventures of the white male characters (the racist Ethan Edwards and the mixed-blood Martin Pawley set off to find two white girls who were kidnapped by the Indians and get revenge on the Indians who butchered their family). On the other hand, her "marriage" to Martin is set up as oppositional element to the relationship between Martin and Laurie (his white sweetheart). Outlined as sexually unattractive (as a mocking reply to the Pocahontas' myth), of limited intelligence (she seems to be more like a faithful dog than like a human being). Even if the marriage is rather a mocking variant of the "Indian marriage", Look, as all her kin sisters have to die, putting out the white fear of miscegenation (an issue to be addressed later in this essay).

The Sexualized Maiden

In *Killing the Indian Maiden* Elise Marubbio states that one of the underlying themes in films dealing with what she labels as the Sexualized Maiden is that "the woman's sexual taint resides in her Indian blood like a disease." (Marubbio 130). The supposedly exaggerated sexuality of the Indian women (that is open sexuality, wielded in a manner traditionally permissible only to men), as reiterated in the dominant discourse narratives, strengthened the "scientific" idea so popular during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that blood carries degeneracy. And since most temptresses on screen are of mixed-blood descent, the racial and sexual stigmas inherited doom her from the beginning: her racial stigma that of being a half-breed [6], coupled with the sexual stigma of being a woman. Subsequently, the mixed-blood Sexualized Maiden is positioned on the lowest level within the mainstream discourse. The mixed-blood Sexualized Maiden carries this evil draped in a seductive form, as John Ford's *My Darling Clementine* (1946) suggests, the mixed-blood girl's Indian blood tainting her white blood and ultimately killing her.

The Sexualized Maiden as delineated in Ford's film is a femme fatale that simultaneously attracts and repels, her garments and gestures accentuating her erotic image. Revealing clothing is a must in her job as a saloon girl, contributing to the fetishization of the woman's body as an object from which men derive visual and sexual pleasure (Marubbio 129). This stereotyping through costuming is also a marker of women's social inferiority. Saloon girls were next to social outcasts and Chihuahua's perpetual hope that Doc would marry her and make her an honest woman is actually socially impracticable.

Even if she is featured on the film poster, Chihuahua has no depth, remaining a flat character whose main purpose is to be set in contrast to the white heroine. Her character gets no respect from the others; she's Doc Holliday's anytime girl and Wyatt has no trouble dunking her in a horse trough while threatening to "send her back to the reservation, where she belongs". Given an insulting pet name instead of a real name or background, it doesn't seem to matter if she's Mexican or Apache in origin: her main purpose in the film is to be a contrasting element to the white heroine. Firstly introduced to the audience as a treacherous seductress, she is despised by all the other characters and is shown sympathy only when she's safely at the point of dying, after sacrificing her life to save the white male characters.

My Darling Clementine presents double heroes and love relations (quite rare for the era) as opposites: the couple of Wyatt Earp and Clementine standing for order, civilization and the promise of a "harmonious community" (Marubbio 129) on the one hand, and the couple of Doc Holliday and Chihuahua as a doomed couple separated by the racial conflict, violence and moral decay. The mixed-blood saloon girl whose real name is never mentioned throughout the film (as being irrelevant) is meant to mirror the destructive behavior of her doomed partner, Doc; on a different level, she is set in contrast to the white angelical beauty

(also implying virtue, honesty and all the qualities rendered as necessary to a lady at the turn of the twentieth century). In opposition, Chihuahua stands for degeneracy, immorality and savagery as a threat to her more civilized white sister. Ford tackles once more, as he did in *The Searchers*, the racism that runs deep into the American national identity.

The Indian Princess

The Indian Princess stereotype emerged in the era of the pro-Indian westerns (at the beginning of the 1950s) when the directors opted for a more sympathetic delineation of the Native Americans. In regard to outlining the female characters, the previous two negative types traditionally employed in the previous period (the squaw and the temptress) were replaced by a more positive, though not less stereotyping image, that of the Indian beautiful maiden mediating between the white and the native worlds. The focus in these films is on her high social status, her beauty and her historic heritage. One of the most representative films is Delmer Daves' 1950 film *The Broken Arrow* which features Sonseeahray as the Indian princess who plays an instrumental part in bridging the tensions between the white and the native culture. Sonseeahray's superiority is suggested by her symbolic and high social status within her tribe as a incarnation of the White-Painted Lady, Mother of Life, an Apache deity. In order to compensate for her racial inferiority, the Indian Princess had to be either of noble birth (usually the chief's daughter, i.e. Pocahontas) or to be placed above the other members of the tribe (i.e. Sonseeahray).

Another distinctive feature of the Indian Princess is her desire to assimilate into the western European culture. All the native maidens start by teaching their white partner their language, but they rapidly end up adopting the white values and are assimilated into the western European culture.

Virginal purity and innocence allude to the native primitivism and to the white moral obligation to civilize the indigenous populations. This is suggested in *The Broken Arrow* by the fact that Sonseeahray's innocence is underlined several times in the film. This childlike innocence alludes to Sonseeahray's need of guidance from a superior being (thus, subtly alluding to the paternalistic Euro-American treatment of the native people even today) [7].

Pocahontas on Display

The Hollywood Pocahontas has little relation to its historical model. Shaped according to the myth-based perceptions of Euro-Americans, Pocahontas is a typical example of male domination of women and appropriation of their power (according to Robertson 1996). Pocahontas' myth is a typical example of how real historical events were manipulated and distorted by the narratives within the dominant discourse in order to legitimize the Euro-American subordination of the native other under the pretence of "authenticity". The myth originates in Captain John Smith's accounts of his interactions with the native tribes in Virginia at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Pocahontas, whom Smith met in 1608, is first mentioned in his *A True Relation of Virginia* (1608) as being "a child of tenne years old" at the time. In *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles* (1624) John Smith gives an extensive fictionalized account of how Pocahontas saved him from the death that her father, the great chief Powhatan (leader of the Tsenacommacah) condemned him to by throwing herself in front of the executioner [8] after he was captured by the native inhabitants of Virginia.

In Smith's account of Pocahontas there is no hint of a potential romantic relationship between the two. Smith was almost thirty years old when he met the ten- years-old Pocahontas. According to some critics, even the act of Pocahontas saving Smith has a high degree of uncertainty and fictionality attached to Smith's story. Nevertheless, the subsequent popular culture narratives of Pocahontas constantly brought the two together in a doomed

interracial relation that would eventually become the prototype for native-white ill-fated interracial relationship.

Pocahontas' story is the most prominent narrative of white-native interracial romantic relationship. Eventually Pocahontas did marry a white man, the tobacco planter John Rolfe, adopted the white ways, converted to Christianity and took the name Rebecca. The couple and their son traveled back to England where Pocahontas fell ill and died in 1617, at the age of nineteen.

Disney, looking to highlight a new multicultural sensibility, took John Smith's account of his love story with Pocahontas and turned it into a box office success. The film was cross-marketed to children (especially little girls) through the sale of Pocahontas themed Nestle chocolate bars, Barbie dolls, Halloween costumes, coloring books, and many others. The animated version of the historical native girl is that of a grown-up woman looking more like a contemporary model than as a seventeenth century indigenous woman, with almond-shaped eyes that look rather Asian and with a highly sensual body.

As it was fitted for a children's film, Pocahontas is not killed in the end, she and Smith choosing dedication to serving their people instead of having a selfish affair (quite a clever subterfuge for avoiding miscegenation), unlike *The New World* where Pocahontas has to die.

New Age Feminism

James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009) is more than just another story of the white male protagonist going native, at least in respect to women status within the social structures. In the film the technologized mercantilism of corporatist America is contrasted to the Edenic harmony of the Na'vis with their exotic land on the planet Pandora [9]. Jake Sully, a paraplegic ex-marine, is literally going native through a temporary mind-inhabiting of an avatar, a hybrid body that combines the human DNA with the DNA of the natives.

The women in *Avatar* are intelligent, strong and independent, fighting side by side with the men. Ney'tiri is feminine yet powerful, beautiful, and deadly. Grace, the chain-smoking scientist is intelligent, strong willed, and witty and she still manages to keep her femininity. Trudy is as good a soldier as her male colleagues; her flying abilities are outstanding, surpassing those of the men around her. Mo'at, Ney'tiri's mother, is governing the tribe alongside with her husband, her spiritual guidance situating her on a particularly powerful position. The Omaticaya women have complete control over their own lives. Many of them choose to become soldiers, fighting alongside their men. This representation of women on screen is laudable, but it is not surprising. More and more contemporary women are financially independent, pursuing a career and having full control over their lives. This sort of equality and strength of women is appealing to most women, adding to the success of the film.

Surpassing at times the drawbacks of the Indian Princess stereotype, Ney'tiri is delineated as a strong woman possessing full control not only over her decisions, but also over her emotional positioning within society (there is no trace of the obeying daughter in her, Ney'tiri defying both tradition and her parents when choosing a husband). She fights alongside Jack, leading with him the fight against the human invaders. Even more importantly, she is the one to save Jack (reversing thus the damsel-in-distress imagery reiterated within the patriarchal discourse since Romanticism).

On Miscegenation

The term of miscegenation was coined in the nineteenth century in connection to interracial marriage and interracial sex, and more generally, to the process of racial mixing. In the United States race mixing, especially between black and white people has been taboo for many centuries, anti-miscegenation laws being in place in the United States as early as 1691.

In regard to native-white interracial relationships, there were no legal interdictions (except for a short period in the seventeenth century). Nevertheless, there has always been a certain tension in the area where the two races intermingled, miscegenation being regarded as highly undesirable (though, I repeat, not forbidden) and the children resulting from such unions being usually treated as substandard citizens. Labeled as “half-breeds”, often together with a derogatory adjective, such as “stinking”, the mixed-blood individuals were given by the white society an even lower status than the full blood natives and, while being often rejected by the native community as well.

On a symbolic level, the fear of miscegenation is a recurrent theme within the white imaginary. The foundational story in the United States focuses on the Founding Fathers – white political leaders and statesmen who participated in the American Revolution by signing *The Declaration of Independence*, establishing the United States Constitution. The inhabitants of the new country who were not white or male (Native Americans, African Americans, women, etc.) were negatively inscribed in the new social structures that proffered equality for everyone and were virtually excluded from the democratic government.

In comparison to the foundational story in the United States, Brazilian foundational stories, for instance, reflect a different attitude towards racial intermixing. Whereas the North American vision of national identity was inscribed into an unstated, yet nevertheless, normative “whiteness”, the Brazilian vision of national identity was usually premised on the notion of racial multiplicity, metaphorically labeled as “tropical multiculturalism” [10]. Since miscegenation was used by colonizers as an instrument to control the native population, interracial mixing is much more common in Brazil than in the United States where racial purity was generally the norm. Consequently, the symbolic representation (in literature and, later, in cinema) of interracial mixing in the two cultural spaces differ greatly. Brazil’s foundational story involves a native woman and a white man (José de Alencar’s novel *Iracema* is the most famous novel about Brazilian literary representation of interracial love) or a native man and a white woman (José de Alencar’s novel *O Guarani*, for instance). The implication is that the Brazilian nation is born from the mixing of the two races (white and indigenous), whereas in the US culture, the union of the two races is doomed (*Pocahontas*, for instance), whiteness overpowering all the other races.

Although representations of Native Americans in Hollywood films have, as a whole, moved away from the simplistic categorizations noble savage/bloodthirsty demon, miscegenation gets the same treatment it did one hundred years ago, the motif of the interracial love affair remaining still behind the times: even if natives have been outlined as complex human beings in recent Hollywood productions, it seems that fear of miscegenation still dooms interracial relationships to failure. There are few productions which outline white characters as abhorring miscegenation. For instance, there is a very subtle treatment of the common view on miscegenation in both John Ford’s film discussed in this essay. In *The Searchers*, Martin Pawley’s attitude towards his Indian “wife” when she sets his camping bed next to his is extremely rude and violent for a character that is very gentle and kind throughout the film. Even if Martin himself has some Indian blood (he is one eighth Cherokee), his violent rejection of miscegenation is highly suggestive of the commonly-held view on interracial relationships.

As compared to Black-white interracial marriage, which was strictly forbidden (legally, as well as on screen), there was a certain tolerance towards native-white interracial relations, though Hollywood almost invariably doomed the union to failure. As Edward Buscombe states in *Injuns!: Native Americans in the Movies*, “Indian westerns [have an] almost obsessive interest in the question of mixed marriage... Fully half of the forty films [released in the 1950s and 1960s] contain a character who engages in some sort of sexual relationship across the racial divide, but never without difficulty: that is to say, the

relationships are never ‘normal’ or ‘natural’ – instead, there is always a problem of some kind” (Buscombe 125). Consequently, a fruitful union is impossible, the purity of the white race being of utmost importance in Hollywood, as Friar and Friar assert: “White men marrying Indian maids has long been a favorite subject in Westerns but – and there has always been a but – something must happen to prevent the couple from living happily ever after” (Friar and Friar 238).

The problematic implications of interracial relationships was generally dealt with by killing one of the lovers – most of the times the native woman – ending the film on a note of bittersweet resignation. Such is the case in *Broken Arrow*, which shows Jimmy Stewart’s Apache wife, Sonseeahray, killed just before the end of the film. Countless other films in the era follow the same scenario in suggesting the inevitable demise of the race, as Buscombe observes: “it is as if the filmmakers, taken aback in their audacity in depicting such a transgressive union, need to introduce the woman’s death in order to mitigate the offense: the only good Indian wife is a dead Indian wife” (Buscombe, 127).

While miscegenation has long been a theme of western literature and films regarding Native Americans, it never seems to end on a note of interracial harmony: the indigenous lover is killed off (in most scenarios), the white hero finds out he has native blood and is thus not the Other anymore or the lovers find that their cultural differences are too strong to overcome. Natasha and Ralph Friar termed this tendency the “cop-out” as they noted its prevalence in westerns of the 1930s and 1940s (Friar and Friar, 167). But fear of miscegenation was not specific only to the most negative period in portraying Native Americans in film. It is still taboo in movies from the 1990s, as well as in the latest Hollywood productions, such as *Avatar* (2009). Similarly to the directors of early westerns, modern directors still employ the same artifices in order to negate the interracial love affair by introducing plot twists through which interracial relationships are no longer an issue.

One of the most typical motifs involved in interracial Native/ white relationships is that of the Native woman sacrificing herself or her people for her love. This motif has been played out in hundreds of films during the last century (Kilpatrick 13), but most notably, of course, in the Pocahontas stories. The intermixing of white and Native Americans is a historical fact; indeed, many white families took “pride in having a select type of Indian blood”, as Donald Kaufmann states, “the best of Wasps, horrified at having one drop of Negro blood, somehow imagined that all went well in the family tree after an illustrious male ancestor stepped off the Mayflower and mated with the first available Indian princess” (Kaufmann 28).

The solution found by recent Hollywood films for a valid and durable romantic involvement of the white hero with a woman belonging to a native tribe is quite predictable. In *Dances with Wolves*, for instance, the woman Dunbar falls in love with is a white woman, Stands With a Fist, who was adopted into the tribe when she became an orphan as a child.

James Cameron’s 2009 film *Avatar* finds an alternative way to negate interracial mixing in films dealing with aboriginal characters simply by negating the issue of race. A classic Pocahontas story, *Avatar*’s solution to the interspecies relationship of Neytiri and Jake is to permanently transfer Jake’s mind into his avatar body, thus literally having the main character “go Native”. Consequently, the interracial love affair is no longer an issue and, therefore, it is an acceptable note on which to end the movie. As a human/Na’vi couple, Neytiri and Jake are biologically incompatible, an uncomfortable metaphor for white/native relationships. The film offers a new solution to the issue of miscegenation, but it still does not confront it. Apparently racial prejudices continue to inform the visual narratives within the dominant discourse.

To conclude, mainstream visual representations of Native American women in different periods tend to be stereotypical and bear little connection to reality, being employed

to serve as justification or legitimization for the Euro-American mistreatment and subjugation of the indigenous women throughout the tumultuous United States history. Even if more recent productions empower women to a certain extent, the racial stereotyping is still present and miscegenation continues to remain a taboo in Hollywood.

Acknowledgements: This work was supported by the European Social Fund in Romania, under the responsibility of the Managing Authority for the Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007-2013 [Grant POSDRU/88/1.5/S/47646]

Notes

[1] The indigenous inhabitants of the Americas have been represented as either noble or bloodthirsty savages from the initial contact (see, for instance *The Letter of Columbus to Luis De Saint Angel Announcing His Discovery* from 1493) to contemporary Hollywood cinema. In my thesis *Contemporary Native American Self-fashioning Narratives* I examine *in extenso* these ideologically-loaded misrepresentations of the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas in the dominant discourse narratives.

[2]The word *squaw* was borrowed by the English language from the Algonquian languages in which it meant “woman”. In English it was mostly used, both as a noun and as an adjective, as a generic term which designates an indigenous woman of North America. Even if initially it did not have any negative connotations, in some late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries texts the word *squaw* is used or perceived as derogatory. Critics as Steels, Hodge or Harris investigated the derogative usage of the word in English. In the second half of the twentieth century the word also acquired a negative sexual connotation. Sanders and Peek (1973) stated that in the 1970s there was a common view according to which the word *squaw* originated from a native word meaning “female genitals”. For contemporary Native Americans the term is highly offensive, the usage of “*squaw*” demeaning native women because it suggests condescending images and even racist attitudes.

[3] I use the inverted commas in order to emphasize the presupposed veridicality of the master narratives.

[4] Beulah Archuletta (1912–1969), the actress cast in the role of Wild Goose Flying in the Night Sky, was often cast as a *squaw* parts in numerous Hollywood productions.

[5] Until quite recently, non-native actors were cast to play native roles in the Hollywood productions. With a few notable exceptions, from the late 1920s to the early 1980s native actors were cast mostly as extras, white actors in red face representing the Indian on screen for the white audience by simply using the “Instant Indian Kit” (Ralph and Natasha Friar), a specific set of props that would turn any white wearer into an “authentic” Indian (this costume included “traditional” Indian clothing and other paraphernalia which made the wearer easily recognizable, as for instance: black longhaired wig, full buckskin clothes, headband, necklaces, moccasins, war bonnets, bone breastplates, etc.). In regard to the films that I look into in this essay, only the very recent *The New World* has a native actress cast in the lead role (Q'orianka Kilcher as Pocahontas).

[6] Mixed-bloods were despised even more than full-blood natives, both by the white community and by the native tribes.

[7] The infamous Bureau of Indian Affairs harmed the survivors of the nineteenth century genocides in new ways. Even today, under the pretence of helping the natives (the same paternalistic attitude was employed by the whites in their attitudes towards African-Americans as well), being nevertheless quite harmful.

[8] According to latest criticism on the mythical delineation of Pocahontas, the entire episode of the native girl saving the white colonist is merely an invention. Though there are several historical accounts of Pocahontas, the only written source on Pocahontas' act of saving Captain Smith is the latter's *The Generall Historie of Virginia*.

[9] As the European explorers named “the new world” they discovered at the end of the fifteenth century “America” and the inhabitants they encountered “Indians”, there is little surprise that Cameron, who also wrote the script, chose a name from ancient Greek mythology to name the planet the humans invaded in order to exploit its natural resources. The symbolical subordination of Pandora and its technologically underdeveloped inhabitants (who use bows and arrows to fight machineguns) starts thus at the level of discourse: the ominous denomination alludes to the humans' failure to conquer the planet and exploit it, while, at the same time, it silences the planet inhabitants at the discursive level (the viewer learns that the Na'vi band in the film is called Omaticaya but that's about all in regard to native denominations).

[10] Term coined by Robert Stam in his famous study of the Brazilian cinema *Tropical Multiculturalism: A Comparative History of Race in Brazilian Cinema and Culture*.

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Filmography

- Avatar*. Dir. James Cameron. Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 2009
- Broken Arrow*. Dir. Delmer Daves. Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 1950
- Dances With Wolves*. Dir. Kevin Costner. Tig Productions, 1990
- My Darling Clementine*. Dir. John Ford. Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 1946
- Little Big Man*. Dir. Arthur Penn. Cinema Center Films, 1970
- The New World*. Dir. Terrence Malick. New Line Cinema, 2005
- Pocahontas*. Dir. Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg. Walt Disney Pictures, 1995.
- The Searchers*. Dir. John Ford. C.V. Whitney Pictures, 1956

Feminitatea în capcana istoriei și a destinului

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Abstract: *The totalitarian dystopian speech is situated in an aesthetic and ideological index committed to multiple analysis, which enable an ethic, political and contradictory moral canvas. Writer George Balaita codifies the totalitarian mechanism's critique, and the novel "The world in two days" (1975) represents a projection of the myth of power. The creation becomes a chronotop, a parable of contemporary man's dramatism, expresing the communication crisis, fear, terror, alienation. Beyond the myth of power, which despises the personal legend, Romanian space proposes hypostasis of femininity, which prove that existence is a palimpsest type of story, in which tragical destinies are consumed.*

Key words: *the myth of power, existential chronotop*

Având o tinerețe nonconformistă (facultăți începute, întrerupte, ocupații diverse, derizorii), scriitorul băcăuan George Bălăiță nu a încetat să-și caute drumul și de cele mai multe ori a refuzat canonul (ideologic, social). Debutază la 25 de ani în revista „Luceafărul” cu proza *Doi oameni și amintirile*, iar după mai multe încercări de a găsi o formulă proprie, la 40 de ani, publică romanul care îl va consacra, *Lumea în două zile* (1975), pentru care va obține premiul Uniunii Scriitorilor. În 2002, într-un interviu dat lui Ștefan Agopian, va recunoaște: „*Lumea în două zile* este sursa de aur a patimilor mele politice!”. De altfel, utilizarea unor registre diferite reprezintă o capcană textuală pentru a denigra sistemul politic pe care îl consideră „o păcăleală istorică”. Atitudinea față de puterea politică este nonșalantă, căci scriitorul o va ignora, considerând că adevărata putere este a omului care găsește resurse pentru a rezista, în cazul scriitorului aceasta realizându-se prin scriitură: „Nu reușeam să-l conving că adevărata putere este aceea din adâncul omului și care îl face pe om să supraviețuiască, să dăinuie, cum spune un mare scriitor din veacul nostru. Fiindcă puternic este numai ceea ce nu se pierde niciodată, ceea ce rămâne. Puternic este acela, am spus eu, care poate să schimbe destine; cel care știe că poate să facă asta, dar nu o face [...]. Este singura putere cu care artistul se arată a fi puternic, am spus.”¹ În același volum, George Bălăiță își așază opera între „pofa de joc” și „pofa de adevăr”, ceea ce dă și nota crezului său artistic: „Între altele, în *Lumea în două zile*, încerc un răspuns la întrebarea cumplită: până unde se poate glumi? Adevărul așteaptă să fie luat în primire. Adevărul este ursul infernal din nuvela lui Faulkner. Adevărul este în Balena Albă din tragica viziune a lui Melville. Adevărul e setea oarbă de pământ din sufletul lui Ion și nevoia de iubire din ființa *Celui mai iubit dintre pământeni*. Adevărul nu se lasă cu ușurință vânat. Este o fiară care se opune cu îndârjire.”²

Critica literară a apreciat, încă de la început, capacitatea scriitorului de a se detașa de spiritul contemplativ moldovenesc și de a construi un roman valoros despre existență și despre obsesia anchetei: „Dintre toate ticurile prozei contemporane românești George Bălăiță a păstrat, distanțându-se cu aceeași ironie cu care e scrisă întreaga carte, tehnica anchetei și prezența anchetatorului, judecătorul Viziru. [...] Sub zodia ironiei, fără accente prea violente, în spiritul acestei labile, fragile stări care necesită participarea cititorului, George Bălăiță construiește cu luciditate unul din romanele de rezistență ale acestui deceniu care pentru literatura românească postbelică este deceniul prozei de înaltă profesionalitate.”³

Monica Spiridon decodifică textul lui George Bălăiță considerând că metafora este „mit structural”, construită în jurul oglinzii: „Prezența neclintită în viața lui Antipa a oglinzii (care dispare semnificativ – abia după dispariția lui) are o funcție precisă, lesne repetabilă: ea întreține dincolo de sine (cum spune însuși Antipa) tensiunea unui lanț de repetiții și de derivări, de afilieri și de imitații generice. Pe firul lor, romancierul ne împinge discret către principiul întemeietor și modelant al romanului său. Așa cum era de așteptat, figura – de fapt, metafora – lui este Oglinda.”⁴

O perspectivă interesantă este valorificată de Elena Dan, în *Daimonion*, care apreciază că romanul lui Bălăiță adună mituri universale, le deconstruiește în manieră ironică pentru a dovedi că istoria înseamnă repetabilitate indiferent de context: „Vorbind de mitul cotidian, subliniem capacitatea scriitorului de a crea – amuzându-se – imagini care să intersecteze mituri universale, pentru a ne lăsa să deducem că tot ce s-a creat în universul imaginar de-a lungul istoriei acestuia se repetă la nesfârșit în forme noi, că acest sfinx care ne locuiește, numit Daimonion, ne pune etern aceleași întrebări, în formulări schimbate, cu intenția de a-i renaște la nesfârșit și pe Oedip, și pe Narcis, și pe Mefisto, de fapt tot atâtea întrupări ale lui Daimonion, cel cu mii de chipuri, reflectate în tot atâtea oglinzi.”⁵

Romanul sondează, prin motivul dublului, existența unui personaj care „se ascunde”, care caută sensuri noi „trecerii” prin lume. La rândul său, are un alter-ego, bătrânul Anghel, care îi prezice moartea. De fapt, personajele sunt întrupări, în serie, ale fricii de a trăi. Întoarcerea la arhetip devine rețeta pentru care optează bărbații, în încercarea de a ieși din labirint: „Vestitor, și, după unii dintre apropiați, un provocator al morții, Antipa dispare la rândul lui – încheind, la 33 de ani, seria de 7 a acestei farse tragice – ucis, conform propriei profeții, de cineva care gândește destinul în felul în care o face el însuși.”⁶. Criticul Eugen Negrici oferă o cheie de interpretare a textului, înțeles ca „parabola inconsistenței lumii acesteia”⁷.

Romanul conține, în paralel, un nivel realist (roman al anchetei întreprinse de judecătorul Viziru) și unul simbolic (roman parabolic, evazionist) ceea ce trimite la formula de metaroman. Personaj oximoronic, Antipa reunește sacrul și profanul, angelicul și demonicul, iarna și vara, viața și moartea. Existența terestră pare un purgatoriu în care oamenii se deconstruiesc, își pierd puterea de a se ascunde în spatele măștilor sociale. Romanul proiectează un bestiariu burlesc în care energiile lumii, necontrolate, se pervertesc în oameni. Planurile romanului se intersectează, iar strategiile narrative moderne sondează dimensiunea abisală a ființei. Vocile narrative multiplică ambiguitatea textuală, specifică „noului roman”: „Într-un fel, cartea aceasta instruieste asupra felului cum se naște mitul sau cum poate fi provocată nașterea lui. Punând la contribuție, ca și D.R. Popescu, tot ceea ce, tehnic vorbind, știa despre adâncirea confuziei și sporirea terenului alunecos al enigmei, George Bălăiță a mizat pe literatura care se ivește tocmai prin dosirea, ambiguitatea, obscurizarea mesajului.”⁸

Planul realist al romanului este asigurat, în parte, de ancheta lui Viziru. El adună probe, își scrie impresiile, are viziunea lui Antipa, încarnat, care îi cere să facă un contract ce pare mai degrabă pact faustic. Scopul declarat al lui Viziru este acela de a afla adevărul, deși recunoaște că acesta îi face rău. Obiectivitatea pare să fie axul ordonator al anchetei. Mesajul adevărat al romanului stă în contrastul perspectivelor din care este evocată realitatea. Pe de o parte, însemnările lui Viziru trădează meticulozitate, onestitate, dorința de a cunoaște viața personală a lui Antipa. Pe de altă parte, *Jurnalul* romanului „lipește” o altă realitate, aceea a societății comuniste. Limbajul de lemn, conformismul, platitudinea sunt trăsăturile unui mesaj ideologic care arată că viața personală a individului nu contează. Amenințarea regimului comunist este deci sugerată printr-o ironie. Valorile spiritului sunt strivite de valorile materiale. Juxtapunerea scenelor de viață domestică trăite de Antipa cu proiecția „omului nou” din *Jurnalul* romanului reprezintă țesătura epică a textului.

Viziru scrie un jurnal (pact cu Antipa) ca să poată înțelege lumea. Parabola bătrânului din Ohio care și-a ridicat patul pentru a privi pe fereastră lumea sugerează chiar demersul celui care analizează lumea scriind. Caietele lui Viziru trădează nevoia de autocunoaștere, raportându-se în oglindă la destinul lui Antipa. Aparițiile nocturne ale lui Antipa în fața lui Viziru aduc spaimă, dar și revelația asemănării cu acesta. Are iluzia că scriind necenzurat va afla adevărul, chiar dacă demersul său pare neserios. Faptele reale se amestecă, așadar, cu elemente supranaturale, care materializează, de fapt, haosul sufletesc: „Scriu toate astea fără

grabă. Mă gândesc: să poți scrie ce-ți trece prin cap, să nu cenzurezi nimic, să faci un colos de cuvinte, ceva ca Sfinxul sau Golemul pe care nici vântul deșertului, nici o formulă magică să nu le poată distruge. Să poți spune, chiar și fluierând cu mâinile în buzunare: ceva statornic, definitiv, nimic provizoriu. Cu toate că un gând care contrazice totul se ivește: oare eu însumi n-am pornit pe drumul ăsta dintr-o glumă?...⁹

Sentimentul dominant este acela de vinovăție, pe care Viziru îl poartă ca pe o povară. Fostul procuror Jehac îi răstoarnă întreaga perspectivă asupra menirii sale. Sentința definitivă era dată, toți oamenii erau vinovați. Jehac este prototipul omului fără scrupule, care crede că deține puterea absolută asupra celorlalți.

Antipa, protagonistul așezat între oglinzi paralele, este captiv al spațiului închis în care își trăiește aventurile spiritului. Complicitatea cu acest colț de lume, casa a cărei stăpână este Felicia, îi oferă iluzia siguranței. În același timp, este conștient de tirania lucrurilor, căci obiectele și oamenii interacționează. Casa îi dă lui Antipa senzația că poate sfida timpul. Atașamentul față de obiecte (oglinza, fotoliul) reprezintă însă o formă de captivitate: „Așadar, nepotul, strănepotul, sau ce-o fi acela, cu o eleganță caraghioasă, locuiește pe rând în câte o încăpere, pe măsură ce restul se surpă, nu fugind de dezastru, ci ieșindu-i în întâmpinare cu voluptate, micșorându-se odată cu casa, pierind odată cu ea fiindcă, fără îndoială, între oameni și obiecte există o stare intermediară, care cuprinde într-o formă nouă ființele și lucrurile neînsuflețite.”¹⁰

Casa (etajul 5, apartamentul 117 din blocul de beton cu 266 de camere), proiecție în miniatură a spațiului citadin, înseamnă totodată îndepărtarea de spațiul arhaic. Destinul său nefericit pare multiplicat într-o societate în care totul este la plural. Blocul, cu sute de camere, strivește individul care vrea să fie unic. Dacă societatea comunistă este ancorată în spațiul citadin, satul este loc al pierzaniei, supus „vitregiilor naturii”. Blocurile comuniste strivesc individualitatea, iar nostalgia arhitecturii de altădată aduce sentimentul de liniște, siguranță și în același timp pune între paranteze prezentul. Jurnalul romanului oglindește fațada unui regim care promovează omul nou, lipsit de individualitate. Astfel, orașul – o casă multiplicată – este o entitate falsă. Așa se explică faptul că locuința este ultima reductă în fața industrializării forțate. Eroul se simte neputincios, izolat. Cărțile devin simple obiecte, îl blochează în lumea lui. Este lipsit de puterea de a mai evada în spațiul ficțiunii literare ceea ce reprezintă adevărata moarte.

Relația dintre Antipa și Felicia este o complicitate ca aceea dintre victimă și atacator. Felicia îi oferă siguranță lui Antipa, însă, în același timp, ea trăiește o continuă stare de nesiguranță. Antipa se hrănește cu iubirea protectoare a Felicie, care trăiește iluzia fericirii umbrite de teamă: „Încrederea mea în ea nu cunoaște margini, însă asta nu ajută, fiindcă ea nu are în mine nici un fel de încredere. Spaima de provizorat găsește un refugiu în dragostea ocrotitoare a Felicie, dar neîncrederea ei mă înspăimântă mai rău.”¹¹ Casa este asociată cu principiul feminității căci Felicia este femeia domestică față de care bărbatul a dezvoltat dependență: „Casa mea este pentru mine totul. Iar stăpâna casei este Felicia. Eu mă reazem de tocul ușii, de degetul meu atârnat legat cu o ață roșie un pachet ușor, un dar, un fleac, și spun: *Felicia's Adventures in Wonderland...*”¹²

Atunci când „ochiul” devine malițios, Felicia și Antipa sunt doi oameni comuni. Profesorul Baroni, bătrân, mizantrop, preocupat de istoria familiei, crede, că omul stă sub semnul ratării¹³, iar cei doi sunt dovada acestei teorii.

Antipa-fiul re trăiește, în spirală, destinul tatălui. Amândoi sunt priviți cu suspiciune de cei din jur. La rândul ei, Felicia observă asemănarea izbitoare între cei doi bărbați, pusă pe seama caracteristicilor de gen. Pentru Antipa, Felicia este femeia vieții lui, fiica nenăscută și mama pierdută prematur. Prin soția lui, descoperă ipostazele feminității, le explorează și are impresia că se află la începuturile lumii: „Antipa o acoperă complet și capul lui se umple de un gând ciudat: ea este fiica mea, pe care ea nu a născut-o, și mama mea care a murit demult.

Un sentiment neașteptat de siguranță. O mulțumire pe care el o pune pe seama vinului băut.¹⁴ Felicia este asociată cu lumea însăși, în forma și spiritul ei originar. Bărbatul nu poate gândi viața și moartea înafara femeii, matrice a lumii: „Viața care pâlăpâia duioasă în trupul ei venea din întunericul și violența speciei. Trupul ei era o cetate invincibilă, sufletul ei era osia lumii. Ea era locul în care Antipa se născuse și va fi îngropat când îi va veni vremea.”¹⁵

Într-un spațiu concentraționar pulverizat ideologic, timpul pare suspendat, întrucât societatea rămâne încremenită. Calendarul bisericesc vechi, simbol al credinței încremenite, și portretul din 1930 al artizanului comunismului, doctor Petru Groza, devin simboluri ale unor lumi antitetice: „Pe peretele din stânga, un calendar bisericesc din anul 1930, citești anul scris cu litere roșii. În spatele lui o gaură, poate o fereastră rotundă, ceva din marginile, din cerceveaua, din geamul de dincolo de hârtie. Peretele care separă odaia de restul casei. În partea opusă, o fotografie veche: portretul doctorului Petru Groza, ramă subțire, cenușie, cartonul gălbui plesnit în fel și chip, sticla pătată, praf, muște.”¹⁶

Fost ceasornicar, bătrân, ciudat, Anghel pare conectat cu marele ritmuri cosmice. Vrea să vadă cactușii doar înainte de apusul soarelui, semn al stingerii. Medicul său, Lambrino, îl consideră nebun, dar inofensiv. Benzile desenate cu vocea lui Anghel trădează coerența, luciditatea, puterea de înțelegere a lumii arhetipale: „dar eu eram în lumea de acolo ceasornicar în marele oraș pe Strada Liniștei Netulburate, lucrăm la ceasornice, meșteșug pe care nu l-am învățat de la nimeni, m-am născut știindu-l sau mai bine zis m-am pomenit că-l învăț treptat și nu-l mai uit, tot așa cum înveți să vorbești pe măsură ce din gândac te faci ditamai cămila și la intervale potrivite mă retrăgeam în umbra Marelui Zid și meditam, mă pregăteam pentru marele scop, fiindcă pe atunci știam ce am de făcut și trebuia să găsesc oglinda.”¹⁷

Ironie, Anghel sugerează că accesul la cunoaștere a fost posibil prin refuzul de a cunoaște femeia. Cunoscător al științelor oculte, Anghel călătorește, este luntrașul care se luptă cu curenții hiperboreeni. Antipa se inițiază în moarte, parcurge labirintul existenței și găsește înțelesuri ascunse ale vieții sale pe care o contemplă ca spectator. În cea de a doua parte a romanului, Antipa apare ca un ins blocat între două lumi. Pe de altă parte, sub masca beției, Pașaliu spune adevăruri dureroase. El asistă la prăbușirea lumii vechi, cu legile ei, și la pânda lumii noi, cu țărani alungați în oraș, o lume răsturnată, în care Antipa nu se regăsește: „Istorie rătăcită în legendă și un tron înalt singuratic ascuns într-un nor de pânză roșie. Speranța însă nu te părăsește. Omule, tu ești mai mult bun decât mai mult rău? Vrei o schimbare, o desăvârșire? Faci ce poți, meritul tău este că vrei să poți mult? Discursul meu nu te apără, el te împinge înainte. Țăranii la temelie și țăranii încercând să fugă de țărânie. Izgoniți apoi. O nouă ordine, dar în câte vieți de om? [...] și iată o lume care ia ființă în pândă și ură și luptă ascunsă, un imn și un recviem, omul de care proștii râd și își bat joc, iar Palatul Comunal în Dealu-Ocna este un loc al vremurilor vechi și al fatalității timpului nou, nimic altceva la urma urmei decât o casă, ziduri groase de cărămidă și acoperișuri de tablă, ferestre și coridoare și odăi și un beci uriaș, dar el vorbește despre om ca și o carte sau un muzeu...”¹⁸

Antipa dovedește inadecvare la mediu. Casa este spațiul de retragere, în care trăiește o captivitate prin reverie, alături de Felicia. Personaj buimac, el evită spațiul social, refuză reperele concrete. Reflexivitatea atinge pragul maxim în noaptea de 21 decembrie, căci o poartă către cer și către sine se deschide. Antipa găsește, în acest moment de grație, granița dintre viață și moarte. Eroul are puterea de a se sustrage lumii aparente, aceea care etichetează ceea ce este altfel. Este conștient că pentru ceilalți el poate fi nebun ori bolnav, însă singura realitate este aceea trăită în sine. În plan sentimental, iluzia fericirii este asigurată de prezența Felicie, femeia care este proiecția universului uman, cea care va continua să trăiască în locul său. Feminitatea devine, așadar, calea către cunoașterea de sine, un univers compensatoriu pentru un erou frust, incapabil să se elibereze din captivitatea istoriei.

***Acknowledgement: The work of Livia Rău (Marcu) was supported by Project SOP HRD - TOP ACADEMIC 76822.**

Note

- [1] George Bălăiță, *Câinele în lesă*. Opt interviuri și un appendix, Ed. Viitorul Românesc, București, 2004, pp.4-7, *Ai văzut vreodată cum se potcovește un cal ?*
- [2] George Bălăiță, *Câinele în lesă*. Opt interviuri și un appendix, Ed. Viitorul Românesc, București, 2004, pp.15-28, *Cubul este gândit. Sfera e ivită din neant*
- [3] Dan Culcer, *Citind sau trăind literatura*, Ed. Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1976, pp. 240-244
- [4] Monica Spiridon, *Melancolia descendenței. Figuri și forme ale memoriei generice în literatură*, Ed. Cartea Românească, București, 1989, pp. 53-99
- [5] Elena Dan, *Daimonion*, Ed. Cartea Românească, București, 1996, pp. 256-313
- [6] Eugen Negrici, *Prefață*, în *Lumea în două zile* de George Bălăiță, Ed. Polirom, Iași, 2009, p. 25
- [7] Eugen Negrici, *Prefață*, în *Lumea în două zile* de George Bălăiță, Ed. Polirom, Iași, 2009, p. 26
- [8] Eugen Negrici, *Prefață*, în *Lumea în două zile* de George Bălăiță, Ed. Polirom, Iași, 2009, p. 29
- [9] George Bălăiță, *Lumea în două zile*, Ed. Polirom, Iași, 2009, p.142
- [10] *Idem*, p.105
- [11] *Idem*, p.104
- [12] *Idem*, p.105
- [13] *Idem*, p.118
- [14] *Idem*, p.268
- [15] *Idem*, p.271
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Les figures féminines dans *Des rêves et des assassins* de Malika Mokeddem

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Abstract: *The woman holds a special place in Algerian society. It is primarily grandmother, mother, sister and wife ... the statutes that confer regarding rights, legitimacy, in the sense that it is possible to rub the woman saw that the right promulgated by social or religious law. This is what was for long the relationships between men and women, because in these conservative societies, women represent the honor of the tribe, its purity is the guarantor and that of his family, his home. This is why it is subject to so many restrictions and confinements. The rise of religious radicalism and fundamentalism, saw appear new forms of deprivation that relate exclusively women. Considered a reincarnation of the devil, because of the temptations it brings, it will be relegated to a lower than man, lord in every sense of the dark creature whose only value lies in its offspring status. But the problem in the advent of the "new religion" is Algerian society itself, because in these 90 years, women from Independence or born at that time took an important place in nation building. Fighter weapons equally alongside their brothers in the bush, their status in the early years of freedom, has changed dramatically. They are not only mothers or sisters but above all women. They invest the street, privileged rights and working to build a democratic country where they think they have the place they deserve. The women we will paint a picture in the following pages, meet these criteria, but some have another "advantage", that of being in these times of hatred facing Algeria, abroad and more particularly in France. These are women who, for the most part, followed their husbands during the war, or who immigrated after independence in search of a better life for themselves and their children.*

Mots-clés : *enfant, mère, identité, femme, société, intégrisme, famille.*

L'écriture féminine, en Algérie, a suivi le même parcours que la littérature. Elle voit le jour, elle aussi, durant le colonialisme. Elle est une écriture du témoignage. Sa parution commence avec l'écrivaine Fadhma Ait Mansour Amrouche, qui dans *Histoire de ma vie*, raconte son destin tragique de fille illégitime dans la Kabylie conservatrice de l'époque coloniale. Comme pour cette pionnière de l'écriture féminine, bon nombre de femmes sont venues à l'écriture par le moyen de l'autobiographie. C'est en quelque sorte se dire pour pouvoir dire les autres. Car dans une société patriarcale, traditionnelle, une femme ne peut pas prendre la parole et encore moins utiliser le « je » dont seul l'homme, le chef de famille, peut se servir.

C'est l'accès à l'école, coloniale pour la plupart des écrivaines, qui a permis à ces femmes de sortir d'un univers presque carcéral par la lecture en premier lieu et ensuite par l'écriture libératrice. Mais dirait Simone de Beauvoir à la fin de son livre *Le deuxième sexe* :

Les femmes ne dépassent jamais le prétexte, me disait un écrivain. C'est assez vrai. Encore toutes émerveillées d'avoir reçu la permission d'explorer ce monde, elles en font l'inventaire sans chercher à en découvrir le sens. (...) Un des domaines qu'elles ont exploré avec le plus d'amour, c'est la Nature ; pour la jeune fille, pour la femme qui n'a pas tout à fait abdiqué, la nature représente ce que la femme elle-même représente pour l'homme : soi-même et sa négation, un royaume et un lieu d'exil ; elle est tout sous la figure de l'autre.

C'est ainsi que sont perçus les premiers écrits de femmes, une sorte de récits qui n'ont pour seule devise que de se dire eux-mêmes, à défaut de dire le monde mais surtout les maux du monde dans lequel elles évoluent.

L'écriture féminine, selon B. Didier est « surtout une écriture du Dedans : intérieur du corps, intérieur de la maison. Écriture du retour à ce dedans de la mère et de la mer. Le grand cycle de "l'éternel retour" ».

Mais cette vision archaïque de l'écriture féminine va évoluer avec l'évolution de la société, ou plus exactement dans son enlisement dans un processus de destruction interne. C'est ce qui c'est produit dans les années 90, où écrire était devenu la planche de salut de plusieurs femmes qui ont subi l'oppression au sein de leur propre société voire de leur propre

famille. Il est évident qu'écrire pour une femme dans cette phase de l'Algérie « noire » l'a met sur le même piédestal que l'homme, car confrontés à la même douleur, ils disent les mêmes peurs, les mêmes souffrances, mais chacun à sa manière, en privilégiant le sujet sur le style.

L'écrivaine que nous avons choisi d'étudier n'est autre que Malika Mokeddem qui, à cette époque, a produit de nombreux textes « littéraires », ou plus exactement de « littérature de contexte et d'environnement », comme le dit Zoubida Belaghueg dans son article *Le roman algérien 1990-2000*.

Dans son roman *Des rêves et des assassins*, paru en 1995, Mokeddem dénonce les sévices subis par la femme algérienne durant ces dix années du malheur. Nous avons choisi d'étudier à travers ce roman différentes figures féminines qui appartiennent à un *ici* imposé, l'Algérie, et un *ailleurs*, la France, qui promet d'être salutaire pour la femme algérienne dans sa recherche de soi qui se traduit dans ce roman à travers la recherche de la mère.

Notre étude sera basée sur deux femmes, sur deux mères : Keltoum - la mère absente et Khadidja - la mère courage.

1. Keltoum : la mère absente

Je vis un visage jeune, qui me souriait. Mon sentiment d'irréalité devint plus fort encore. Je n'avais jamais vu frémir ces traits. N'avais aucun souvenir de baiser, aucune parcelle de vie à insuffler à ce mot : mère. Il ne m'était que l'absence et l'inconnu. L'absence d'une inconnue. Le visage sur la photo n'y changeait rien. Je ne pouvais pas perdre une mère que je n'avais jamais eue. Ni éprouver du chagrin par procuration. Je dus faire un effort pour ne pas éclater de rire et froisser la femme. Car sa peine m'intimidait et m'excluait davantage. (Le manque et l'outrance, pp.25-26)

C'est à partir de ce passage que se construit secrètement chez Kenza, l'héroïne du roman, l'idée d'aller sur les traces de la mère. L'invitation de Zana Baki, amie de cette dernière, étant une incitation à entreprendre ce voyage, Kenza traversera une mer qui la mènera à la découverte de l'absente et par conséquent à la découverte de soi. Le mot mère parcourra ainsi tout le roman et constituera l'étape initiale de toute entreprise de départ.

À la différence des autres personnages qui prennent la parole à un moment donné du récit, Keltoum est convoquée par le biais des souvenirs des personnages présents. Elle est absente, physiquement, dans tout le roman, elle ne vit que dans la mémoire de celles et ceux qui l'ont connue, aimée et aidée. Keltoum est donc une « impression » qui se présente à nous sous différentes facettes, celles que veulent bien lui donner ceux qui en parlent. D'ailleurs, en parlant de sa mère dans le chapitre I, *Le manque et l'outrance*, Kenza utilise souvent l'expression « *Il paraît* » qui marque le doute et l'hésitation de la narratrice quant à la véracité des informations relatées. Comme dans le passage suivant :

Il paraît que ma mère m'a enlevée lors de l'un de ses retours à Oran. Que pendant quinze jours mon père a écumé la ville et battu son épouse. Il paraît qu'on m'a retrouvée en bas de l'immeuble, le jour où ma mère reprit le bateau pour la France. J'avais deux ans. Il paraît que, par la suite, toutes ses tentatives pour me revoir restèrent vaines. (Le manque et l'outrance, p. 23)

Keltoum pourrait être une femme faible, comme toute femme algérienne. Mais, les mots qu'emploie Lamine, le demi-frère de Kenza, pour la décrire, mettent en valeur la force et le courage de cette femme différente de sa propre mère, une femme soumise et docile :

... Mais ma mère, elle, que t'a-t-elle fait ?

- ...

- Elle a pris la place de la tienne ? Elle ou une autre, qu'importe. Elles n'y sont pour rien dans l'histoire.

- Elles y sont pour beaucoup. Elles acceptent.

- *En tout cas pas ta mère ! Elle, elle s'est rebellée. Elle a décidé de partir, de tout quitter. Elle a choisi. Ce devait être une femme courageuse... La mienne est une victime et le restera comme beaucoup d'autres. Victime de toute une éducation et de l'ignorance, tu sais ça ! (L'Inespéré et le pire, p.33)*

En outre, la mère étant, du fait de son départ, liée à une ville, Kenza se trouve, inconsciemment, contrainte de choisir comme lieu d'exil Montpellier, ville refuge, ville mère, ville sur mer. Le projet s'élaborant après la rupture avec Yacef mais aussi après l'enterrement du frère d'un ami, elle donne une sorte de légitimité à ce voyage et à cette quête. Elle met ainsi des mots sur ce qu'elle ressent au plus profond d'elle-même depuis son enfance :

- *J'essaierai peut-être de retrouver une amie de ma mère. **Maintenant**, je veux savoir. Comment vivait-elle là-bas ? Comment était-elle ? Comment est-elle morte ? Est-ce que je lui manquais ? J'ai besoin de la construire pour me retrouver un peu. Pour supporter le reste.*

- *Tu n'as jamais essayé de savoir, **avant** ? Comment est-ce possible ?*

Je n'ai pas le courage de tenter une explication. De dire qu'avant de rencontrer l'amour, j'ai avancé tendue vers un seul but : un examen, un diplôme. Les uns après les autres, ceux-ci m'aidaient à occulter mes manques, mes complexités et la schizophrénie grandissante du pays. Dire que la découverte de l'amour m'a plongée dans l'urgence vitale d'y éteindre mes soifs. Dire qu'après les études, j'errais avec cet amour interdit, ne trouvant de stabilité que dans le travail. (pp.101-102).

Le projet de départ, qui couvait dans ma tête depuis la disparition de Yacef, s'est imposé à moi, tout à l'heure, dans la foule de l'enterrement. (Quand le savoir et le premier des exils, p.104)

Elle met ainsi, des mots sur ce qu'elle ressent au plus profond d'elle-même depuis son enfance et soulève toutes les préoccupations qui ont jusque là été tuées. Elle veut se reconstruire en reconstruisant la vie de la mère. Elle part ainsi sur ces traces et sur celles de sa propre vie, présente et future. C'est ainsi que, se trouvant à Montpellier, elle cherche avec une sorte de désespoir, jusque là feint, l'image de la mère sur le visage de toutes les Maghrébines qu'elle croise. Ne sachant à quoi pourrait ressembler Keltoum, elle a l'espoir qui, elle le sait, est vain de retrouver non pas l'amie de sa mère mais sa mère elle-même :

*Je mets du temps à comprendre la véritable nature de mon trouble. L'explication de cette pitié teintée de dérision qui m'étreint à leur apparition est ailleurs. Pour l'heure, la recherche de Zana Baki n'est qu'un leurre. **C'est qu'en chacune d'elles, j'ai le sentiment étrange de croiser un spectre de ma mère. Comme si elle était toujours là, ma mère, fantôme errant, en plusieurs exemplaires. Comme si elle déployait pour ma venue différentes silhouettes de l'absence.** Diverses esquisses d'un corps exilé. Je finis par m'avouer ça et mon cœur se serre. (Montpellier, p.120)*

Kenza, se crée une mère sur les visages de ces autres femmes. Elle croit que sa mère est là pour l'accueillir dans cette ville qui les a liées, l'une à l'autre, durant neuf mois, la ville qui a vu naître la fille et a vu mourir la mère. La ville où elle veut trouver un nouveau départ et un nouvel espoir. La ville qui lui donnera la mère par petits bouts et lui permettra ainsi de savoir :

(...) *Je veux juste savoir qui était ma mère. Comment elle a vécu. (Rêves de deux Sud)*

Les trois derniers chapitres du roman nous rapprochent de plus en plus de Keltoum. Kenza qui demande l'aide de Slim afin de retrouver Zana, est dirigée vers une autre Maghrébine qui lui raconte la mort de Keltoum. *Khalti* Aïcha commencera ainsi, par raconter la fin d'une vie, la mort tragique d'une femme qui a longtemps pleuré sa fille restée en Algérie. Aïcha la qualifie de « *Meskina* », la pauvre, car comme elle le dit: « *elle est morte. Y a longtemps et tristement* » (p.182). Le récit de la vie de la mère est fait en deux parties. Une première qui dit la tristesse de Keltoum et son désespoir à la perte de sa fille. La seconde qui relate les circonstances de la mort de la mère :

(...) *Ta mère a beaucoup souffert. Une femme très bien. Elle pensait à toi tout le temps. Elle pleurait et se lamentait : "Si j'avais su, je l'aurais volée la seule fois où j'ai pu la revoir. Elle avait deux ans. Mais je*

voulais faire les choses légalement". Ton père, il n'a jamais accepté qu'elle te revoie. Elle avait entrepris des démarches pour lui arracher ce droit. Il laissait traîner et ne se présentait jamais aux convocations. Elle projetait de t'enlever pour te garder définitivement. Mais quand elle allait à Oran, elle ne te trouvait pas. Il devait te cacher, ton père. (Des mots en paillettes, p.184)

Ces quelques phrases rassurent Kenza qui pensait être une enfant abandonnée et confirment aussi, ce qu'on lui avait raconté sur sa mère, durant son enfance. Elles constituent une première étape dans la construction de soi, car toute son enfance a été bâtie sur la base de l'abandon, du rejet. Le fait de ne pas avoir de mère la rabaisait en quelque sorte aux yeux des autres et la rendait fragile. Or, Kenza, qui a toujours combattu pour être traitée comme une personne à part entière, comme une fille, une femme capable de se faire une place dans la société. C'est pour cette raison, que le fait d'être orpheline constituait pour elle une sorte d'handicap, car elle se sentait fragile et fragilisée par cet abandon et plus tard par cette mort.

Dans la seconde partie, au moment où Aïcha reprend le récit, Kenza arrive enfin à mettre un visage et donner vie à la morte, à l'absente dont elle a toujours ignoré l'existence, en ce sens où elle se connaissait une mère, mais une mère fantôme, hors de toute présence réelle et matérielle :

- Je n'ai pas cessé de penser à toi, depuis tout à l'heure. Après coup, j'ai eu l'impression d'avoir eu la visite d'une revenante. Ta mère était même un peu plus jeune que toi lorsqu'elle est morte. Ça m'a fait bizarre.

*Bizarre. Car sa "revenante" vient à moi pour la première fois. Pour la première fois, cette étrange sensation qu'elle n'est plus un fantôme en déshérence dans les rues de Montpellier. Que les paroles d'Aïcha l'ont fait renaître en moi. **L'absente a maintenant mon visage et ma silhouette. Elle est une part morte dans ma vie. Et mon deuil se construit avec les mots d'autrui. Avec le poids de ses jamais, dépouilles des toujours** (p.201).*

« - Que dire de ta mère sinon sa mort ?

(...)

- Zana était partie pour Marseille depuis quelques jours. Elle a téléphoné plusieurs fois de suite à ta mère. Sans parvenir à la joindre. Keltoum ne s'absentait jamais. Son frère était mort depuis trois ou quatre ans déjà. Elle n'avait personne en France. Zana savait aussi dans quel état se trouvait son amie. Elle a abrégé son séjour. A son retour, elle est allée directement chez elle. Rien. Elle a appelé des voisins qui ont défoncé la porte. Couchée sur le côté, les mains jointes entre les cuisses et les genoux au menton, ta mère gisait dans une marre de sang. Elle était morte depuis deux ou trois jours. Mesquina, elle était tombée enceinte. C'est d'ailleurs pour cette raison que Zana était allée à Marseille chercher de l'aide.

(...)

- Par qui s'était-elle fait avorter ? Est-ce que vous le savez ?

- Non, on n'a rien su. Peut-être avait-elle fait ça toute seule avec une aiguille à tricoter. Zana le pense.

Les médecins qui ont vu son corps ont dit qu'elle avait l'utérus troué.

(...)

- Est-ce que vous savez qui était le père ?

- Moi, non. Zana, elle doit sans doute le savoir. Mais quelle importance ?

Ce qui m'importe c'est moins l'homme que ce qu'a pu éprouver ma mère pour lui. L'a-t-elle aimé, fût-ce quelques heures ? Je poserai cette question à Zana.

- Comment vivait-elle ?

- Comme toutes les femmes seules ici : le jour, ménage chez les français. Le soir, l'orgueil et l'amertume dans la solitude... Pour les funérailles et le rapatriement du corps, la solidarité des femmes a joué, certes. Mais la vérité est la vérité, Zana a déboursé la presque totalité des frais. (Des mots en paillettes, pp. 201- 204)

La dernière partie de ce passage montre le désir de Kenza de créer et de trouver un autre lien avec la mère. Elle veut connaître son histoire d'amour avec celui qui l'a mise enceinte et qui, elle le suppose, l'a abandonnée, comme elle a été elle-même abandonnée par Yacef. C'est par conséquent, Zana Baki, l'amie de la mère qui lui contera cette histoire qu'a partagé Keltoum avec un officier français rentré d'Algérie, comme elle, mais pas pour les mêmes raisons. Mais cette histoire est liée à un autre élément qui constitue, une fois encore, un lien entre mère et

filles. La mer, cette eau qui a longtemps fasciné Kenza, ce désert de vagues qui l'a portée jusqu'à Montpellier pour retrouver celle qu'elle a perdue :

- *La première fois que j'ai vu ta mère, elle m'a parlé de la mer. Et c'est pareil pour toi. Tu n'as pas les mêmes mots pour la décrire, heureusement. N'empêche, c'est une troublante coïncidence.*

- *Qu'a-t-elle dit de la mer ?*

- *Qu'elle a failli être son tombeau mais qu'Allah ne l'a pas voulu.*

(...)

- *Pourquoi la mer a-t-elle failli être son tombeau ?*

- *Un jour, j'étais dans le train, en gare de Marseille, quand une femme est montée. Elle avait des yeux hagards et un bouquet de fleurs à la main. Le wagon était encore vide. Elle l'a traversé pour venir s'asseoir en face de moi. Tu vois ça, une femme de chez nous avec, pour tout bagage, un carré de tissu noué sur deux robes et des fleurs ? J'étais sidérée. Quand j'ai essayé de la questionner, elle s'est détournée vers la vitre et s'est mise à pleurer en silence. Durant tout le trajet, elle est restée comme ça : le regard vague, au-delà des paysages et du temps, le visage ruisselant de larmes. Je l'ai laissée pleurer en paix. Je sais le bien que font les larmes. Avant que le train n'entre en gare ici, je l'ai vue qui s'apprêtait à descendre. Je lui ai dit : "J'habite à Montpellier. Veux-tu venir chez moi ?" Elle m'a murmuré : "La mer a failli être mon tombeau mais Allah ne l'a pas voulu". J'ai réitéré mon invitation. Elle m'a observée longtemps à travers ses larmes et a répondu : "Oui, merci". Nous avons passé plus d'une semaine ensemble avant qu'elle ne fasse signe à son frère.*

(...)

- *Ton père t'a arrachée à ses bras. Le lendemain, elle a repris le bateau pour la France. Elle a dit qu'elle a vu Oran s'éloigner puis disparaître derrière une limite d'eau. Elle a dit que c'était comme si on l'avait coupée en deux. Elle a dit qu'elle entendait tes cris et tes pleurs couvrant le bruit des machines du bateau. Que la mer était calme. Calme comme la mort. Qu'elle, elle avait la tempête dans sa tête. Un vent noir et les hurlements du désespoir. Qu'elle ne se voyait pas atteindre l'autre rive sans toi. Elle a dit qu'elle est restée des heures comme ça, déchirée, fascinée par la sérénité des eaux bleues. Elle a dit que tout à coup, elle a eu l'impression que la mer se mettait à monter, monter vers elle et l'aspirait.*

(...)

- *Mais elle a eu une chance incroyable. Figure-toi que sur ce bateau, il y avait beaucoup de militaires français qui rentraient en France puisque l'Algérie venait de gagner son indépendance. Parmi eux, il se trouvait un nageur exceptionnel. A l'attitude de ta mère, cet homme avait compris qu'elle n'était pas bien. Il n'était pas loin lorsqu'elle a flanché. Sans attendre une seconde, l'homme a plongé. Il a pu la rattraper avant qu'elle ne se noie. Il lui a tenu tête hors de l'eau le temps que le navire ralentisse et envoie une chaloupe. S'il n'avait pas été aussi bon nageur, ta mère n'aurait pas survécu.*

(...)

- *Quand elle a repris connaissance, Keltoum était à la Timone, un hôpital de Marseille. Il faisait nuit. Elle a dit que lorsqu'elle a ouvert les yeux dans le noir, elle s'est crue morte, gisant au fond de la mer. Elle s'est mise à pleurer. Une infirmière est venue la rassurer et lui donner un calmant.*

« *Le lendemain matin, le militaire qui l'avait sauvée lui a rendu visite. Il avait des yeux couleur de la mer et il tenait un bouquet de fleurs à la main. Il lui a dit, en arabe, que la vie était belle et qu'elle, elle était jolie. Personne auparavant ne lui avait dit ça. Elle l'a cru.*

« *Dès qu'elle a été seule, elle a pris son baluchon et ses fleurs et elle s'est sauvée de l'hôpital. C'est ce matin-là que nous nous sommes rencontrés.*

« *Malgré ses souffrances, Keltoum aimait la vie. Et quand elle revenait du marché, son couffin s'ornait toujours d'un bouquet de fleurs. (Vers des ailleurs blancs, pp. 210-214)*

Ce long passage qui résume la vie de Keltoum, procure à Kenza une certaine paix intérieure et un apaisement certain, comme si connaître la vie de la mère équivalait à se connaître soi-même davantage. Elle crée par conséquent une certaine fusion entre elle et celle qui l'a mise au monde. Keltoum et Kenza Meslem ne font qu'une, du fait de leur ressemblance physique, mais surtout, de leur amour pour la mer qui les unit à un pays et à une ville :

Ma mère a une existence vraie maintenant. Je crois que je commence à l'aimer. Et ça, ça n'a pas de prix. (p. 215)

Vers des ailleurs blancs signe l'accomplissement et l'achèvement d'un roman, d'un être et d'une quête. Mais celui d'un rêve aussi : marcher sur les traces de la mère par le moyen des

souvenirs et de la parole, partager ses angoisses, ses rires et ses larmes, même si au fond cela reste des impressions. Ce dernier chapitre souligne aussi la réalisation d'un songe, celui où KENZA s'imagine marchant dans un désert de neige. Il y a ainsi continuité dans le roman, dont le fil conducteur est le désert : désert de sables, de vagues et de neige. Et comme chacun des deux premiers déserts est lié à un enfant : Alilou pour le sable, Slim pour la mer, il est à penser que l'héroïne, à son arrivée au Canada, trouve un troisième enfant qui lui aussi, l'amènera à rêver d'une meilleure vie :

Je regarde la mer. Pense à mère. Au désert et à Alilou. J'écoute le vent. Je n'arrive pas à manger. N'arrive pas à dormir. N'arrive pas à bouger. J'ai des brûlures à l'estomac. Et des crampes plus bas. Le vent brame sur les maux du Sud. Baratte la mer. M'emporte vers des ailleurs blancs. Loin de tout. J'ai mes embrouilles d'origines, embruns de liberté. (p.222)

Cette recherche de la mère et de soi aura duré cinq jours. Leur répartition sur ces cinq derniers chapitres est inégale, cela revient à l'ampleur des actions et des événements que contiennent les jours en question. Le jour 3, qui renvoie aux différents déplacements effectués par KENZA et qui se rapportent à la mère.

Nous aurons ainsi retracé la vie d'une femme seule qui, à défaut de se soumettre comme l'exige la tradition, s'est rebellée et a choisi l'exil à cette vie de recluse. D'une mère qui, sous la contrainte d'un mari pervers, a abandonné sa fille dont le souvenir l'a mené au suicide. Une mère qui n'envisage pas sa vie sans sa fille, mais qui du fait d'un avortement, du refus d'enfanter une nouvelle fois, meurt dans la solitude et la souffrance.

Le courage des femmes algériennes nous amène à parler de cette autre mère : Khadidja : « *la mère courage* » qui, elle aussi, a souffert du rejet, celui d'un mari et d'une famille. Khadidja constituera ainsi, notre prochain objet d'analyse et conclura la partie consacrée à la femme et par extension à Slim.

2. Khadidja : la mère courage

Petite maman, douce maman, maman patiente et résignée, maman douloureuse et pleine de courage ! Sais-tu seulement que ton Jeannot n'est pas sorti de tes jupes qu'il ne sera jamais guéri de son enfance et que, quoi qu'il fasse et où qu'il soit, tu es avec lui, non point comme une image fugitive qui traverse en éclair la mémoire, mais comme l'air qu'il respire et sans lequel il mourrait étouffé... Ma petite maman, tu es notre miracle secret, car malgré tous les travaux qui usent l'âme et le corps, Dieu t'a accordé la grâce la plus rare : sous les rides et sous les cheveux blancs, tu as gardé l'âme fraîche et une réserve de joie, comme une source sous les roches qui jaillit de tes yeux fatigués.

Nous pouvons rapporter ces propos à Slim qui voue une certaine vénération à sa mère Khadidja. D'ailleurs, les mots qu'utilise Slim pour la décrire portent la même empreinte, celle de l'amour, du respect et de la fierté :

(...) Moi, ma mère, elle est tout à la fois. Elle est extra, ma mère. (p.138).

Moi je m'en fous des autres femmes. Je te parle de ma mère. Elle est UNIQUE MA MÈRE. (p.139).

Elle est trop bonne, ma mère. (p.143).

(...) je prendrai le nom de MA MÈRE et la nationalité française. Je suis le fil d'une femme seule, moi. Et fier de l'être. (p.174).

Ma seule origine, c'est le ventre de ma mère. (p.175).

Elle a pas des idées tordues, ma mère. Elle a la GROSSE-GROSSE NOSTALGIE. Elle a mal à son pays, ma mère. (p.176).

Nous avons de ce fait le portrait d'une femme qui est, avant tout, une mère dans les yeux de ce fils qui, pour appuyer ses dires et leur donner plus de fidélité, conclut toujours par : « *Ma mère dit, si ma mère le dit* ». C'est donc, en elle qu'il puise ses mots, ses vérités et sa vision du monde. A travers elle, qu'il juge ce qui est bon et ce qui ne l'est pas. Car cette mère qui s'est

sacrifiée pour son fils, a subi le déni de sa famille pour lui, a travaillé durement pour que son fils soit fier de lui-même et de celle qui ne l'a jamais laissé dans le besoin

Mais tu sais, pour l'oseille, je l'accepte jamais de personne. Sauf de ma mère. (p. 145).

Kenza nous conforte dans cette vision de Khadidja, car elle nous dresse le tableau d'une femme qui porte les marques du dur labeur, mais aussi, celle de la paix intérieure et de l'accomplissement de soi :

Elle a la dignité de celles qui s'en sont sorties envers et contre tous. Et "proprement", comme en témoignent ses mains qu'elle brandit comme des étendards. Aucun dard ne semble torturer sa conscience. Elle a cette lassitude tranquille que procure le devoir accompli. Elle est fière de son fils. Le montre et le dit avec la même délectation que son follet lorsqu'il affirme qu'elle est "UNIQUE". Elle l'appelle "kahlouchi", "mon noiraud". Il dit "mima" ou "la vieille" avec un minois pétillant à croquer. A vous faire craquer. (pp.198-199)*

La mère et le fils sont très complices. Ils partagent cette fierté qui les différencie des autres immigrés qui vivent en France. La propreté de la cage d'escaliers, l'interphone, toutes ces petites choses renvoient à leur réussite ou plus exactement à la réussite de Khadidja. Cet immeuble est une extension de sa personne, sa victoire contre ce monde qui lui a été hostile, sa victoire en tant que femme abandonnée par son mari. Cette mère et son fils ne répondent pas aux critères dont semblent être affublés les immigrés. Les préjugés et stéréotypes de Kenza sont ainsi remis en question, à travers ces deux personnages qui ont réussi, comme Aïcha, à amalgamer les deux cultures occidentale et orientale :

Dans l'appartement règne un mélange d'ici et de là-bas. Et je renifle des arômes qui me mettent l'eau à la bouche. (p.199)

Ce roman est très marqué par la culture musulmane, car les prénoms des personnages, femmes surtout, font référence aux femmes du prophète. Comme pour Aïcha, Mokeddem choisit de donner le prénom d'une des femmes de Mohamed à cette figure féminine, Khadidja, première femme du prophète :

Khadidja : Prématurée, précoce.

Très répondu chez les musulmans : première épouse de Mahomet, première femme adepte de l'Islam, elle l'a soutenu et cru en Lui.

Bien qu'étant contre le radicalisme religieux et l'intégrisme musulman, Mokeddem puise ses références dans la culture islamique modérée qui est, avant tout, une religion d'amour et de paix. Le fait d'introduire ces références dans un texte qui dénonce les barbaries commises au nom d'Allah, n'est pas fortuit. Cela montre qu'étant intellectuelle et femme libre, elle n'est pas ignorante dans les sujets de la religion et se l'approprie même. C'est le cas du personnage de Khadidja qui a sa propre philosophie en ce qui concerne les choses de la vie :

- (...) j'ai du porto. Une goutte de temps en temps ça fait du bien. Il y a longtemps, une amie portugaise m'en a apporté de son pays. Elle a été déçue quand je lui ai dit que je ne buvais pas l'alcool que j'en ai goûté. J'ai trouvé ça bon. Mais j'ai aussi du pastis pour les amis. Allah qui nous a créés ne peut pas nous punir d'aimer quelques bonnes choses de la vie. (pp.199-200).

Khadidja jouera aussi, un rôle dans la recherche de la mère. C'est elle qui dirigera Kenza vers Aïcha, elle qui la soutiendra lorsqu'elle apprend que sa mère est morte en avortant. Elle joue le rôle de mère de substitution en ces moments douloureux, comme l'a été Barbara Combes, la mère française qui renvoie aussi à la dédicace du roman :

- (...) *En fait, elle a été plus que ça. Pendant mon adolescence, elle était le seul adulte en qui j'avais confiance. Sa présence et sa compréhension m'aidaient beaucoup. Nous n'avons jamais perdu contact.* (p.111)

Aïcha, Zana, Khadidja et Barbara, constituent chacune à sa façon, une mère pour Kenza. Elles sont le reflet de l'amour, de la douceur et de la solidarité entre les femmes algériennes. Kenza et à travers elle Mokeddem, rend hommage à toutes ces femmes dans ce roman qui a pour autre objet, de leur donner la parole et faire entendre leur voix dans ce monde qui leur est encore hostile.

Au bout de sa quête, Kenza aura rencontré plusieurs figures féminines qui lui rappellent sa mère et l'aident à la connaître. Kenza lors de son départ se sent délivrée d'un poids, celui du doute et de l'ignorance.

Notes

- [1] Mokeddem, Malika, *Des rêves et des assassins*, Paris, Grasset, 1995.
- [2] Beauvoir (De), Simone, *Le deuxième sexe*, II, Paris, Gallimard, 1976 (1949), pp. 635-636.
- [3] Didier, Béatrice, *L'écriture-femme*, op.cit, p. 12.
- [4] Belaghoueg, Zoubida, "Le roman algérien 1990-2000", in *Algérie Littérature /Action*, Paris, Marsaédition, n°47-48, janvier-février, 2001, p.189.
- [5] C'est nous qui soulignons.
- [6] C'est nous qui soulignons.
- [7] C'est nous qui soulignons.
- [8] C'est nous qui soulignons
- [9] Ait Mensour Amrouche, Fadhma, *Histoire de ma vie*, Paris, Maspéro, 1968, p.17.
- [10] Dib, Fatiha, *Les prénoms arabes*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1995, p.53.

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Portrait de l'écrivain amoureux : Marin Preda vu par Aurora Cornu

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Abstract: *The paper aims at analyzing the conversations between Eugen Simion and Aurora Cornu, published in The portrait of the enamoured writer. Marin Preda. It is a dialogue between two writers, but more than that, it is a dialogue between a good friend and literary critic and once the wife of another writer, Marin Preda, regarded in different times and from different perspectives. The conversations are eventually transformed into a book, but nevertheless manage to retain the particularities of speech: the improvisation, intended and unintended repetitions, fragmented presentations, discontinuity and side topics. The result proves to be nothing less than remarkable: the dialogue captures the intellectual society of the 1950s and also adds interesting elements to the portrait of such a well known and spoken about writer.*

Key words: *Marin Preda, portrait, conversation, literary perspective*

Motto: « Je pense vraiment qu'il n'y a rien de plus important dans la vie d'un écrivain que son oeuvre. Marin Preda était l'homme de son oeuvre... »¹

Les interviews d'Eugen Simion avec l'écrivain Aurora Cornu connaissent deux éditions : en 1998, « Dialogues sur Marin Preda », édition ratée à cause des conditions d'impression, et la deuxième, en 2010, un titre plus énigmatique et peut-être plus inspiré : « Le Portrait de l'écrivain amoureux. Marin Preda », ayant une structure et un scénario critique tout à fait différent. Publié à une maison d'édition de prestige, le volume avec sa structure complexe et démonstrative justifie ses quatre cents pages : Marin Preda, « Lettres pour Aurora », Eugen Simion, « Dialogues avec Aurora Cornu », Marin Preda, « Pages de journal (1958-1959) », commentées par Eugen Simion dans le chapitre « Chronique d'une malaise ».

Les dialogues avec Aurora Cornu, comme pour le volume *Dialogues avec Marin Preda*, où l'écrivain écrit un *Argument* en faveur de son livre et, implicitement, de son interlocuteur, sont précédés par une ample étude introductive, un vrai essai biographique – où Eugen Simion fait le « portrait intérieur » de Marin Preda, un écrivain obsédé par son œuvre, amoureux, dans sa relation conjugale, au milieu de ses amis et de ses ennemis, un portrait moins connu. Chaque partie du livre est suivie par des notes qui ajoutent de nouvelles données biographiques ou expliquent les possibles questions des lecteurs.

La critique a commenté surtout l'importance de la publication et le contenu des lettres d'amour envoyées par Marin Preda à sa femme de Bucarest, Pékin ou Hanoï dans les années 1954-1958; on analyse le caractère profondément sentimental de l'homme, en contradiction avec l'image de l'écrivain, « réputé pour son caractère ombrageux et pour son comportement imprévisible et difficile »², voué exclusivement à sa carrière littéraire. Dans cet article, nous nous proposons d'analyser des témoignages sur Marin Preda et ses relations avec des écrivains et des critiques contemporains, sa passion pour la littérature, la philosophie, la religion et la musique, ses préférences littéraires et sa passion pour la littérature et la culture française.

C'est grâce à Eugen Simion que ce livre voit le jour ; l'idée lui vint dans les années '80, après avoir lu les lettres de Preda adressées à Aurora Cornu. Il découvrit alors un autre Marin Preda, différent de celui qu'il avait connu de ses livres et se proposa de provoquer à un dialogue le destinataire de ces lettres d'amour. Aurora Cornu revint dans le pays dans les années '80 et c'est ainsi que le dialogue commença à Bucarest, continua à Breaza et finalement à Paris dans les années '90. Ce dialogue n'est pas achevé, car toutes les fois que les deux interlocuteurs se rencontrent Marin Preda est leur sujet préféré.

Mais qui est Aurora Cornu et pourquoi est-elle si importante dans la biographie de Marin Preda? Née en 1931, poète, actrice et metteur en scène, elle est la première épouse de l'écrivain, dans une relation qui dure quatre ans. C'est elle la raison de l'existence et de la parution d'une partie importante du *Journal intime* ; pourtant son mérite le plus important est sans doute lié à la publication du roman *Moromeții*, ce que Marin Preda confirme dans une des interviews accordées à Mihai Ungheanu: « [...] Je lui ai dit que c'était un livre qui ne m'intéressait pas. Elle a argumenté que c'était un manuscrit exceptionnel que beaucoup d'écrivains auraient publié s'il l'avait écrit. Mes amis m'avaient conseillé d'abandonner le livre. Mais elle m'a convaincu de le publier et c'est ainsi que *Moromeții* parut, d'un manuscrit jeté dans un tiroir. »³

Aurora Cornu avoue dans une interview publiée dans le *Journal National* que c'est Eugen Simion qui a voulu parler de Marin Preda et qui lui a demandé le plus de détails possibles. Elle voulait mettre à l'abri ces lettres si précieuses pour elle, car elle les prenait partout avec elle, dans ses voyages, et elle avait peur de ne pas les perdre. Ces lettres l'ont toujours accompagnée, toute sa vie, partout où elle a vécu, changeant souvent de ville : Paris, Londres, New York et ensuite de retour à Paris.

A la question si ces lettres ne dévoilent pas de question trop intimes, l'explication donnée est claire : contrairement à Eminescu, qui ne soupçonnait pas que ses lettres seraient lues par quelqu'un d'autre que Veronica, Marin savait très bien que ses lettres seraient lues. Elles sont des textes parfaits avec une valeur littéraire. C'est une touchante déclaration d'amour d'Aurora Cornu qui aurait pu être incluse dans le volume *Timpul n-a mai avut răbdare*, sur l'homme et l'écrivain Marin Preda, ouvert à tous ceux qui ont eu quelque chose à dire, avec nostalgie.

La valeur littéraire indubitable des lettres de Preda est confirmée par Eugen Simion dans la préface du volume : « La lettre est un journal qui s'écrit pendant la nuit, une chronique des insomnies d'un écrivain prêt pour la grande cérémonie de l'amour mais aussi pour la souffrance. Il ne veut pas faire de littérature, mais la littérature s'insinue, sans qu'il le veuille, dans son discours amoureux. [...] Un discours amoureux où sa passion forte et irrévocable n'évite pas les clichés et la rhétorique du genre. »⁴

L'essai introductif de Eugen Simion, complexe et inspiré, écrit d'une manière sincère et unique, recrée pour les lecteurs du XXI^e siècle un portrait complexe et original de Marin Preda, qui finit par s'identifier tout doucement avec le personnage qu'il créé : Ilie Moromete. La beauté, le bien et la vérité, voilà les trois notions qui définissent son existence liée étroitement à sa création.

Le critique rappelle, dès le début, que les valeurs morales du monde paysan restent à la base de toute la philosophie de l'existence de Preda et que les grands thèmes comme l'amour, la famille, l'amitié, le respect pour les parents, la loyauté et la tolérance dans les relations humaines reviennent de manière systématique dans son œuvre. Simion fait l'éloge de la vaste culture littéraire de Marin Preda et de l'intérêt pour l'évolution de la littérature occidentale et les problèmes sociaux, sa préoccupation permanente de devenir un écrivain professionnel et de répondre aux attentes de ses lecteurs.

L'argument du livre est divisé dans des chapitres avec des titres suggestifs pour les diverses facettes de la personnalité de Preda : « Une nature stabilisatrice. Un moraliste cruel », « Une stratégie du détour, une tactique de l'ajournement », « Si je n'écris pas, je n'ai aucune raison pour vivre », « Ce que signifie être un homme moral », « Apparition d'un amour jeune et la parution d'un chef-d'œuvre ».

Nous apprenons que le modèle littéraire de Marin Preda est Balzac, un grand écrivain pour lequel l'inspiration compte moins que son imagination et son pouvoir de travail ; à l'encontre du grand réaliste français, Preda avoue dans ses dialogues, lettres et articles que

pour lui, comme pour tous les vrais écrivains, l'essentiel est d'écrire, dire la vérité sur l'homme, sur ses relations avec l'histoire qui tend à l'enchaîner.

Le critique divise les œuvres de Marin Preda en deux cycles : les narrations fatigantes, qui l'exaspèrent, le rendent malade et le font penser à renoncer à sa carrière d'écrivain (*Moromeții II, Risipitorii*, une partie de *Cel mai iubit dintre pământeni*) et les narrations sereines, malgré leur contenu tragique, des livres qui soulagent, écrits assez vite, avec le sentiment que la maladie peut être vaincue (*Moromeții I, Intrusul, Marele singuratic, Viața ca o pradă*). D'habitude, les livres écrits sans trop de peine sont les livres vécus, pendant que les narrations qui le terrorisent et mettent sa patience créatrice à l'épreuve sont ses œuvres d'imagination.

Mihai Ungheanu remarque et analyse, dans la carrière de Marin Preda, le conflit entre vocation et aspiration : d'un côté, le fait que seulement ce qu'un écrivain a connu directement, a vécu et subi a de la valeur, conviction qui contredit le désir de l'écrivain de réussir à dépasser l'expérience de son enfance et du monde paysan et d'écrire de la prose d'imagination, d'inventer des sujets qu'il n'a pas vécus. Comment s'entendent ces exigences ? Pas trop bien, mais elles peuvent coexister et se succéder dans la pensée d'un créateur.

Ces dialogues qui se déroulent en trois étapes : septembre 1983, août 1985 et juillet 1994, gardent les signes de l'oralité: improvisation, fragmentation, répétitions volontaires et surtout involontaires, discontinuités, mots inutiles, parenthèses, égarement du sujet et retour au même sujet. C'est une décision inspirée, car ces échanges littéraires se construisent comme un duel où personne ne cède rien à l'autre ; une transformation littéraire diminuerait sa saveur. Il est aussi intéressant à noter la manière dont Eugen Simion rappelle à Aurora Cornu, sous diverses formes et à divers moments, qu'il attend d'elle une explication logique pour avoir quitté Marin Preda ; la poétesse se défend en affirmant son indépendance littéraire et personnelle.

Un des aspects les plus importants du *Portrait de l'écrivain amoureux* est la reconstitution de l'atmosphère littéraire des années '50 et l'histoire des amitiés de Marin Preda avec d'autres écrivains ou critiques littéraires, des amitiés plus ou moins durables. Car les amitiés littéraires changent, paraît-il, aussi en fonction des intérêts littéraires profonds ou du succès dû à la publication d'un nouveau roman. Les dialogues portent sur Ovid S. Crohmălniceanu – le critique auquel Preda confie ses manuscrits avant de les envoyer à la maison d'édition, rôle qui revient ultérieurement à Eugen Simion ; Miron Radu Paraschivescu – le premier qui reconnaît son talent et publie sa première nouvelle, Mihai Gafița, Fănuș Neagu, Ion Băieșu, les poètes Mircea Dinescu, Adrian Păunescu et Ion Caraion ou le critique Mihai Ungheanu, l'auteur de l'importante monographie *Vocation et aspiration*.

La publication du roman *Moromeții* signifie la re-confirmation du grand talent de l'écrivain et, en même temps, la rupture avec beaucoup de ses amis, parmi lesquels les plus connus, Paul Georgescu et Petru Dumitriu. « Les amitiés littéraires, précise Eugen Simion, se nouaient et se dénouaient en fonction de Preda. Les critiques et les prosateurs se groupaient par rapport à Preda. Ce n'était pas facile d'être un grand écrivain en Roumanie. »⁵

Les dialogues avec Aurora Cornu entament des thèmes des plus divers, de la critique biographique au style de l'écrivain, de la littérature existentialiste aux convictions et aux idéaux qui définissent la personnalité de l'écrivain. Les deux interlocuteurs se rappellent que par dessus tout, Marin Preda était un homme du métier. Il travaillait à parfaire son art. Il avait l'orgueil du maître qui comparait son travail avec l'autre et constatait qu'il n'était pas inférieur. « C'était l'orgueil d'un travailleur, d'un maître travailleur. Il devenait humble et s'émerveillait devant les mystères et les découvertes de la vie. Il n'avait pas d'orgueil mais la vanité du créateur de belles choses. Quand il travaillait, il était parfaitement humble et ouvert

à toutes les suggestions. Cette réceptivité devait être considérée, probablement, comme politique de travail. »⁶

Dans plusieurs confessions, Marin Preda avoue son plaisir de lire et de relire les grands réalistes français : Balzac, Stendhal, Flaubert. Il affirme avoir lu quatre ou cinq mille pages de Balzac et se demande d'où savait cet écrivain « *grand comme Machiavel* », comment se comporte une vieille fille et comment elle devient. Car surprendre une fois la psychologie originale d'un personnage, cela tient à la force du talent de l'écrivain, mais faire cela maintes fois différemment, là c'est la grandeur du génie. En relisant *La Chartreuse de Parme* Stendhal, le roman lui semble presque parfait : grâce à son style, la narration des passions, bien que démodée, gagne quelque chose de très fort.

La passion pour la lecture et le plaisir de relire « des livres sans lesquels il est difficile ou impossible à vivre » est confirmée par Aurora Cornu: « Il lisait Tolstoï, lisait Stendhal, lisait *Madame Bovary*. [...] Il a énormément lu. En profondeur. Il a relu de nombreux livres. Marin était passionné par la lecture. [...] Marin avait cette théorie: ne lis jamais avant les critiques, commence avec l'oeuvre. Ensuite consulte les critiques et compare leurs opinions avec les tiennes. Commence avec l'auteur, quelque difficile qu'il soit. Et l'auteur n'est pas si difficile que ça. Les grands auteurs ont le grand désir d'être clairs. C'est un signe. »⁷

La stratégie épique de Marin Preda est une stratégie du délai, de l'accumulation lente, de l'ambiguïté calculée, sa voie dans l'œuvre est toujours sinueuse, apprécie Eugen Simion. Preda démontre d'ailleurs que l'on peut écrire de la prose moderne avec des sujets urbains ou ruraux, et pense à Proust qui accorde la même importance à Swann et à la domestique Françoise. Ses modèles littéraires sont Tolstoï, Stendhal, Flaubert ; il est l'adepte d'une écriture claire, travaillée, arrangée. Il travaille chaque phrase, s'attarde à chaque mot ou tournure de phrase et c'est pourquoi il s'interdit d'écrire plus d'une page et demie par jour.

Tous les souvenirs sur Marin Preda sont précieux et apportent des confirmations et des compléments au portrait de celui qui voulait être un écrivain qui ne mente pas et qui n'abandonne pas l'homme. Il considère que pour un écrivain, dans le monde où il est né, la mission la plus importante est de faire de la littérature.

Notes

[1] Eugen Simion, *Portretul scriitorului îndrăgostit. Marin Preda*, Editions Muzeul Național al Literaturii Române, Bucarest, 2010, p. 212.

[2] *Ibidem*, p. 6.

[3] Mihai Ungheanu, *Interviuri neconvenționale*, Editions Cartea Românească, Bucarest, 1982, p. 30.

[4] Eugen Simion, *Portretul scriitorului îndrăgostit. Marin Preda*, Editions Muzeul Național al Literaturii Române, Bucarest, 2010, p. 23.

[5] *Ibidem*, p. 209.

[6] *Ibidem*, p. 216.

[7] *Ibidem*, p. 185.

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La dualité identitaire dans *L'Enfant de sable* et *La Nuit sacrée* de Tahar Ben Jelloun

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Abstract: *L'Enfant de Sable* and *La Nuit Sacrée*, two texts in which Tahar Ben Jelloun wavers between reality and fiction. A father takes an intolerable and criminal decision, motivated by a sense of divine injustice: he diverts the existing laws for the sole purpose of creating an illusion, according to his desire for a son. His eighth daughter will be declared and presented as a male named Ahmed. We will analyze the impact of this dual identity. At first we try to see how to find a balanced identity that could reconcile the carnal and the spiritual when it is divided between two images of the body, while in the second part, we will examine how this division and the transition of each other through processes of self ambiguous multiplier. In the third part, we will see that the quest for that person is no longer that of a man or a woman, but is to find someone to whom to speak. She found an identity because it is not finally recognized as male or female but as a human being.

Mots-clés : Tahar Ben Jelloun, dualité identitaire, *La Nuit Sacrée*, *L'Enfant de sable*, le dédoublement, la recherche de l'identité féminine, personnages féminins.

L'Enfant de Sable est le sixième roman de Tahar Ben Jelloun ; salué par la presse, dès sa parution, il a conquis un immense public. *La Nuit sacrée* (Prix Goncourt 1987), prolonge et amplifie les thèmes de *L'Enfant de sable*. Deux textes dans lesquels l'auteur vacille entre la réalité et la fiction. Rappelons en les données : un père intolérant prend une décision criminelle, provoquée par le sentiment de l'injustice divine : il détourne les lois existantes dans le seul but d'instaurer une illusion conforme à son désir d'avoir un fils. Sa huitième fille sera déclarée et présentée comme un mâle prénommé Ahmed. La tentative de maintenir cette situation tout à fait contre-nature du point de vue sexuel et identitaire s'avèrera de plus en plus complexe au fil des ans. Dans son « Moi social », Ahmed vit donc dans les milieux des hommes et profite de tous les privilèges que cette identité masculine lui offre. Il va même pousser ce détournement jusqu'à l'absurde et prendre pour femme une cousine handicapée.

Dans *L'Enfant de sable* la stratégie narrative est organisée autour de sept portes et de sept conteurs qui nous permettent d'avoir accès à l'histoire d'Ahmed. Par une série d'oppositions qui permettent plusieurs interprétations, les conteurs essaient de répondre chacun à sa manière à la question de savoir comment Ahmed qui ne sent plus une personne « entière », arrive à survivre. Car comment le peut-on lorsqu'on est détaché de son corps, ou lorsqu'on est divisé entre une double identité, entre deux types de sentiments régis eux-mêmes par deux forces opposées : d'une part le désir d'autodestruction, de l'autre la volonté de fuite vers le monde. L'autodestruction se manifeste dans son mariage avec Fatima. C'est un mariage entre deux exclus : Fatima est victime d'un corps ruiné par la maladie, et est enfermée parce qu'elle ne peut assumer son rôle de femme reproductrice; Ahmed est contraint d'assumer un corps qui ne lui appartient pas et qui suscite en lui un désir de se perdre – désir qui est non seulement une réaction temporaire en face d'une situation particulière, mais une conduite fondamentale vis-à-vis de son existence. En face de situations qui menacent à ce point leur identité et leur être, ces deux individus ne trouvent aucune perspective réelle pour échapper à leur condition impossible. Ils sont incapables de remplir le « rôle » que la société attend d'eux. Et Fatima, refoulant son désir sexuel, voit en Ahmed son double. Ce sentiment de double et leur souffrance commune la rapprochent de lui. C'est elle qui lui fait comprendre que son désir de s'intégrer dans la société masculine, n'empêche pas qu'il est avant tout une femme souffrante, et c'est sur la base de cette dualité qu'elle l'oriente vers la nécessité de réfléchir. Il semble que l'impossibilité d'accéder à une existence physique et légale plonge Ahmed dans un état d'aliénation. Aussi, en se trouvant réduit à n'être

qu'une victime menacée, dans l'attente de son sort, il décide de fuir pour défendre son identité. Ce sont les conteurs de *La Nuit sacrée* qui nous apprendrons la suite de l'histoire : comment après la mort du père, Ahmed est devenu Zahra : comment le père l'a libéré finalement de ce destin et de sa lourde identité masculine.

Nous analyserons donc l'impact de cette dualité identitaire. Dans un premier temps nous nous essayerons de voir comment trouver une identité équilibrée qui puisse concilier le charnel et le spirituel quand on est divisé entre deux images du corps, tandis que dans la deuxième partie, nous étudierons ce dédoublement et comment la transition de l'un à l'autre passe par des procédés ambigus de démultiplication du moi. Nous verrons enfin, dans la troisième partie, que la quête de cette personne n'est alors plus celle d'un homme ou d'une femme-son intime blessure générique-, mais consiste à trouver un interlocuteur à qui adresser la parole. Elle retrouve une identité parce qu'elle est reconnue enfin non comme homme *ou* femme mais comme être humain.

Le nom, le visage et la voix

Lorsqu'un nouveau-né vient au monde, il est en attente d'identité. La première étape de son obtention est symbolique par le baptême. Selon un ancien texte chrétien, les enfants non baptisés ne vont ni dans le royaume des cieux, ni en Enfer, mais restent dans un séjour lumineux, situé entre l'Enfer et le Paradis, espace fermé et entouré de véritables murailles¹.

Dans *l'Enfant de sable*, le baptême du nouveau-né, huitième enfant dans la famille, s'effectue au cours d'une grande cérémonie. Le père donne à son enfant le prénom de Mohammed Ahmed, l'un des noms du prophète. C'est le moment où le nouveau-né voit les cieux s'ouvrir devant son âme. Et puisque ce prénom constitue l'identité première de l'enfant, il devient éternel : il s'inscrit dans « le livre de la vie », qui se trouve dans le ciel où, normalement, tous les êtres humains sont inscrits. Le père d'Ahmed, lui, annonce la nouvelle de la naissance de son enfant dans un grand journal national : « Il vient d'illuminer la vie et le foyer du votre serviteur et dévoué potier Hadj Ahmed Souleimane. Un garçon-que Dieu le protège et lui donne longue vie est né à 10 heures. Nous l'avons nommé Mohammed Ahmed »².

Or cette nomination est en réalité une condamnation à subir un destin tragique, avec ses terribles conséquences. Le père, jouant le rôle de Dieu, enferme son enfant dans cet espace entouré de murailles qui devient pour lui son nom. C'est en grandissant et après avoir pris conscience de son état intérieur qu'Ahmed entame sa quête identitaire, qui prend peu à peu une dimension dramatique, car le nom qu'il porte ne correspond pas à sa nature biologique. Et ce n'est que bien plus tard, lors de la vingt-septième nuit de Ramadan, nuit sacrée, nuit d'ouverture des portes du ciel, que le père mourant convoque son enfant pour lui donner un nom féminin conforme à son corps.

Dans *La Nuit Sacrée*, le nom d'Ahmed disparaît, donc, puisqu'il est changé en Zahra ; mais tout montre que l'identité reste malgré tout en danger. Car ce nom porte une double signification : « Zahra » signifie en arabe (fleur) et, au sens figuré (se profiler), (se révéler), (visible). Les deux étymons se combinent pour dresser l'avenir de Zahra et la promesse d'une nouvelle identité. C'est pour qu'elle puisse vraiment exister et retrouver sa voie, loin de cette « maison maudite », avec un autre destin qui serait « meilleur » que celui de toutes ces femmes du pays, que le père la libère en lui disant : « Tu viens de naître, cette nuit, la vingt-septième... Tu es une femme... Laisse ta beauté te guider. Il n'y a plus rien à craindre. La nuit du destin te nomme Zahra, fleur des fleurs, grâce, enfant de l'éternité, tu es le temps qui se maintient dans le verset du silence... »³.

Zahra quitte alors la demeure familiale, passe par des villes anonymes, rencontre des inconnus. Sa forme se modifie, passant de celle d'un garçon manqué à celle d'une femme

fatale. Elle n'est cependant encore ni homme ni femme, et a besoin d'une période de transition pour pouvoir « se définir » enfin. Son changement d'apparence n'est qu'une métamorphose externe. Le deuxième aspect de son enquête concernant sa personne et son identité est d'ordre plus métaphysique, car Zahra n'a connu jusqu'à ce moment que les sentiments d'un corps vide. Elle écrit ainsi : « Comment vous répondre alors que je ne me suis pas encore retrouvée et que je ne connais que des émotions inverses, venant d'un corps trahi, réduit à une demeure vide, sans âme ... »⁴. Il lui faut donc parvenir à se reconquérir, à entrer en elle-même.

Pour en revenir au nom, il faut noter qu'Ahmed-Zahra est virtuellement riche de tous les noms possibles : entre la lettre « A », première lettre de l'alphabet, et la lettre « Z », dernière lettre, il y a toutes les autres. Mais le personnage ne s'étant jamais construit son identité, Ahmed-Zahra préfère garder l'anonymat.

D'ailleurs, la première personne qui l'appelle « Zahra » est Oum-Abbas, mère incestueuse du patron de cirque : baptême ironique taché par l'altération. Le prénom « Zahra » y est assorti d'un surnom cruel « Amirat Lhob », princesse d'amour, surnom digne des princesses des contes merveilleux. Mais dans le milieu du cirque, où elle demeure quelque temps, le personnage, tantôt travesti en homme, tantôt déguisé en femme ne fait exercer une attirance sexuelle ambivalente, qui a pour effet de le faire glisser de plus en plus dans un état de désespoir profond et dans la marginalité absolue à laquelle la condamne le nom interdit. Être nommé c'est être appelé : le nom désigne la personne et lui permet d'entrer en relation avec autrui. Ainsi recevoir un faux nom crée une perturbation dans la relation à autrui. Cependant, dans le cas d'Ahmed-Zahra, il s'agit moins d'un faux nom que de l'impossibilité de nommer. Le nom interdit l'a ainsi conduit à vivre séparé du monde extérieur, isolé dans sa chambre haute, avec pour seul but de préserver son existence.

Être nommé c'est recevoir une identité. Or dans les deux romans, la plupart des femmes en sont privées : elles reçoivent le plus souvent un nom générique. La mère de famille n'est, par exemple, jamais appelée par son nom, et est réduite à sa fonction de génitrice. L'Assise, elle, est ainsi désignée en raison de son « fessier impressionnant ». Elle est aussi une femme abandonnée, à laquelle personne ne s'intéresse ni ne pose la question de savoir comment elle passe ses nuits. Quant à Oum Abbas, la mère incestueuse, elle n'existe que par le prénom de son fils, « mère d'Abbas ». Mais le cas de ces femmes est différent de celui d'Ahmed-Zahra : les premières ne reçoivent pas de nom, la seconde n'en a pas. Seule Fatouma, la conteuse, porte un prénom – mais ce peut être un pseudonyme, et on n'est jamais sûr de son authenticité. Ne se voile-t-elle pour ne pas le faire connaître ? « Fatouma s'arrêta un instant, se voile le visage avec une partie de son foulard sur la tête, baisse les yeux »⁵.

C'est le visage qui distingue les autres humains les uns des autres ; or ces femmes privées de nom n'offrent pas non plus les visages qui diraient leurs particularités. Et s'il arrive qu'il en apparaisse un, il est lisse et sans trait. Comme dit Fatouma on devrait en avoir plusieurs : « Dans la vie on devrait pouvoir porter deux visages ... Ce serait bien d'en avoir au moins un de rechange ... ou alors du tout... Nous serions juste des voix ... Un peu comme des aveugles »⁶.

Rappelons que le troubadour « aveugle », dernier conteur de *L'Enfant de Sable*, est le seul qui a reconnu Zahra. Aveugle, comment y arrive-t-il ? C'est que depuis son infirmité, il fait confiance à ses « intuitions ». Quand il voyageait, auparavant, il regardait et observait. Depuis sa cécité, il refait les mêmes voyages, mais il « écoute » : il a l'impression que l'oreille le renseigne mieux que l'œil, et c'est ainsi qu'il reconnaît la « voix » de Zahra, dont la description correspond à son histoire : « Je ne peux donc décrire le visage de cette femme. [...] J'ai rarement entendu une voix aussi grave et aiguë en même temps. Voix d'homme qui aurait subi une opération sur les cordes vocales ? Voix de femme blessée à vie ? Voix d'un castrat vieillit avant l'âge ? »⁷

Ahmed-Zahra est ainsi un personnage en transition entre deux identités qui sont en effet inscrites dans sa voix. Mais, pour le lecteur comme pour ceux qui ne sont pas aveugles, la représentation de l'image physique des femmes, permet avant tout l'expression de la souffrance qui s'exprime par ces traits. L'Enfant de Sable n'offre-t-il pas un « visage allongé par quelques rides verticales, telles des cicatrices creusées pas de lointaine insomnies, un visage mal rasé, travaillé par le temps »⁸.

Et Fatima est une femme « nommée », mais elle est victime d'un corps qui la condamne à mourir, et à ne plus être rappelée que sous les traits d'un fantôme. Le lecteur qui a lu *La Nuit Sacrée* sans lire *L'Enfant de Sable* n'a pas la possibilité de connaître Fatima, ni son rôle dans la vie de Zahra. Dans le second roman, Ahmed-Zahra fait référence à elle en recouvrant un rêve comme motif qui lui permet de parler d'un passé où existait une personne innocente, mais qui représente une période indésirable. Dans ce rêve, Fatima est présentée comme un cadavre échoué au fond du lac repoussant ; - puisque telle était l'idée que se faisait d'elle Zahra. Fatima, femme mystérieuse qui semble avoir beaucoup de choses à dire, est restée intacte, épargnée par les rats qui sévissent dans les profondeurs du lac. Son visage est empreint de sérénité. Avec sa robe de mariée un peu salie, Fatima morte poursuit l'homme au turban bleu. Un vendredi, elle l'arrête et lui dit : « Je suis Fatima. Je suis guérie ». Et elle lui est apparue chargée de fleurs. Elle revient pour visiter les lieux, observer les choses qu'elle voulait éternelles.

Le dédoublement

Privé de nom et d'identité, divisé entre la conscience de son propre corps et l'image de ce même corps dans la perception des autres, Ahmed-Zahra oscille entre un monde extérieur et un monde intérieur. La transition de l'un à l'autre passe par des procédés ambigus de démultiplication du moi. Le scripteur de son journal, auquel se réfèrent les conteurs, cherche ainsi à se reconstruire en un « moi » unique. Mais en rupture avec le monde qui l'entoure, arrivera-t-il à trouver un équilibre avec les autres et avec lui-même ?

Ahmed-Zahra est une femme consciente, secrètement, de sa féminité ; mais il est un homme pour les autres, et il doit leur offrir les caractères de la personnalité d'un homme. Contraint d'assurer une correspondance entre la réalité secrète de son corps et la reconnaissance de sa masculinité, par les autres, il se trouve dans un état de discordance entre sa conscience de son corps et son image extérieure. Dans un sentiment de désespoir, il entre dans une solitude absolue, et se cherche un interlocuteur. S'adressera-t-il à lui-même ?

Dans son journal, les lettres d'un correspondant inconnu occupent un rôle important qui peut être interprété comme une relation interpersonnelle. Certaines ne sont ni datées ni signées, et la signature en est indéchiffrable ou composée d'une « croix », d'« initiales » ou d'« arabesques ». Et cette obscurité suscite dans le texte même plusieurs hypothèses : « Sont-elles d'un correspondant ou d'une correspondante anonyme ? Ou sont-elles imaginaires ? Se serait-il écrit à lui-même dans son isolement ? »⁹.

Pour ces lettres, qui figurent dans le journal d'Ahmed en même temps que les réponses qu'il leur a faites, l'hypothèse du premier conteur est la suivante : le héros aurait rencontré un épistolier anonyme. Mais l'assemblage des lettres forme une sorte d'énigme qui rend difficile de croire qu'il s'agit d'échanges épistolaires. La lettre du 25 avril, par exemple, parvient pliée en quatre, et le correspondant y évoque son départ prochain pour une destination lointaine et inconnue, afin de se rapprocher de lui-même. Ahmed lui écrit le matin même, que, dans sa solitude, et par l'intermédiaire de l'autre, il se déplacera pour vivre ce voyage. Pris par un désir de fuite, enfermé dans sa solitude, il avait pourtant trouvé un moyen pour s'adapter à ses angoisses, car les fantasmes de l'anonymat peuvent aller au delà des mots. « L'anonyme », surnom du correspondant, propose un autre nom : il se fait appeler « Al Majhoul », adjectif qui, en arabe, signifie inconnu. Il vit les mêmes angoisses, les mêmes doutes et la même

solitude qu'Ahmed, et sa situation lui fait penser à la sienne quand il lui décrit son isolement : « Je suis réduit à une solitude absolue. Étranger au sein de ma famille, je suis négligeable, absolument négligeable. Singulier et isolé »¹⁰.

L'absence de toute communication entre les personnages peut expliquer la création d'un double imaginaire. S'agit-il d'un être spirituel ou d'un fantasme ? Le correspondant anonyme se métamorphose en créateur, et rend visite à Ahmed dormant dans sa baignoire au milieu des vapeurs et des brumes : « J'ai dormi dans ma baignoire [...] Un homme est venu, il a traversé la brume et l'espace et a posé sa main sur mon visage en sueur [...] Il passa ensuite sa main lourde sur ma poitrine, qui s'éveilla, plongea sa tête dans l'eau et le déposa sur mon bas-ventre »¹¹.

Ailleurs, il joue le rôle d'un double inverse. Il s'oppose au héros, le jugeant indigne puisqu'il a pris la décision d'épouser Fatima, et l'accusant d'avoir fait ce choix par vengeance : « Vous avez voulu cette liaison non par pitié mais par vengeance »¹². Ahmed ne pousse-t-il pas, en effet, les convenances de son paraître jusqu'à l'extrême quand il se marie avec cette femme, avant d'éprouver le désir de retrouver en définitive une correspondance permanente entre son être et l'apparence de son corps : « Mon corps soulèverait les pierres lourdes de ce destin et se poserait comme une chose neuve sur le sol »¹³.

Ahmed-Zahra est donc une femme bien consciente de son indenté corporelle et de sa différence avec sa propre image. « Il » devient ainsi maître du jeu. « Il » prend son père au dépourvu en l'obligeant à assumer les conséquences de son désir d'avoir un garçon. Jean Bessière constate que l'identité corporelle est le « lieu de l'ultime identification de soi » ; c'est elle qui préserve « la médiation de soi et du monde, de soi et de l'autre »¹⁴.

Le premier conteur définit le rôle de ce correspondant parlant d'un dialogue intérieur salutaire qui aide le héros à réfléchir sur sa condition. Il lui demande de sortir de cette solitude, d'abandonner les masques et la peur. Il est important de signaler que l'emploi de la seconde ou troisième personne ne renvoie sur aucun autre personnage que celui qui parle. De fait, le monologue intérieur d'Ahmed-Zahra inclue un destinataire bien problématique : s'adresse-t-il à lui-même en tant qu'autre, ou s'adresse-t-il à un autre fictif qui n'est qu'un double de lui-même ? Gillian Lance-Mercier souligne que, selon la règle de la réflexivité, un locuteur unique peut être son propre destinataire, et cela confirme la possibilité d'un dédoublement par lequel le conteur s'ouvre aux voix qui l'habitent, et qui rendent manifeste la multiplicité de la conscience.

Mais Ahmed refuse vraiment toute psychologie et tout ce qui nourrit la culpabilité. Il dit que l'échange épistolaire qu'il entretient avec son correspondant n'a pas pour but de reproduire la morale sociale. Selon lui, si la fatalité musulmane existait réellement, elle épargnerait les sentiments mesquins, petits et malodorants. Or, l'évocation de cette fatalité peut nous permettre d'appréhender la figure de ce correspondant, à partir de la conception arabo-musulmane selon laquelle chaque âme a un double céleste, son icône personnelle. Selon les croyances des anciens arabes, en effet, l'homme est doté de deux âmes principales¹⁵. Mais faut-il conclure à l'indépendance de l'une par rapport à l'autre, ou s'agit-il au contraire d'une même et unique puissance qui se manifeste différemment selon les moments de la vie ? On peut estimer que le « moi » d'Ahmed cherche à préserver son identité, mais, n'étant pas ancré dans le réel, demeure enfermé dans son propre système (entre son identité corporelle et son image extérieure). En s'adressant à lui-même, Ahmed se crée un « moi » intérieur, apte à s'adapter à des environnements nouveaux pour ne pas agir sur la réalité. Sa condition l'amène ainsi à vivre deux dimensions de son existence et à se doubler dans l'ordre de la conscience de la dualité de son corps et de son nom. En rupture dans la continuité de son moi, se sentant étranger dans le monde où il vit - tant dans sa famille que dans son propre corps - , il tente d'établir lui-même un « pont » entre son vrai moi et l'autre. Mais la transposition de cette dualité dans l'ordre de l'écrit (épistolaire) n'est pas neutre, et ce dédoublement peut aussi

apparaître comme la figure de l'écrivain à la recherche d'une écriture identitaire : n'est ce pas à travers le langage de l'autre qu'il se manifeste et s'exprime, transmet des connaissances et éclaire ses propres ténèbres ? C'est le besoin de l'autre qui devient dès lors une évidence...

Hommes et femmes

Il n'est pas un hasard que le terme « sexe » en arabe soit désigné par le terme « dhakar » qui signifie le « pénis », le « mâle », aussi bien que le « souvenir » et la « mémoire »¹⁶. D'une part le mâle et le pénis sont des synonymes, et constituent des appellations interchangeable, l'homme étant ainsi désigné à la fois par son organe sexuel et par son genre. En liant ainsi le générique au sexuel, chaque fois que l'on se représente le terme « dhakar » on évoque une empreinte psychique du pénis, et il est donc évident que celui-ci occupe une place primordiale dans la conscience collective. D'autre part, si dans la langue arabe « la verge et le souvenir ont le même étymon, à savoir « dhakara », il est clair que l'organe sexuel de l'homme accumule des connotations métaphysiques. Le pénis est associé indéniablement à la mémoire de l'homme, à sa conscience »¹⁷.

Le personnage d'Ahmed-Zahra, lui, est divisé entre son identité masculine sociale et son identité féminine réelle. Entre son vrai corps de femme avec toutes ses sensations sexuelles, même si il / « elle » ne les a pas vraiment cultivées, et le comportement d'homme qu'on lui a appris. Un corps avec de petits seins et une voix d'homme, un visage avec des traits fins, et avec une barbe.

Dans l'avant propos de *Par-delà le masculin et le féminin*, Claude Lévesque explique que la domination exercée par le sexe masculin commandée par un seul et même attribut « le phallus » ; l'avoir ou ne pas l'avoir, ou même l'avoir mais faire comme si on ne l'avait pas change la condition de l'être humain : « La présence ou l'absence de l'organe emblématique aura, à travers toute l'histoire de la pensée occidentale, fondé le privilège de l'un, la marginalisation de l'autre et, partant, la domination d'un sexe sur l'autre »¹⁸.

Cette différence des sexes donne le pouvoir à l'homme sur la femme et les oppose complètement dans presque toutes les sociétés. Sans vouloir aller plus loin dans cette direction, rappelons qu'Aristote définit la femme comme un « mâle mutilé » un « homme incomplet » et que cela ouvre la voie pour que d'autres penseurs comme Kant, Hegel, Freud et Lacan donnent de cette dernière des définitions à peine concevables, toutes ordonnées à l'idée qu'il n'y aurait jamais eu qu'un seul sexe de référence, symbolique car « le seul sexe apparent, perceptible »¹⁹. Dans la société patriarcale où l'héritage passe par la lignée des mâles, le père ne souhaite qu'avoir des enfants mâles pour que la chaîne de transmission des biens soit garantie. Le père d'Ahmed est obsédé par l'idée de laisser ses biens et son héritage à un fils, et non à ses frères qu'il déteste. Si le père d'Ahmed avait eu un héritier mâle, il n'aurait pas mis en marche le mensonge, auquel contraint la loi d'héritage islamique.

Dans le début de *L'Enfant de Sable*, la mère d'Ahmed est l'une des victimes du système : elle vit sous le règne du mari et, ne produisant que des filles, elle est traitée comme une infirme : « Tu es une femme de bien, épouse soumise, obéissante, mais au bout de la septième fille, j'ai compris que tu portes en toi une infirmité : ton ventre ne peut concevoir d'enfant mâle ; il est fait de telle sorte qu'il ne donnera – à perpétuité – que des femelles »²⁰. Elle est donc prête à tout faire pour être enfin « une femme reconnue comme une vraie mère » après la naissance d'un garçon. Elle consulte des charlatans, des guérisseurs, et séjourne dans un marabout pendant une semaine. Le père frustré fait ainsi subir à sa femme toutes les contraintes du corps pour qu'il puisse avoir un garçon. Et c'est cette même décision, qui est « une détermination inébranlable, une fixation sans recours », qui le pousse à faire également subir à sa fille d'autres contraintes du corps, jusqu'à l'aliénation totale. Les seins, organes féminins, ne doivent donc pas apparaître. La bande de tissu les étouffe et donne l'impression qu'ils poussent à l'intérieur de la poitrine, entraînant une difficulté de respiration. Les

menstrues sont une trahison de l'ordre, une blessure, une fatalité : « J'examinerais ensuite les taches de sang sur le tissu. C'était cela la blessure. Une sorte de fatalité, une trahison de l'ordre. Ma poitrine était toujours empêchée de poindre. J'imaginai des seins qui pousseraient à l'intérieur, rendant ma respiration difficile »²¹.

L'aliénation totale du corps d'Ahmed-Zahra est aussi une aliénation de ses sensations féminines et de sa sexualité. Le personnage a « perdu la langue de son corps » et il ne saura la retrouver qu'à partir du moment où il se sera approprié son cœur. C'est donc le corps qui va le guider dans un long chemin d'apprentissage, commençant d'abord par parler comme une femme : « J'ai perdu la langue de mon corps, je devrais l'apprendre et commencer d'abord par parler comme une femme... »²².

Cependant Zahra réussit à trouver un amour partagé, et à sentir par là – même son corps en conjuguant le charnel et le spirituel. Puisque le Consul et Zahra ne sont pas un couple ordinaire, leur amour est né dans un bordel : Zahra a découvert sa sexualité avec un aveugle, unie à lui par une « même blessure » et non par une « même infirmité ». Mais il est évident qu'entre les deux amants il y a eu un échange intellectuel qui les rapprochait avant même tout contact physique. Zahra a ainsi découvert la possibilité d'une union entre le corps et les sentiments, alors qu'elle ne pensait pas pouvoir jamais arriver à ce stade. Par cet amour né d'un « entendement » réciproque, d'une « intimité silencieuse », d'une « complicité » qui liait les deux corps dans le « silence » et le « secret », ce couple a renversé les normes et les conventions de la société maghrébine : ils ont fait de l'espace de l'interdit, l'espace de leur double épanouissement.

Le Consul vit également une relation incestueuse avec sa sœur, qui exerce sa dictature sur lui, et Zahra s'est méfiée d'emblée de la réaction de l'Assise car cela ne manquerait pas de provoquer cette haine aveugle qui anime la vengeance féminine dans une violence inouïe. Or cette haine se laisse d'abord parcourir chez la mère d'Ahmed-Zahra, qui souhaite ouvertement que la mort de son époux lui permette de goûter la liberté : « Ma fille ! Prie pour moi pour que Dieu ou le destin fasse que je meure en ta vie et qu'il m'accorde un mois ou deux de vie après la mort de ton père ! »²³. Son seul vœu est d'avoir un peu de temps pour pousser le cri du tréfonds de l'âme qui est tapi dans sa poitrine.

Car, si, dans *L'Enfant de Sable*, Ahmed choisi de garder son identité masculine et de ne pas revenir à sa mère en tant que fille, dans *La Nuit Sacrée*, c'est bien pire : Zahra quitte la maison afin de retrouver son identité féminine, mais les autres filles la quittent également – abandonnant leur mère dans une solitude absolue qui ne peut que l'orienter vers la folie. La haine de la mère est sans doute inspirée par la haine du père envers ses filles, mais c'est la même haine qu'éprouvent l'Assise et Oum Abbas face à Ahmed-Zahra, dont on aurait pu croire qu'une certaine solidarité féminine leur aurait fait comprendre la souffrance. Elles réagissent, au contraire, avec une violence à la mesure d'un sentiment intense de frustration qui les rend aussi malheureuses que la femme la plus soumise. Car l'une et l'autre ne vivent pas leur féminité, et cette détresse sexuelle se manifeste chez Oum Abbas dès sa première rencontre avec Ahmed-Zahra : dans une ruelle sombre, elle la coinça contre le mur « puis introduisit son médium dans mon vagin. J'eus très mal »²⁴.

Même si L'Assise apparaît moins violente, elle n'hésite pas à recourir à des mesures cruelles, puisqu'elle ne supporte plus de vivre déchirée entre le rôle d'un homme au hammam et d'une femme à la maison ou les deux à la fois. Ce déchirement identitaire mène à la haine, et l'Assise prend contact avec l'oncle de Zahra pour qu'il l'empêche de vivre en femme épanouie. Jalouse du fait d'une sexualité réprimée qui s'exprime uniquement sous une forme incestueuse, l'Assise dévoile à sa rivale cette relation entre elle et son frère : « Quand il était petit, je le lavais. [...] Il y prenait un plaisir évident, jusqu'au jour où ce plaisir, comment te dire ? Ce plaisir était précédé d'un désir. Il venait et mettait sa tête sur ma poitrine, il se collait à moi. Son visage rougissait et ses yeux ouverts étaient ceux d'un homme perdu errant dans le

désert. Il me disait : « J'ai envie que tu me laves... » Il n'était plus un enfant. Après, j'allais nettoyer le sol. Je ne sais pas s'il urinait ou faisait autre chose, mais il y avait des saletés partout, un peu comme au hammam en fin de matinée après le passage des hommes »²⁵.

C'est que L'Assise et Oum Abbas se consacrent à un seul homme : Oum Abbas est la mère d'Abbas ; le Consul n'est pas le fils de l'Assise, mais elle assume pour lui un rôle de mère. Et la frustration sexuelle qu'elles éprouvent l'une et l'autre produit des relations incestueuses. Deux figures féminines dont l'indépendance par rapport aux autres femmes n'est en réalité qu'un voile trompeur masquant mal les frustrations qui causent leur malheur. Face à ce déchaînement de haine, on ne peut comprendre le comportement d'Ahmed-Zahra qu'en considérant que la violence qu'elle rencontre alors joue un rôle important et bénéfique dans sa vie : elle est un chemin de croix nécessaire pour comprendre que « l'émancipation » qu'elle pensait trouver grâce à ces femmes n'est qu'une illusion. Car à la différence de ces mères – épouses frustrées, Zahra va jusqu'au bout de sa décision de supprimer son passé, donc jusqu'au bout de son destin, et elle n'éprouve pas le besoin de manifester sa haine sur des êtres innocents, mais sur son oncle, qui représente une figure masculine hypocrite.

C'est la haine de ces deux femmes qui conduit Zahra dans la prison où elle reçoit la visite de ses sœurs, poussées par un sentiment de colère excessive qui déborde l'imaginaire et à ce débordement répond plus ou moins également la haine ; une réaction à la déstabilisation de leur Moi, à une sorte d'irruption dans le règne du Moi d'une autre manière de penser ou de parler : à la naissance d'Ahmed, les sept filles étaient tenues à l'écart. Elles sont venues pour régler leur compte et lui faire payer le prix du mensonge, elles l'accusent jusqu'à la destruction de leur « être ». Soumises à deux forces opposées : d'une part, la recherche de leur identité féminine, de l'autre la vérité qui les sortent du mensonge. Elles se souviennent de l'épreuve de la circoncision d'Ahmed, quand le père a présenté au coiffeur-circonciseur son fils : les jambes écartées, et quelque chose a été coupé, le sang a coulé sans que personne ne pense que le sang versé était celui du doigt du père. Vingt ans plus tard, elles décident de dévoiler le mensonge et de lui faire une vraie circoncision, mais la vengeance doit être à la mesure des conséquences désastreuses du mensonge : « On va te faire une petite circoncision, on ne va pas simuler, ce sera pour de bon, il n'y aura pas de doigt coupé, non, on va te couper le petit chose qui dépasse, et avec une aiguille et du fil on va museler ce trou »²⁶.

Plus tard Zahra apprend que la gardienne de la prison est une esclave ramenée il y a longtemps du Soudan, sorcière, experte dans les méthodes de torture. C'est elle qui a certainement proposé aux sœurs de la rendre infirme et l'exclure de la vie. Quand elle a raconté au médecin ce qu'il lui est arrivé il s'est montré impuissant face à la corruption qui existe en prison, il lui confirme que la police ne mettra pas en doute la parole des surveillantes.

La fin de la Nuit Sacrée

La fin énigmatique de *La Nuit Sacrée* donne la possibilité de deux lectures : deux volets qui forment en se fermant l'un sur l'autre un diptyque. Une première peut être faite à partir de l'hypothèse de plusieurs conteurs de *l'Enfant de Sable* : il est possible qu'elle soit le récit de la mort de Zahra, seule fin logique, et libération pour le personnage. Dans la première lettre qu'elle rédige, adressée au Consul, elle évoque sa tristesse et la mort à laquelle elle se sait condamnée, elle se compare aux étoiles mortes : « Il m'arrive d'être atteinte de tristesse ; une stupide et lourde tristesse m'enveloppe comme une cape d'étoiles mortes »²⁷. Dans la prison, reléguée à l'écart du monde, dans l'épaisse couche des ténèbres qui l'entoure elle essaye d'organiser le peu de temps qu'il lui reste à vivre. Rappelons que l'apparition d'une grande lumière, presque « insoutenable » descendant du ciel au moment de la mort est un point commun que l'on retrouve dans les religions révélées.

Pourtant la lettre qu'elle a écrite au Consul est en fait le premier écrit destiné à être lu ; son destinataire n'est plus l'Anonyme. Elle confirme sa vocation d'écrivain, mais comme l'avait fait le Consul dans son rêve du hangar des mots, elle prend ses distances par rapport à un langage qui lui est indispensable ; un langage dont elle perçoit également les insuffisances. Elle exprime le rêve impossible « voix nue sans mot, sans phrase, juste la chaleur d'un murmure »²⁸.

Pour Tahar Ben Jelloun, la conception romanesque de l'écrivain emprisonné dans son monde ne suffit pas pour son inspiration. L'histoire racontée doit être fondée sur un fait divers, reçu, lu ou entendu. Puis par son propre imaginaire, l'écrivain l'élève pour lui donner la dimension d'un mythe. Dans le cas de Zahra, la mission que le mourant lui permet d'enrichir sa vie, Tahar Ben Jelloun met en valeur l'importance de la transmission des histoires. Pour Zahra le récit est la seule forme d'une libération longtemps attendue, mais elle n'était pas possible sans le récit « modifié » de sa propre vie. Ce sont ses expériences, les récits des autres femmes qu'elle raconte avec « patience » qui lui permette de découvrir et apprendre beaucoup sur les mœurs de « sa société, sur la mesquinerie des hommes, sur la grandeur et la faiblesse de l'âme »²⁹. C'est par les souffrances d'autrui que l'on peut se libérer de nos propres souffrances. Zahra rêve de malheureux qui furent oubliés dans un hangar parce qu'il fallait nettoyer la ville avant l'arrivée d'un visiteur important : « Nous étions le visage sale et indésirable du pays. Il fallait effacer cette image, exiler cette population, la faire disparaître, du moins momentanément, juste durant les quelques jours de la visite de l'étranger. »³⁰. L'autorité les a oubliés, ils se sont battus entre eux, il n'en reste qu'un qui devait aussi disparaître parce que son témoignage est terrible, et il lui prie de raconter ce qu'il a vu : « Rapportez ces paroles. Racontez à tout le monde ce que vous avez vu ici. Ce n'est pas un cauchemar »³¹.

Zahra est à la recherche de quelqu'un à qui elle peut parler, elle devait raconter pour se libérer et c'est à partir de là que l'on pourrait interpréter l'acte de raconter comme s'il était l'équivalent de l'acte de se libérer. En incarnant la voix de l'homme mourant, l'homme oublié, Zahra a commencé à parler intérieurement, répétant à l'infini ce qu'il lui avait confié et c'est ainsi que l'intensité de ses douleurs baisse : « La voix de l'homme mourant s'était introduite en moi jusqu'à se verser dans la mienne et devenir ma propre voix. Je n'entendais plus le mourant mais je parlais intérieurement, répétant à l'infini ce qu'il n'avait confié. Curieusement cette appropriation fit baisser l'intensité de mes douleurs »³². Dans sa prison, le corps de Zahra ne se définit plus que comme un « sac de sable », elle est obsédée par les personnages de son histoire. C'est dans une alliance forte et solidaire entre l'histoire de sa vie et celle des autres que ses récits prennent naissance. Certaines femmes venaient la voir pour lui raconter leur vie. Elles croyaient que leur vie était un roman, que leur destin était celui « d'héroïne méconnue ».

Zahra réunissait les femmes qui s'intéressaient encore à la vie extérieure, leurs lisait les journaux datés de quelques jours. Elles voulaient entendre des histoires des faits-divers. Pour les satisfaire, Zahra invente et rajoute, mais le schéma est le même : « un amour impossible s'achevant dans le sang ». Puisque son talent de conteuse s'épuisait assez vite, elle leur racontait toujours la même histoire, celle de sa propre vie : deux êtres qui s'aiment dans le risque et le danger de la clandestinité puis en découvrant l'interdit le drame s'installe, le « châtiment » et la « vengeance ».

Zahra utilise sa vie comme une trame à partir de laquelle elle donne libre cours à son imaginaire (faits-divers, histoires d'autres femmes et sa propre vie). L'acte de raconter se lie à l'acte de l'écriture, Zahra leur écrit des lettres, heureuse d'être utile, on lui donne un petit bureau avec du papier et des stylos. Une satisfaction intérieure qui l'éloignait de sa propre prison. Son métier « d'écrivain public » lui permet de reconstruire son monde. Un monde imaginaire construit à partir de concepts langagiers, de situations abstraites, d'images

mentales et de sa propre vie. Elle devient un rêveur diurne et elle voyait tous les personnages de sa vie débarquer comme des fantômes, elle les chassait sans hésitation et enfin ce sont eux qui étaient de mauvaise humeur : « Je les excusais sans hésiter. Dès que je fermais l'œil je les voyais débarquer comme des fantômes descendant d'un train en plein brouillard. Ils étaient de mauvaise humeur »³³. Le rêveur diurne est celui qui est insatisfait, qui a recours aux fantasmes et au rêve éveillé pour réaliser ses désirs « corriger la réalité qui ne donne pas satisfaction »³⁴. Pour réaliser certains désirs, l'écrivain est, lui aussi un rêveur qui a recours aux fantasmes et au rêve : cette double incarnation (du moi social et du moi créateur) qui sont deux instances d'une même personne fait d'elle une femme qui se libère.

Sa quête n'est plus celle d'un homme ou d'une femme, sa blessure générique, mais celle de trouver un interlocuteur à qui adresser la parole. Elle retrouve une identité parce qu'elle est reconnue enfin comme être humain. Un puissant sentiment de vérité la saisie, qu'elle découvre dans la parole et non pas dans l'identité impossible. L'acte de l'écriture lui ouvre la voie pour des expansions et des amplifications d'une identité pertinente qu'elle n'a pas trouvée ni dans l'amour ni dans la différence sexuelle. L'écriture dépasse la sexualité, et c'est par l'intermédiaire des mots qui emportent l'âme que l'être humain se définit et non pas le sexe (homme ou femme).

Zahra est en quête d'un espace qui dépasse toute les distances, et où les êtres peuvent se rencontrer. Partir dans un autre monde où elle trouvera enfin un sens à son existence, une identité. La dernière phrase prononcée par le saint (le Consul) : « Enfin, vous voilà », « oui, me voilà ! », montre que c'est la personne elle-même qui se représente...

Notes

- [1] François Zonabend, Pourquoi nommer ?, Cité dans *l'Identité*, Séminaire dirigé par Claude Strauss, Paris, Grasset et Fasquelle, 1977, p. 257
- [2] Tahar Ben Jelloun, *L'Enfant de sable*, Paris, Seuil, 1985, p. 30.
- [3] Tahar Ben Jelloun, *La Nuit Sacrée*, Paris, Seuil, 1987 ; p.32.
- [4] Tahar Ben Jelloun, *L'Enfant de sable*, Op. cit., p. 99.
- [5] Tahar Ben Jelloun. *L'Enfant de sable*, Op. cit., p. 161.
- [6] Ibid. p. 162.
- [7] Ibid. p. 174.
- [8] Ibid. p. 7.
- [9] Ibid., Op., cit. P. 59.
- [10] Ibid.
- [11] Ibid., Op. cit., p. 95.
- [12] Ibid., Op., cit., p. 98.
- [13] Ibid., Op., cit. P. 111.
- [14] Jean Bessière, « A propos de chamisso, Dostoïevski, Maupassant, Nobokov » in *Le Double chamisso Dostoïevski, Maupassant, Nobokov*, Collectif, Honoré Champion éditeur, Paris, 1995, p.9.
- [15] Joseph Ghelhod, *Les Structures de Sacré chez les arabes*, pp. 149-177
- [16] Thérèse Michel-Mansour, *La portée esthétique du signe dans le texte maghrébin*, Paris, Publisud, 1994, p. 108.
- [17] Ibid., 109.
- [18] Claude Lévesque, *Par delà le masculin et le féminin*, Paris, Aubier, 2002, p. 9.
- [19] Ibid.
- [20] Tahar Ben Jelloun, *L'Enfant de sable*, Op., cit., pp. 125-135.
- [21] Ibid., pp. 47-48.
- [22] Ibid., p. 96 .
- [23] Ibid., p. 52.
- [24] Tahar Ben Jelloun, *L'Enfant de sable*, Op., cit., p. 118.
- [25] Ibid., p. 111.
- [26] Tahar Ben Jelloun, *La Nuit Sacrée*, Op. cit., p. 159 .
- [27] Ibid., p. 153.
- [28] Ibid., p. 153.
- [29] Tahar Ben Jelloun, *La Nuit Sacrée*, Op. cit., p. 177.

[30] Ibid., p. 162.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., p. 163.

[33] Ibid., p. 174.

[34] S. Freud, « La création littéraire et le rêve éveillé », dans *Essai de psychanalyse appliquée*, Paris, Gallimard, 1933, pp. 69-80.

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Feminism in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*

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Abstract: *The aim of the present study is to analyse Virginia Woolf's contribution to feminism in her two works "Mrs. Dalloway" (1925) and "To the lighthouse" (1927). The study presents the very way in which she transformed herself as a distinguished feminist woman writer in her treatment of woman's helpless situation. She used her novels in order to show women from her period the way in which they could obtain meaning in life and realize their own identities. She unveiled, thus, through her novels the causes of women's oppression and gave solutions and gave solutions for their problems.*

Key words: *feminism, confusion, novels, woman*

The two selected novels of Virginia Woolf show a powerful commitment to political, social and most of all feminist principles. Virginia Woolf was one of those women writers whose image of life was conditioned by the forces of their age. She was completely aware of the damages of contemporary life and her writings completely and firmly condemned British patriarchal culture. The aspect of her novels is that of a satire on English social system. She found out that the emotional strain of modern life almost damaged the bonds of communication among people. She asserted that personal relationships provide the order and meaning of life, but together with the loss of meaning and social relevance, human relationships have suffered a serious blow. This terrifying state of confusion is expressed in Woolf's novels through the inability of her characters to communicate with each other.

Thus, in *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), Clarissa is trying to discover a way of communicating to the others, but she fails to overcome her sense of loneliness. In *To the lighthouse* (1927) even though the Ramsays and their guests live together, each is in fact an isolated, lonely soul. Virginia Woolf has dedicated her novels to the analysis of the miseries and loneliness of women's life that have been shaped by moral, ideological and conventional means. Miss Kilman and Rezia are outstanding examples of the cruelty of English society. Her aim was to create a world in which there is a correct balance between intellect and emotion.

Feminism can be defined as a movement seeking to enhance the quality of women's life by defying the norms of society based on male dominance and subsequent female which implies the emancipation of women from restrictions, norms and habits of society. Feminism demands that women should be not treated as passive objects but as autonomous subjects, seeking to obtain equality between women and men in all fields: moral, social, economic and politic.

Before the mid of the 19th century women were considered weak both intellectually and physically. Women were not allowed to work or learn, they were only educated to sew, nurse and paint and their only sole vocation was marriage. During Virginia Woolf's period people were affected by the collapse of the old concepts and values that influenced the entire conceptual world. Virginia Woolf had an acute awareness of the demolition and ravage of contemporary life and thus she criticized the authoritarian power that made autocrats out of husbands and fathers because she herself was subjected to a depressive atmosphere and patriarchal rule in her family and was also affected by her father's domination of his wife and daughters. After the death of her mother and half-sister, her father's demands and needs for sympathy and attention from his daughter increased. Her strong admiration for women was coupled with growing dislike for males' domination, represented by her father and step brothers especially. Given her strong relation with Vanessa, Virginia appreciated the need for women's friendship and continued to insist on the importance of women's friendship against patriarchal machinery.

Being very aware of the need for all women to rebel against the patriarchal system, Virginia Woolf examined carefully the literary works and biographies of women writers such as: Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte and many others together with their lives and the way they translated their resentment of males' dominance in literature. In this way she discovered that killing the feminine stereotype, "*the angel of the house*", as she called her, was a part of the main occupation of women writers. These women writers maintained their integrity and insisted upon their own identities against patriarchal society. She had a strong belief that an artist needs shared goals, tradition and continuity. It is in *Room of one's own* (1929) she stated: "Masterpieces are not single and solitary births, they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body, so that the experience of mass is behind the single voice." (Woolf, 1957, 68-69). So, in this novel she created a female tradition, because in order to kill the angel and create an artist, women have to create their own identity, talk about their own experiences and encourage feminine writing. Virginia Woolf was extremely convinced that women might change society's values and save it from self destruction. It is also in this novel that Virginia Woolf asked women not to talk about their experiences, but instead to talk about themselves: "For we think back through our mothers if we are women. It is useless to go to them for pleasure. Lamp, Browne, Thackeray, Sterne, Dickens, de Quincy- however it may be- never helped a woman yet, though she may have learnt a few tricks of them and adopted them to her use." (Woolf, 1957: 68-69).

Virginia Woolf dedicated her major novels to analyze the patriarchal English society. She portrayed different types of women in various contexts. She opened women's eyes on their inferior status and provided them with a female tradition to rely on. It is also in "*Room of one's own*" that she tries to answer the question of why there have been so few female writers. She refers this to women's minor status largely to socio-economic factors, especially their poverty and lack of privacy. She also exposes gender-consciousness. She was pretty convinced that men afraid of losing their power, disparaged women to glorify themselves. Consequently, women's writing is marked by the feelings of anger and fear, and men's writing is marked by aggression. So, in her feminist essay *Three Guineas* (1938), Woolf sets them apart from the patriarchal world and recommends that women must be in league together against patriarchy for the creation of a healthy and normal life.

Later on, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf portrays the impact of patriarchal society of England on women's life. She portrays the loneliness and frustration of women's lives that have been shaped by the moral, ideological and conventional factors. The action of Mrs. Dalloway is confined to a single day in June. On this day, Clarissa gives a party in the evening. Peter Walsh comes unexpectedly and calls upon her. The party brings together several other friends from her young days: Sally Seton, Whitbread and others. Clarissa holds the center of the stage and her love experiences are part of every warp and woof of the novel. There is her love-story with Peter Walsh, Richard Dalloway and Sally Seton. The most important love-story of Clarissa's life was that with Peter. Whenever she thinks of the past, of Bourton, the town where Clarissa lived with her parents before marriage, she thinks of Peter. She loved Peter when she was a young girl and still loves him. Memories of Peter keep coming to her mind throughout the novel. After she had refused Peter's offer of marriage, he went to India, and married another woman, but that marriage didn't turn out to be a happy one. At the age of fifty-two, he fell in love with a married woman. The relationship between Clarissa and Peter starts with love, but it has been marked with a sense of tension. Clarissa's soul craves for love and to be loved, but also wants privacy and independence of her own. In her relationship with Peter, her soul underwent a constant tension between love and individual freedom. Clarissa wants to preserve her virginity. She equates virginity with freedom as a result of an aggressive social structure where women were snubbed and despised. Peter is portrayed as a male dictator who believes that he has the right to dictate to her how she should

live and what she should do. Clarissa thought that if she had married Peter, he would have engulfed her and forced her soul. She gives reasons for rejecting him and marrying Richard. For in marriage a little licence, a little independence there must be between people living together day in day out in the same house; which Richard gave her, and she him (where was he this morning, for instance? Some committee, she never asked what.) „But with Peter everything had to be shared, everything gone into.” (*Mrs. Dalloway*, p.10)

Clarissa feared intimacy with Peter, and was unwilling to share him her feelings and thoughts. She was attracted and frightened at the same time. The reason behind not marrying Peter was her apprehension that he would not give her the kind of freedom that she thought essential for her happiness. On the other hand, Peter thought that she was cold and lacked female sympathy. He couldn't understand the importance of her emotional need. Peter is unconventional and visionary in society. He can't fit into the conventional society of London. He is able to see the worldliness, hypocrisy and insecurity of his society. In his youth, he aspired to be a brilliant poet. „He was deeply interested in the affairs of the world. It was the state of the world that interested him; Wagner, Pope's poetry, people's characters eternally, and the defects of her own soul.” (*Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 9)

On the other hand, „Clarissa possessed nothing except giving parties. Not that she thought herself clever, or much out of the ordinary... She knew nothing; no language, no history; she scarcely read a book now ... Her only gift was knowing people almost by instinct, she thought, walking on.” (*Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 11)

Clarissa is not a visionary in society like Peter. She gives parties and likes to bring people together regarding her parties as an offering, though she doesn't know precisely to whom. She compensates her need of warmth by giving parties and seeking the warmth that other people are willing to offer her. Clarissa oscillates between her need of love and her need of independence completely lacking depth of feelings and understanding, and being unable to see the inward troubled soul of society. She only sees the world's glittering body, but she knows nothing about social problems.

This tendency in Clarissa seems to Peter to be excessive, and has made him say that she would prove to be the perfect hostess. He thinks that she cared for rank and society. He sees through Clarissa the hypocrisy and insecurity of the society of London. „He always said sarcastically that she would marry a Prime Minister and stand at the top of a staircase. Clarissa felt such comments were pretty hurtful and often wept. The perfect hostess he called her (she had cried over it in her bedroom), she had the makings of the perfect hostess, he said.” (*Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 10)

Consequently, their relationship ended in failure.” Tell me the truth, tell me the truth,” he kept on saying..... And when she said, 'It's no use. It's no use. This is the end.'....., it was as if she had hit him in the face.” (*Mrs. Dalloway*, pp. 71-2)

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa's relationship with her husband hasn't proved to be successful. Throughout Virginia Woolf's presentation of Clarissa-Richard marital relationship, she emphasizes that marriage is not a guarantee of a happy relationship and mutual understanding between a husband and a wife in patriarchal society, even while living under the same roof. Clarissa rejected Peter because his love was too possessive and domineering while Richard's is not. In her decision to marry Richard, she chose privacy over passion. But whenever she thinks of Richard, she automatically thinks of Peter.” Clarissa tries to feel convinced that she acted wisely when she rejected Peter, but the virtues she attributes to Richard as a husband are obviously representing a pathetic attempt to view her married life as a total success. So she would still find herself arguing ... still making out that she had been right- and she had too- not to marry him... ..she was convinced; though she had borne about her for years like an arrow sticking in her heart the grief, the anguish.” (*Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 10)

Clarissa lacks effusiveness and generosity being unable to respond to male demands of sympathy and is unable to provide her husband with the kind of romantic passion usually expected in heterosexual relationships. She chooses an attic room as a refuge from the traditional female role. This kind of marital relationship caused a state of loneliness and lack of intimacy in marriage, loneliness without any sense of partnership with the husband is suggested through the narrow bed. Clarissa has to mitigate her loneliness through social life and idle gossip. She has come to accept that there is a gulf even between husband and wife. The following conversation presents an evidence of the casual nature of Clarissa-Richard relationship: "Some committee?" She asked, as he opened the door. 'Armenians,' he said; or perhaps it was 'Albanians.'" (*Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 132)

This conversation shows also that Richard is so preoccupied with politics more than his wife. In response to his loyalty to the social duties of upper class, he leaves his wife for a meeting that he does not care about. Again we find Richard invited to Lady Bruton's party without his wife. This action fills Clarissa with a sense of emptiness Richard is excluded from Clarissa's room and insists on her resting undisturbed because of a heart affliction. Clarissa mocks her husband's attempt at taking a hot water bottle as a substitute for her warmth:

„And if she raised her head she could just hear the click of the handle released as gently as possible by Richard, who slipped upstairs in his socks and then, as often as not, dropped his hot-water bottle and swore! How she laughed!" (*Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 37)

Woolf interprets Richard's withdrawal from his wife, Clarissa, as an attempt to impose strictures, on female desire under the garb of medical impositions by disinterested men of authority in medical profession.

Virginia Woolf called for excluding all masculine values of hierarchy, competition and dominance. She called for the society of women as alternative to the authoritarian structures, and insisted on the importance of women's friendship against these structures. Woolf found a refreshing freedom and mutual understanding in her relationship with women. She found it so secret and private compared with men. Virginia and Vita Sack-West experienced astonishing revelations with each other and Woolf wrote about it truthfully in *Mrs. Dalloway*:

„It was a sudden revelation, a tinge like a blush which one tried to check and then, as it spread, one yielded to its expansion, and rushed to the farthest verge and there quivered and felt the world come closer, swollen with some astonishing significance, some pressure of rapture, which spilt its thin skin and gushed and poured with an extraordinary alleviation over the cracks and sores. Then, for that moment, she had seen an illumination; a match burning in a crocus; an inner meaning almost expressed." (*Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 37)

In her youth, Clarissa, couldn't resist sometimes yielding to the charm of a woman, not a girl, of a woman confessing, as to her they often did, some scrape, some folly. And whether it was pity, or their beauty, or that she was older, or some accident- like a faint scent, or a violin next door (so strange is the power of sounds at certain moments), she did undoubtedly then feel what men felt. Only for a moment; but it was enough. Her love for Sally Seton was the most intense emotion she will ever experience. Woolf expresses this kind of relationship in the following words: The strange thing on looking back, was the purity, the integrity, of her feeling for Sally. It was not like one's feeling for a man. It was completely disinterested, and besides, it had a quality which could only exist between women, between women just grown up. It was protective, on her side, sprang from a sense of being in league together. (*Mrs. Dalloway*, pp. 38-9)

Sally was an anti-patriarchal woman asserting herself as a woman and demanding equal rights for women Sally was Clarissa's inspiration to think beyond the walls of Bourton, read and philosophize. "There they sat, hour after hour. . . . talking about life, how they were to reform the world. They meant to found a society to abolish private property." (*Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 38) Woolf describes Clarissa-Sally relationship as a gift: „She felt that she had been given

a present, wrapped up, and told just to keep it, not to look at it- a diamond, something infinitely precious, wrapped up, which, as they walked (up and down, up and down), she uncovered, or the radiance burnt through, the revelation, the religious feeling!" (*Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 40)

Clarissa broke the authorial patriarchal voice as uniting with women results in equal relationship. This kind of relationships was a reaction against patriarchy and for the creation of a society for women. Though Clarissa was attracted to Sally, she was stifled by the traditions of society. Sally Seton represented the forbidden in patriarchal society, and her vision was not shared and accepted by the narrow-minded people of the world. People like Sally aren't welcomed by society, and they are compelled to conform and resign. Her acceptance of the social roles and constraints of respectability prevented her from following her union with Sally. Her defeat and acceptance of these roles are clear in her reaction to the thought of a woman becoming pregnant before marriage. Sally mentioned that the housemaid had married the neighbouring squire and had given birth before marriage. Peter considers Clarissa's reaction as the death of her will."He could see Clarissa now, turning bright pink; somehow contracting; and saying, ' Oh, I shall never be able to speak to her again!' Whereupon the whole party sitting round the tea- table seemed to wobble. It was very uncomfortable 'The death of her soul.' He had said that instinctively, ticketing the moment as he used to do- the death of her soul." (*Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 66)

Sally Seton was also compelled to yield and accept the patriarchal forces. She got married to a rich industrialist and resigned to be a conventional mother. Both Clarissa and Sally were defeated because the only accepted female identity was the one that was accepted by patriarchy. We are introduced to Miss Kilman who has a grudge against the world. She lost her job as a school-teacher when the war came because she was suspected of having German sympathies. She felt that she had been cheated, and wanted to have revenge against the whole world. The cruelty of life drove her to seek solace in the church. Religion for her is a choice of despair. She failed to get that solace because the church didn't help her in mastering the raging passion of hatred. While religion teaches love, it could not fulfil its purpose of anchorage. She felt that she would have triumphed on this grim reality only by humiliating Clarissa. In humiliating Clarissa, she wants to humiliate the cruel world that knows nothing about her suffering and poverty. Under the pretext of religion, she is obsessed with the thought of possessing Elizabeth's soul. Miss Kilman hates Clarissa because she views her as a product of the patriarchal society by which she was victimized. Miss Kilman's grudge against Clarissa is expressed effectively in the following words: If she could have felled her it would have eased her. But it was not the body, it was the soul and its mockery that she wished to subdue; make feel her mastery. If only she could make her weep, could ruin her; humiliate her; bring her to knees crying. This thought determines her to repress her femininity by dressing like men, behaving with ruthlessness and adopting aggressive masculine values. An example of the unconventional woman is portrayed through the character of Elizabeth Dalloway. Elizabeth has ambitions to have a career and a professional life. She has planned to be a doctor, farmer, or to go into Parliament. The disintegration and lack of mutual understanding which mark her parents' relationship have their impact on her own life. Her father fails to recognize her at the party. When he does, he accepts her as a decorative object- a part of the trivial feminine world. Her mother feels shocked, and helpless on finding her daughter under Miss Kilman's influence all the time. Clarissa's helplessness as a mother is expressed, with a sudden impulse, with a violent anguish, for this woman was taking her daughter from her, Clarissa leant over the banisters and cried out, „Remember the party! Remember our party tonight.' But Elizabeth had already opened the front door; there was a van passing; she didn't answer." (*Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 139) Elizabeth has to choose between participating in the trivial feminine society of her mother or taking part in the male dominated

society. None of these choices is adequate example for the creation of a modern woman. But blending the emotional side of Clarissa with the ambitions of the professional life of Miss Kilman gives a promise for the birth of a new identity for women.

Lady Burton is an aristocratic woman and a representative of patriarchy. She is proud of her ancient decent, social status and style of living. She has an ambition to solve social and political problems. Lady Bradshaw is a classical example of the upper class Victorian woman. She obeys her husband and responds fully to his effort to attain power and domination over her. She keeps herself busy in the trivial life of attending dinner-parties.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the dark picture of patriarchal society is portrayed through Septimus-Rezia relationship. Septimus had gone to war with a sense of total dedication to the ideal of freedom which was seriously threatened by the German hordes. The grim experience of war has given him a new vision of the truth. He is able to see the painful reality of English society and wouldn't accept the world as different from what he actually sees it. This vision of Septimus makes him an insane person through his doctors and people's eyes. He married Rezia without loving her because he couldn't stay alone at night. Rezia suffers silently and alone because her husband does not want to have a child because he rejects to join patriarchy by becoming a father himself. „Rezia finds herself alone in a foreign country without a husband or a child. She was very lonely, she was very unhappy! She cried for the first time since they were married. Far away he heard her sobbing; he heard it accurately, he noticed it distinctively; he compared it to a piston thumping. But he felt nothing. His wife was crying, and he felt nothing; only each time she sobbed in this profound, this silent, this hopeless way, he descended another step into the pit.” (*Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 100)

Woolf compares Rezia to a flower attempting to protect her battered husband with her maternal petals: „Sitting close, sitting besides him, he thought, as if all her petals were about her. She was a flowering tree; and through her branches looked out the face of a lawgiver, who had reached a sanctuary where she feared no one; not Holmes; not Bradshaw; a miracle, a triumph, the last and greatest.” (*Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 163)

Rezia tries to restore her marriage by refusing to separate from her husband, but Dr. Holmes, „the agent of death” pushed his way up to Septimus, who jumps to death, and Rezia is driven to darkness and destruction. Septimus's death is a moment of vision for Clarissa. She comes to understand that Septimus, in his madness, has denied society and its constructing conventions that have imprisoned her into a snobbish hostess. Woolf depicts Clarissa's final apprehension of the truth of life: „A thing there was that mattered; a thing, wreathed about with chatter, defaced, obscured in her own life, let drop every day in corruption, lies, chatter. This he had preserved. Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate, people feeling the impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically, evaded them; closeness drew a part; rapture faded; one was alone. There was an embrace in death.” (*Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 202)

Clarissa feels ashamed of her past and ignorance of the painful nature of life. „Somehow it was her disaster-her disgrace. It was her punishment to see sink and disappear here a man, there a woman, in this profound darkness, and she forced to stand here in her evening dress. She had schemed; she had pilfered. She was never wholly admirable. Odd, incredible; she had never been so happy. Nothing could be slow enough; nothing lasts too long.” (*Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 203)

To the Lighthouse (1927) is concerned with the Victorian arrangement of patriarchal society, and it questions the distinction between men and women's social roles. Throughout the novel, we find that there are two distinctive worlds: the world of men, the masculine one, and the world of women, the feminine one. The masculine is marked by egotism, rigidity, and insistence on intellect over feeling. By contrast, the feminine is marked by imagination, intuition and compromise. The patriarchal society has discouraged mixing the characteristics

of these two worlds, and thus prevented the creation of a modern society, in which there is balance between the masculine intellect and the feminine emotion. Mrs. Ramsay represents the conventional and the submissive female to patriarchal society. Her medium is emotion and her form is human relationships. Lily Briscoe is a representative of the unconventional and rebellious against gender boundaries. Her medium is intellect and her form is her painting. Through Woolf's projection of Mrs. Ramsay's life and her relationships to men characters, she affirms the female values of fertility, giving and creating harmonies, which are associated with Mrs. Ramsay; but Woolf criticizes the way she has chosen to subject her positive femininity to masculine definitions. Woolf's projection of Lily's life and her relationships to Mrs. Ramsay and male characters is an attempt to teach women to accept their femininity, cultivate their masculinity, and choose the role that they want to play as independent women. Examining the lives of these two female characters, we find Woolf seeking to integrate the masculine and feminine qualities into a balanced whole that would render men and women the capacity to achieve meaning in life. Ramsay's marriage is a patriarchal marriage based on middle – class Victorian values. We find inadequacy in this marriage which doesn't allow mature intellectual interchange. The character of Mr. Ramsay is based on Woolf's father, Leslie Stephen. Marcus comments, according to Leslie „It was a natural law that a wife should have no legal rights, no right of her own property or money, no training for any job, nor any hope for obtaining one.” (Marcus, 1981: 152) Mrs. Ramsay is subordinated to his needs and engulfed by his world. She has been badly crippled by her narrow education and trained to be intellectually inferior. The stupider the wife appears to the husband, the more desirable she becomes. Yet Mrs. Ramsay is not as stupid as her husband thinks of her. She is frightened of her potential of intellectual achievement, but she never had time to read books. His wife's stupidity makes him see her astonishingly beautiful. Yet Woolf expresses her view regarding this matter through Lily's consciousness „Beauty was not every thing. Beauty had this penalty – it came too readily, came too completely. It stilled life –froze it. One forgot the little agitations; the flesh, the pallor, some sight or shadow, which made the face unrecognizable ... It was simpler to smooth that all out under the cover of beauty.” (*To the Lighthouse*, p. 193) Hypocrisy is evident in Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay's interaction. Mrs. Ramsay subdues herself to her husband because she suspects her husband's intellectual abilities. „Mr. Ramsay wants to reach the heights of genius, the letter Z, and to be like Shakespeare. He has no questions about the division of social roles which have shaped the relationship between husband and wife in a patriarchal society. Accordingly, his lack of the feminine qualities of creativity denies him an access to the forces of life. He wants to be assured that he lives in the heart of life. His need of sympathy renders him reliant on his wife's femininity. He comes to her not only for sympathy but to feel that he is needed over the world. Mrs. Ramsay looking at the same time be animated and alive as if all her energies were being fused into force, burning and illuminating, and into this delicious fecundity, this foundation and spray of life, the fatal sterility of the male plunged itself, like a beak of brass, barren and bare. He wanted sympathy. He was a failure, he said.” (*To the Lighthouse*, pp. 42-3) Mrs. Ramsay „doubts her husband's intelligence, but she doesn't let herself, even for a second, to feel finer than him. She doesn't discuss her husband's intellectual problems, but she takes the role of fulfiller to his needs and makes him dependent on her femininity. But it was their relationship, and his coming to her like that, openly, so that anyone could see, that discomposed her, for then people said he depended on her.” (*To the Lighthouse*, p. 45) Such hypocrisy between husband and wife raises an accusing finger at patriarchy which imprisons the intellectual maturity of their husbands. Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay are aware of the irremovable barrier which separates them. „They had nothing to say, but something seemed, nevertheless, to go from him to her. It was the life, it was the power of it. It was the tremendous humour, she knew, that made him slap his thighs. Don't interrupt me, he seemed to be saying, don't say anything;

just sit there. And he went on reading.” (*To the Lighthouse*, p. 129) Woolf emphasizes the separation between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay: He turned and saw her „Ah! She was lovely, lovelier now than ever.’ He thought. But he couldn’t speak to her... He passed without a word, though it hurt him that she should look so distant, and he couldn’t reach her... again he would have passed her without a word had she not.” (*To the Lighthouse*, p. 172) Both Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay accept the limits of their marriage. In their silence, they want certain barriers to be maintained. Mrs. Ramsay has a mania for arranging marriages. She insists that Minta must marry and she wishes to create something that lasts between Paul and Minta. She succeeds in getting them in marriage, but their marriage fails. Paul had come in and gone to bed early. Minta was late. „There was Minta, wreathed, tinted, garish on the stairs about three o’clock in the morning. Paul came out in his pyjamas carrying a poker in case of burglars... He spoke indignant, jealous words abusing her... she flamboyant, careless. For things had worked loose after the first year or so; the marriage had turned out rather badly.” (*To the Lighthouse*, pp. 187-8)

Mrs. Ramsay has sometimes the skill of making men feel good because she makes them feel superior. She feels satisfied when they feel proud through her admiration of them. Ironically, men need women’s acknowledgment of their worth, and only through their admiration they can feel proud. At the dinner party, Tansley doesn’t enjoy Mrs. Ramsay’s effort and sees through her superficiality. His insecurity, regarding his feelings of his social inadequacy, prevents him from understanding how to socialize effectively. Mrs. Ramsay pities him and forces Lily to stop bothering him. The novel stresses the antagonism between the father, and his children. James, the youngest of Ramsays’ children looks forward to making a trip to the Lighthouse. Mrs. Ramsay promises him to go tomorrow if the weather were fine. Yet James’s hope is dashed to the ground by his father’s saying that the weather will not be fine. Then, Woolf describes James’s rage against his father: Had there an axe handy, a poker or any weapon that would have gashed a hole in his father’s breast and killed him, there and then, James would have seized it. (*To the Lighthouse*, p. 8)

Mrs. Ramsay feels angry about her husband’s abnormal concern for his children’s feelings and she tries to comfort James compassionately. She is infuriated by her saying and calls it the folly of her mind. The reason for his anger is that he thinks that Mrs. Ramsay gives a false hope which was utterly out of the question. But in this way, Mr. Ramsay turns into a symbol of tyranny and despotism in his children’s eyes. Mrs. Ramsay tries to make her children more tolerant and more sympathetic. She regrets that her children will grow up in this atmosphere. She doesn’t want them to grow up in a terrible and hostile life. Lily Briscoe is a representative of unconventionality. Her rebellion against the given social roles is demonstrated in her pursuance of truth. Yet, under the expectations of the feminine role in patriarchal society, Lily undergoes self-division. She is divided between her inspiration for the world of self-actualization and the limitations of the maternal world. Consequently, Lily’s divided self imprisons her femininity and places restraints on her relationship with men. She finds feminine roles unfulfilling. She is afraid of her femininity and denies it. Lily feels guilty and insincere about being forced to relieve Tansley in the party. „Lily fights these limitations through her art, but she can’t achieve fulfilment. She is confused in regard to a romantic relationship with Mr. Banks. She understands its beauty; but on the other hand, she fears its degradation. In the dinner party, she says to herself, she needn’t marry, thank Heaven, she needn’t undergo that degradation. She was saved from that dilution.” (*To the Lighthouse*, p. 111) Lily Briscoe likes and admires Mr. Banks. She feels ashamed of her impulse towards him and, at the same time, wants to compliment him, but she doesn’t say anything. Unlike Mr. Banks, Mr. Ramsay lacks the ability to understand and admire the feminine. Lily criticizes this in Mr. Ramsay in comparison with Mr. Banks. After Mrs. Ramsay’s death, Mr. Ramsay demands Lily’s sympathy. Yet he expresses his need as a desire to give her. Instead of giving

sympathy, Lily compliments his boots. Lily associates giving with femininity and she refuses and revolts against men's need of sympathy. Yet Mr. Ramsay respects the compliment and smiles. Now Lily has made advance to Mr. Ramsay as an equal, not a woman to man, but as a man to man. He can see her now as a person interested in similar things. Mr. Ramsay acknowledges that she admires his traits rather than she fulfils his need for sympathy. At this moment, Lily's role is about being an ungendered equal and Mr. Ramsay's need for sympathy diminishes. Lily's confusion drives her to assert her gender through her painting, and to find the truth inside herself. Yet, Lily is unable to define her femininity and yearns to the security of the ideal woman, Mrs. Ramsay. She wants to express Mrs. Ramsay's idealization of her painting, but Lily knows that Mrs. Ramsay's idealization is an illusion. Her inability to accept her femininity and Mrs. Ramsay's idealization prevents her from establishing a vision of truth in art. Ten years after Mrs. Ramsay's death, she recalls Mrs.

Ramsay's life and comes to cherish in herself powers different from those that motivated Mrs. Ramsay for imposing harmony and order in life. The memory of Mr. Ramsay is a catalyst for Lily's growth. She realizes that her thoughts about Mrs. Ramsay's life have imprisoned her and crippled her talents. She understands that time prevented Mrs. Ramsay from creating meaning and intimacy in life, what is the meaning of life... Mrs. Ramsay making of the moment something permanent (as in another sphere Lily herself tried to make of the moment something permanent) this was the nature of a revelation. In the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and following (she looked at the clouds, going and leaves shaking) was struck in to stability. Life stands still here. Mrs. Ramsay said „Mrs. Ramsay! Mrs. Ramsay!' She repeated. She owed this revelation to her.”(To the Lighthouse, pp.175-176) It is now that Lily achieves a moment of community and a sense of unity. Finally, she is able to get rid of her confusions. She is able to achieve the emotional side of Mrs. Ramsay's life. Lily's first inspiration about her painting comes when she thinks about the misguided pity that Mrs. Ramsay has for Mr. Bankes. She thinks that Mr. Bankes doesn't need this pity because he is a whole and that he is fulfilled in his work. This reminds her that she, too, has her work. At this moment, she accepts her masculinity. The first revelation comes when she strays herself away from the given gender roles. She has her concept of the ideal femininity and acknowledges that her work is a pursuance of the truth and a rejection of the illusion of the maternally enclosed world. Lily's acceptance of her work as a masculine and her final assertion of her femininity bring out her vision. She is able to express her mature vision that femininity and masculinity are separate, but equal and personal. Lily draws a line down the middle of her painting. There is a mass on the right which is Mrs. Ramsay and a mass on the left which is Mr. Ramsay. The line down the middle is a divider into equal halves.

She looked at her canvass; it was blurred. „With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision.”(To the Lighthouse, p. 226)

Conclusion

Mrs. Woolf was one of the great writers whose works reflect her philosophy of life and identification of women. She grew up with an intense interest in the feminist question, and her novels hold the key to the meaning of life and the position of women. In her writing, Woolf makes a sifting appraisal of women's problem, their peculiar dilemmas and conditioning in the traditional Victorian society. Woolf was the most vociferous and vehement on feminist issues such as subjectivity, class, sexuality and culture. In her critiques, Woolf questions an aesthetic that disallows anger, unreason and passion as productive emotions.

Before Woolf's literary works, women's writings were marked by feelings of anger and fear. It is pretty clear now after a careful study of her novels, that Woolf felt that novels

written by women were influenced by their resentment to the treatment meted on their sex and ended up pleading for their rights. Woolf felt that this weakened the cause of women struggling to carve a niche for themselves in the literary canon. Woolf believed that it is a part of the occupation of women writers to destroy the patriarchal structures. Woolf strived to give women feminine identity. She called women to re-write the history of women through female eyes and talk truthfully about themselves and their experiences. Woolf's novels, especially *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, are devoted to portray a picture of a patriarchal and imperialistic society, and to detail the factors that have limited women's opportunities for a meaningful life. In both novels, women suffer alone, have no chances for education, lack warmth and are compelled to suppress their needs.

Virginia Woolf aimed at communicating the message that such a blind social system must be eradicated from its roots and that because she believed that the oppression of women is rooted in social, economic and psychological factors. Woolf's solution implies the need for self-organization and change in gender identity-different masculinity and femininity. She strived for creating a new man and woman- life, in which both man and woman's identities are realized. Woolf believed in the distinctiveness of women's values. She emphasized women's capacity to educate and add a meaningful contribution to our life. It is significant that Woolf chose women characters, not men, to recognize the vision of truth as seen at the end of both novels.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa is able to understand Septimus's vision of reality. Woolf's point is that war can be understood only with reference to the feelings which society considers appropriate only to women. *To the Lighthouse* ends also in a positive feminist note which is seen in Lily's mature vision. By writing *Mrs. Dalloway*, The writer intended to send an outcry against patriarchy and its representatives. Clarissa moves from one relation to another and every time she is frustrated, and loses the chance to have a happy life with each partner. She completely fails in love and marriage, and misses her chance with Sally. Her conventionality, lack of understanding and lack of education are in sharp contrast with Peter's patriarchal demands on woman and his inability to understand her needs. Clarissa rejected Peter's offer of marriage because she prefers privacy to emotion. Entering a marital relationship with Richard, Clarissa is unable to provide him with the kind of relationship usually expected in heterosexual relationships. Clarissa's need for privacy drove her to preserve her virginity, even after having got married to Richard. Richard is excluded from her room, and she gets along with her loneliness and the triviality of her social life.

In her relationship with Sally, Clarissa broke the authorial voice because bonding with a woman means relationship on equal terms. Yet both Clarissa and Sally were defeated. They were compelled to ignore their needs because the only accepted female identity was that accepted by patriarchy. Missing the chance with Sally darkens Clarissa's life and fills it with agony. Had she responded to her impulse with Sally Seton, she might have been psychologically fulfilled.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the terrible influence of patriarchy is effectively portrayed through the presentation of Miss Kilman and Rezia's lives. Both are victims of the cruelty of the social and political doctrine of the English society and their only guilt is that they are merely women. What is really tragic about Rezia is not her husband's death, but the unfriendly manner in which the world treats her. The cruelty of Miss Kilman's world and her inability to invade the male-dominated teaching profession drove her to deny her femininity and adopt aggressive masculine values. She turns to be a ruthless woman and her life turns to be full of darkness and bitterness.

In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf makes sharp critical examination of aspects of men-women relationships. Woolf projects the defects of private and public life, and proves that in none of them we can find an adequate model for modern life. The relationship between Mr.

and Mrs. Ramsay proves that marriage is not a guarantee of mature and healthy relationship between husband and wife. On one hand, Woolf affirms the femininity of Mrs. Ramsay, but criticizes the way she has chosen to subject her positive feminine traits to male demands. Lily, unlike Mrs. Ramsay, revolts against masculine needs. She denies her femininity and gets along with self-division in the face of her relationships with men. On the other hand, Woolf discards Mr. Ramsay's masculinity by commenting sarcastically that he has a splendid mind. The tone of the description of his mind is sarcastic because his masculinity is not shown as a positive quality, neither in his relationship with his wife, nor with his children and his work. Mr. Ramsay fails to develop a mature relationship with his wife. He turns into a symbol of tyranny and despotism for his children. Positive masculinity is to choose methods of fulfillment when the male is able to use his work to be independent and unique, and when he admires and understands the feminine. Had Mr. Ramsay cultivated his femininity and had Mrs. Ramsay had some access to self-fulfilment outside the domestic sphere, they would have held the key for a mature marital relationship.

By writing *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, Mrs. Woolf aimed at setting up a new formula for personal development always aspiring towards the wholeness of personality. Woolf introduces women characters who symbolize hope in creating the androgynous world. Elizabeth Dalloway signifies the emergence of the new dawn of women. Thirty years before Elizabeth's age, women couldn't dare to imagine or think of professional life. Elizabeth admires the intelligence of Miss Kilman, and is influenced by her mother more than she realizes. Woolf suggests that Elizabeth becomes the new woman by uniting her tutor's cleverness and ambitions with her mother's humane sympathies.

In *Three Guineas*, Woolf expressed a hope for a generation of independent women united in profession solidarity. By allowing Elizabeth Dalloway a glimpse of that some vision, Woolf suggests that the adolescent girl may yet blossom into a new woman who unites the cleverness and ambition of Miss Kilman with the humane sympathies of some one such as Clarissa. We find Clarissa that has her own vision in Septimus's death which allows her to face her own misery, step out of the social prison, and have a new vision of life. In comprehending Septimus's death, Clarissa discovers her own identity and becomes a whole.

In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf rationalizes her quest for the androgynous world through tracing the development of two lines and the coincidence of their triumph at the end of the novel. The completion of Lily's picture and the arrival of the Ramsays at the Lighthouse came due to the development of the characters' personalities regarding the truth of their gender. On one hand, Mr. Ramsay tries to fulfil his quest by paying his penance to the memory of his wife, and putting an end to the old enmity with his children. This can be seen as an improvement of his personality and refinement of his femininity. On the other hand, Lily has the first inspiration about her painting the moment she acknowledges that her work is masculine and also embodies pursuance of truth. At the end of the novel, Lily has a moment of personal wholeness when she accepts the femininity that she has always denied. The novel ends with Lily's vision that femininity and masculinity are separate but equal and personal. Mrs. Woolf ends *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* with two female visions of the truth of our life: Clarissa and Lily's visions. Woolf ends the two novels with a hope for the new woman. Woolf's central idea is that women shouldn't lose their femininity, and also shouldn't be limited to it.

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French Feminist Awareness

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Abstract: *My intention in producing this study is to provide a compendium of information about women writers and the world they lived in. Space limitations forced me to select only a few. My first decision was to limit the women authors included to those writers who lived and worked mainly in France. In terms of my methodological approach, I asked the reader to focus on the development of a "feminist" consciousness, on each writer's awareness of the ways in which her gender shaped her outlook and her opportunities, and to reflect on the way categorizations, structures, and terms used to describe literary works have been defined for women and the ways in which women writers have responded to these definitions.*

Key words: , *French women, French literature, feminism, feminist consciousness*

In the seventeenth century, the popular novelist Madeleine de Scudéry lamented the fate of women writers: "Among the infinite number of beautiful women who doubtlessly lived during the centuries preceding our own, we have barely heard of only two or three: and during those same centuries, we can see the glory of men solidly established by the written works they have left us." ¹ We can only say that most of the works of only these few women writers worthy of recognition have been judged by men.

Our current state of historical knowledge allows us to state with some degree of certainty that the earliest known literary productions by women living in Europe were by French women. As far back as the twelfth century, women troubadours in the south of France were writing poems in Occitan, a Gallo-Roman language. French women continued writing through the ages, their number increasing as education became more available to women of all classes. And yet, of the great number of works by women writers who preceded the current feminist movement, very few survived.

"Times have changed," and we can observe that the reclaim of women writers and the rethink of literary history includes them in college and university curricula. Course offerings now include many more women authors and many institutions offer programs in gender and women's studies, under the banner of multiculturalism. The presence of women in administrative positions in institutions of higher education, as department chairs, deans, and presidents, indicates that this subject is more complex than it requires debating.

The twentieth century is a period in which France took part in two world wars, witnessed the independence of most of its colonies, experienced mass immigration, and confronted the internal tensions that arose from the Occupation and the Algerian War. In terms of literary and philosophical movements, the same century moved from surrealism and existentialism through the Nouveau Roman, the Theater of the Absurd, and the Nouvelle Vague to, in recent times, postmodern and postcolonial literature and thought. The twentieth century also witnessed the emergence of large numbers of women writers who have expressed themselves in fictional and nonfictional forms on topics ranging from a questioning of women's role in society to the significance for women of reclaiming voices, bodies, and identities.

In the social and political spheres, a series of important reforms allowed women greater freedom to shape their own lives. In the early part of the century, women were still seeking to affirm their political and civil rights. It was only in 1938 that married women became legal majors; the Constitution of 1946, while guaranteeing women the same rights as men, did not question the unequal position of the married woman in relation to her husband as defined by the Napoleonic Code. While women got the right to vote in 1944, not until 1965

did they have the right to engage in a career or to control their own bank accounts without the consent of their husband.

Significant gains were made in education and the workplace during the twentieth century. In 1900 there were 624 women university students in the whole of France as compared to 27,000 men. With the institution in 1924 of a secondary school program which would be the same for both sexes, the number of women in higher education grew steadily, equaling that of men in 1971 and surpassing it by 70,000 in 1990. In the workplace, women have entered an increasingly large number of professions. As early as 1922, the writer and activist Colette Yver emphasized the difficulties of balancing a career with domestic duties and she expressed her point of view on women's participation in traditionally male-dominated professions, especially science-related fields. Gains made during the interwar period suffered a setback, however, under the Vichy government, which, with its emphasis on family and traditional values, prohibited married women from working in the public sector. While protection for women working outside the home began at the end of the nineteenth century, the most important legislation was introduced after World War II and focused on three main areas: maternity leave, night work, and sexual harassment. Subsequent legislation mandated equal pay for equal work (1972), prohibited gender-based discrimination (1975), and guaranteed equal rights in the workplace (the Roudy law of 1983). However, although women are protected by law, factors related to gender still affect their employment for the most part, women remain concentrated in lower-paying or part-time jobs and benefit from fewer promotions.

In terms of reproductive fights, women were legally prevented from obtaining contraceptives until the passage of the Neuwirth Law in 1967, and from having abortions until new legislation was introduced in 1974 and adopted in its final form in 1980. Early in the century, activists such as Nelly Roussel argued against "forced" maternity, claiming that the government's natalist policies posed a threat to women's autonomy and equality. Subsequently, in reaction to the 1920 law banning the sale of contraceptives, several movements were founded, out of which the *Movement for Family Planning* (1956) and *Choisir* (1971) are two of the most noteworthy. Activists such as Gisèle Halimi, a lawyer and one of the founders of *Choisir*, played a major role in the struggle for reproductive rights and for increased legal protection against sexual assault. In *La Cause des femmes* (1973), Halimi describes her involvement in the famous Bobigny trial, a case that led to the liberalization of legislation on abortion.

Although literary histories of the early years of the century suggest the relative absence of women writers, an examination of their literary production indicates that a large number of women were actually writing, and points to the patriarchal biases inherent in canon formation. A prominent group of Parisian-based writers raised provocative questions relating to female sexuality; Renée Vivien and Natalie Barney, in particular, focused on lesbian identity. Lesser-known writers of the *Belle Époque*, including Louise-Marie Compain, Gabrielle Reval, and Hélène Brion, addressed issues of women's suffrage, labor laws, and pacifism in their essays and treatises, and portrayed independent women in their fictional work. Many of the women writers at this time were still from the middle and upper classes, some depended on male patrons, and either attributed their works to male authorship (as Colette did in her early works), resorted to pseudonyms (Harlor, Rachilde, Gérard d'Houville), or published their works anonymously (the *autobiography of Catherine Pozzi*, for example). In addition, women faced difficulties in the production and distribution of their texts, given that men controlled all aspects of publishing. It was not until 1968 that a woman first owned her own publishing house—when Régine Deforges founded *L'Or du Temps*. The renowned *Editions des femmes* was established in 1973.

The impression of a small number of women writers was reinforced by the literary production of the two world wars – the fact that war writing is a traditionally male genre further contributed to the androcentric canon. Contrary to popular belief, however, women did in fact have much to say about the war. Writers such as Marcelle Tinayre, Marcelle Caby, Lucie Delarue-Mardrus and Camille Mayran produced a variety of texts that portray a wide range of positions in relation to the war. As regards World War II, the best-known writers were again male; the role of women has been sorely neglected until recently, both in relation to the World War II Resistance and the Holocaust.

Elsa Triolet, active in the Resistance, was the first woman to receive the *Prix Goncourt*. Her prize-winning collection of short stories, *Le Premier Accroc coûte deux cents francs* (1945), explores the position of women in the Occupation years. Other women who were active members of the Resistance (Marguerite Duras, Clara Malraux, Edith Thomas, and Lucie Aubrac) have described their experiences in memoirs and in fictional form. While Elie Wiesel remains the most well known writer on the Holocaust, women writers, too, evoked the horrors of the camps in a variety of genres: novels (Anna Langfus), autobiographical narratives (Charlotte Delbo, Fania Fénelon), plays (Delbo, Langfus, Liliane Atlan) and poetry (Micheline Maurel). These writers, like their *Belle Époque* counterparts, are currently being revisited as scholars seek to reevaluate the role of women during the two world wars.

Despite the ground-breaking work of numerous early twentieth-century women writers, two women in particular found their way into the canon and deeply influenced later generations of feminists – Colette and Simone de Beauvoir. With her focus on women as subjects of their own desire and her revalorization of the maternal vein, Colette is one of the most important precursors to contemporary feminism. Both her life as a music-hall performer and her literary work raise questions about women's sexuality and their role in society. Unlike Colette, Beauvoir favoured a more intellectual approach with an emphasis on philosophy and sociopolitical issues. Her revolutionary work, *Le Deuxième Sexe* (1949), theorized on the concept of a socially constructed female identity and provided a critical approach of the institution of marriage and the notion of maternity as a woman's biological goal.

The postwar period saw the publication of a series of novels that dealt with gender roles and adolescent sexuality, as the teenager made her appearance on the literary scene. The most acclaimed of these, Françoise Sagan *Bonjour Tristesse* (1954), challenged traditional representations of adolescent love, while *Le Rempart des béguines* (1951, Françoise Mallet-Joris), and *Les Petits Enfants du siècle* (1961, Christiane Rochefort) depicted, respectively, a violent sexual relation between a young girl and an older woman, and the sexual initiation of a young teenager living in a housing project. The works of these and other writers reflected the social and economic changes taking place in the 1950s and 1960s, and analysed in Geneviève Gennari *Le Dossier de la femme* (1965), a historical study that examines the status of women between 1889 and 1964.

The events of May 1968 constitute a central point in regard to the condition of women in the twentieth century. The women's liberation movement (*MLF*) was one of the most significant movements to emerge from 1968. Writers such as Sophie Chauveau have chronicled the consciousness-raising, demonstrations, and general sense of vitality that characterized this period, which witnessed the creation of numerous women's groups - *Féminin et masculin futur*, *Psychanalyse et Politique*, *Féminisme révolutionnaire*, and *Féminisme et Marxisme*, for example. As these groups began to address the different forms of women's oppression, whether social, political or linguistic, a series of journals devoted to women's issues appeared and became a center of intellectual debate – *Questions féministes* (later *Nouvelles Questions féministes*), *F-Magazine* and *Sorcières*, for example.

Sexual difference, one of the most important issues to be raised in the 1970s, was the focus of numerous texts ranging from the highly theoretical to the very popular. Hélène

Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva, the three best known theorists of sexual difference, examined this issue in psychoanalytic, philosophical and linguistic terms. Cixous' *Le Rire de la Méduse*, with its emphasis on language, identity, and the body, challenges traditional representations of women. Irigaray's *Spéculum de l'autre femme* (1974) provides a critique of the patriarchal Western philosophic tradition from Plato to Hegel; similarly, Kristeva, in many of her works, associates the feminine with the pre-Oedipal and underscores the revolutionary potential of language.

The question of women's relation to language and the body posed by these theoretical texts reflected in popular works by writers such as Annie Leclerc, Marie Cardinal, and Benoîte Groult. Leclerc's *Parole de femme* (1974), a lyrical exploration of women's bodily experiences, equates giving birth with creating a new language. In *Les Mots pour le dire* (1975), Cardinal critically examines the crucial role of language in the construction of female identity, while Groult *Ainsi soit-elle* (1975) focuses on the social construction of identity.

With its focus on thinking and writing "otherwise" and on finding a voice for women, feminism led to an explosion in women's writing in the 1970s that continued through the 1990s. The impact was felt in two main areas: formal experimentation and themes. Building on the earlier work of Nathalie Sarraute and Marguerite Duras, writers who had rejected linear narrative structures in order to express previously unexplored emotional states, the *écriture féminine* that emerged in the mid-1970s challenged patriarchal language and traditional forms. This avant-garde experimental style associated with writers such as Hélène Cixous and Chantal Chawaf stressed the corporeality of language and the role of subversive word play. The search for innovative literary forms has recently been expressed in the poetry of Anne-Marie Albiach and Marie Etienne, for example, whose work is often characterized by minimalism and typographical experimentation. Women also sought to convey the female experience through revisionist mythmaking strategies (Cixous, Michèle Sarde) and the reworking of the structures and themes of fairy tales and legends (Pierrette Fleutiaux, Sylvie Germain, Marie Redonnet).

Both the experimental and the more conventionally written texts have given voice to women's concerns on the thematic level. In addition to the permanent focus on the body expressed through the themes of aging, maternity, menstruation, and sexuality, these works also explore the social dimensions of issues relating to abortion (Annie Ernaux); incest (Christine Angot), mother-daughter relations (Dominique Rolin), and madness (Jeanne Hyvrard), thus receiving increased attention. In the theater, an unprecedented number of women playwrights are staging works related to women's lives, in particular mother-daughter relationships (Denise Chalem), surrogate motherhood (Denise Bonal), and marriage (Josiane Balasko). In these texts as well as in others, women writers are examining the complex criss-crossings of race, class, and gender. At the same time, more new voices continue to emerge, suggesting paths to be followed in the future. In particular, writers of immigrant descent are examining issues related to immigration, integration, and racism, and especially their implications for women from diverse cultural traditions (Farida Belghoul, Calixthe Beyala, Kim Lefèvre, and Leïla Sebbar, for example).

As the century draws to a close, women's literary production continues to branch out in new directions and to raise important questions for the future.

Note

[1] Madeleine de Scudéry, quoted in Faith E. Beasley, *Revising Memory: Women's Fiction and Memoirs in Seventeenth-Century France* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 55.

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**Interferențe și conexiuni lingvistice /
Interférences et connexions linguistiques**

Polivalența termenilor mitofolclorici: ipostaze ale feminității

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Résumé : *L'étude du lexique populaire du point de vue ethnolinguistique permet une meilleure connaissance de la spiritualité traditionnelle. L'analyse ethnolinguistique en met en évidence des aspects tels que: l'étymologie, les évolutions sémantiques, les dérivés des termes étudiés. C'est dans une telle perspective qu'on se situe dans notre travail, à travers l'analyse de certains personnages féminins du folklore roumain.*

Mots-clés : *personnages féminins, folklore, approche ethnolinguistique*

În cadrul lexicului românesc, termenii mitofolclorici se remarcă, în special, prin paleta lor semantică extinsă, spre deosebire, de exemplu, de termenii din sfera lingvisticii, a științelor exacte; aceștia din urmă sunt, în majoritatea cazurilor, termeni monosemantici, legați strict de anumite aspecte ale realității. Este adevărat că astfel de cuvinte fac parte din categoria neologismelor recente (sau cu o vechime mai mică în limbă). În schimb, termenii mitofolclorici având în urmă o istorie îndelungată au suferit un permanent proces de îmbogățire semantică, proces ce reflectă evoluții importante petrecute de-a lungul timpului în mentalul popular, în istoria societății românești.

O categorie de termeni populari mai puțin studiată este cea referitoare la persoanele în vârstă de sex feminin; este vorba de termeni de tipul *babă, băbăreasă, bahorniță, băbârță, cotoroașă, moșmoandă* etc. Elementul cel mai important al seriei este cuvântul *babă*, cuvânt aparent banal, ce denumește, prin excelență, persoana feminină în vârstă. O incursiune pe teren mitofolcloric românesc este utilă pentru o studiere a implicațiilor acestui cuvânt în spiritualitatea tradițională. Să remarcăm de la bun început că acest cuvânt este cel mai frecvent utilizat în terminologia actanților magici; Artur Gorovei atrăgea atenția încă acum 70 de ani asupra acestui fapt: „Persoana care descântă se numește îndeobște *babă, băbăreasă, doftoroaie* etc.” (A. Gorovei, *Literatură populară*, II, p. 74). Cuvântul este răspândit pe întreg teritoriul românesc și este înregistrat și la românii din afara granițelor, în Moravia, Basarabia, în Serbia (v. TMRP, p. 138); este un termen folcloric cu o vechime deosebită, prima sa atestare datând din 1464 (v. DERS).

Autorii DA evită definirea directă a termenului pe teren magic, punctând o serie de caracteristici, activități ale actantului menționat: „Babele sunt adesea femeii știutoare, care vindecă boale, descântă, fac farmece și vrăji; se crede că stau în legătură cu spiritele rele” (DA, tom I, partea I, p. 400). De altfel, definirea exactă a sensurilor cuvântului *babă*, pe teren magic, ridică unele probleme dat fiind faptul că acest actant poate îndeplini o serie întreagă de activități cu caracter magic ce, de obicei, necesită actanți diferiți: „Babele fac la fete cu bobi să le vie drăguți” (ALR SN, V, H, h. 1567); „Ceea ce fac țigăncile cu cărțile fac babele cu bobii...” (Șez, III, p. 126); „În acea noapte (spre Sf. Gheorghe – n.n.) unii buciumă spre a alunga farmecele babelor care alungă mana de la vite” (A. Fochi, *Datini*, p. 295); „O babă înconjoară mormântul cu un cuțit în mână amenințând și descântând în șoaptă, apoi înfinge cuțitul lângă cruce” (G. Coșbuc, *Elementele*, p. 324).

Din exemplele date se poate observa că termenul *babă* nu poate fi definit doar cu sensul „descântătoare”, cum sugerează Gorovei, ci implică o paletă semantică mult mai bogată ce apropie termenul dat de termenii *ghicitoare, fermecătoare, vrăjitoare* etc. De aici, probabil și faptul că lucrările lexicografice mai vechi (DULR) sau chiar cele apărute după război (DLRM) nu pot fixa clar sensul termenului *babă*; astfel, dacă acceptăm definiția din DLRM (p. 62) „femeia bătrână de la țară care pretinde că vindecă bolile prin diferite leacuri și vrăji” ar trebui să acceptăm și implicarea acestui actant doar pe terenul medicinei populare, ceea ce este important, dar nu acoperă cu adevărat paleta semantică a cuvântului. Credem că

alături de sensul „descântătoare” ar trebui menționate în dicționare, pentru termenul *babă* și sensurile „ghicitoare”, „cărturăreasă”, „bobăreasă”, „fermecătoare”, „vrăjitoare”, ceea ce ar da o imagine mai apropiată de realitate, asupra actantului respectiv.

Substantivul *babă* este un împrumut de origine slavă; este interesant faptul că el se poate folosi și în combinație cu alți termeni ce denumesc actanți magici: *babă meșteră*, *babă doftorodie*, *babă descântătoare*, *babă fermecătoare*, *babă vrăjitoare*, *babă meșteriță* etc. (v. TMPR, p. 139). Termenul discutat prezintă o adevărată predilecție pentru structurile bimembre și, nu ar fi exclus ca, inițial, al doilea termen al sintagmei să fi avut valoare de determinant pe lângă primul membru al sintagmei; ca o posibilă dovadă în acest sens ar putea fi existența unor sintagme în care al doilea membru are o clară valoare determinativă: *babă știutoare*, *babă pricepătoare*, *babă lecuitoare*.

O sintagmă des întâlnită în materialele studiate este *baba satului*: „Când copiii plâng în somn [...] femeile cheamă pe *baba satului*, ca sa descânte copiii descântecul de mai sus” (Gr. Tocilescu, Chr. N. Țapu, *Materialuri*, III, p. 246). Sintagma amintită ne sugerează faptul că acel actant se bucură de recunoaștere, de un statut aparte în cadrul comunitar. De altfel, astfel de actanți își precizează destul de clar competențele: „știu să discânt, să dau în boghi, în cărți, să disleg farmici”. Încrederea în specialistul local este destul de mare: „unde medicul nu reușește, reușește baba” (C. Pintilie, *Corod*, p. 646).

Termenul în discuție a pătruns și în paremiologia populară atât la nivel general cât și la nivel local: *Unde baba face, dracul nu desface* (*Proverbe românește*, p. 283); *Câte babe, atâtea vrăji*, proverb cules de Gh. Pavelescu în Munții Apuseni (Gh. Pavelescu, *Cercetări*, p. 51).

Materialele înregistrate de noi pe teren ne-au permis să găsim și alte elemente interesante din punct de vedere lingvistic cu privire la actantul menționat; astfel, în zona Viile, județul Galați a fost înregistrată porecla unei bătrâne (Costorica) foarte pricepută în descântarea prin turnarea cositorului. Numele ei real a fost înlocuit cu porecla (derivată din domeniul magicului) și nu mai era practic utilizat de săteni. În aceeași zonă am înregistrat și un alt fapt de interes pentru cercetarea noastră: marcajul formal al statutului de actant magic. Persoana implicată, o anume Catrina, era pricepută în practicile de descântat; de aici și o situație oarecum surprinzătoare: când sătenii mergeau la ea în vizită spunea „merg la tușa Catrina”. Când însă se deplasau la domiciliul bătrânei pentru descântat ei spuneau „merg la baba Catrina”.

Termenul discutat apare și în alte structuri lingvistice cu caracter general sau local; astfel, îl găsim în formulele finale ale descântecelor: *leac și babii colac*; *leacul fie nu fie, colacul babii să se știe*. În zona Alba, județul Tulcea, pentru a denumi o serie de actanți magici de tip „descântătoare”, „făcătoare” se utilizează perifrazele *babă care știe de desfăcut*, *babă care știe de făcut*. Substantivul *babă* prezintă o serie de derivate interesante pe terenul magiei populare: *băbăreasă* „femeie (de obicei bătrână) care știe să lecuiască, să descânte, să dea cu bobii, femeie știutoare” (DA, tom I, partea I, p. 403); *băbărie* „meșteșuguri băbești, fermecătorii, vrăjitorii” (CADE, p. 108); *băbârță* „neagă rea” (DA, tom I, partea I, p. 403). Interesant este și derivatul *băbesc* ce apare în anumite sintagme cu originea pe terenul magiei populare: *leacuri băbești*, *farmece băbești*, *boscoade băbești* etc. (V. TMPR, p. 141). Să mai amintim și faptul că există o serie de personaje mitofolclorice relevante pentru termenul în discuție: *Baba Hârca*, *Baba Cloanța*, *Baba Coaja*, *Baba Dochia* (de care sunt legate așa-numitele *Zile ale babei*).

Cuvântul *babă* face parte din seria termenilor ce denumesc persoane în vârstă de sex feminin; din aceeași categorie fac parte și termeni ca *băbăreasă*, *bahorniță*, care atrag la rândul lor atenția asupra polivalenței termenilor mitofolclorici, fără a avea însă încărcătura spirituală a cuvântului analizat de noi. Analiza, chiar și sumară, din perspectivă etnolingvistică evidențiază complexitatea termenilor amintiți; pe teren popular acești termeni

nu denumesc doar persoane feminine în vârstă, ci sugerează și o serie întreagă de implicații pe teren mitofolcloric.

Băbăreasă denumește, spre exemplu, descântătoarea în multe zone ale țării; în alte zone (Oltenia, Prahova) termenul amintit are sensul „cărturăreasă”, ceea ce face trimitere la un actant divinator.

Bahorniță, termen răspândit în Muntenia și Moldova, are și sensul „vrăjitoare” DA, tom I, partea I, p. 427). Variantele *baborniță* și *bahorniță* au rezultat în urma contaminării cu cuvântul *babă*; cu timpul acest termen a suferit un fenomen de degradare semantică ajungând să aibă sensurile „femeie urâtă”, „femeie rea”.

S-ar mai putea lua în discuție în alți termeni din categoria amintită (*Cotoroaia*, *hoască*, *scorpie*, *strigoaie* etc.); chiar și numai pe baza informațiilor oferite de termenii analizați se poate ajunge la concluzii semnificative:

- termenii ce denumesc persoane în vârstă de sex feminin prezintă o încărcătură spirituală remarcabilă (comparativ cu multe alte categorii terminologice);
- acești termeni mai păstrează încă ecouri ale mentalului arhaic, amintind de riturile străvechi cu originea în matriarhat în care femeile în vârstă dețineau roluri esențiale;
- degradările semantice produse evidențiază și impactul pe care l-au avut elementele de sorginte creștină asupra mecanismelor mentalului arhaic. Creștinismul a transformat reprezentanții vechilor sisteme mitofolclorice în demoni, în personaje negative.

Abrevieri bibliografice

ALR SN = *Atlasul lingvistic român*, serie nouă, vol. I-VII, București, 1956-1972

CADE = Ion Aurel Candrea, Gheorghe Adamescu, *Dicționarul enciclopedic ilustrat „Cartea Românească”*, București, 1931

G. Coșbuc, *Elementele* = George Coșbuc, *Elementele literaturii populare*, Ed. Facla, Cluj-Napoca, 1983

DA = *Dicționarul limbii române*, tom I-II, a-lojnică, Ed. Academiei, București, 1913-1949.

DERS = *Dicționarul elementelor românești din documentele slavo-române*, 1374-1600, Ed. Academiei, București, 1981

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A Case Study in Translation Practice: Male/vs/Female Authorship

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Abstract: *The domain delineated by the theory and practice of translation constitutes an endless source of interdisciplinary approaches, beginning with a typological analysis of the text to be translated and continuing with considering translation a product, and more recently a result of not only the translator's personality and gender, but also of the social, ideological and cultural influences reflected both in the source and target text.*

Key words: *translation, descriptive text, gender analysis, meaning, equivalence*

The domain of translation studies has broadened far beyond the mere replacement of SL linguistic items with their TL equivalents, reaching sociological, cultural and ideological phenomena, becoming “a perfect interdisciplinary, interfacing with a host of other fields”(Hatim, Munday 2004:169).

The present research focuses on translation seen from the perspective of both text- and function-based approaches aiming at presenting some of my personal findings concerning the assertion that men and women translate differently and pointing out the role of equivalence in the comparison of same language translations.

Text-based approaches have developed along several coordinates, leading to a sub-categorization of texts into various types allowing a direct analysis of the linguistic make-up of both SL and TL texts.

Cognitive classifications e.g. Kinneavy (1980) and Werlich (1976), concentrate on ways of conceptualizing, perceiving or portraying the world by:

- a. Narration, which stands for our viewing the continuum changes of reality in a dynamic way, by providing the differentiation and interrelation of perceptions in time, texts becoming *narrative*.
- b. Description, which stands for our static view focused on individual experience, by providing the differentiation and interrelation of perceptions in space- *descriptive* texts.
- c. Exposition, focusing on the comprehension of general concepts through differentiation by analysis or synthesis- *expository* texts.
- d. Argumentation, understood as evaluation of relations between concepts by extracting similarities, contrasts and transformations- *argumentative* texts.
- e. Instruction, meaning prospective attitudes, planning of future behaviour with option and without option- *instructive* texts.

Textual specificity has been enlarged by De Beaugrande and Dressler 's procedural approach (1981) adding the categories of *scientific, didactic, literary* and *poetic* texts.

A more general classification has been made by Trosborg (1997) who distinguishes texts by taking into account two criteria:

- *purpose*, based on communicative functions, suggesting that texts are intended to inform, to express an attitude, to persuade and to create a debate
- *mode of discourse*, underlining rhetorical strategies, hence the grouping into descriptive, narrative, expository, argumentative or instrumental texts.

A typological synthesis has been proposed by Reiss who classifies texts into *informative, expressive* and *operative* (in Fawcett 2003: 104).

Without drawing a clear-cut line between narrative and descriptive texts we shall particularly take into account the latter's characteristics, since the selected translation samples are of a descriptive rather than a narrative character, considering description “as an autonomous whole, a semantic unit, a supplementary to the narrative allowing free insertion into the narration” (Hamon 1972: 80).

Descriptive texts can display the following features as specified in the literature:

- a. A particular rhythm originating from both the iteration of the same lexical unit by the ‘effect list’ of nouns and adjectives and the frequency of elliptical predicate constructions.
- b. Special rhetorical figures: comparison, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche.
- c. Grammaticalization of full lexical words such as nouns, adjectives and static verbs.
- d. Lexical, including the ‘pivotal word’, announcing the topic.
- e. Semantic, centered on a pantonym (Hamon 1972) narrowed down to seven semantic classes: *topography*, description of a place, landscape, etc.; *cronography*, description of a period of time or an event; *prosopography*, description of the physical qualities of an individual; *etopeea*, description of the manners; *portrait*, description of both physical and moral features; *comparison*, involving the parallel between two descriptions, in order to set forth an analogy or an opposition; *framed* description, detailed presentation of an action, a phenomenon or event.

These characteristics are retrieved in the ST and TT as necessary pace contributors to activating the next stage of the development of the action in a narrative text. With reference to translation practice, they will decide on the strategies to be adopted by the translator in order to be faithful to the original text, and yet, at the same time, to try to come up with a fluent translation.

Text-typology in translation can be a valuable source of ideological interpretation in any of its coordinates. Our interest here lies in gender reevaluations made in connection with the theory and practice of translation, aiming at generalizing upon the fact that “The differentiated use of language by males and females is more than just a matter of linguistic forms; it is the use of these forms in society and is ideologically constructed”(Leonardi 2007: 37) on power exchanges, since any language use could be a site for power relations.

The semantic theme that I have chosen to analyse in two Romanian comparative translational samples is a token of prosography. The excerpt has been taken from Truman Capote’s *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* and comprises the description of the physical qualities of the major character in the novella, Holly Golightly.

The TT frame corpus thus delineated is described below:

- a. The ST is an online variant of *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* as mentioned in the Corpus Sources.
- b. The first Romanian version (TT1) that I have considered has been translated *Sandvişuri cu diamante* by Catinca Ralea and was published in 1967 in the volume *Harfa de iarbă și alte povestiri*, Universal Literature Publishing House, Bucharest.
- c. The second Romanian version (TT2) has been translated *Mic dejun la Tifanny* by Constantin Popescu having been included in the volume *Mic dejun la Tifanny și alte povestiri*, published in 2006, Universe Publishing House, Bucharest.
- d. The two Romanian versions belong to different periods of time, fact which has influenced the selection of vocabulary in both translations.
- e. One Romanian variant has been translated by a female, the other by a male. We aim at identifying the equivalents which make the difference.
- f. We have presented the corpus by aligning the sentences in both Romanian versions and the English text above.

ST Corpus: Truman Capote’s *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*

Sample Analysis 1

ST1: “I went out into the hall and leaned over the banister, just enough to see without being seen. She was still on the stairs, now she reached the landing, and the ragbag colors of her boy's hair, tawny streaks, strands of albino-blond and yellow caught the hall light.

TT1: <i>Sandvişuri cu diamante</i> by Catinca Ralea (page 379-380)	TT2: <i>Mic dejun la Tifanny</i> by Constantin Popescu (page 17)
Am ieşit pe palier si m-am aplecat peste rampă, atât cât să	Am ieşit pe palier și m-am aplecat peste balustradă ca să-i

<p>pot vedea fără să fiu văzut. Era încă pe scară; dar curând ajunse pe palier. Lumina de pe palier se reflecta în culorile variate ale părului ei de băiat cu şuvițe decolorate de soare, unele de un blond albicios, altele galbene.</p>	<p>pot zări fără să fiu văzut. Holly era pe scară și ajunsese la palierul ei, iar părul ei în toate culorile, tăiat băiețește, cu şuvițe arămii, de un blond aproape alb, sau galbene, lucea în lumina din hol.</p>
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The viewer who is the author himself, starts watching without being seen, fact which makes the description focalized on Holly and her physical qualities: ST: *I went out into the hall and leaned over the banister, just enough to see without being seen/* TT1: *Am ieșit pe palier și m-am aplecat peste rampă, atât cât să pot vedea fără să fiu văzut.*

/ TT2: *Am ieșit pe palier și m-am aplecat peste balustradă ca să-i pot zări fără să fiu văzut.*

In Popescu's translation of the clause *the ragbag colors of her boy's hair, tawny streaks, strands of albino-blond and yellow, caught the hall light*, the complex NP centered around the noun *păr* and its metonymical counterpart *șuvițe* follow the ST determination ordering, but unlike in the original, the translator has chosen to unload the sentence by choosing a single translational equivalent for *streaks* and *strands*. *And* has been translated by *sau* supposing that the translator might have imagined that the evening dark made the colors not so clear. Instead of *tăiat băiețește* as an equivalent for *her boy's hair*, I think that *tuns băiețește* could have also been a good variant obtained by domestication from the Romanian expression *a se tunde băiețește*.

In Ralea's translation there's a shift in the word order of the same clause introducing Holly's appearance, due to the fact that Romanian is much more flexible than English. Fronting of *Lumina de pe hol* as an equivalent to *hall light* placed at the end of the ST operates as a syntactic device marking the circumstances of the writer's watching. It is the pivotal word anticipating the pantonym and guiding Holly's description into Romanian, acting both as an instrument and location. The genitival construction *her boy's hair* has been rendered by *părului ei de băiat* followed by the use of the participial construction *decolorate de soare* as an equivalent for *tawny*.

Ralea's translation bears the female mark of gentleness and love of explicitness under the auspices of the linguistic phenomena of thematization which "consists in arranging words in a particular way so that readers will pay attention to specific key concepts in the sentence. This aim could be achieved by marking specific words instead of others in a sentence and this procedure could be regarded as being a way for the author to express his or her ideology" (Leonardi: 102).

Popescu's translation stands for a male's direct way in expressing thoughts and making evaluations. His variant is a case of semantic translation, keeping to all the facets of meaning implied by the writer.

Sample Analysis 2

ST2: For all her chic thinness, she had an almost breakfast-cereal air of health, a soap and lemon cleanness, a rough pink darkening in the cheeks.

<p>Cu toată silueta ei subțire și elegantă, avea un aer sănătos de om care mănâncă bine dimineața, un aer îngrijit, care amintea de săpun și de lămâie și o roșeață violentă care-i întuneca obrajii.</p>	<p>Cu toată silueta ei elegantă, fata avea un aer de om sănătos, care mănâncă zdravăn dimineața, un aspect îngrijit, care te ducea cu gândul la săpun și lămâie, iar în obraji îi stăruia o notă trandafirie.</p>
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The sentential context ST2 has been translated almost similarly in both variants, being an occasion for the author to express her/ his esthetic evaluation of what she/he is looking at or a commentary on the effect the sight has on her/him. The ST metaphorical adjuncts have been rendered into Romanian with a slight change in the translators' lexical choice for rendering the expression *had an almost breakfast-cereal air of health*. Popescu translates by a grammatical shift, using the adverbialized adjective *zdravăn* modifying the verb *mănâncă*, while Ralea prefers domestication using the Romanian expression *a mânca bine* with a temporal specification *dimineața*. Both translators use addition and shift to render the meaning of *health*, but while Popescu uses the noun *om* modified by the adjective *sănătos*, Ralea uses it to modify *aer*, which she reiterates in *aer îngrijit*, for the sake of symmetry. We can still notice some difference in the Romanian equivalents to *a rough pink darkening in the cheeks*. Popescu's translation is more poetical and mild in tone, a subjective evaluation coming from admiring young females with rosy cheeks e.g. *iar în obraji îi stăruia o notă trandafirie*. Ralea's translation *o roșeață violentă care-i întuneca obraji* tries to be nearer the 'cold' meaning of the ST modifier epithet *rough* and the participle *darkening* as a means of intensifying the character's powerful reaction at external stimuli.

By way of a tentative conclusion, we can state that Ralea's translation as a female translation exhibits greater usage of features identified as "involved" while Popescu's translation as a male translation exhibits greater usage of mixed features identified as "involved -informational". We have thus found several classes of simple lexical and syntactic features whose occurrences in the STs have been translated in TTs using methods and strategies specific for descriptive texts.

The analysis that we have presented is both a continuation of previous research on the use of corpora in the theory and practice of translation (Dima 2009) and an opening chapter on studying the way in which gender evaluations can bear the mark of both the translator's gender and personality and the SL linguistic particularities.

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Didactică / Didactique

Impactul educațional al modelelor comportamentale în formarea resursei umane¹

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Abstract: *In the context of rethinking education system is imperative that the initial training, to develop a methodological framework that provides legal and functional prerequisite skills certification specific to education. The paradigms of change is marked by the tendency of the European Union to bring a common educational efforts, to create the European Higher Education Area, offers the opportunity of education to restructure and adapt initial and continuing training of teachers in rethinking, reformulation, re-institutionalized components. From this perspective, the professionalization of teaching involves a redefinition of the powers of nature competences witch is based on effective teaching practices, including, apart from knowledge and skills and schemes of thinking/reasoning, interpretation, creation of hypotheses, the anticipation of decision.*

Key words: *professionalization of teaching, knowledge and skills, key competences*

Cariera didactică și implicit modelul profesionistului din educație se află într-o perioadă de tranșare atât conceptuale cât și metodologice. Sursa generatoare o constituie evoluțiile din plan național dar, mai ales, trebuie să recunoaștem că în cea mai mare parte schimbările sunt parte a convențiilor internaționale la care țara noastră are rolul de membru semnatar.

Din punct de vedere conceptual primul pas în a determina o abordare unitară, la nivel global a domeniului educației, a fost acela de a stabili semnificația științifică a terminologiei specifice și a solicita utilizarea ei în reconfigurarea sistemelor de formare a resurselor umane. domeniul profesional didactic. Importanța acordată limbajului de specialitate și a universalizării acestuia este ușor de remarcat doar dacă amintim că termeni precum calificare, competențe, rezultate ale învățării, cunoștințe, abilități au fost definiți în cadrul celui mai înalt for decizional european²:

- *Calificarea* reprezintă un rezultat formal al unui proces de evaluare și de validare, recunoașterea oficială a valorii rezultatelor individuale ale învățării pentru piața muncii, precum și pentru educația și formarea profesională continuă, printr-un act de studii (diplomă, certificat, atestat) ce conferă dreptul legal de a practica o profesie/meserie.
- *Rezultatele învățării* reprezintă setul de cunoștințe, abilități și competențe pe care o persoană le-a dobândit și este capabilă să le demonstreze după finalizarea procesului de învățare pe un anumit ciclu de școlarizare.
- *Cunoștințele* reprezintă rezultatul asimilării, prin învățare, a unor informații; sunt un ansamblu de fapte, principii, teorii și practici legate de un anumit domeniu de muncă sau de studiu.
- *Abilitatea* înseamnă capacitatea de a aplica și de a utiliza cunoștințe pentru a duce la îndeplinire sarcini și pentru a rezolva probleme; include anumite tipuri de structuri operatorii, de la deprinderi până la capacități de interpretare și rezolvare de probleme.
- *Competența* reprezintă capacitatea dovedită de a selecta, combina și utiliza adecvat cunoștințe, abilități și alte achiziții (valori și atitudini), în vederea rezolvării cu succes a unei anumite categorii de situații de muncă sau de învățare, precum și pentru dezvoltarea profesională sau personală în condiții de eficacitate și eficiență. Competențele au fost clasificate în două categorii: profesionale și transversale. Competențele profesionale sunt dovedite în situații circumscrise unei anumite profesii, iar competențele transversale au o natură transdisciplinară și transcend un anumit domeniu, respectiv program de studii. În general, competențele transversale vizează: lucrul în echipă, comunicarea orală și scrisă în limba maternă/străină,

utilizarea tehnologiei informației și comunicării – TIC, rezolvarea de probleme și luarea deciziilor, inițiativa și spiritul antreprenorial, deschiderea către învățarea pe tot parcursul vieții, respectarea și dezvoltarea valorilor și eticii profesionale etc.

Competențele se pot forma, dezvolta și valorifica pe niveluri multiple și în mod diferențiat de la o persoană la alta în funcție de potențialul acesteia și de condițiile de învățare. Ca urmare, evaluarea obiectivă a competențelor în domeniul educațional necesită stabilirea unor indicatori concretizați în *descriptori de performanță* care stabilesc și descriu nivelurile minimal, mediu și maximal de realizare a competențelor vizate. În cariera didactică competențele sunt corelate cu standardele profesionale specifice, împreună configurând un model al profesionistului din educație, performanțele individuale ale cadrelor didactice fiind apreciate în funcție de gradul de apropiere sau depărtare de aceste unități cu valoare de „etalon”.

Aria conceptuală trebuie extinsă pentru că *indicatorii de performanță* au ca referință *standardele profesionale pentru ocupațiile didactice*³, considerate etalon în formarea inițială și continuă a cadrelor didactice. Elaborarea și legiferarea acestora a fost o preocupare constantă în sistemul nostru de învățământ, încercările oficiale de conceptualizare aparținând Centrului Național pentru Pregătirea Profesorilor (CNFP) din MEETS, structură care funcționat până în 2011 și care a jucat un rol extrem de important în construcția modelului profesional didactic.

În aceeași arie de schimbări conceptuale în domeniul resurselor umane din educație se situează și recente abordări din literatura de specialitate privind raportul dintre perfecționarea profesională și profesionalizare didactică⁴. Perfecționarea profesională urmărește însușirea teoretică și practică a unor cunoștințe noi, necesare desfășurării activității prezente, dar pe un fundament teoretic și practic deja certificat profesional; se întinde pe o perioadă mai scurtă de timp și nu întotdeauna este parte a unui program coerent „*lifelong education*”. Profesionalizarea este un proces mai complex ce urmărește însușirea unor cunoștințe și formarea unor competențe în raport atât cu poziția actuală, în ceea ce privește activitatea profesională, dar mai ales pentru a răspunde unor posibile situații viitoare și presupune parcurgerea unor conținuturi noi, transdisciplinare. Ca note definitorii putem remarca două linii de acțiune specifice profesionalizării:

- descrierea sau elaborarea „identității profesionale”, astfel încât să se contureze un set de cunoștințe și competențe structurate într-un „model profesional” (standarde profesionale), care poate fi asimilat sistematic, pe baze științifice;
- solicită și un efort corespunzător de legitimare a profesiei didactice în câmpul activităților și profesiilor sociale, cu ajutorul acestui model al profesiei didactice.

Din această perspectivă, profesionalizarea activității didactice presupune o redefinire a naturii competențelor care se află la baza unor practici pedagogice eficace, incluzând, pe lângă cunoștințele și competențele profesionale și scheme de gândire/raționament, de interpretare, de creare de ipoteze, de anticipare, de decizie, etc.

Registrul conceptual necesită și minime trimiteri la *criteriul de optimalitate*⁵ implicat în procesul de formare și dezvoltare profesională. Acesta semnifică stabilirea distribuției sau repartiției așteptate și dezirabile a performanțelor cadrelor didactice. În orice context educațional formatorul, cadrul didactic are nevoie de anumite repere, unele prestabilite, care funcționează în regim de obligativitate pentru toate cadrele didactice, fiind definite de o autoritate în domeniu și altele stabilite conjunctural fiind impuse de o anumită situație educațională.

În contextul acestor reconfigurări devine imperios necesar ca la nivelul formării inițiale, să existe un cadru metodologic legal și funcțional care să ofere premisa certificării competențelor specifice domeniului educațional. Paradigmele schimbării marcate de tendința

Uniunii Europene de a aduce la un numitor comun demersurile educaționale, de a crea Spațiul European al Învățământului Superior oferă posibilitatea sistemului educațional de a restructura și adapta formarea inițială și continuă a personalului didactic prin regândirea, reformularea, reevaluarea componentelor instituționalizate.

Configurarea modelului profesional din educație prin competențele specifice a devenit o prioritate și obligativitate la nivelul sistemului de învățământ o dată cu legiferarea *Metodologiei Cadrului Național al Calificărilor din Învățământul Superior – CNCIS*⁶, care aplică recomandările europene și solicită descrierea în termeni de rezultate ale învățării - cunoștințe, abilități și competențe - a calificărilor obținute în urma studiilor universitare. Maniera integratoare, atât sub aspectul profesional și transversal al competențelor, cât și gradual-progresiv, sub aspectul formării acestora se aplică și domeniului didactic, calitatea programelor de formare reflectând nu doar viziunea și finalitățile noilor politici educaționale, ci și profesionalismul resursei umane din educație.

Dacă până la adoptarea Legii Educației Naționale⁷, reperul instituțional în formarea competențelor didactice îl constituia programul de studii psihopedagogice organizat la nivelul *Departamentului pentru Pregătirea Personalului Didactic*, odată cu intrarea în vigoare a noilor prevederi, s-au modificat condițiile de formare și acces în sistemul de învățământ pentru ocuparea unei funcții didactice. În conformitate cu noua legislație, *formarea inițială* pentru personalul din educația antepreșcolară se realizează prin liceele pedagogice iar pentru ocuparea celorlalte funcții didactice din învățământul preuniversitar se solicită parcurgerea a trei etape de formare:

- a) *formarea inițială, teoretică, în specialitate*, realizată prin universități, în cadrul unor programe acreditate potrivit legii - studii universitare de licență;
- b) *master didactic cu durata de 2 ani* (absolvenților masterului didactic se eliberează diploma de master didactic în domeniul programului de licență).
- c) *stagiul practic cu durata de un an școlar*, realizat într-o unitate de învățământ, sub coordonarea unui profesor mentor.

Orientarea de la nivel european privind încurajarea mobilității studenților și în formarea didactică se regăsește în precizarea că pregătirea practică din cadrul masterului didactic se poate derula și sub forma unei perioade de stagiul în străinătate în cadrul unui program al Uniunii Europene (perioadă certificată prin documentul Europass Mobilitate).

Schimbările sunt și în cazul obținerii unei alte specializări, absolvenții studiilor de licență putând urma un modul de minimum 90 de credite transferabile care să ateste obținerea de competențe de predare a unei discipline din domeniul fundamental aferent domeniului de specializare înscris pe diploma de licență. Acest modul va putea fi urmat în paralel cu masterul didactic sau după finalizarea acestuia.

Beneficiile acestor schimbări vor fi cu siguranță umbrite de obstacolele anticipate deja în privința dificultăților de finalizare a procesului prin stagiul practic cu durata de un an școlar, care se poate realiza numai dacă se ocupă un post didactic prin concurs pe posturi/catedre vacante/rezervate sau prin repartizare de către inspectoratul școlar județean pe posturile rămase neocupate în urma concursului. O astfel de gândire ar da roade în condițiile unui sistem stabil, cu o foarte bună cunoaștere – diagnoză și prognoză – în privința încadrării pe posturi. Numai că în școla românească „mișcarea personalului didactic” are o rată foarte mare ceea ce a și generat oficializarea fenomenului chiar la nivel de minister prin proceduri specifice. Chiar și cu aceste măsuri menite să pună sub control riscul migraționist didactic, va fi greu de previzionat în timp util o situație exactă a posturilor așa încât să se asigure tuturor celor integrați în proces anul de practică pedagogică și implicit condiții de finalizare cu succes a formării profesionale inițiale.

Stagiul de practică are un statut ambivalent și pentru că, potrivit precizărilor legislative, persoanelor aflate în perioada stagiului practic cu durata de un an școlar li se

aplică, în mod corespunzător funcției didactice ocupate temporar, toate prevederile legii educației naționale, precum și toate celelalte prevederi corespunzătoare din legislația în vigoare. Altfel spus, studentul intră deja în rolul și statutul oficial de personal didactic înainte de a finaliza procesul de formare inițială.

Același stagiul de practică are și rolul de primă etapă în examenul de definitivare în învățământ, care se înscrie și el în seria schimbărilor majore privind cariera didactică. Transformarea în examen cu caracter național prin organizarea de către MECTS, conform unei metodologii aprobate prin ordin de ministru⁸, în care este implicat instituțional inspectoratul școlar și doar prin membrii comisiilor universităților, prevede ca etapă eliminatorie perioada stagiului practic cu durata de un an școlar și constă în evaluarea activității profesionale la nivelul unității de învățământ, evaluarea portofoliului profesional personal și în susținerea a cel puțin două inspecții la clasă. Finalizarea acestui an de stagiul practic constituie de fapt și cea de a II-a etapă a definitivatului care prevede o examinare scrisă, pe baza unei tematici și a unei bibliografii aprobate de MECTS pentru fiecare specialitate.

Aceste restructurări în privința masterului didactic și a examenului de definitivat sunt determinate de intenția exprimată oficial de a integra cele două componente în etapa formării inițiale. Elementul de noutate pentru sistemul nostru educațional, cu impact în privința modelului profesional promovat la nivel social, este dat de titlul conferit cadrelor didactice care promovează examenul de definitivat, acela de profesor cu drept de practică în învățământul preuniversitar. Inițiativa este binevenită putând aduce un plus de valorizare a domeniului din perspectivă motivațională dar și psihosocială, meseria de profesor având momentan o percepție socială nefavorabilă și ca atare o slabă atractivitate pentru tinerii valoroși.

Modelul profesional didactic este nevoit să facă față provocărilor societății cunoașterii, formarea continuă impunându-se nu doar ca o continuare firească a formării inițiale, ci și ca un obiectiv necesar de asumat la nivel personal și social. Integrând dezvoltarea profesională și evoluția în carieră, orice profesor are șansa de a parcurge etapele unei formări oficiale și evaluarea diferitelor niveluri de competență prin obținerea gradului didactic II, a gradului didactic I și a gradului de excelență didactică cu titlul de profesor emerit.

La nivelul învățământului preuniversitar, concepția și coordonarea procesului de formare continuă a personalului didactic este asumată de către MECTS, în conformitate cu politicile naționale și europene. Formarea continuă a înregistrat o dezvoltare intensă prin extinderea la nivel instituțional a posibilității de ofertare. Astfel, pe lângă instituțiile de învățământ preuniversitar implicate în mod direct în perfecționarea propriului personal didactic, au apărut mulți furnizori de formare continuă acreditați – Universitățile – centre de perfecționare, Casa Corpului Didactic (CCD), alte instituții, organizații nonguvernamentale sau societăți comerciale care au posibilitatea legală de a intra pe piața programelor de formare continuă.

Dinamizarea activității profesionale a cadrelor didactice a fost posibilă și datorită implementării Sistemului Creditelor Transferabile (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System – ECTS). Conform International Guide to Qualification in Education⁹, „sistemul de credite în învățământul superior permite fiecărui curs să obțină un număr specific de unități/ore în funcție de munca și efortul implicat. Gradele sau notele cursurilor constituie baza pentru evaluarea performanței academice”. În România, deși se aplică încă din 1997 a fost adoptat oficial abia în 2005¹⁰, implementarea ECTS contribuind semnificativ la reformarea și flexibilizarea sistemului de învățământ prin aplicarea unor principii¹¹ specifice adoptate la nivel european:

- *principiul mobilității* văzut din două perspective: pe orizontală – la nivelul aceluiași program de studii, între domenii/discipline diferite, dar și între programe diferite în cadrul aceleiași facultăți; pe verticală – în scopul organizării propriei cariere didactice, prin temporizarea duratelor de studiu și prin restructurările curriculare);
- *principiul modularității* (aplicabil în contextul aplicării noii Legi a Educației Naționale care prevede completarea studiilor de nivel licență, cu un master didactic sau cu un alt modul de specializare diferită dar tot în domeniul fundamental);
- *principiul curriculum-ului* (proiectare, realizare și evaluare din perspectivă curriculară a planurile de învățământ și a ofertei de formare);
- *principiul responsabilității* (libertatea, dreptul și obligația cadrului didactic de a-și construi propriul program de formare și dezvoltare profesională, în raport cu potențialul, așteptările și vocația personală);
- *principiul succesului și al eficienței* (prin flexibilizarea organizării programului de formare, a diferențierii și a libertății fiecărui profesor de a-și organiza propria activitate profesională, ceea ce oferă șanse de reușită);
- *principiul transferului* (posibilitatea de echivalare a studiilor de formare profesională, prin mecanismele recunoașterii și a transferului de credite, cu efecte și în creșterea mobilității didactice pe plan național și internațional).

Analiza standardelor și a descriptorilor de performanță în cariera didactică, arată influența evidentă a idealului socio-educational și a unei noi filosofii a educației specifice societății secolului XXI. Cerințele impuse de evoluția cunoașterii, de avansul tehnologiilor și al comunicațiilor, precum și tendințele de globalizare manifeste și în meseria de profesor, aduc schimbări în pregătirea științifică, psihologică, pedagogică, sociologică, managerială și culturală a educatorilor, pe diverse trepte ale sistemului de învățământ. Formarea conform modelului al profesorului eficient didactic și managerial ar permite ulterior și o evaluare unitară, procesul și produsul formării raportându-se la standardele profesionale de performanță agreate la nivel național și european.

Note

- [1] This paper was made within The Knowledge Based Society Project supported by the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOP HRD), financed from the European Social Fund and by the Romanian Government under the contract number POSDRU ID 56815
- [2] „Recomandarea Parlamentului European și a Consiliului din 23 aprilie 2008 privind stabilirea Cadrului european al calificărilor pentru învățarea de-a lungul întregii vieți”, în: Jurnalul Oficial al Uniunii Europene C 111 din 6.05.2008 (2008/C 111/01), anexa 1 – Definiții, p. 4.
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Sex-role behavior of adult women between traditional and modern

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Abstract: *In recent years, within the social system, there is a tendency to merge and delete behavioral differences between genders, sometimes creating ambiguity and unease in the assumption of socially-expected gender roles. The multitude of statutes that the contemporary woman has leads to an accumulation of roles that overlap and for which special efforts are needed in order to balance them which can often consume its psychological resources. So, overlapping roles of women in contemporary social system generates the emergence of new behavioral patterns and hence new feminine typologies.*

Key words: *feminine typologies, sex-role behavior, the traditional models of femininity.*

Manifestation of masculinity and femininity is determined by sex roles and cultural differences in perceiving male and female roles. Beyond the bio-psychological factor, "social prescriptions" are the main elements supporting and guiding the differences in male and female role models to their specific behaviour ("the way a woman/man should look and behave").

Recently, there is a general tendency of levelling and cancellation the behavioural differences between the sexes, thus generating ambiguity and discomfort in taking the socially-expected sex-role.

Another tendency is that most of the young people identify themselves with the male role (Krantz, R., 1968, apud Mitrofan, I., Ciupercă, C., 2002, pg.129), while the female role is becoming increasingly obscure and devalued. The process of transformation of male and female roles is due to changes in social perspective and to either permissiveness or restrictions imposed by family, religion and group morality.

In terms of sex-role identity formation of girls, Iolanda Mitrofan demonstrates the existence of three types of "identity initiations" and highlights the role of the three significant relationships in shaping women's gender identity. Thus, father-daughter relationship is extremely important in shaping gender identity, particularly in the early stage of development of the girl. It leads to the configuration of femininity and it is very important for accepting her self-image in sex-role, for psychological comfort as a woman, for the level of basic safety and self-trust. The second initiation for girls is mother-daughter relationship, leading to identification with the same-sex parent and foreshadowing the appropriate sex roles identity. This opening is the prototype of future parental roles assumed in the scenario of life. The third initiation is carried out in the couple relationship. (Mitrofan, I., 2005, apud Anghel, E., 2009, pg.54)

In recent years, within the social system, there is a tendency to merge and delete behavioral differences between genders, sometimes creating ambiguity and unease in the assumption of socially-expected gender roles. Nowadays, teenagers are not sufficiently female or male polarized, which raises some issues regarding their social and self acceptance. As far as the gender-role model is concerned, there have occurred some changes. Thus, we witness transition metamorphoses of gender-role behavior, from traditional to egalitarian. The change of the traditional gender-role model is not attained at a slow pace, free of conflicts and difficulties. The transition towards the unisex society and the reconversion of roles, from the highly differentiated and complementary to the significantly similar and somewhat similar, has not been accomplished with the full agreement of the two genders.

If we are to compare the traditional models of masculinity and femininity, *we can* say that the traditional male gender-*role* consists of a constellation of features and guidelines such as: competitiveness, aggressiveness, confidence, assertiveness, while the traditional female

gender-role constellation consists of expressive features such as: care, sympathy, sensitivity to the needs of others, delicacy, fragility.

According to the traditional model, the male was considered a symbol of authority, the power-holder. He made all the important decisions in the couple, and again had the power to impose respect on his life partner. Women's basic responsibilities were: doing house chores, taking care of children and providing for the partner's needs and satisfaction.

In the contemporary social system, the traditional male / female roles have changed much from the past. The new marital ideal has become the gender-role egalitarianism, in all of the marital life dimensions, including the intimate one. This implies an egalitarian participation of spouses, in cooperation on financial support, domestic care and childcare. Women accede to equality in respect to sexual behavior and gratifications, as well as in family decision-making. Despite the increasing tendency of gender-role equaling, many people still feel comfortable conforming to traditional gender roles. They are considered rather a minority in the contemporary society (Norton and Moorman, 1987).

One of the major results of this change is the fact that both the man and woman have the freedom to pursue their own interests, without feeling pressure from gender-role expectations. For example, the "new man" is able to share responsibilities within family life with his spouse and still enjoy the fulfillment of domestic or child care tasks, without necessarily feeling emasculated. The inverse is also true: the "new woman" can invest in some professional concerns and have behaviors that were previously assigned to men, without experiencing a loss of femininity.

These changes, aimed at equalizing gender-roles, at changing both the marital and the premarital relationship. As a result, for example, nowadays women are allowed to make appointments with men, to take initiative in sexual behavior, to participate as an equal in decision-making and even to propose marriage to a man. The man is no longer always right at any cost, but now is free to express feelings, share fears, sorrows and frustrations.

Considering these circumstances, what is the actual meaning of a "real woman" or a "real man", what kind of image these expressions depict?

However, the situation becomes much more complicated, as both men and women receive conflicting feed-back from the society: women are encouraged to be even more than men, focusing on career, competence, competitiveness and even aggressiveness. But if she is successful in her career, in a contemporary world that is still dominated by men, she expects to be considered to have lost her "femininity".

Likewise, men are encouraged to be even more than women; that is caring, emotionally expressive and sensitive to the feelings expressed by others. But if he goes too far in this direction he expects to be considered a "feminized" (J. Coleman, 1988). Gender-role transition seems to favor roles expansion by mutually acquiring gender-role attributes.

In short, women and men exchange traditional gender-roles, but this change automatically implies certain drawbacks, leading to conflicts, both within the individual's personality (female or male) and regarding their intimate relationship. There is a "long way" to reaching equality between genders, one that is supposed to be comfortable for both of them and which is expected to continue through the expansion and achievement of compatibility and harmony within the couple. That is because, obviously, any change involves the transformation of a certain balanced state, and the time necessary to reorganize both the individual and family life is longer than the one you need to dislocate everything. The accommodation to the new reality meets serious difficulties because habits, attitudes, stereotypes and prejudices are hard to change and prone to reluctance. Until the establishment of a new state of imbalance, there is also a psychological tension that occurs, an anomie of the male and female roles. It seems that, functionally speaking, *the* contemporary family has not

overcome this condition yet, the negative effects induced by the new conjugal role structure still prevailing over the positive ones.

What were the causes for this change? The traditional gender-role structure was modified in the context of action (most of the times) associated with the following factors: woman's emancipation, her economic independence, involvement in social life, professional career, the change of lifestyle and family values, the changes in the socialization process (the unisex society in which roles are no longer gender differentiated), the debasement of feeling within the couple (the emphasis of individualism leads to the prejudice of the spouse's involvement in couple life; the greater the emotional detachment from the partner, the lower the tendency to accept and perform traditional gender roles).

When elaborating these factors, so as to highlight the feminine typologies and the effect in the individual plan of their integration in the gender-role model, it was noticed that the feminist ideology was the one to determine women give up their cultural model, which was then considered obsolete, without even thinking of a replacement. They were still unaware of what had to be actually changed, and did not take into account the men's response to the new requirements of the gender-role model. Practically, the women did not intuit empathetically the men's possibilities to come up to their expectations. Thus, *according to* the typology proposed by K. Horney (1998, 42-53), the obedient woman was replaced by the aggressive one (obedience, aggressiveness, and isolation are generic names given to some ways of being and approaching, from the perspective of some qualities that characterize a certain type of behavior), and the main features of the two female typologies are:

- The isolated woman prefers exclusively male activities, demonstrating reluctance towards sexual intercourses and marriage. However, if she is involved in such a relationship, she eventually perturbs it because of her trying to assert, to be superior. She has great difficulties in becoming an accomplished person, or in finding her true self through her partner, or through marriage. She stubbornly refuses to acknowledge defeat and accept compromises because she believes that these are clear signs of weakness, which generate dependency. She hardly gets to know love and happiness, and that is why she considers them to be mere illusions and utopias. She believes that her partner has to accept her the way she is and to understand her thoroughly, ignoring the fact that her spouse wants and needs the same things, as well. Therefore, the relationship in which she is involved shows signs of dissolution, even if the latent time of discontent may be shorter or longer.

- The aggressive woman accomplishes and considers her role more of a responsibility, continuously trying to change something, not only in regards with an internal conflict, but also with an external one, irrespective of the number of difficulties she encounters. She is much more open to making compromises and communicating than the isolated woman. The intensity of the conflicts and disputes can reach the maximum, but, eventually, the situation receives an amiable solution. These differences are the expressions of women's inner frustrations, represented by resentment and claims, which can be either solved or deteriorated. In both cases, the aggressive woman tries to allay the dissension, because she values her relationship more than her feminist ambitions. Therefore, even the couple that seems to be the less likely to dissolve can reach a difficult stage in its relationship, and that is if the aggressive actions become very frequent. The aggressive woman unlike the isolated one, can find love easier and achieve happiness faster, even if only sequentially, combining moments of euphoria with the monotonous ones, alternating moments of love with those of hatred and even contempt.

The two types of women are characteristic for the contemporary partnership. The obedient personality, characteristic of the traditional family, tends to remain statistically insignificant, few women now accepting subordination to man, excessive tolerance and emotional and material dependence.

The change of the traditional gender-role structure leads to the transformation of the relation between authority and power of the two genders (authority and power within the modern couple being under construction and reconstruction, being based on the negotiations between partners, attitudes and their behavior towards the roles they perform in the family). Women's professional careers cause fortuitous changes in the conjugal role structure (men can no longer use traditional behavior: come home, watch TV, have dinner served, have the table cleared, rest for the next day so as to go back to work, because women no longer have time to deal physically with such a passive attitude even if they emotionally assume a wide range of roles).

Moreover, there is noticed a decrease in the birth rate, in the time devoted for children's education; the intergenerational conflicts deepen, interpersonal relationships deteriorate, especially those between spouses. Effective communication between partners could be the solution to get through this impasse, which, unsolved would have serious consequences for *the* individual, couple, family and society as well.

The most important and interesting psychological aspect of this change in *the* traditional gender-role structure refers to the women's motivation to accomplish it, more precisely to the confusion and inner conflict arising from the battle of reasons. Woman's temptation to emancipate and change roles and labor responsibilities within the couple or family is facing, paradoxically, her very indecision. And that is why because "the woman is afraid of refusing to play the role of mother or wife exclusively, for fear of losing the safety offered by the old feminine values, of waking up without any personality at all". Thus, *the* modern woman always oscillates between the need for independence and the desire to cling to old values. She does not manage to fully live neither freedom, nor submission." (Niel, 1974: 148). In fact, she is not trying to abandon what she detests. She has no inclination to final solutions. Men protest against men, against its condition, but never escape from it (de Beauvoir, 1949). This oscillation, the woman's indecision to fully assume the change of the role and its implications emphasizes the differences and conflicts within the couple, diminishes the reliability on family values as a social institution and creates emotional imbalances at the level of the individual.

Practically speaking, women either still do not know what they really want or are simply unaware of their actions, these reasons diminishing the lack of unity of the female representatives regarding the change of spousal models.

The denial of traditional roles and the neurotic integration of new female typologies (the independent, competitive, aggressive, isolated, "omnipotent" woman – the "superwoman" who is above all) lead to an amplification of emotions such as anxiety and depression, confusion in taking new roles due to the excess of one of the poles of the feminine-masculine dyad.

Under these circumstances, women who encounter such difficulties are integrated in the psychotherapeutic approach. The negative emotional states are generated by: the women's reluctance to change, the "psychological baggage" (fears, myths, stereotypes, family prescriptions) handed down in regard of gender-role identity, social pressures (including the state of poverty), and the image of the couple's balance which has to stand the test of time.

The aspects concerning the issue imposed by the new female typologies present in the social contemporary space, the structural changes in gender-role identity, as well as the key points within the life scenario are important elements in preparing the psychotherapeutic intervention plan. The psychotherapeutic objectives were: the integration of the gender-role model and those elements characteristic either for the traditional typologies, or the modern ones, which correspond to the constellation of the scenario, which meet the needs of authority and power within the couple, which provides emotional balance and validation of flexible and adaptive behaviors.

The attachment to a particular typology considered a model and its arbitrary reference creates difficulties in the personal development of the contemporary woman. The search for a personal gender-role model, nourishing, creative becomes an important goal in the personal development. In other words, what is validated by the community or parental model should not be considered the only starting point in establishing one's gender-role model.

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New approaches and educational policies in human resources training in education¹

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Abstract: *This article recommends the extension of the issue addressed in other papers devoted to a similar theme, this time focusing on a long-awaited and necessary implementation of a grantable credit system in the professional teaching development, as well as methods for approved recognition through certification and validation of skills acquired through various forms of training and conversion. The main objective of this paper is to illustrate the tenets according to which the methodology and axiological frame of the whole process is structured, as well as some actual forms and applications in educational practice.*

Key words: *teaching career, professional credit transfer system, the paradigm of the competences approach.*

The emergence of a new legislation in the Romanian education system has generated the reorganization of the institutional and operational structures, forms and practices devoted to training human resources in education. The challenge matches up the change, the immediate need felt within the reality of school requiring the formulation and adoption of methodologies, regulations and procedures specific to the legislative framework in education.

One of these changes concerns the in-service training of the teaching staff. This article recommends the extension of the issue addressed in other papers devoted to a similar theme, this time focusing on a long-awaited and necessary implementation of a grantable credit system in the professional teaching development, as well as methods for approved recognition through certification and validation of skills acquired through various forms of training and conversion. The main objective of this paper is to illustrate the tenets according to which the methodology and axiological frame of the whole process is structured, as well as some actual forms and applications in educational practice.

The entire concept is fixed in the new requirements regarding the teaching career: the correlation of the career progression with the accumulation of transferable professional credits, the conversion of general models of professional development to the teaching career and the establishment of relevant in-service training programs; the methodological innovation of professional skills certification and validation system, the adjustment to European developments and trends and their suitability to institutional and curricular contexts of lifelong learning process in Romania.

The success of the reforming process of the field is conditioned by a series of premises:

- a) The accidence of the teaching staff to new vision and regulations regarding the certification and validation by including in the methodological and procedural system a factual need investigated and identified in the train of an impact assessment;
- b) The management by motivation of the teaching staff and the involvement in the self-management of the in-service training curriculum by establishing procedures and institutional mechanisms in order to facilitate the prevailing assessment of aspects regarding teaching and syllabi with consistency and relevance for the categories of skills defined within the conceptual framework of lifelong learning;
- c) The systematization and coherence for the certification and validation of the professional skills;

- d) The assurance of the feasibility of the certification and validation methodology by outlining mechanisms for optimal use of resources in the assessment and certification of professional competence;
- e) The reconstruction of the professional development of the teaching staff in the pre-university education by aligning it to a set of principles of the European Credit Transfer System (European Credit Transfer and accumulation System - ECTS) for higher education and adapted to the in-service training.

Therein, a synthetic presentation regarding the international design of ECTS is a *fortiori*. The European Credit Transfer System² (*ECTS*) is a credit methodology that, *by virtue of the* adoption at the education system level of most convenanter countries of the Bologna Declaration, may facilitate the introduction of consistent methods of recognition of learning outcomes and activities undertaken during the curricula regarding education / training developed by institutions of higher education. In Romania, *according to active legislation, there is of necessity* to grant credits for each year of study, but there is no credit methodology for courses, seminars, laboratories, summer schools, training programs organized by institutions of higher education or other activities conducted within the educational framework. In the context of the “*Bologna Process*” *the* credit transfer system is interconnected with other fundamental elements of the scheme, such as the implementation of a national qualifications framework or the development and release of a “*diploma supplement*”, which should, according to recommendations agreed by the signatory of the Declaration of Bologna, include information about the competences and skills of the graduates.

The ECTS credit methodology granted to the in-service teacher training field represents an assessment and validation proceeding of the “workload” which a trainee should complete in order to achieve the objectives of a training program described as the skills and learning outcomes pursued throughout the program. A credit represents in fact the “work performed by the teacher” in the conduct of those activities necessary for the successful completion of a training program or other activity regulated and validated in the field. There should also be mentioned the fact that ECTS is not a parallel system of teaching performance rating. The credits are not equivalent grades derived from partial or final examination in a training program and which differentiates the graduates of the program depending on the level of performance achieved during the training process. On this line, credits represent a form of recognition of the results of the activities undertaken during a training program, both at the national level of higher education, as well as at the European one.

The methodology for the assignment of a certain number of credits for a specific in-service training activity is based on the principle of a realistic estimate of the time required to meet specific requirements and successful completions, credits not representing in any way a measure of the importance of that activity, the quality of people leading the activity or *a unit of time* in the training activities.

The ECTS system allows a comparable assessment among similar programs run by different institutions. Thus, as far as the evaluation of the in-service training curriculum is concerned, the form of credit of *specific activities may be an indicator of the way they are planned*, and in addition to this it could be also an indicator of the anticipated results of these programs (in terms of competences and learning outcomes) and also may indicate the correlation between the national (or even European) qualifications and specific objectives of such a course. The credit system is probably one of the few objective, comparable and transparent sources of information for the evaluation of the objectives and outcomes of the training program. Therefore, on the one hand the development and implementation of a methodology of credit compatible with ECTS, and on the other the acknowledgement of its own credit system that *is* adopted and used by various educational institutions, may represent

a fundamental dimension of the quality evaluation process in human resources training in education.

The flexibility and openness of the educational systems towards other forms of learning, beyond the official-formal framework created another problem in the reconfiguration of the training system that aims at the evaluation and recognition of professional skills acquired / improved in formal, non-formal and informal context. In this case, the terminological code is based on a series of key-concepts, which are prerequisites for a functional methodology: the paradigm of the competence approach; the cumulative development of teachers' level of competence; the European Qualifications Framework concepts regarding lifelong learning and the emphasis on learning outcomes; the management of the teaching career development; management and self – the management of the in-service training curriculum.

The paradigm of the competence approach represents a perspective of definition and recognition of the training outcomes in the spirit of postmodern pedagogy, where the competences direct and regulate the learning/training process and maintain interdependent relationships between all the curricular variables of the training programs. The references of the term competence, which we capitalize on here, are: “the knowledge, skills and individual's demonstrated, accomplished abilities that are accomplished at a standard determined level. The competences consist of a combination of knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform a major task or function in a given situation”³. From this defining perspective, the professional competences of the teaching profession are integrative ensembles of cognitive, intellectual abilities, functional schemes, skills and attitudes that facilitate expert activities professional in contexts and fields specific of the teaching profession and guarantee performant and professional ethic behavior.

The cumulative development of teachers' level of competence represents the systematic acquisition of new skills or their rational improvement by following specific lines in the development of the teaching career through teacher certification levels, curricula and activities in formal, non-formal and informal contexts, which ensures the accumulation of necessary transferable credits. The level of the professional skills development, achieved through curricula and formal, non-formal and informal activities, is assessed against professional standards and accordingly to teachers' metacognitive competences, for autonomous use of capacity, skills and abilities in the (self) process of in-service training, in order to cope with the changes in the educational policy, as well as with complex situations. The changes in the system relate to two categories of skills:

- On the one hand, there are the professional competences with which the European Qualifications Framework⁴ (EQF - European Qualifications Framework) operates and the National Qualifications Framework in Higher Education⁵ (NQFHE), adapted to the specificities of the teaching career: professional competences expressing the unified and dynamic ensemble of knowledge and skills, hence the two dimensions: cognitive and functional - action, cross competences - role skills, personal and professional competences development.
- On the other hand, there were recently enacted by Annex 1 to OM 5660/2011 the professional competence types defined according to in-service training standards for professorship (for secondary school) which the training program providers and managers in charge of the professional skills certification and validation retrospect to:

C.1. Methodological skills.

C.2. Communication and relationship skills.

C.3. Students assessment skills.

C.4. Psycho – social skills.

C.5. Technical and technological skills.

C.6. Career management skills.

The concepts of the European Qualifications Framework regarding lifelong learning and the emphasis on learning outcomes support the methodological concept axis of the certification and validation process on the activities, curricula and records of professional training, relevant for the development of the teaching career. The implementation of the lifelong learning principle requires recognition and validation of the acquisitions acquired by teachers in the in-service training stages, in formal, non-formal and informal contexts through the recognition, transfer and accumulation of professional credits system. Formal training stages represent the expression of the teaching staff development policies, based on a rational and progressive development of professional skills, and consist of:

- Processes for obtaining teaching degrees;
- Bachelor's and / or master degree;
- Postgraduate studies for professional conversion;
- Activities and curricula developed by trainers and implemented by the assistance provided by educated trainers;

Bachelor's degree and master programs are acknowledged as completing and validating forms through transferable professional credits only if they meet the following conditions:

- Are accredited study programs or approved by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education;
- The specialization is reflected in the teaching plan, in the curricular area which includes the specialized discipline or is part of the Educational Science and Psychology license area;
- The skills to teach a new specialization are certified, by graduating the teacher training program (in the Teacher Training Departments or have a Master's degree according to the National Educational Law no.1/2011⁶), on the lines of psycho-pedagogical disciplines studied in the psycho-pedagogical module of the specialization and psycho-pedagogical certification for the Educational Sciences field.

Postgraduate studies for professional conversion are recognized as in-service training programs and validated through transferable professional credits only if they meet the following conditions:

- Are study programs of at least 90 transferable, accredited or approved credits by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education;
- Are part of the fundamental or license field provided by the university nomenclature and found in the teaching plan, in the field of the taught curriculum discipline;
- the pedagogical training program was completed (in the Teacher Training Departments or through the Master's degree according to the National Educational Law no.1/2011), on the lines of psycho-pedagogical disciplines studied in the psycho-pedagogical module of the specialization and psycho-pedagogical certification for the Educational Sciences field.

As far as the training stages within the formal context are concerned, the recognition and validation of professional competences are assured by the promotion of the programs and activities that are to be conducted within the educational framework. Another voted approach was undertaken in non-formal and informal contexts that represent the very expression of the professional competences development, apart from autonomous formal forms of education, or through learning activities carried out in collective or informal

groups. The main forms of learning in non-formal consist of methodological experience exchanges, practical-applied research activities, the performance of specific tasks within institutional or community committees, of some educational projects, participation in scientific, pedagogical and methodical conferences etc. In this case, the recognition and certification of professional competences are carried out by authorized bodies and structures.

Learning outcomes represent the evidence of the training programs and in-service training activities, of professional or personal nature that teachers demonstrate in their curriculum practice and other educational and social activities after the completion of the learning process. Learning outcomes represent the reference point according to which competences are validated and officially recognized. The design of the in-service training curriculum based on learning outcomes is directed by the focus of the training programs on the significant results through the determination of learning outcomes, focusing on maximum standards and the demonstration of the importance of learning.

The management of the teaching career development represents the assembly of the processes regarding the monitoring of the professional evolution, sequential evaluation of the professional competences development, psycho-pedagogical, methodical and specialized support and counseling for the optimization of the in-service training process and decision-making regarding self-improvement and career development. The management of the teaching career development is exercised on several levels, involving a number of responsible factors with relevant expertise in the field (policy makers, advisors, experts in education, inspectors and school managers, teachers responsible for improving the teaching staff): Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, County Boards of Education, Teaching-Staff Resource Center, County center for psycho-pedagogical assistance, school management.

The management of the in-service curriculum represents a paradigm influenced by the need of rationality and responsibility in the field of in-service training, whose significance is the result of a conceptual multidimensional analysis. From this defining perspective, the management of the teaching career development is:

- from the structural point of view, a set of principles, functions, strategies, methodological and procedural systems, designed and coordinated to facilitate the achievement of high standards performance objectives and working programs in order to improve the professional skills of teachers and ensure the assessment and recognition of their results, according to the criteria of relevance, consistency, usefulness and timeliness of the outline of the teaching staff;
- from the procedural point of view, a unified system of multidimensional curricular analysis processes (curriculum audit for in-service training, the analysis of the educational needs, the analysis of the necessary resources), design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review of policies for the professional development of the teachers and curriculum projects /in-service training programs, involving management roles and responsibilities, on several levels: the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, County Boards of Education, Teaching-Staff Resource Center, County center for psycho-pedagogical assistance, school management.

The real success of such an in-service training system of human resources in education would have considered the implementation of the practices provided by the self - management of the in-service training curriculum as a system of teaching activities, of rational, professional and responsible implication in its very own process of professional development through: the diagnostic analysis of the professional competences development in relation to the specific requirements imposed by the teaching career evolution stages, personal

professional expectations and other factors (school managers, students, pedagogical and specialized literature); the establishment of project of professional development focused on defining strategic objectives and tactical objectives for (self) in-service training, the recommendation of in-service training programs and activities in order to acquire / improve desirable professional skills; the coordination of the implementation and personal monitoring of the formal, non-formal, informal in-service training, self-assessment and regulation in the spirit of the professional conduct of the project, for the achievement of results recognized and certified by accredited authorities.

Notes

- [1] This paper was made within The Knowledge Based Society Project supported by the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOP HRD), financed from the European Social Fund and by the Romanian Government under the contract number POSDRU ID 56815
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Sur le décodage de l'image identitaire dans les manuels de FLE

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Résumé : *L'image identitaire qui circule dans les manuels de FLE découle de l'imaginaire patrimonial engendré par un contexte, une histoire, etc... et combine plusieurs aspects : genre, ethnicité, religion, origines sociales et familiales ou expériences stigmatisantes. Cette image peut être produite soit par les sociétés elles-mêmes (autoreprésentation / stéréotype), soit par le regard des autres (hétéro représentation/stéréotype) et se forge dans la relation à l'Autre. Notre communication vise à étudier la relation entre les textes du manuel de FLE et les référents socioculturels qui déterminent le décodage de l'image de l'Autre dans ce type de textes.*

Mots-clés : *identité, identité culturelle, image identitaire, stéréotype*

La notion d'identité, difficile à expliquer, est définie, d'habitude, selon les disciplines qui l'étudient : s'il s'agit de la psychologie et/ou de la philosophie, cette notion est associée à la subjectivité, à l'individuel, tandis que, s'il s'agit de la sociologie ou/et de l'ethnologie, elle est associée à l'identité d'un groupe ou d'une société entière. *Le Dictionnaire raisonné de la théorie du langage* constate que « le concept d'identité, non définissable, s'oppose à celui d'altérité (comme « même » à « autre ») qui lui-aussi, ne peut être défini : en revanche, ce couple est interdéfinissable par la relation de présupposition réciproque ... ». [1]

D'ailleurs, la définition de la notion d'identité nous met en embarras car, d'une part, étymologiquement *identité* provient du bas latin *identitas* –atis (plus tard, le latin classique *idem* = *le même*, « caractère de deux ou plusieurs êtres identiques (identité qualitative, spécifique ou abstraite)» [2] et d'autre part, *identité* signifie que l'individu est unique, sans ressembler à aucun d'autre. C'est pourquoi, les spécialistes en anthropologie culturelle considèrent que définir la notion d'identité est une opération presque impossible et cherchent à surpasser cet inconvénient par la prise en compte de plusieurs aspects de l'identité.

« L'identité confère à l'individu l'unicité. Cette unicité est cependant fortement corrélée au collectif car elle se situe dans une dialectique du **Je et du Nous** où « je suis JE » en même temps que « je suis NOUS ». Il existe autant d'identités que d'individus et autant d'identités qu'il y a de peuples ou de groupes, les uns et les autres étant dans une perpétuelle quête d'identité ». [3]

Philippe Buschini [4] imagine un schéma (voir le schéma no.1 ci-dessous) qui contient les trois dimensions de l'identité traditionnelle : l'identité personnelle, l'identité sociale et l'identité culturelle. *L'identité personnelle* réfère à l'individualité de l'individu. Il s'agit de l'ensemble des informations qui permettent à individualiser de manière unique l'individu (nom, prénom, date et lieu de naissance, etc.). *L'identité sociale* représente le statut que l'individu partage avec les autres membres du groupe ou de la société d'appartenance (âge, sexe, métier, religion, etc.). « *L'identité culturelle*, très (trop) souvent confondue avec l'identité sociale, est l'adhésion plus ou moins complète d'un individu aux normes et valeurs d'une culture » [5].



Schéma no.1 « L'écosystème de l'identité traditionnelle » [6]

L'identité n'est ni une structure créée aléatoirement ni le résultat des expériences précédentes. Elle est une structure à facettes multiples qui « s'organise selon une cohérence particulière en vue de finalités opérationnelles » [7]. L'individu a sa propre identité mais il possède aussi une

partie de l'identité du groupe auquel il appartient. Il y a donc une relation de complémentarité entre l'identité personnelle et l'identité collective.

La transmission des images culturelles à travers les manuels de FLE

Les manuels scolaires constituent l'un des supports les plus importants qui transmettent par leurs textes des informations sur la culture du pays dont on apprend la langue. A la différence des manuels des autres disciplines, l'objectif général des manuels de langue étrangère est celui de rendre capables les apprenants de s'exprimer et de communiquer correctement et efficacement dans une langue étrangère. Par cette démarche, les apprenants connaissent aussi la culture étrangère (française et francophone) car le manuel scolaire est un outil préféré de représentations culturelles et sociales.

Dans l'enseignement de la langue française on a affaire à deux aspects de la culture : la culture française connue en contexte didactique à travers la langue d'apprentissage (le FLE) et la culture de l'apprenant. Pour Malika Bensekat, la culture transmise

« servira à provoquer le conflit cognitif chez l'apprenant qui doit inévitablement, se confronter à d'autres approches que les siennes et accepter un autre fonctionnement mental [...] l'enseignant de langue doit amener les apprenants à une maîtrise cognitive des modes culturels de la vie des natifs, et à une compréhension faisant intervenir la capacité à imaginer ce qu'est vivre à l'intérieur de ses propres structures ». [8]

Le professeur de langue étrangère a comme but la maîtrise par ses apprenants, des modèles culturels de la vie des natifs (des Français). Dans l'acte d'enseigner toute approche didactique repose sur l'usage des manuels scolaires qui permettent l'accès à la culture de la langue cible. Le manuel scolaire, en tant qu'élément de l'axe apprenant –enseignant – manuel, représente le catalyseur des activités communes des apprenants et de l'enseignant au cours desquelles les cultures d'apprentissage et d'enseignement se rencontrent.

Les didacticiens se posent la question si, selon les politiques éducatives d'un pays, les manuels de langue sont créés de telle sorte qu'ils promeuvent la culture de l'Autre ou portent sur les idées d'appartenance à la culture nationale en promouvant l'identité et la culture nationales :

« il faut se demander quelle culture est véhiculée par le manuel, mais plus généralement, si on peut transmettre une culture (et quelle culture ?) par l'intermédiaire d'un livre scolaire. Il convient également de réfléchir à la contextualisation des manuels (à quel niveau ? pour quels objectifs, sous quelles formes ?) et à la souplesse et à la prise en compte (ou pas) des écarts entre la culture de l'apprenant et la culture de l'Autre » [9]

Au cours de langue nous, les enseignants, nous proposons à nos apprenants de découvrir la culture de l'Autre et de se préparer à communiquer avec cet Autre [10]. C'est ainsi que l'enseignement /apprentissage d'une langue étrangère est asservi à l'acquisition d'une triple compétence [11] : linguistique, communicative et interculturelle inséparables entre elles. Les différences culturelles sont observables au niveau de quatre critères [12] :

- « Les symboles: mots, attitudes, dessins ou objets (langage, vêtements, coiffure, marques de prestige social).
- Les héros : vivants ou morts, réels ou imaginaires, ils possèdent des caractéristiques hautement appréciées et servent de modèles de comportement.
- Les rituels : activités collectives considérées comme essentielles à l'intérieur d'une culture : le salut, les formules de politesse, les cérémonies sociales et religieuses, sportives.
- Les valeurs : elles sont le cœur de la culture et définissent le bien et le mal, le beau et le laid, le naturel et ce qui est contre nature, la norme et l'anormal, le rationnel et l'irrationnel, le cohérent et l'insensé. »

L'enseignement/apprentissage de l'interculturel introduit la notion de réciprocité dans les échanges des deux cultures, langue maternelle et langue cible, et essaye de sauvegarder l'identité culturelle des interactants en contact. L'identité de chacun se définit par différenciation des autres identités distinctes et pourtant, la relation à l'Autre est impliquée dans les contacts interculturels. Il s'en suit que la communication interculturelle implique la compréhension progressive de la culture de l'Autre : « L'objet de l'apprentissage interculturel est, pour une part, la culture étrangère, pour l'autre, le processus de compréhension de cette culture étrangère y compris tous les autres facteurs qui la composent ». [13]

L'étrangeté, l'altérité interculturelle, est présente dans toute classe de FLE. L'enseignant a le devoir de la valoriser de sorte que chaque apprenant s'enrichisse des écarts et des complémentarités de l'Autre et construise, ainsi, une culture nouvelle, la culture de l'apprenant. Cette nouvelle culture permettra la compréhension des relations (ressemblances et différences) entre la communauté d'origine et la communauté cible.

Pour maintenir la relation avec l'Autre il faut que l'apprenant comprenne quels sont ses propres modes de pensée, ses comportements, comment il réfléchit et agit et, en même temps, quels sont les modes de pensée, les comportements, etc. de cet Autre. La perception des différences culturelles et des valeurs qui les soutiennent permettent des interrelations plus riches et plus vraies et, par suite, une communication authentique.

Le *Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues : apprendre, enseigner, évaluer*, souligne que « la prise de conscience interculturelle inclut la conscience de la diversité régionale et sociale des deux mondes... [« le monde d'où l'on vient » et « le monde de la communauté cible »] ». [14]

Travailler sur les stéréotypes en classe de langue

Les stéréotypes sont des opinions, des représentations toutes faites, que les individus appartenant à une culture se font sur les individus appartenant à une autre culture et qui leur permettent de « catégoriser ce qu'ils n'ont jamais connu personnellement » [15]. Les stéréotypes sont constitués souvent de traits contradictoires et dans le contexte des relations interhumaines, un même stéréotype peut être négatif ou positif selon la situation d'utilisation. « L'utilisateur du stéréotype pense souvent procéder à une simple description, en fait il plaque un moule sur une réalité que celui-ci ne peut contenir. Une représentation stéréotypée d'un groupe ne se contente pas de déformer en caricaturant, mais généralise en appliquant automatiquement le même modèle rigide à chacun des membres du groupe » [16].

L'objectif de l'enseignement de l'interculturel n'est pas d'éliminer les stéréotypes, mais de travailler sur eux pour qu'ils ne soient pas renforcés au cours des échanges communicationnels :

« L'aspect destructeur des stéréotypes et des préjugés vient non pas de leur nature, mais de l'utilisation qu'on en fait. D'abord, on risque de les accumuler : un stéréotype n'est jamais isolé : comme dans une armée, ils marchent à plusieurs ! De plus, leur utilisation consciente et volontaire dans un contexte d'opposition, de domination ou de dépendance, en fait autant d'armes qui dévalorisent, manipulent et enferment. Ils suscitent discrimination, racisme et conflits ethniques » [17].

Dans la classe de langue les non natifs (les apprenants) et le natif (l'enseignant et les supports didactiques qui y sont utilisés) sont impliqués dans une interaction et les informations sur la culture nationale sont souvent appréciées comme plus significatives que d'autres indices identitaires. En faisant appel aux représentations que l'apprenant a sur le groupe culturel de l'Autre (les Français), ces représentations peuvent prendre la forme des stéréotypes. En ces conditions, le stéréotype national symbolise l'image d'une nation, la catégorise. Même lorsqu'on parle d'un italien, d'un anglais ou d'un américain il y a un

catalogage, il y a un stéréotype. En réalité, un détail est choisi pour cataloguer l'ensemble des individus appartenant à la nation italienne, anglaise ou américaine. [18].

Les manuels de FLE représentent de riches sources pédagogiques pour les professeurs de langue française - langue étrangère. Selon les exigences pédagogiques, les manuels de FLE édités en Roumanie sont complétés de différents matériels didactiques variés, authentiques et plus vivants que les manuels d'autrefois qui sont considérés être plus méthodiques en explication grammaticale. Nous avons choisi quelques manuels de FLE [19] qui illustrent, tous, d'une manière ou d'une autre, l'image culturelle de la France et de la Roumanie telle que les Français et les Roumains se représentent.

Les manuels qui nous ont servi de corpus proposent, selon les sommaires, des unités d'étude c'est à dire leçons, séquences, dossiers avec leurs documents qui les constituent, textes, images, dialogues exercices, etc.

Par exemple, dans les manuels examinés nous avons repéré des unités dont les titres suggèrent plus ou moins explicitement les objectifs socioculturels suivis par les auteurs des manuels :

- dans le manuel pour la Xème, Unité 1 – *L'amitié...une seconde parenté*, Unité 3 – *Joyeuses fêtes !* Unité 8 – *La Normandie à tout cœur*, etc.

- dans le manuel pour la XIème, Unité 2 - *Itinéraires*, Unité 4 - *En ville ou à la campagne*, Unité 6 - *Balade provençale*, etc.

- dans le manuel pour la XIIème, Unité 2 – *Les métiers selon vos goûts*, Unité 3 – *Au rythme des festivals*, Unité 5 - *Au-delà de la France*, etc.

Les thématiques mentionnées aident les apprenants à acquérir une compétence communicative à partir de chacune des compétences fondamentales, écouter, parler, lire, écrire, y compris la compétence socioculturelle qui englobe les autres quatre. On observe le soin de créer des situations de communication liées à la réalité culturelle de la France de nos jours. Les méthodes de français plus récentes insistent sur la complémentarité des deux notions « culture » et « communication ». Pour rendre plus facile l'accès à la culture française, l'enseignant de FLE n'explique pas à l'apprenant ce que représente le phénomène interculturel mais l'aide à l'interpréter et à le mettre en pratique. Autrement dit, la compétence communicationnelle est fondée sur cette capacité des interlocuteurs natifs et non natifs à repérer le culturel dans les échanges langagiers et sur la qualité de médiateurs culturels des enseignants.

Les manuels dont nous parlons contiennent beaucoup de symboles et d'emblèmes culturels [20] exploités et choisis par l'enseignant de FLE dans les textes à étudier selon plusieurs critères tels que leur représentativité et la fréquence de leur occurrence dans la langue et dans la vie quotidienne. Sélectionner les symboles et les emblèmes de la France est la mission du professeur qui doit les intégrer dans des contextes linguistiques, communicatifs et simultanément interculturels.

Prenons l'exemple de l'Unité 4 – *D'une ville à l'autre* - du *Manuel de FLE* [21]. A la page 48, au sous chapitre « Lire » les apprenants ont à étudier le texte « *Paris : le rendez-vous de la culture* » ; à la page 49, au sous chapitre « *Découvrir* », l'activité 5 contient les consignes suivantes :

5. Répondez aux questions.

- Les Parisiens sont-ils contents de la vie culturelle de leur ville?
- Quelles sont les villes françaises les plus riches en équipements culturels?
- Quelles sont les « ombres » qui nuancent l'image artistique de Paris?
- Quelles sont les pratiques culturelles le mieux représentées à Paris?

Et votre ville / région?

- De quels équipements culturels jouit-elle?
- Quels sont ses points forts et ses points faibles?
- Quels sont les événements culturels les plus importants qui y ont lieu?

Les questions de cette tâche didactique renvoient à des réalités présentes dans les deux cultures française et roumaine. Après avoir répondu à ces questions on se rend compte que l'apprenant n'acquiert pas deux manières étrangères d'agir et de communiquer. Il devient plurilingue en apprenant l'interculturalité et au fur et mesure que son expérience langagière dans un certain contexte culturel s'étend à celle du groupe social auquel il appartient et puis à celle d'autres groupes, par l'apprentissage scolaire (dans notre cas) « il/elle ne classe pas ces langues et ces cultures dans des compartiments séparés mais construit plutôt une compétence communicative à laquelle contribuent toute connaissance et toute expérience des langues et dans laquelle les langues sont en corrélation et interagissent » [22].

Les compétences linguistiques et culturelles acquises par l'apprenant au cours de cette tâche didactique sont transformées par la connaissance de la vie culturelle de la ville de Paris et contribuent au développement des habiletés et des savoir-faire interculturels. Dans la classe de FLE, l'apprenant de cette deuxième langue culture française ne perd pas les compétences qu'il possède dans sa langue-culture maternelle (le roumain). La nouvelle compétence de communication qu'il est en train d'acquérir n'est pas intégralement indépendante de la compétence de communication en langue maternelle.

Martine Abdallah-Preteille considère le discours interculturel comme un discours qui pose des questions sur les autres cultures, sur l'Autre et sur sa propre culture. Tolérer une autre culture implique la conscientisation de sa propre culture et les méthodes de français langue étrangère, tels qu'ils sont conçus aujourd'hui, dépassent le niveau de la théorie et de l'analyse sèche (car les savoirs n'assurent pas le savoir-faire) et sensibilisent les élèves à une communication efficace avec ceux qui appartiennent à l'Altérité.

Conclusions

L'ère de la globalisation impose une nouvelle approche de l'interculturel, approche fondée sur le dialogue des cultures, l'intercompréhension entre les individus, sur « le retour sur soi » et la reconnaissance de la altérité. La didactique des langues a comme composante fondamentale l'interculturalité qui influence tous les paramètres pris en compte en didactique des langues : savoirs, savoir-être, savoir-faire et savoir- apprendre.

Ce qu'il faut retenir dans le discours pédagogique c'est la valorisation de l'Autre et du Même dans ce processus de co-construction identitaire, processus qui aide à appréhender l'Autre et, à travers l'Autre, soi-même.

Notes

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[3] Abdel-Fattah, Françoise, « Représentations interculturelles et identités en présence dans l'enseignement de la culture françaises en Jordanie », Thèse de doctorat, 2006, p.74

[4] Buschini, Philippe, *Identité traditionnelle versus identité numérique*, <http://www.buschini.com/2009/12/04/identite-traditionnelle-versus-identite-numerique>

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- [18] Veyrat-Masson, Isabelle, *Le rôle de la télévision dans les stéréotypes nationaux*, http://documents.irevues.inist.fr/bitstream/handle/2042/15133/HERMES_1989_5-6_237.pdf?sequence=1
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- [20] Michel Pastoureau, un historien français renommé affirme dans son ouvrage « Les emblèmes de la France » (p.6) : « En tant que personne morale, institutionnelle, constituée de plusieurs millions d'habitants ou de citoyens, la France a surtout des *emblèmes*. En tant qu'entité plus abstraite, représentant telle idée, tel programme ou tel mythe (monarchie, souveraineté, démocratie, république), elle a aussi des *symboles*. »
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Curriculum-ul școlar, cadru pentru manifestarea stereotipurilor de gen

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Abstract: *This article examines the ways in which curriculum is influenced, and influence at its turn, gender-based stereotypes. It will discuss the research on sex-role stereotyping in the curriculum, with emphasis on the development of gender equity in education.*

Key words: *curriculum, educational system, gender stereotype, gender identity,*

Odată cu apariția feminismului, disciplinele școlare au fost supuse unor presiuni intense de a-și adapta conținutul tradițional, metodologia și organizarea clasică la solicitările venite din partea mediului socio-cultural, în sensul modificării și transformării lor în direcția promovării unei atitudini nestereotipe și descurajării comportamentelor de gen stereotipe. Numeroase cercetări au demonstrat faptul că prin curriculum-ul actual este favorizată discriminarea de gen, în materialele educaționale, activitățile și chiar discursul academic imaginea de femeie pasivă, dependentă și lipsită de putere, continuând să existe. (Grumet și McCoy, 1997). În acest sens, Dupuy, Ritchie și Cook (1994) au arătat că deși există o anumită conștientizare a necesității de accentuare și aprofundare a problematicii stereotipurilor de gen manifestate în mediul educațional, totuși „...conștientizarea nu conduce neapărat spre modificări curriculare” (apud Hoffman și Myers, 1996).

Deși este cunoscută importanța educației școlare, privită în ansamblul ei, pentru dezvoltarea unor atitudini și valori sociale corespunzătoare necesităților și solicitărilor unei societăți în schimbare în care conceptul egalității de gen devine factor esențial al interacțiunilor și activităților sociale, conținutul acesteia nu a suferit mari modificări de-a lungul timpului, în acest sens observându-se o oarecare reticență, indiferent de forma sau nivelul educației.

Cercetările realizate în ultimii ani au evidențiat o relație specială între comportamentele, atitudinile, normele, valorile și credințele manifestate în cadrul unei societăți și curriculum-ul aflat la baza sistemului educațional, ele aflându-se într-o permanentă interacțiune, influențându-se reciproc. Tocmai această reciprocitate determină necesitatea conștientizării nevoii de adaptare a disciplinelor școlare, de explorare a modalităților prin care activitățile instructiv-educative pot fi construite și dezvoltate astfel încât să asigure o corelație pozitivă între conținutul educației și mediul socio-cultural. În acest fel, prin activitatea de învățare i se va oferi individului posibilitatea adaptării optime la noile condiții sociale, în care definițiile masculinității și feminității capătă noi sensuri și dezvoltări.

Grumet și McCoy (1997) vorbesc despre o înțelegere dialectică a identității de gen, care recunoaște faptul că fiecare individ are o identitate în care masculinitatea și feminitatea reprezintă părți ale aceluiași întreg, aflate într-o relație de dependență reciprocă, existența uneia fiind dependentă de existența celeilalte, identitatea devenind astfel expresie parțială și temporară a celor două atribute ale identității de gen.

În urma studiilor de specialitate asupra sistemului educațional au fost evidențiate multe dovezi referitoare la perpetuarea atitudinilor stereotipe de gen prin intermediul curriculum-ului școlar. Analiza disciplinelor academice a relevat existența stereotipurilor de gen la majoritatea domeniilor de studiu, în conținutul învățământului regăsindu-se valorile, normele și comportamentele specifice stereotipurilor culturale ale societății respective.

Experiențele de învățare prin care trece elevul pe parcursul perioadei de școlarizare nu se limitează doar la informațiile oferite de către profesori, ci, ele le cuprind și pe cele trăite în afara spațiului școlar, acestea având o influență deosebită asupra modului în care sunt percepute, prelucrate și apoi interiorizate conținuturile curriculare. Cu toate că feminismul a

provocat toate ariile curriculare, nu au fost observate transformări esențiale la nivelul acestora. Educația oferită atât de instituțiile statului cât și de mediul social din afara școlii ar trebui să extindă cunoașterea, nu să o îngreunească între anumite bariere culturale stereotipale.

Cea mai mare parte a responsabilității perpetuării la copii a percepției stereotipe a masculinității și feminității este a părinților și a profesorilor, însă de cele mai multe ori aceștia nu conștientizează propriul comportament și atitudine stereotipă, negând implicarea lor, directă sau indirectă, în transmiterea valorilor și normelor stereotipe. Chiar dacă aprobă și încurajează schimbările sociale în privința rolurilor de gen, atunci când copiii lor se află în situații care oferă oportunitatea experimentării unor comportamente ne-stereotipe îi descurajează sau chiar le interzic participarea. Expresia „ar fi bine pentru toți ceilalți copii, dar nu și pentru al meu” devenind un mod de gândire ce evidențiază nevoia de autocunoaștere și de conștientizare a propriilor atitudini, astfel încât poziția lor să nu influențeze în mod negativ dezvoltarea și adaptarea copiilor la mediul socio-cultural (Greever et al, 2000). Profesorii se află în poziția ideală pentru a direcționa percepțiile stereotipe ale genului ale copiilor spre adaptarea lor la modificările și transformările survenite la nivelul societății.

Fiecare arie curriculară, fiecare disciplină în parte favorizează, într-un fel sau altul, participarea și performanța academică în funcție de categoria de gen, motivația rezultând din studiile de specialitate care au demonstrat existența unor diferențe psihice și fizice între cele două genuri. Astfel, sunt descrise domeniile de studiu „rezervate” fetelor sau băieților, respectându-se criteriile stabilite prin dovezile aduse de cercetările și teoriile existente până în prezent. Se consideră că băieții se remarcă în matematică și științe, în timp ce fetele se evidențiază în domenii precum literatura sau științele sociale. Domeniul sportiv și, în general, activitățile ce presupun un efort fizic susținut, au fost întotdeauna asociate cu masculinitatea, aceste comportamente fiind încurajate în special în cazul băieților, fetele fiind orientate spre activități mai puțin solicitante din punct de vedere fizic.

Diferențele de gen, indiferent de caracterul acestora, nu justifică un curriculum al cărui conținut să determine dezvoltarea și interiorizarea unor valori stereotipe. Dovezile oferite prin cercetarea științifică nu impun și conținutul educației, ci, mai degrabă, încearcă să demonstreze nevoia unui curriculum care să favorizeze dezvoltarea și nu segregarea oportunităților de învățare în baza unor stereotipuri culturale.

Fiecare disciplină în parte poate fi considerată un cadru pentru manifestarea unor atitudini ne-stereotipe, prin conținutul, activitățile, metodele utilizate în procesul de învățământ. Literatura prin intermediul trăsăturilor personajelor și a modului în care acestea reacționează în anumite situații de viață, prin autorii care au obținut recunoașterea talentului lor indiferent de categoria de gen căreia aparțin (Hartman et al., 1997), permite promovarea unor modele care să determine o incertitudine asupra corectitudinii stereotipurilor de gen.

Nu este suficientă intervenția doar asupra materialelor educaționale, în atitudinea profesorilor observându-se anumite modele favoritismului, care au la bază diferențele de gen. Astfel, tipul atenției acordate elevilor, gradul și calitatea acesteia, răspunsurile profesorului la întrebări, feedback-ul la ideile, comentariile și răspunsurile elevului par a fi determinate de apartenența la un gen sau altul, a copiilor.

Încă din perioada preșcolară pot fi observate anumite preferințe în dezvoltarea și desfășurarea activităților educative, acestea fiind diferențiate în funcție de genul copiilor, recompensele acordate diferențiat, jocurile de rol și uneori, chiar și formarea grupurilor pentru activități este influențată de prezența valorilor și normelor tradiționale referitoare la comportamentele adecvate fiecărei categorii de gen.

În prezent există preocupări pentru dezvoltarea unor proiecte prin care se urmărește modificarea, cel puțin parțială, a unor conținuturi școlare și orientarea acestora spre promovarea unor valori și atitudini ne-stereotipe, practicile educaționale fiind direcționate spre egalitatea de gen, prin oferirea unor oportunități egale de învățare și diminuarea

influențelor stereotipe asupra organizării și desfășurării activităților instructiv-educative, indiferent de nivelul la care acestea sunt desfășurate.

Educația primită pe parcursul anilor de școală (privită în sensul general), reprezintă un factor esențial pentru dezvoltarea individului, motiv pentru care este necesară o reevaluare a conținutului, organizării, metodelor și modalităților de realizare a activității instructiv-educative, astfel încât copiii să beneficieze de toate resursele necesare asigurării unor șanse egale de creștere și dezvoltare fizică, psihică și socială.

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Varia

Simbolul – modalitate critică de (re)configurare a universului autohton

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Abstract: *The symbol engages a variety of categories, many notions and also considerable meanings, which should be judged as an act of deciphering culture, opening various interpretative ways. In the local cultural space, the temptation of the analysis focused around the symbol belongs to numerous researchers who care about mythical-archetypal senses, literary criticism, but and also to philosophers or folklorists. An important role in diachronic concerns values the demonstrations on Romanian spiritual existence. Although most of them there are not true mythical exegesis or mythical-archetypal analysis, numerous Romanian writings appeals to the symbolic approach, which reveals true concerns for original national values, no matter of the point of hermeneutic point of starts: theological, philosophical, religious or metaphysical.*

Key words: *symbol, mythical exegesis, mythical-archetypal analysis, cultural space*

Tentația analizelor focalizate în jurul simbolului mitic-archetipal, aparține numeroșilor exegeți, de la critici literari, la folcloriști și filosofi. Dintre aceștia însă nu mulți sunt cei care încearcă să demonstreze prin astfel de analize coordonatele existenței spirituale românești. Mulți chemați, puțini aleși. Chiar dacă nu sunt mitanalize sau exegeze mitocritice sau mitic-archetipale în adevăratul sens al cuvântului, numeroase scrieri se apropie de asemenea formule prin care recursul analiza prin la simbol scoate la iveală numeroase pledoarii pentru românită, indiferent care este unghiul din care pornește actul hermeneutic: teologal, filosofic, religios sau metafizic.

Acestei serii în aparține și creația lui Vasile Lovinescu. Scriitura sa trebuie să-și găsească locul atât în seria exegeților începători întru ale simbolului, dar și în cea a autorilor ce demonstrează originea, autenticitate și pregnanța spiritualității românești. Revedicându-se ideatic de la drumul croit de revelațiile aurorale ale lui Vasile Pârvan, Ovid Densusianu și Bogdan Petriceicu-Hasdeu privind străvechimea românească dincolo de confirmările istoriei, descendentul din ilustra familie a Lovineștilor aparține galeriei înnoitorilor în ceea ce privește formula adoptată în demonstrație. Criteriul cronologic este important acum mai mult decât oricând. Numeroase articole și eseuri apărute imediat după 1930 în periodicele vremii, precum și primele încercări de analiză a textelor populare și culte, demonstrează faptul că se poate vorbi de un protocronism la nivelul metodei critice adoptate, întrucât oferă ceea ce Adrian Marino nota undeva prin "creație hermeneutică", încheagată după toate atributele necesare unei opere artistice de sine stătătoare, originale, cu un eșafodaj cultural impresionant. Din păcate însă, la fel cum se întâmplă și în cazul lui Mircea Eliade la aproape un deceniu distanță, nu și-a denumit metoda, motiv pentru care cele mai multe dintre studiile sale stau încă acoperite sub vălul uitării.

Ilustrative în această serie valorică sunt tezele lui Tudor Pamfile. Prin *Mitologia poporului român* autorul urmărește o privire de ansamblu în arealul național asupra circulației structurilor simbolice, circumscrise celor trei momente fundamentale ale existenței: "icoana lumii trecute", "icoana lumii de azi" și "sfârșitul lumii" [1], la nivelul cărora mitul este elementul liant. La fel, Victor Kernbach în *Universul mitic al românilor* insistă pe "analiza originilor spiritualității românești în miturile și în formele religioase populare"[2], reverberate apoi "ca materii fluide" în Miorița sau/și creațiile lui Eminescu, Creangă, Iorga, Brâncuși, Bлага, purtând cu ele girul structurii mitologice a poporului român.

Cronologic, și nu numai, analizele lui Mircea Eliade ocupă de departe locul de vârf în simbologia românească. În *Insula lui Euthanasius* (1943) savantul conjugă direcția critică și afirmarea românismului, demonstrând că simbolul devine un cod care reglementează existențe, în cazul nostru al autohtonismului. Pornind de la recurența insulelor paradisiace, care atrage atenția în mod deosebit în opera eminesciană, se creează premisele apartenenței la

categoria "insulelor transcendente". Exegeza devine prilej pentru a construi un întreg eșafodaj cultural ce demonstrează circulația și deschiderea interpretativă aferente simbolului, clamând astfel necesitatea transgresării barierelor critice: "Suntem îndrituiți să acordăm simbolului și metafizicii un rol important în explicația operei sale poetice" [3]. Principiul va deveni pilon argumentativ în următoarele studii prin care se susține românismul. În *Comentarii la legenda Meșterului Manole*, demonstrează că, dincolo de recurența simbolurilor ca semn al apartenenței la universalitate, specificitatea spiritualității românești constă în ceea ce textul baladesc adună și reverberează, acel "văzduh metafizic" [4], angrenând coordonatelor universului și seninătatea morții rituale, pe fondul viziunii ancestrale moștenite de la getodaci. La fel, mai târziu, în studiul comparatist despre religiile și folclorul Daciei și Europei Centrale, *De la Zalmoxis la Genghis-Han*, supune noului exercițiu critic efigiilor românității: *Zalmoxis, Voievodul Dragoș și "vânătoarea rituală", Meșterul Manole și Mânăstirea Argeșului, Mioara năzdrăvană* [5], prezente deopotrivă în texte aparținând fondului popular și cult. Nu e lipsit de importanță să se amintească aici că în studiul sugestiv intitulat *Destinul culturii românești* (1953) Eliade nota: "puține neamuri se pot mândri că au avut atât noroc în Istorie, ca neamul românesc." Afirmatia îi încununează convingerile: *Miorița și Meșterul Manole* definesc românescul "fel de a fi" în istorie. [6]

Aceeași preocupare pentru valorizarea autohtonismului prin comentariul simbolurilor ce individualizează un popor se întâlnește și la contemporanii săi, maeștri ai altitudinilor spirituale: Nichifor Crainic, prin studiile ce vizează artisticul: *Elogiul lui Octavian Goga, George Coșbuc, "poetul eroismului" sau Poesia noastră religioasă* [7], în discursurile lui Nae Ionescu, în care prezența mitului lui Faust în spațiul românesc este prilej de meditație pe marginea mântuirii.[8] După cum, tot aici se poate inseria și "planul" lui Mircea Vulcănescu "de desfășurare a gândurilor românești despre existență", acolo unde locul și timpul sunt "cele două mari receptacole ale firii" [9] românești, iar chipul, rostul, soarta, lipsa de teamă în fața morții sunt simboluri care definesc ființa și firea. Toate acestea pot fi considerate cvasi analize de gen, ce pun în valoare preocuparea pentru românism, prin supralicitarea simbolului, de cele mai multe ori a celui mitico-religios.

Nume de rezonanță în seria simbologiei românești, Nicolae Steinhardt în *Monologul polifonic* construiește veritabile încercări de mitanaliză, așa cum apar în considerațiile pe marginea volumului semnat de Ovidiu Moceanu, *Fii binevenit, călătorule*, despre care afirmă că ne introduce "în certă mitologie și cosmogonie", cu "eroi, povestiri, [...] personajii mitice". Din aceeași lucrare poate fi reținut capitolul "Mitologia română, coordonată a spiritualității românești", în care discursul se articulează ca sumă de răspunsuri "dezordonate", cum le numește însuși autorul, care adună într-un inedit "alfabet", sumarul unui adevărat manual de mitocritică, ce pune însă în valoare stăpânirea cu fermitate a unui instrumentar modern clădit pe temelia solidă a valorificării elementelor tradiției. "Maestru stăpân pe o atât de amplă și policromă claviatură lingvistică" [10], autorul, dincolo de definițiile și distincțiile aplicate mitologiei și mitologizării, subliniază existența unei "mitologii proromâne așa cum a existat [...] un precreștinism cosmic, vestitor și (pregătitor) al creștinismului carpato-danubiano-pontic". [11] Prin *Cuvânt împreună despre rostirea românească* Constantin Noica ridică la rangul universalității conceptele-stare ale neamului: Sine, Fire, Ființă, Existență, Conștiință. Pentru autor "infinirea" eminesciană, care "nu sperie, nu strivește" este emblemă către absolut, inifinitul devenit "intim și concret". [12] La fel se întâmplă cu "troienirea", "locul tuturor celor unde vin și se petrec". Valențele termenului sunt culese dintr-o matcă de istoricitate de o tulburătoare frumusețe: cuvântul "troian", pornit din limba noastră, "începe să călătorească", adunând sensuri multiple: grămadă, noian, parte, obligatoriu purtând însă și fărâme spirituale din "valul Traian" sau din colindele în care acesta este încă invocat. [13] Valențele nebănuite ale simbolurilor devin la Constantin Noica temelii pentru "rostirea de

sine a ființei omului și a rânduielilor lui” [14], iar studiul devine o exegeză aparte, o în care se mitanalizează elemente care definesc identitatea unui întreg neam.

Pot fi apropiate acestei clasificări și studiile lui Ernest Bernea din *Cadre ale gândirii populare românești*, unde analiza și interpretarea anchetelor sale etno-folclorice evidențiază viabilitatea unei culturi arhaice românești, posibil de descifrat doar prin recursul la analiza mitului, ce însumează ”o categorie de fapte și un mod particular de a interpreta lumea și viața”, încât să se vorbească despre un ”cosmicism românesc”, cu un cronotop propriu, ce oglindește ”o gândire românească populară”, tributară unei unei ”logici populare”. [15] Pe acest fundal, se profilează, ceea ce Gilbert Durand avea să numească la câteva decenii mai târziu: ”omul tradițional”, un adevărat ”antropocosmos”, căruia ”nimic din cele cosmice nu-i este străin”. [16]

În același spirit, recunoașterea simbolului drept ax ce susține autohtonismul se regăsește la George Călinescu în *Opera lui Mihai Eminescu*, demonstrându-se că prezența numeroaselor simboluri universale asumate de poet nu este decât un mod superior de a ne justifica și asigura permanența între marile culturi ale lumii. [17] Teza este prezentă mai târziu în lucrarea Ioanei Em. Petrescu, *Eminescu. Modele cosmologice și viziune poetică*, care susține ”gândirea mitică” [18] dar și la Petru Caraman, *Pământ și apă*, în încercarea făcută ”simboliceii eminesciene”, de a investiga semnificația și originea simbolurilor culese din substratul arhaic, preponderent mistic dar și din cel al neguroasei preistorii. [19]

La fel, pornind de la ”teme și structuri poetice”, un exercițiu mitanalitic construiește Gheorghe Vrăbie în *Eposul popular românesc*. Pentru etnolog ”comoara folclorului universal” se regăsește în forme distincte în cultura română, date de ”interpretul-meșteșugar”, care a știut să imprime textelor sale patina autohtonului, fie la nivel de existență, de gândire, sau de muzicalitate lingvistică, generând ”organisme coerente”, ce fundamentează prezența unui epos mitologic românesc. [20]

În același spirit, Eugen Todoran în studiile închinat lui Lucian Blaga, *Mitul poetic și Mitul dramatic* [21], demonstrează că opera artistică a poetului filosof se coagulează pe marginea unor scheme mitice. La baza creației se află o ”dinamică a arhetipurilor”, o ”substanță mitică a imaginii”, un simbolism profund care merge până la ”structura mitică a metaforei”, motiv pentru care scriitura devine o alcătuire mitică a lumii, articulată din structuri antropogonice specifice spațiului cultural românesc: ”Mitul transcendenței și condiția umană”, având în centru ”dorul” și ”Mitul antropogonic și alcătuirea lumii”, constelație de simboluri clădită în jurul ”obârșiei”. [22]

Tezaurul spiritualității românești, văzut însă ca apartenență la marele bazin mitic al umanității, îl supune cercetării prin invocarea similitudinilor cu filosofia indiană Sergiu Al. George în *Arhaic și universal*. După acesta, creațiile lui Brâncuși, Eliade, Blaga și Eminescu sunt exemplele care confirmă justetea simbolicului ca metodă de argumentare a apartenenței noastre la universal, evidențiind însă elementul definitiv care ne asigură specificitatea și permanența: filonul arhaic al folclorului național. Oprindu-se cu mai ales asupra miturilor cosmogonice (Brâncuși), dialecticii sacru-profane (Eliade), structurilor antinomice ale metaforicului (Blaga) și arhetipului (Eminescu), demonstrează prezența spațiului mitic al lumii noastre țărănești, un simbolism adânc ce-și revendică apartenența la cosmic. [23]

Original, Romulus Vulcănescu în a sa *Mitologie română* [24] țintește o investigație de tip interdisciplinar, care să evidențieze structura mitologiei române, pe linia de demarcație a interferenței dintre autohton și universal. Astfel, la Eminescu identifică tentația unei ”epopei mitice” naționale, ”o mitologie pe măsura capacității de creație a poporului român”, după cum ”atmosfera mitologizantă” de la Mihail Sadoveanu ia naștere ca urmare a recurenței unei ”substanțe mitologice”. [25] Materialul supus unei astfel de analize este majoritar literar, aparținând deopotrivă fondului popular și cult, dar autorul demonstrează că prin simbol pot fi

transgresate numeroase limite, supunând atenției numeroase exemple ce decurg din analiza relației mitologie română și alte arte: sculptură, muzică, coregrafie, film.

De asemenea, o atenție sporită trebuie acordată îndeosebi unuia dintre modelele exegetice oferite de Ovid Crohmălniceanu în *Cinci prozatori în cinci tipuri de lectură*, prin care demonstrează că există în creația lui Mihai Sadoveanu o serie de ”pattern-uri mitice și sensuri simbolice profunde” [26], o gamă limitată de arhetipuri, în spatele cărora personajele nu pot acționa liber, ci doar după un scenariu prestabilit. La fel, acestei serii de studii hermeneutice aparține și lucrarea *Filosofia legendelor cosmogonice românești*, a lui Gheorghe Vlăduțescu, în care urmărește legătura mit-filosofie cu aplicație pe texte ce aduc în prim plan cosmogonii și antropogonii, pledoarie pentru o ”integrare a folclorului în istoria (scrisă) a filosofiei românești”. [27]

Modele de interpretare în același spirit oferă lucrarea lui Mihai Coman, *Studii de mitologie*, în care se evidențiază în ce măsură toposuri mitologice indo-europene apar în creațiile folclorice românești, contribuind la configurarea unui orizont simbolic omogen.[28] De aceeași factură, studiul sinteză al lui Andrei Oișteanu, *Ordine și haos*, încearcă reconstituirea mitologiei pre- și protoromâne, fixându-se drept corolar intenția de a demonstra că specificul mitologiei române este dat de prevalența structurilor mitice arhaice, autohtone, încă prezente mai ales în formele folclorizate în mitologia populară, fără a exclude însă și ”modul în care au fost asimilate scenariii și motive mitice exogene.” [29] Mergând pe aceeași linie, Silviu Angelescu în *Mitul și literatura* identifică prezența unor ”structuri mitico-rituale”, ce se pot ordona în ”configurații specifice, cu valoarea unui model cultural” reflectând în acest mod existența unui popor, așa cum se întâmplă, de pildă, în analiza textelor sadoveniene, în care domină recurența unor simboluri mitice precum: datina, străinul, pribeagul. [30] Tot la scheme fundamentale ale mitologiei românești se oprește George Nițu în *Elemente mitologice în creația populară românească*, susținând existența unei simbolice a lumii noastre, o adevărată ”matcă arhetipală” [31], încheată în jurul câtorva figuri mitice precum: Zalmoxe, Dionysos, Orfeu, de la care se revendică majoritatea creațiilor românești de tip baladesc-basmic. Un alt exemplu oferă Florea Tiberian în lucrarea sugestiv intitulată *În nada maestrilor. Încercări de mitanaliză*, construindu-și discursul pe marginea autohtonismului clădit în special pe mitul genezei, în forme variate: Cezarul, ”troianul” care ”a învăluit un spațiu între fruntarii ferme”, ”etnospirituale”, oceanul primordial născut din ”adâncimi neștiute, precosmogonice”, asigurându-se astfel cadrul necesar apariției poetului național, ”înger de strajă” pentru un neam. [32]

Lista contemporanilor este încununată de grupul cercetătorilor de la *Phantasma*, în special prin cele ale lui Corin Braga, prin care sporadic se oferă modele de analiză arhetipală cu aplicație pe texte populare (*Miorița* [33]) și culte (Camil Petrescu, Anton Holban, G.M. Zamfirescu, Mihail Sebastian, Nicolae Breban [34]), o literatură construită în mare parte pe relația ”de la *filia* la *neikos*” [35], ce susține originalitatea românească în context cultural universal. O atenție deosebită trebuie acordată studiului *Lucian Blaga. Geneza lumilor imaginare*, în care se analizează prezența miturilor universale: Apollo, Dionysos, Pan, Zalmoxe, ca forme originale de relevare a identității noastre, ”chinuită, dramatică” [36].

Din analiza diacronică a definițiilor, opiniilor celor mai vehiculate și a analizelor se remarcă, așadar, faptul că simbolul angrenează o sumă de categorii, o varietate de noțiuni și nu mai puțin atâtea sensuri. Descifrarea tuturor acestora trebuie gândită ca necesar act de cultură, ce deschide numeroase punți interpretative și adună sub semnul nevoii de a cunoaște o sumă de concepte, metode, activități, altele și totuși mereu aceleași, ca în enigmaticul joc hessian ”cu mărețele de sticlă”.

Note

- [1] Tudor Pamfile, *Mitologia poporului român*, I, Editura Vestala, București, 2008, p. 12
- [2] Victor Kernbach, *Universul mitic al românilor*, Editura Științifică, București, 1994, p. 5
- [3] Mircea Eliade, *Insula lui Euthanasius*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2004, p. 17, 21
- [4] Mircea Eliade, *Comentarii la legenda Meșterului Manole*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2004, p.21
- [5] Cf. Mircea Eliade, *De la Zalmoxis la Genghis-Han*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1995
- [6] Mircea Eliade, *Destinul culturii românești*, în *Arta de a muri. Antologie*, Editura Eikon, Cluj-Napoca, 2006, p. 231.
- [7] Cf. Nichifor Crainic, *Puncte cardinale în haos*, Editura Timpul, Iași, 1996
- [8] Cf. Nae Ionescu, *Problema mântuirii în "Faust" al lui Goethe*, Editura Anastasia, București, 1996
- [9] Mircea Vulcănescu, *Dimensiunea religioasă a existenței*, Editura , Cluj-Napoca, 2009, p. 27, 35
- [10] Nicolae Mecu, *Intervenție în cadrul lansării seriei de autor "Nicolae Steinhardt"*, la *Librăria Cărturești-Muzeul Țăranului Român*, 12 noiembrie 2008, în <http://www.manastirea-rohia.ro/index1.php?f=noutati>, site accesat la data de 6.09.2011
- [11] Nicolae Steinhardt, *Monologul polifonic*, Editura Dacia, 2002 , p. 17, 21, 35
- [12] Constantin Noica, *Cuvânt împreună despre rostirea românească*, Editura Eminescu, București, 1987, p. 64-65.
- [13] *Ibidem*, p. 79, 76
- [14] *Ibidem*, p. 53
- [15] Ernest Bernea, *Cadre ale gândirii populare românești*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2005, p. 18, 289, 297
- [16] Gilbert Durand, *Știința despre om și tradiția*, Editura Fundația Culturală Ideea Europeană, Iași, 2006, p. 31
- [17] George Călinescu, *Cultura. Eminescu în timp și spațiu*, în *Opera lui Mihai Eminescu*, I, Editura Minerva, București, 1976, p. 355-557
- [18] Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Eminescu. Modele cosmologice și viziune poetică*, Editura Paralela 45, București, 2005, p. 70 ș.u.
- [19] Petru Caraman, *Pământ și apă*, Editura Junimea, Iași, 1984, p. 25
- [20] Gheorghe Vrabie, *Eposul popular românesc*, Editura Albatros, București, 1983, p. XI-XII
- [21] Eugen Todoran, *Lucian Blaga. Mitul poetic*, Editura Facla, Timișoara, 1981 și Eugen Todoran, *Lucian Blaga. Mitul dramatic*, Editura Facla, Timișoara, 1985
- [22] Eugen Todoran, *Lucian Blaga. Mitul poetic*, ed. cit., p. 99-100, 314
- [23] Cf. Sergiu Al-George, *Arhaic și universal*, Editura Eminescu, București, 1981
- [24] Romulus Vulcănescu, *Mitologie română*, Editura Academiei, București, 1987, p. 13
- [25] *Ibidem*, p. 609-614
- [26] Ovid S. Crohmălniceanu, *Cinci prozatori în cinci tipuri de lectură*, Editura Cartea Românească, București, 1984, p. 9
- [27] Gheorghe Vlăduțescu, *Filosofia legendelor cosmogonice românești*, Editura Minerva, București, 1982, p. 210
- [28] Mihai Coman, *Studii de mitologie*, Editura Nemira, București, 2009. Vezi și *Introducere în antropologia culturală. Mitul și ritul*, Editura Polirom, Iași 2008
- [29] Andrei Oișteanu, *Ordine și haos. Mit și magie în cultura tradițională românească*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2004, p. 13
- [30] Silviu Angelescu, *Mitul și literatura*, Editura Univers, București, 1999, p. 91 ș.u.
- [31] George Nițu, *Elemente mitologice în creația populară românească*, Editura Albatros, București, 1988, p. 154
- [32] Tiberian Florea, *În nada maștrilor*, Editura Vreamea XXI, București, 2005, p. 32,36, 43
- [33] Cf. Corin Braga, *Concepte și metode în cercetarea imaginarului. Dezbaterile Phantasma*, Editura Polirom București, 2007, p. 265-268.
- [34] Corin Braga, *10 studii de arhetipologie, 10 Studii de arhetipologie*, Editura Dacia, Cluj, 1999, p. 173 ș.u.
- [35] *Idem*
- [36] Corin Braga, *Lucian Blaga. Geneza lumilor imaginare*, Editura Institutul European, Iași, 1998, p. 206.

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Literature on its own

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Abstract: *In the past half-century or so, the form, structure, status and conception of literature have been subjected to all sorts of pressures, a quite a number of changes occurred at various levels, adding up to something that might be called a literary (or cultural, rather) paradigm shift, which, in our view, may be only a superficial one.*

Key words: *critical reading, critical thinking, literature*

Beginning in the early 1960s, thinkers and scholars from both sides of the Atlantic authoritatively proclaimed such things as the death of the author (Roland Barthes), *Waiting for the End* and the ominous *What Was Literature* (Leslie Fiedler), *Against Interpretation* (Susan Sontag), *Criticism in the Wilderness* (Gerald Graff), *Literature Against Itself* (Geoffrey Hartman), *The Closing of the American* (Allan Bloom), *Killing the Spirit* (Page Smith) or *Illiberal Education* (Dinesh D’Sousa), following in the not very distant tradition of Hegel’s *The End of Ideology*, Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Death of God*, F. F. Fukuyama’s *The End of History*, John Horgan’s *The End of Science*, and culminating, for our particular purposes here, in Alvin Kernan’s *The Death of Literature* (1990); and Kernan believes that literature has become a type of discourse endlessly self-conscious about the problematics of reading, interpretation, and making meaning, frequently making these very questions its central subject. Thus thinking about literature has become thinking in literature about itself.

As a consequence, new definitions of literature in general, and of poetry in particular have been proposed. These definitions tend sometimes to back up or away from any formal characterizations: “Poetry is the orphan of silence: the words never quite equal the experience behind them...” An endless problem with poetry, which also raises the question of what is inside the language and what is completely outside the language and what is both inside and outside of the language; because once reality - whatever that may mean (Barth: “reality is a nice place to visit, provided you do not remain too long there”) - gets absorbed, by some kind of feedforward, into the language of a text, then there is a feedback from the text into the reality, such that the latter becomes itself some kind of text. Consequently, on a second reading, reality is no longer the same, the first one - it is reality semiotically charged.

This very concept of charging may have brought about a series of other definitions regarding literature as an energetic construct. As far back as 1911, philosopher George Santayana regarded minds as “storage batteries for energy”; if this energy gets transferred into language, and that language becomes a text, we can see why some critics and theorists might speak of textual insufficiency - the battery is not charged enough - , or of excess of meaning - too much energy for the volume of the text. Books in a library are as many storage batteries standing on the shelves and awaiting to be plugged in by one mind or another in order to release their energy - maybe, sometimes, even explode or blast off. But, of course, the conservation and transformation of textual energy as it moves between minds is something that deserves more than this passing commentary, as some books represent accumulations of energy - original, then conjoined by later charges of critical effort, century after century very often, translation after translation (in the most general meaning of the term) - that turn them into Mogul diamonds (Coleridge) and invaluable crystalline compositions. Creative thinking is superimposed, enriched and complicated by layers upon layers of literary critical thinking, until one may not be sure as to which is which and in what ways both have modified the initial critical thinking (one of our permanent preoccupations, here and elsewhere). Let it also

be said that their energy is both static and dynamic and that it can be stored, transported, lost or gained and amplifies depending on as many factors and conditions.

Time, language, and the mind of man in literature is one of the most challenging and complex intellectual problems of mankind; when the great mind (creative thinking) of the great literary creator confronts, in time, mystery by means of language, the result is a great sense of failure (literary critical thinking), and literature may therefore be defined in terms of this supreme joy and wisdom at discovering yourself as a failure (see F. Scott Fitzgerald); writers are heroes who confronted time, language, the world, and God, and their own minds and failed, and their great poems are the stories and poems of these failures. Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Goethe, Dickinson, Dostoevsky, or Faulkner have all, in pack it up in their partial expressions of partial understandings: literature as man's modality of tampering with mystery; literature as that highly varied - though classifiable -, multitude of texts through which a linguistic community confronts, historically, its own despairs, and uncertainties: "Here we shall find /this community's/

conversation with itself,
its inner thoughts and
its outer experience,
its private editations and
its public utterances." (Pat Rogers, "Preface" to *Oxford Illustrated History of English Literature*)

The university classroom or lecture hall has had, all this time, a central role, as more and more of the *difficult* literary pieces came to be confined to the academic world, and the battle for the *canon* or against it got various types of impulses, not only from inside the literature departments, but from outside as well - from politics, sociology, race-ethnicity-religious studies, etc.

On the other hand, the professors themselves started appearing as accumulators of so much systematic knowledge about literature (literary critical thinking) that novels or poems (creative/poetic thinking) tended to be written with such readers in mind. Not only that, but the professors also became writers in their own right, so that literary philosophy and theory entered their texts, turning these into post-modern metaliterature. No wonder some might claim that the teaching of literature has undermined literature itself. We may know, from someone like Peter Porter or Susan Sontag, that "the essence of art is to engage faculties that transcend the analytic," (creative thinking is all too often outside the reach of literary critical thinking), but classes of creative writing sprang up almost in all American universities, the novelists and poets turned writers in residence, the dons got preoccupied with the teaching of literature *per se* rather than the teaching about literature, and a number of trespassers came in from linguistics, semiotics, mathematics even, theology, history, philosophy, and, to top it all, cultural studies were invented or came into being.

So, our questions become obsessions: What does really happen in the literature classroom? What do we think about the whole thing? (critical thinking confronting both creative thinking and literary critical thinking). If any personal experience (of one writer or another) has a wholly subjective character, then nobody from the outside (no critic or reader) can repeat that experience, not even hypothetically. Turning such an experience into language with a view to having it communicated so that somebody else might appropriate it and thus, possibly, repeat it, is in itself - this linguistic transformation - another subjective experience, a new intellectual-emotive event. Consequently, the sense or significance of the first experience undergoes a change through linguistic encoding - whether oral or textual -, which may be followed by decoding and the attempt of the receiver to represent that experience, which means that there are three subjective experiences at this end: linguistic reception, decoding or understanding and re-experiencing. Between the first subjective

experience - let us take it to be the reading of a poem - and the final subjective experience, i. e. reconstructing the experience communicated by the first reader - four other intellectual-affective moments come in.

But if both subjects have - each his or her own way - a certain response to the reading of that poem and they communicate nothing (they cannot, will not, find no reason why), what can one say about the two experiences? That they are responses to the same linguistic composition; then that, since they are speakers of the same language, they may have processed about the same meanings from the text and their responses, their subjective experiences might be comparable. If each of them expresses in writing this experience and a third reads the three texts - the poem and the two essays - what we have is a moment of critical teaching; and the endlessness of teaching is rooted in the fact that the two or three responses have never been, will never be, and cannot be identical.

In other words, one can say, together with Van Wyck Brooks, that “the teaching of literature stimulates the creative faculty, but it also and far more effectually thwarts it, so that the professor turns against himself. He passively plays into the hands that underfeed his imaginative life and permits the whole weight of his meticulous knowledge of the past to tip the beam against the living present. He gradually comes to fulfill himself in the vicarious world of the dead and returns to the actual world of struggling and miseducated mortals in the majestic raiment of borrowed immortalities. And he pours out upon that world his own contempt for the starveling poet in himself.” (p.95) Many contemporary professors-poets-critics would certainly disagree; no type of thinking denies another or other types.

So, if the writer speaks with the authority of failure (our Fitzgerald example again), the professor is a double failure himself, and that very fact folds him in a majestic raiment, which, of course, most students will mistake for a beggar’s outfit. As literature moved from the writer to critic to professor to student, the perception of literature may have move from willing suspension of disbelief, to willful suspension of belief, to unwilling suspension of belief in postmodernism. As the professor and the student become writers rather than (just) readers, when expectation and surprise change places, letters are replaced by beams of light, imagination and reality are one and the text is hypertext (or hyperfiction, or cyberfiction, or reactive literature, or nonsequential literature). The creation of literary meaning becomes everybody’s possibility in communicating in alienation. Space and time combine in ways that would surprise even an Einstein, texts become tri-dimensional and are made up of lexias and hypertrophies arranged in some kind of a menu, the syntax becomes plurivocal, memory acquitters collective definitions, combinatory games are being played in a universe of hypersigns, i.e. letters, words, textual blocks, fixed or moving images, and the literary work becomes an endless happening. Literature has turned out to be one among innumerable options, as the consequences of an act told in one narrative become part of someone else’s story and so on. One could even say that this is one version of the contemporary fairy tale - *One Thousand and One Nights* written and re-written all over again for the pleasure of one reading it an re-writing it at the same time. Roland Barthes - death of the author, Umberto Eco - the semiotics of indecision, Jacques Derrida - discontinuity, decentering, deconstruction, and Michael Bakhtin - dialogism and the reader as producer of the text - have all come together and have one name - MOUSE. The educational power game - the critic’s reading the professor’s reading plus the student’s reading is replaced, fortunately or unfortunately, by web democracy. With the author dead - or unimportant - and with all of these more or less recent developments, the man-in-the-crowd or a simple consumer so far comes to occupy both front-stage and center-stage as a producer of the text, so much so that no only does he become a valued addressee, but an addresser, a sender as well, as he comes to write the literature he reads. And thus the distinctions we have had in mind - critical thinking, creative thinking, literary critical thinking, poetic thinking - seem to have melted into one another, though

looking at them separately might have some sense. J. L. Borges's "garden of the forking paths" is transformed into the supreme metaphor and the mouse performs the whole operation when the cat is obviously not at home, or possibly extinct.

This way, almost paradoxically, literature gets to be more alive than ever, more alive than it was in the beginnings, when great literature controlled the destinies and minds of all men, in forms whose poetry we cannot miss after thousands of years: "At the beginning of God's creating of the heaven and the earth, when the earth was wild and waste, darkness over the face of the Ocean, rushing spirit of God hovering over the face of the waters - God said: Let there be light! And there was light. God saw the light: that it was good. God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light: Day! And the darkness he called: Night! There was setting, there was dawning, one day."

In the beginning, therefore, was literature, and literature was in words, and these words were literature. And literature, we can now safely say, is very much present in the age of supertechnology, when the computer has already turned many readers into writers and pretty soon reading, writing, and the teaching/sharing of literature will be one thing. If Shakespeare was the man of the second millennium, Jesus the man of the first millennium and Homer, possibly, the man of the millennium before that, then we can anticipate that the man-or woman - of the third millennium will be the reader-writer-critic-professor-computer wizard; or Google - Google as God; or a digital immigrant; if literature is dead, then long live literature!

Computer wizard? Well, yes, and that computer wizard can take all or most of the knowledge about literature (literary critical thinking) or about fiction accumulated so far, share it with his friend BRUTUS (computer program) and ask him to write a story - appropriately enough - about betrayal, which BRUTUS challengingly titles "Betrayal in Self-Deception": "David Striver loved the university. He loved its ivy-colored clock towers, its ancient and sturdy brick, and its sun-splashed verdant greens and eager youth. He also loved the fact that the university is free of the stark unforgiving trials of the business world; only this *isn't* a fact: academia has its own tests, and some are as merciless as any in the market place. A prime example is the dissertation defense: to earn the PhD, to become a doctor, one must pass an oral examination on one's dissertation. This was a test Professor Edward Hart enjoyed giving.

Dave wanted desperately to be a doctor. But he needed the signatures of three professors on the first page of his dissertation, the priceless inscriptions which, together, would certify that he passed his defense. One of the signatures had to come from Professor Hart, and Hart had often said to others and to himself that he was honored to help Dave secure his well-earned dream.

Well before the defense, Striver gave Hart a penultimate copy of his thesis. Hart read it and told Dave that it was absolutely first-rate, and that he would gladly sign it at the defense. They even shook hands in Hart's book-lined office. Dave noticed that Hart's eyes were bright and trustful and his bearing paternal.

At the defense, Dave thought that he eloquently summarized Chapter 3 of his dissertation. There were two questions, one from Professor Rodman and one from Dr. Teer; Dave answered both, apparently to everyone's satisfaction. There were no further objections. Professor Rodman signed. He slid the tome to Teer; she too signed, and then slid it in front of Hart. Hart didn't move. 'Ed?' Rodman said. Hart sat motionless. Dave felt slightly dizzy. Later, Hart sat alone in his office, in his big leather chair, saddened by Dave's failure. He tried to think of ways he could help Dave achieve his dream."

A story *generated* or *engineered* by a computer program, not *authored* by BRUTUS. But we can listen to those who authored BRUTUS, Selmer Bringsjord of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, New York, and David Ferrucci of T. J. Watson Research Center, IBM,

New York: “BRUTUS didn’t *originate* the story. He is incapable of generating it because two humans spent years figuring out how to formalize a generative capacity sufficient to produce this and other stories, and then they are able to implement part of this formalization so as to have a computer produce such prose. The engineering method followed here is known as *reverse engineering*.” A story generator is firmly based on theoretical investigations of narrative (literary critical thinking) and computation (critical thinking? engineering critical thinking?)

Then Bringsjord and Ferrucci acknowledge their indebtedness to Roger Shank, who as far back as 1979 believed that what makes a story interesting can be captured in computable schemes; therefore, Bringsjord and Ferrucci work on the assumption that interestingness is computable, that a narrative has to trigger certain readerly imaginings, and thus they produce a list of heuristics for how to produce the desired reader response. In their 2000 book *AI and Literary Creativity. Inside the Mind of BRUTUS, A Story-Telling Machine* they also discuss the issue of point of view, informing us that, in order for BRUTUS to write interesting stories, he/it must carry the reader in a landscape of consciousness, and there seem to be certain determinate ways to enable this. A number of technicalities and formulae follow - which we, as literary people, cannot struggle with - but what remains is a story about betrayal (other “lofty literary themes” are unrequited love, evil, power, sex, money, destruction, chaos, romance, disease...) and how to receive it.

This author’s own reception of it is that most of us will soon be left out of the literary game or experience (with stories generated rather than told, with themes captured in logical parameters rather than subtly suggested, with interestingness formalized rather than carefully worked out or fallen upon, with narrative contracts implemented rather than intuited, envisioned and originally developed with literature communicating to itself rather than to a third party), and before long we will have computers reading literature written by computers and thus the human mind will have moved to the end of its tether through this postmodern concentration on itself (the three types of thinking mentioned before coming full circle again). And thus we are back to Kernan’s observation about the endless self-consciousness of literature concerning the problematics of reading, interpretation and making meaning. Literature will, however, go on being written - and read, presumably - but outside the realm of human experience; as man vanishes, literature survives. And this does not make much sense to a literary mind trying to encompass the four thousand year gap between Bringsjord with his interestingness computed and Khakheperresenb, an Egyptian scribe of cca 2000 BC, also frustrated by the impossibility of being original:

“Would I had phrases
that are not known
utterances
that are strange
in new language that has
not been used,
free from repetition,
not an utterance
which has grown stale,
which men of old
have spoken.”

If the scribe would rather avoid stale utterances spoken by men of old in 2000 BC, then BRUTUS can only be interesting by repetition; the criticism and literary theory (literary critical thinking) BRUTUS was given to storage and digest only to spit out in the form of a story that had constituted the starting point of the theory and criticism in the first place is only the result of interesting repetition on top of interesting repetition of the Egyptian’s lament.

Narrative intelligence consists in the art of hiding the obvious for the purpose of revealing the obvious again and again; when it remains on its own - without writers and readers - the obvious will no longer have a name.

These and other considerations could become better articulated for one who has in mind the much larger project of following the interrelationships between and among the four types of thinking suggested in various places all along: critical thinking, creative thinking, poetic thinking, and literary critical thinking, all of which, hopefully, have been part and parcel of what we intended to point out. Centuries-long accumulations of critical thinking behind creative thinking, or the many different ways in which literary critical thinking and poetic thinking determine, influence, undermine or complete each other have all resulted in leaving with literary thinking encompassing all of them, to which critical reading has to be naturally added.

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Grimasele tranzitoriului posttotalitarist în „povestea” piesei *Desfacerea gunoaielor*, de Marin Sorescu

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Résumé : *La critique littéraire actuelle est sur le terrain de lutte des évaluations des résultats de la « bataille culturelle » postmoderniste dont Marin Sorescu a eu l'intuition dès 1971, année où il avait conçu la pièce « L'abrogation des ordures », qu'il ne publie qu'en 1995, grâce à l'universalité et à l'actualité des motifs circonscrits au thème de l'immixtion du politique dans la vie de l'écrivain. Cette parodie à l'adresse du système communiste pourri (action claire de dissidence, idée ignorée par les critiques !) exprime, d'autre part, la satire amère envers la crise (néo)moderniste subjuguée de nouveau par l'ingérence du politique dans l'époque post-totalitaire, quand l'auteur publie cette pièce ayant un statut incertain (rejetée par la censure communiste ? expression du refoulement ? « littérature de tiroir » ?). L'auteur aperçoit aussi les formes de début de la globalisation (la culture de consommation, les cultures alternatives, l'autoréférentialité, la littérature du prosaïque etc.) régurgitées par le mécanisme postmoderniste qui reprend les « vieilles ordures » - les thèmes consacrés et distribue les « nouvelles ordures », européennes, à une déplorable Roumanie second-hand, qui attend, résignée, à la queue de l'histoire, échouant l'acclimatation des « eucalyptus » littéraires (qui, que Dieu nous en garde !, pourraient même changer notre climat...) et le miracle du complètement du cercle de la solidarité des écrivains. Cela ne peut plus arriver, car l'Enfant (terrible) aux velléités de dirigeant bouscule le Retraité du canon (soupçonné collaborateur de la Securitate) et les habitants de la Rue du Nouveau Demi-cercle et ceux de la Rue du Vieux Demi-cercle se réunissent pour « avancer en ralentissant » dans la grande place, où pullule la « queue aux ordures », cirque organisé sur le principe du « donner-prendre », du jeu à la « bâza » et celui à l'hasard « comptage par multiple de trois », sous un temps qui court et qui échappe à la compréhension...*

Mots-clés : *transition, révisions, anticommunisme, post-décembriste, parodie, post-modernisme, crise, La distribution (répartition) des ordures*

Motto: “Scara mea de valori, începând cu valorile culturale și ideologice, este net deosebită de a mediilor sociale și culturale pe care le-am străbătut, obligat sau nu. Iar o astfel de singurătate – care nu este nici sentimentală, nici socială – este greu de suportat. O suferință abstractă, rece. O revoltă permanentă și fără soluție. Mai totdeauna inexprimabilă și incomunicabilă. Nu doresc nimănui o astfel de contrarietate și uzură interioară. Fără ieșire și fără o adevărată consolare. Incerc totuși s-o pun pe hârtie, s-o definesc și s-o descriu cu maximă claritate.(...) Să-mi afirm identitatea, personalitatea, bună, rea, așa cum a fost.”

(Adrian Marino, Viața unui om singur)

Lumea pieței, piața lumii

Desfacerea gunoaielor este o piesă în 2 acte și 7 tablouri, scrisă în 1971, când Marin Sorescu era angajat ca redactor-șef la Studioul cinematografic „Animafilm” București și participa la programe culturale și burse în America și în Europa, în Berlinul de Vest.[1] Statutul acestei piese tăios subsersive, momentul și locul conceperii ei, motivele deciziei autorului de a fi publicată abia în 1995 sunt probleme la care nu vom afla un răspuns, din lipsa referințelor biobibliografice.

Citind *Prologul*, o didascalie explicativă tipic soresciană, avem sentimentul că intrăm în toposul absurdului acceptat, considerat normalitate, în atemporalitatea simbolică a pieței din *Rinocerii*, în care se adună locuitorii din strada Semicercul Vechi și din strada Semicercul Nou, așteptând mașina de desfacere a gunoaielor; o alegorie de alt fel decât peisajul ludic, jovial al pieței bruegeliene, exprimând simbolic spațiul în care se distribuia obligatoriu gunoiul *Tezelor din Iulie*, prin care Ceaușescu dorea o revoluție culturală de tip Mao, bazată pe cultul propriei personalități, într-o Românie în care ora culturală exactă se lua în acele vremuri, de fapt, pe *Unde Scurte*, de la Europa Liberă. Personaje generice, din registrul (neo)modernist-expresionist, precum *Potolea*, *Perpelea*, *Evdochia*, *Pensionarul*, *Dan*, *Irina*, *Femeia cu copil în brațe*, *Femeia brunetă*, *Femeia înaltă*, *Femeia oacheșă*, *Femeia cu basma*

verde, Coca, Tipul formează lumea de bazar a nedemnei cozi comuniste, modalitate prin care „omul nou” obține cele necesare subzistenței, sau măcar trăiește cu iluzia satisfacerii nevoilor de trai, căci „nu se prea ajung aici lăturile, nici gunoaietele, nici nimic – ăsta e adevărul (Perioada de criză, războiul mondial bate la ușă)” [2] – nevoi precum: posibilitatea afirmării, comunicarea, socializarea, renumele literar, histrionismul, locuința, alimentele etc. *Gunoierul șef și Gunoierul adjunct, Țața Cața, Neagu, Șoferul, Copilul, Sugaciul* compun cealaltă față a lumii comuniste – Puterea, dobândită în limite variabile de abjecție. Traseul gunoierilor la începutul piesei constă în mutarea gunoaielor de pe o stradă pe alta cu scopul constituirii noii lumi, simbol al confiscării proprietății și al puterii democratice reale, implicând, nelipsit, transferul de la o generație la alta – „încarcă pe Strada Semicercului Vechi, descarcă pe Strada Semicercului Nou”. Totul pare să aibă noimă, regulile sunt însușite de către acești cetățeni-marionete, niște salariați conștiincioși, care se prezintă zilnic la datorie/ la coadă, deși nemulțumirile se tot rostesc în replici sugrumate, cu poantă amânată sau profetice: „dacă am fi și noi societate de consum, n-ar mai trebui să menajăm așa toate susceptibilitățile...” (Potolea), „am în minte un fond reacționar, pe care-l menajez” (Tipul), „omul s-a disciplinat”, așteaptă la coadă „ca o compensație la viteza nemaipomenită, la fuga timpului” (Perpelea), „viața a luat o astfel de întorsătură încât individul e absorbit de societate” (Neagu) [3]

Conjuncturalul social-politic, prim algoritm de lectură, definește perimetrul scriiturii esopice, care șoptește printre rânduri despre umilința statului la coadă cu pancarte în mână, lăudând statul-partid, despre neputința ripostei și acceptarea în tăcere a ordinii „mașinii negre” [4], care-i putea judeca pe protestatari, pe nemulțumiți, pe cei care se sustrag controlului intimității (ca în cazul cuplului Dan – Irina, blamat inchizitorial). Rolul Adjunctului este al activistului format în „înghețul” stalinist: stârpirea „eucaliptilor” și a „fachirilor” („într-o societate nu trebuie ca unora să le fie tare”, „trebuie să luptăm împotriva ăstora care au stat ca pe puf”), iar Neagu este propagandistul „liberalizării”, dispus să controleze numărul acestor experimente inovatoare, de dragul permanentizării exercițiului propriu de vigilență. Pensionarul este și el printre privilegiați. A fost paznic de noapte „la un fel de școală, adică pensiune...Unde se mănâncă zdravăn... bătaie! Cine scăpa viu de la autocritică trecea la critică, după aia la secția de satiră unde era făcut zob.” [5]

Citită în cealaltă cheie, deși avem rezerve în legătură cu intervenția autorului în text după 1971, raportată la anul publicării și la contextul tranziției postrevoluționare, cu rădăcinile ei otrăvite de mentalități și practici vetero-comuniste, această piață anistorică devine piața în care se descarcă pubela civilizației de consum a Occidentului, în care se dezvăluie degradarea literaturii sub imixtiunea noilor forme de presiune și manipulare exercitate de domeniul politic și economic sau de grupuri de favorizați ai momentului. Dezgustul scriitorului pentru îmbrâncheala oportuniștilor ar putea fi unul din motivele determinante ale publicării tardive, în 1994-1995, a acestei piese de sertar.

„Războaiele culturale” semnalate de Sorin Antohi par a fi declanșate aici de însăși libertatea de expresie și de principiile pieței libere, concurențiale, antrenând idei, valori, stiluri intelectuale, retorici, identități, domenii. „Pe acest fond, intelectualii publici ai postcomunismului au trebuit să se recicleze sau să piară, să se adapteze la nevoile megamașinii mediatice – un dispozitiv liber până la limita anomaliei (...) sau să se resemneze la revenirea în *majoritatea tăcută* și la comunicarea în mediul academic” [6]. Discursul „rezistenței prin cultură” e preluat din mers în postcomunism, puțin cosmetizat, atât de scriitorii deveniți în tranziție publiciști din varii motive, cât și de către cei ambițioși, oportuniști sau de către alte categorii generate de reconversie.

Poate că tocmai acest tip de discurs, tipic teatrului sorescian – aluziv, demolant, caricatural face mesajul piesei mereu actual, prin punți intertextuale sugestive (și subversive) și prin plauzibile raportări la criza (neo)modernității îngenunchiate de formele hibride ale globalizării (cultura de consum, culturile alternative etc.), regurgitate de mașinaria inflației

informaționale a societății postmoderne, care preia, studiind, lumea blocului ex-comunist și reîmparte doctrinele ideologice europene de stânga ca zarzavaturi proaspete unei deplânse României culturale second-hand, așteptând reforma întârziată de un etern Adjunct comunist, ratând aclimatizarea „eucaliptilor” culturali, adică a impunerii elitei „școlite” în Occident, în perioada comunismului (care – Doamne ferește! – ar fi putut schimba chiar clima pe la noi...) și miracolul solidarității acestor elite intelectuale, lucru care nu se mai poate petrece...*Copilul* din piesă și *Sugaciul*, „cel mai tânăr luptător împotriva trecutului”, se instalează la conducere într-un regim antireacționar („Adio, mamă, adio tată. Ați făcut greșeli cu toptanul, acum vreți să ne otrăviți și pe noi, să sugem odată cu laptele și idealismul, misticismul, spiritul mic-burghez, tendințele de chiverniseală, nepotismul, abstracționismul și împăciuatorismul?!”) [7], iar locuitorii din Strada Semicercului Nou și cei din Strada Semicercului Vechi, deși se întâlnesc în piața mare, nu refac un cerc al democrației, ci al lui „homo homini lupus”; Circuitul nu e niciodată întreg, nici măcar revelatul „cerc strâmt” al condiției umane precare, din care se poate ieși prin creație, ci e locul abject al rinocerizării unde pulsează „coada la gunoaie” și crește cercul organizat pe „principiul dării-luării”, al jocului „Bâza” și pe unicul criteriu de selecție al hazardului – „număratul din trei în trei”, sub un timp – Ouroboros care fuge după propria-i surpră, dilatat, și care scapă înțelegerii, amăgind cu aparențele ciclicității constrângere – libertate, sacrificiu – prosperitate.

Profilul intelectualului în acest topos alterat este proteic, refăcând ipostaze variate, de la stereotipia Tipului cu servietă, ce umblă cu deșteptătorul la el, la ipostazele scriitorului înflăcărat (Perpelea) ori rezervat (Potolea), capabil să improvizeze un montaj literar-artistic, umilit când i se cere să suprimă părțile care contravin moralei comuniste, până la imaginea de „eucalipt” smuls din rădăcini după aclimatizare, căci crește nepermis(bursierii trimiși în străinătate) sau pe acela de „fachir”, de genul oamenilor pe care Adjunctul și acoliții săi îi consideră „dușmani periculoși”, „trebuie eliminați”, căci „stau ca pe ace, așteaptă ceva, vor să plece undeva”, încât „poți plăti cu salariul greșelile lor”. „Se infectează și infectează toată societatea”, „se ascut zilnic”, „dorm pe cuie, dar lor le e moale”, „susțin morțiș că nu avem bolduri suficiente” etc.. [8] Ei sunt importatorii de mentalități dăunătoare sistemului...Cu adevărat importante în primul nostru deceniu postcomunist au fost „deschiderea noastră mentală”, „demolarea moștenirii ceaușiste” prin importul, chiar superficial, înainte și după decembrie '89, de teme, teorii, paradigme, stiluri de viață, la care Marin Sorescu a contribuit, datorită contactului nemijlocit cu Occidentul, fapt reflectat în teatrul său. [9]

Distribuția mobilă a forțelor pieței, care trec dintr-o parte în alta, evocă, de asemenea, o lume de redacție, cu atmosfera de suspiciune, de cârcoteală, cu relațiile de (in)subordonare politică, de subminare, de pâră etc.. Un articol recent al criticului Alex Ștefănescu vorbește despre recuzarea lui Marin Sorescu de către propria echipă de redactori de la revista craioveană *Ramuri*, pe care a condus-o între 1982 și 1991, denigratorii fiind Ion Buzera, Valentin Bazăverde, Gabriel Chifu [10], Romulus Diaconescu, Marius Ghica, Sabin Gherman, Ion Lașcu, George Popescu, Constantin Barbu. La învinuirile că se comportă dictatorial, că activitatea sa de redacție e nulă, că-i denigrează pe marii scriitori ai momentului – pe Șt. Aug. Doinaș, informator al Securității până în 1984, pe Mircea Dinescu, pe Ana Blandiana și Nicolae Manolescu, față de care avea alte opinii politice, că „denigrează marii scriitori din exil”(E.Ionescu și Cioran), refuzând să-i mai publice („E. Cioran a ajuns ca Ceaușescu pe toate gardurile”), că denigrează forul literar suprem („Uniunea Scriitorilor se va desființa; s-o ajutăm să se prăbușească”), ori că tratează „redacția și Oltenia ca pe o moșie proprie, devenind o piedică în dezvoltarea spirituală a acestei regiuni”, Marin Sorescu n-a putut reacționa decât dându-și dezgustat demisia din funcția de redactor-șef la *Ramuri* și din Uniunea Scriitorilor. [11].

În sfârșit, „piața de desfacere” în cultură este un aspect, care, considera scriitorul, trebuie să fie de calitate, fiindcă reprezintă numele țării. În numeroase interviuri, lui Marin

Sorescu i se cerea să vorbească despre colegii de breslă, despre generația sa; întotdeauna s-a considerat original, „singur printre poeți”, refuzând înregimentarea, incadrarea într-o grupare. În interviuri manifesta însă o solidaritate cu ai săi congeneraționari, dar și cu valorile interbelice și nu numai. Într-un interviu dat lui Dorin Tudoran în 1979, scriitorul nu mai vorbește, ca altădată, de o sumă de talente, ci despre propria generație „matură”, „viguroasă”(„prin generația noastră înțeleg vreo...trei generații”) care „are obligația de a intra în dialogul internațional al generației sale”, eventual prin organizarea unui festival internațional de poezie, riscând altfel de a fi târziu „redescoperiți ca niște epigoni ai unor străini ce au venit după noi”. [12]

Coadă la mașina de gunoi ideologic

În actul I, *Copilul* ajuns la conducere ține un discurs despre combaterea imoralității și a filoxerei, după ce se desparte ideologic de părinții reacționari, căci „a fi imoral acum când, zdruncinată din temelii, piere o lume imorală, înseamnă a face cârdășie cu ea”. Măsurile sunt dure: „jos cu hodorogii din așternut”, „jos nepotismul”, „vom umbla din casă-n casă, distrugând pat cu pat și transformându-l creator în masă de lucru, pentru a stârpi din rădăcina *doritul*”, „luăm ce e mai bun dincolo și altoim în spiritul nostru”, săpatul gropilor pentru „accidentele de muncă” ale celor refractari precum *Tipul*, deposedarea suspectilor de cazma, unealta sacră, „vom studia dosarele și pe-o față și pe alta”, „să dispară dintre noi uneltele Vaticanului și parașutații”, „demolați și sistematizați!”, „în locul maghernițelor, ridicăm palate...”etc. [13]

În actul II „au crescut eucaliptii, dar nu știe ce. Realitatea aceeași, deși pe planul conștiinței s-au înregistrat progrese mari”. Toată coada îngenunchiată, devenită cor, se roagă pentru Evdochia („lungește Doamne boalaaaa”), care-și împarte patul cu cuplul fără cămin, judecat pentru concubinaj și pentru neîngrijirea bătrânei. Potolea, de plictiseală, ar organiza măcar o societate sportivă de tir, dacă nu una secretă, iar Potolea e mulțumit că a învățat englezește știind că „nu te poți lansa în niciun domeniu decât în străinătate”, unde „tragi cu pușca și nu vezi o coadă”. Oamenii au înțeles că „se ascute lupta dintre scepticism și optimism”, ca „orașul a ajuns la nivelul satului”.

La moartea Evdochiei, în tabloul V, Neagu primește repartitie în patul rămas liber. În piață se prezintă mai întâi un montaj literar-artistic de către diletanți(Festivalul Cântarea României), apoi se joacă „bâza și antibâza în același timp, într-o unitate dialectică”, până când Pensionarul bătăuș cade mort. [14]

Într-un articol mai vechi, din 2005 – *O instituție demonizată: Uniunea Scriitorilor*, Alex Ștefănescu vorbește despre procesul falsificării instituțiilor și despre formalismul reconfigurărilor administrative, golind instituțiile de esența lor, despre mecanismele cenzurii și ale supravegherii comuniste, care a reușit să impună „realismul socialist”și să transforme forul literar cel mai înalt într-o instituție de propagandă. În 1971, anul când Sorescu scria *Desfacerea gunoaielor* – poate în perioadele scurte cât se afla în țară, dar posibil și în străinătate, poate în intervalele petrecute la Skopye, la Londra sau mai degrabă la Iowa, în Statele Unite, unde urma International Writing Program [15] – Consiliul Uniunii Europene vota legislația muncii cu privire la aplicarea regimurilor de securitate socială, în timp ce Nicolae Ceaușescu importa „realismul cultural”maoist. Mircea Martin evoca o întâlnire a scriitorilor cu Ceaușescu la Neptun, descriind consternarea și respingerea față de celebrele Teze din Iulie, cu reactivatele clișee jdanoviste, care reduceau cultura la propagandă și propaganda la dictatura personală [16]. Armă cu două tăișuri, Uniunea Scriitorilor a devenit cadrul propice, liberal, al ideilor, astfel încât ultima conferință a U.S.R., în 1981, a fost supravegheată și pregătită de Securitate cu o desfășurare de forțe specială, așa cum reiese din documentele reproduse în *Cartea Albă a Securității*. [17]

Poate că e relevant să amintim și cum s-a produs schimbarea ștafetei, în 1989, când la conducerea U.S.R. a venit, adus de valul entuziasmului general, disidentul Mircea Dinescu. Din 1993, U.S.R. a fost condusă de Laurențiu Ulici (ca președinte interimar), din 1995 de Laurențiu Ulici (ca președinte) și de Florin Iaru (ca vicepreședinte), secretar devenind fostul adjunct de la *Accademia di Romania* din Roma, întors în țară din această misiune diplomatică – Eugen Uricaru. Acesta i-a succedat la președinție lui Laurențiu Ulici, iar limbile ascuțite spun că sunt ciudate deopotrivă moartea suspectă, prin intoxicare cu dioxid de carbon, a senatorului Alianței Civice, în 2000, cât și înlocuirea lui în 2001 cu o persoană compromisă, care a anatimizat instituția a dată cu dezvăluirile Doinei Cornea și confirmările CNCAS. [18] „O asociație a scriitorilor tineri, înființată în 1994 și autointitulată ostentativ Asociația Scriitorilor Profesioniști - ASPRO (ca și cum cei din URSS n-ar fi fost profesioniști!), nu reușește - deși încearcă în repetate rânduri, cu insistență, prin reprezentanții sau adepții ei - să clatine autoritatea U.S.R. Aceasta dă dovadă de toleranță în raport cu membrii ASPRO, dintre care mulți țin să rămână (pentru orice eventualitate) și membri ai URSS.” [19]

Este, desigur, o simplă speculație apropierea acestor evenimente de semnificația mașinării ideologice din piesa la care ne referim; intenția noastră se limitează la semnalarea unui leitmotiv sorescian – *istoria se repetă*. Sub plurierele timpului, întotdeauna, unii vor râvni puterea și succesul, iar alții vor fi victimele nevoii de innoire...A sta la coada consacrării este cea mai interesantă punere în scenă a unui clișeu demonetizat de comunism, evocat frecvent în memorialistica postdecembristă. În prolog, autorul o descrie sarcastic, subliniind aspectul invaziv și vicios al gunoiului ideologic[20], ce limitează gândirea liberă, secarea inspirației și atentarea la viața privată a scriitorilor: „Oamenii sunt obligați să arunce gunoaiile vechi și să ridice gunoaiile noi. Cetățeanul se scoală cu noaptea-n cap, își ia ziarul să vadă cui i-a mai dat un gunoi în ochi”. „Statul la coadă e și o plăcere: lume multă, vorbesc toți(...) se vântură idei”, femeile croșetează, fac pomelnice sau colivă, iar bărbații „cioplesc bârne, fac butoaie, se tund” își pun dorințe și așteaptă ieșirea din „cercul vicios: semivechi ori seminou, la alegere”. Dau buzna cu sacoșe pregătite ca pentru cumpărături”. Autorul recomandă îngroșarea cozii: „teatrul să folosească toți actorii care nu sunt prinși cu roluri în alte piese.” [21] Există și condiții ale promovării, enunțate sarcastic de către Perpelea, ipostază a scriitorului angajat, care se dă exemplu pentru sânguința perfecționării („Fără doctorat nu mai ești primit în nicio casă și pe bună dreptate: prea mulți proști.”) și pentru modul „cum se îndură bătaia” de la cei consacrați, că așa e piesa (Pensionarul-paznic „a murit în bătaie, adică bătând”, „nu l-a mai ajutat cordul” când „a tăbărit cu pumnii și cu picioarele”) [22]. Un alt personaj, Neagu, care s-a făcut propagandist după ce i s-a luat totul „până la ultima zdreanță”, constată că individul nu mai trăiește pentru sine, ci e absorbit de colectivitate, rândul fiind „forma cea mai avansată pentru percutarea înainte” după modelul furnicilor: „cea din față are grăuntele-n gură, celelalte au sula-n coaste, cum ar veni.” [23]

„Las’o încurcată”: *Semicercul Vechi și Semicercul Nou*

Finalul piesei, în al cărei subiect se consumă replici ionesciene, specifice iraționalului stat la coadă, este amar: mașina de gunoi devine un *perpetuum mobile*, o invenție a Adjunctului comunist, care a simplificat „procesul tehnic”, evitând să mai facă 2 drumuri și instituind extrapolarea celor 2 cozi, în fiecare semicerc fiind descărcate propriile reziduuri tocate: „tărățe”, „nutreț de vite” îndeajuns – „chiar și ultimul pesimist poate să-și umple buzunarele”, cu condiția ca gunoiul, „marea trâncăneală” [24], să fie depus, cu listele făcute. Concilierea civică, egalitatea, integritatea, comuniunea sufletească și spirituală, dimensiunea transcendentă a conștiinței – elemente ale simbolismului cercului [25], nu pot fi generate de un mediu distopic, spectral și în postcomunism, păstrat în „tradiția” divergențelor generaționale și de grup.

În articolul *Mandarinii culturali sau nevoia de schimbare culturală*, Paul Blendea observa că lumea culturală posdecembristă românească a fost un mediu eterogen și divergent: neotraditionaliștii și moderniștii filo-răsăriteni, precum C.V. Tudor, Adrian Păunescu, Dinu Săraru, D. R. Popescu, A. Buzura s.a., moderniștii moderați, cum sunt Nicolae Manolescu, Mircea Dinescu, Andrei Pleșu, Gabriel Liiceanu, Horia Roman-Patapievici, Monica Lovinescu, Virgil Ierunca și Paul Goma și intelectualii postmoderniști, cu rădăcinile în "Cenaclul de Luni" condus de Nicolae Manolescu. I. B. Lefter devine președintele unei noi formațiuni, incluzându-i pe Mircea Nedelciu, Mircea Cărtărescu, Gheorghe Crăciun, C. Dobrescu, Al. Mușina, Magda Cârneci, Liviu Antonesei ș.a., care au dat „o replică la literatura oficială și la cea mutilată estetic prin autocenzură” și au constituit, la 11 iulie 1994, Asociația Scriitorilor Profesioniști din România (ASPRO) ca alternativă la Uniunea Scriitorilor pe care o considerau „o relicvă a trecutului comunist”, atacând atât gruparea neotraditionalistă, cât și pe cea modernistă. Ei susțineau modernizarea și occidentalizarea României printr-un proces rapid, arzând etapele.

Liderul grupării postmoderniste recunoaște existența unei falii între moderniști și postmoderniști: „Nici una dintre confruntările de acest tip n-a fost întâmplătoare, toate sunt reprezentative pentru fenomenul amplu la care participa și pe care l-aș descrie prin două opoziții definitorii pentru starea actuală a câmpului intelectual autohton: tensiunile dintre modernitatea în faza finală și postmodernitatea incipientă; și cele dintre *autoritarismul* culturii elitare și *democratismul* discursurilor pluraliste, care recunosc diversitatea, alteritatea, multiplicitatea lumii de azi.”, afirma I. B. Lefter, în 2004, într-un articol din *Observator cultural*, ziar prin care, ca și prin revista *Contrapunct*, se obținea temporara victorie postmodernistă. [26]. Care a fost rolul postmodernismului în tranziția românească este un subiect încă discutat.

Intr-un articol publicat în revista *Familia*, în 1998, un alt scriitor postmodernist reprezentativ, Ștefan Borbély, făcea observația că efortul generației '80 s-a irosit în van, din cauza supraestetizării, a livrescului, a „enclavizării instituționale”, adică a separatismului din ASPRO, a lipsei de fermitate politică, în condițiile în care Pactul Alianței Civice a fost alternativa unică validă. [27] Ion Simuț le reproșează postmoderniștilor „inertă inacceptabilă” și conflictele generaționiste în raport cu șaptezeciștii și nouăzeciștii, precum și păcatul de a nu-și fi recunoscut predecesorii, față de care au afișat o frondă ireconciliabilă. [28]

Postmoderniștii au modificat însuși conceptul de literatură – devenită „paradigma pluralismului umanizator” [29] expresie a conștiinței acute ripostând la tumefierile „modernolatriciei”, metodă de dezintoxicare de excesele metodologizante, care se extinde și dincolo de spațiul pur beletristic, cu concursul unei mass-media orientate spre consum și divertisment, chiar cu pericolul atingerii de kitsch. Dispare „caracterul monist, exhaustiv, piramidal și teleologic al istoriei literaturii și al canonului artelor”, i se substituie istorii locale, receptarea fragmentară, eclecticismul. Desolemnizarea discursului, prozaismul, intertextualitatea și metatextualitatea, repudierea sobrului, a ermetismului, ironia, parafraza și parodia, deconstructivismul, textualismul, autoreferențialitatea, spiritul ludic, provizoriul și plăcerea contradicțiilor sunt numai câteva dintre principiile estetice ale noii orientări, care au fost tatonate, unele dintre ele, și de Marin Sorescu, deși scriitorul se declară în repetate rânduri un (neo)modernist.

Încă de la debut, Marin Sorescu a avut intuiții critice cu privire la pulsul diferit al noului val literar și luări de poziție, percepând timbrul secund al unor congeneri (Constantin Abăluță, Toma George Maiorescu, Ilie Constantin) care vor manifesta preferința pentru postmodernism. [30] Recenzarea volumului *Poeți români de azi*, de Gheorghe Grigurcu îi prilejuiește lui Sorescu un schimb de ironii la adresa criticului, care „subminează cu consecvență prin opțiunile sale ierarhia de valori consacrată. Poeților în vogă, poezilor care se bucură de popularitate și datorită unei impurități a poeziei lor, el le opune adeseori poeți

ignorați de publicul larg”, de felul lui Constantin Abăluță [31], fără a fi perceput valorile noului val – Mălăncioiu, Adrian Popescu, Mircea Dinescu, Ștefan Foarță. [32]. De asemenea, i se par „ditirambice” aprecierile despre Dan Verona, răutăți cele spuse de Grigurcu despre Mircea Dinescu etc. „Dacă exegeza a tăcut, poeții – noii și tot mai noii – s-au orientat intuitiv, preluând temele, motivele... și totul, riscând să transforme modestul omagiu de discipoli în reproducători seriali de universuri cunoscute, strivind maeștrii sub propriile lor cărți, caricaturizate la infinit” [33]. Practica „îmbrâncirii”, a demolării modelului este reprezentată în piesa *Desfacerea gunoaielor*, în jocul „Bâza” și în figura „omului nou” pe care epoca totalitară l-a produs, prezent și în elitismul tranziției.

Obsesia calității și supremația cantității

Două dintre toposurile literaturii comuniste au fost calitatea și cantitatea, care au suferit aceleași mutilări conceptuale precum toleranța, bucuria, libertatea. Se știe că economia și cultura, cercetarea și învățământul raportau cifre aberante privind realizările comuniste. Nu este aici locul să dezvoltăm mitologia social-economică, științifică și culturală pe care o analizează minuțios, printre alții, Lucian Boia; regăsim în piesa analizată câteva tipare mitice comuniste, ale „solidificării materialiste” [34], cu constelația lor de pseudo-simboluri: părinții fondatori, conducătorul, omul nou, grija față de copiii și bătrâni, forța rațiunii, piața de desfacere, bunăstarea colectivă și individuală, intelectualul, scriitorul, activistul, ordinea urbană, modelarea naturii, deschiderea culturală internațională, cultura de masă, protocronismul [35]. Criza de care vorbește R. Guénon într-o carte celebră se întrevede în semnele vremurilor, în atmosfera pieței: nevoie de agitație continuă, excluderea contemplației, primatul acțiunii executate mașinal, schimbarea neîncetată, cu viteză mereu accelerată, dispersia în multiplicitate, fragmentarea, dezagregarea activității umane, pe toate nivelurile, relativismul [36]. Printre trăsăturile caracteristice ale mentalității moderne se află „tendința de a reduce totul la punctul de vedere cantitativ”, „domnia cantității”, asociată substanței, materiei, manifestării, cu excluderea din viața obisnuită a semnificațiilor ritualice ale actelor umane. [37] Număratul din finalul absurd, ionic, al piesei deschide pâlnia disoluției, a haosului, omul fiind în pericolul de a pierde sensul și rostul existenței sale. E complexul lui Iona – al rupturii dintre planurile în care omul trăiește – social, cultural, metafizic. Salvarea, cred personajele, vine din acceptarea existenței mimetice, generice, a repetiției și a de-multiplicării în planul creator, împăcându-se cu un alt complex., cel al lui Proteu, în același gest al ieșirii prin cer, prin soluția metafizică dată de această dată de număr, expresie a multiplicității în spațiu și a timp a universalilor. [38]

Concluzii

Piese metaistorice – *Răceala* și *A treia țepă*, teatrul cu substrat existențialist, cu elemente de absurd și de psihanaliză – *Există nervi*, *Luptătorul pe două fronturi*, *Casa evantai*, *Pluta meduzei*, *Desfacerea gunoaielor* – reflectă, prin toposuri, un *theatrum mundi* distopic, o cronotopie a dispersării oglinzirii Sinelui și a Lumii (apartamentul-compartiment, cușca bizantină, casa, ringul/sala de box, pluta-copac, piața în care se stă la coadă la „desfacere”etc.), „mitologia omului modern” [39] și criza lui identitară, generată de absurdul istoric și existențial al epocii ceaușiste.

Teatrul sorescian a cunoscut elementele specifice conflictului scriitorului supravegheat cu statul comunist: cenzura care impunea corectarea și rescrierea, amânarea editării, oprirea spectacolelor la previzionări, reflectări alegorice ale conjuncturalului din nevoia ripostei, suportarea amenințărilor (destituirea posibilă de la conducerea revistei *Ramuri*, în împrejurările scandalului „Meditația transcendențială”), „esopism, lectură suspicioasă”, literatura de sertar [40]. Constatăm că în critica literară actuală s-au omis importante amănunte biografice de substrat genetic, ce explică trecerea de la un registru dramatic la altul

în anii din prima etapă de creație și care argumentează ideea scrisului sorescian matricial, de tip subversiv.

După unii critici, Marin Sorescu un scriitor „tolerat”, „oportunist”, din „elita de seră” [41], cărui i s-au dat libertate și șanse de afirmare privilegiate din rațiunile unei politici comuniste de deschidere internațională (Eugen Negrici, Adrian Marino [42]). Piesele primei etape de creație dramatică sunt piese ale deșteptării și afirmării conștiinței culturale – ordinea în care sunt scrise piesele fiind diferită de clasificările consacrate (1964 – *Există nervi*, „o primă tatonare dramatică...o primă manifestare a unor presupuziții”, 1965 – *Iona*, solilocviul unui „om nemaipomenit de singur”, 1968 – *Paracliserul*, „înălțarea pe verticală a omului, căutarea de sine, zbuțumata căutare de celest”, 1971 – *Desfacerea gunoaielor etc.*). Marin Sorescu este scriitor adaptat nevoii scris-cititului printre rânduri, a stilului aluziv, „inflamat”, autor de literatură de sertar, devenit „scriitor oficial” doar datorită originalității și popularității imense în țară și în străinătate. Sorina Sorescu, nepoata scriitorului, integrează piesa prezentată în „seria de piese absurde” din „anii ’70-’80, (ce dezvoltă, de altfel, un motiv secundar din *Există nervi* – lezarea vieții private în comunism, n.n.), dar care nu a văzut nici lumina tiparului, nici a rampei, decât foarte târziu, după anii ’90”.

Așadar, diminuarea, în percepția critică, a aportului estetic al dramaturgiei soresciene și a laturii subversive, esopice a teatrului sorescian a fost una dintre consecințele unei tranziții culturale a contrastelor, cu o „democrație de vitrină”, cu instituții în care tocmai rădăcinile mentalităților comuniste au rezistat și au alimentat un spirit anarhic, destabilizator. O inflație a producției literare și dezvoltarea criticii de întâmpinare și de direcție, laturi promovate de numeroase reviste literare, au dus la fragmentarism în media și în literatură și la deformarea receptării fenomenului literar antedecembrist, la proliferarea canoanelor construite pe criterii exclusiv nonestetice, la relativizări jenante, mai ales când se referă la valorile generației din anii ’60 – ’70. Critica literară actuală este terenul de luptă al evaluării rezultatelor „bătăliei culturale” postmoderniste, pe care Marin Sorescu le-a intuit în preajma și înaintea anului 1995, când a hotărât să dea publicului în premieră textul piesei *Desfacerea gunoaielor*, în care, în discursul subserviv caracteristic atitudinii de rezistență prin scris la absurdul totalitarist, autorul prevedea, vizionar, și schimbul dur de generații, criza culturii și utiliza incipient elementele artistice urmărite programatic de valul optzecist, într-un efort de sincronizare cu postmodernismul în vogă în anii ’60 -’70, pe care l-a cunoscut nemijlocit în contactele artistice (Statele Unite, Germania, Italia, Spania etc.), fiind un precursor nerecunoscut de valul postmodernist din anii ’80, prin piesa *Vărul Shakespeare*. Piesa *Desfacerea gunoaielor* demontează mecanismele discursivității totalitare, pe care o bagatelizează prin coborârea în treptele obiecte ale prozaicului (leitmotivul „gunoi”) și o subminează prin deturnări și resemantizări, prin repetarea mecanică a unor cuvinte desemantizate în limbajul de lemn („piață”, „muncă”, „desfacere”, „ordine”).

Tranzitoriul – element postmodernist semnificativ al deconstrucției discursului ideologic, se compune în această piesă și din caleidoscopul toposurilor bagatelizării și prozaizării, al fragmentarismului socio-cultural și al relativizării politice.

Cuvintele lui Sorescu „aud și pipăie” adevărurile lumii, ca ale maestrului său, Beckett. „Sunt cârțițe ale unei conștiințe inflamate, săpând galerii.” [43]. Pentru ieșirea la lumină a adevărului.

Note

[1] G. Sorescu a publicat corespondența de familie, în vol. *Marin Sorescu în scrisori de familie*, Editura Autograf MJM, Craiova, 2008. Documentele relevă că în 1971 a călătorit la Stuttgart (29 ianuarie), la Skopje (21 august), la Londra (3 noiembrie), la Iowa, „un centru universitar destul de mare; ne-am instalat într-un cămin și ne pregătim de iarnă și de sesiune, învățăm pe rupe” (11 decembrie 1971; alte cărți postale sunt expediate din America până în mai 1972) – p. 118-121

[2] *Prolog* în vol. Marin Sorescu, *Desfacerea gunoaielor*, Editura Expansion-Armonia, București, 1995, p. 7

- [3] Marin Sorescu, *Desfacerea gunoaielor*, Editura Expansion-Armonia, București, 1995, p. 103
- [4] Într-un interviu acordat lui Radu Basarab, sugerându-i-se să-și imagineze, ca George Gamow, o mașină de tipărit care ar imprima toate combinațiile posibile de litere, semne și cifre, chiar și ceea ce Shakerspeare a aruncat la coș, Marin Sorescu a spus că nu l-ar deranja o astfel de mașinărie, că el, personal, nu are nimic de aruncat, mai ales dacă „mașina ar fi Timpul sau Istoria omenirii”, „e un absurd asumat”, în Marin Sorescu, *Opere, vol. V. Publicistică*, ed. cit. P. 1023
- [5] Idem, p 38
- [6] Sorin Antohi, *Războaie culturale. Idei, intelectuali, spirit public*, Editura Polirom 2007, p.13. Cf. Andrei Grigor, *În ariergarda avangardei* (Eugen Simion – convorbiri cu Andrei Grigor), Editura Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2004; cf. Doinița Milea, *Les commandements politiques et les intellectuels dans les miroirs du texte*, în *Communication interculturelle et littérature*, nr. 2 / aprilie-mai-iunie 2009 pp. 83-88; cf. Alina Crihană, „Trădarea intelectualilor” în discursul (asupra) Istoriei: „cazarma scriitorilor”, în *Discursul intelectual la răspântiile istoriei*, Europlus, Galați, 2007, pp. 152 - 160.
- [7] Marin Sorescu, op. cit., p. 46
- [8] Marin Sorescu, *Desfacerea gunoaielor*, Editura Expansion-Armonia, București, 1995, p. 106-107
- [9] Sorin Antohi, *Războaie culturale. Idei, intelectuali, spirit public*, Editura Polirom 2007, p.18.
- [10] Gabriel Chifu prezintă întâmplarea și circumstanțele într-un interviu din *Observator cultural*, Nr. 523 din 7-14 mai 2010 – „Iau toate valurile direct în piept”, <http://www.romaniaculturala.ro/articol.php?cod=14702>
- [11] Vezi articolul lui Alex Ștefănescu, *Ultimul Sorescu*, publicat în revista *Cultura*, în nr. din 12 mai 2010 pe <http://revistacultura.ro/nou/2010/03/ultimul-marin-sorescu/>. Reproducem parțial conținutul scrisorii adresate lui Mircea Dinescu și lui Doinaș, pe care Marin Sorescu a dat-o publicității în ziarul *Adevărul*, în nr. 350, din 5 martie 1991: „Plecând la cerere de la revista *Ramuri*, aş preciza că înlăturarea mea de la această publicație era o veche obsesie a fostului pcr. Încercările energice în acest sens au început încă din 1981, cu ocazia „complotului” Meditația transcendențială și au continuat, cu puseuri, mai tot timpul, până în anul de groază 1989, când, prin octombrie, fusesem practic înlocuit cu Romulus Diaconescu. Ședința Comitetului director din 21 februarie 1991 m-a descumpănit. Dacă o fi existând și pe lumea cealaltă pcr, are acum (acolo sus sau acolo jos) un bun prilej de a se bucura. Mărturisesc, îmi vine greu să mă despart de vechi prieteni, de Uniunea noastră de creație, care, chiar în condițiile îngrozitoare din trecut, a apărut, atât cât se putea, profesionalitatea și statutul de scriitor. Ședința amintită mi s-a părut că rimează prea bine cu un fenomen periculos, care se petrece astăzi în toată țara și anume înlocuirea specialiștilor cu petiționari. Consecințele au și început să se vadă peste tot și ne bânuie ritmic precum cicloanele. Refuz să cred că democrația este mai rea decât dictatura. Cea dintâi trebuie să aibă pe undeva – ascunse, și nu le găsim noi, deocamdată – acele mecanisme care stopează incompetența, veleitarismul. Altfel, la ce bun Revoluția și atâta tam-tam?
- Desigur, nu intenționez să rămân o vecie la *Ramuri*. Sunt foarte nemulțumit și de mine. Cu o încăpățănare aproape masochistă, care m-a costat nervi, sănătate și mii de ore de navetă, fascinat de utopia creării unor noi valori, am fabricat și eu, vai, la Craiova, niște mici monștri veninoși. Cu Gabriel Chifu, Constantin Barbu, Marius Ghiță nu-i bine să înnoptezi pe drum, sau să treci ziua printr-o pădure. Le urez în continuare o creștere frumoasă. Comitetul director a luat în serios, cu o grabă suspectă, un memoriu aberant. Eu nu cred, domnule Ștefan Augustin Doinaș, că e democratic să fiu pus la colț, fiindcă nu stau tot timpul la Craiova, de redactori care sunt de peste cinci luni și pentru mai mult timp, la Lyon. (Marius Ghica, fost Ghiță, când l-am adus de la Calafat în redacție și Ion Buzera). L-aș întreba și pe prietenul meu, criticul și istoricul literar Nicolae Manolescu: știe câte rânduri de literatură a scris Valentin Bazăverde?
- E drept, n-am făcut școala de disidenți de câteva luni, care să-mi dea acum noian de drepturi. Disidența mea a început cu vreo 25 de ani în urmă și se află în cărțile mele. Plec de la Uniunea Scriitorilor și pentru că am înțeles ca orice pretext e bun pentru înlăturarea unui redactor-șef, care, acum ca și în trecut, refuză să se alinieze și tocmai declarase la TV că publicația *Ramuri* va face imposibilul pentru a se menține exclusiv în sfera esteticului. A fi scriitor pur și simplu îmi este de ajuns. Marin Sorescu.“
- [12] Marin Sorescu, *Opere. V. Publicistică*, op. cit., p. 1040
- [13] Marin Sorescu, *Desfacerea gunoaielor*, ed. cit., p. 51-52
- [14] Idem, p.86-95
- [15] G. Sorescu, *Exegeze*, Autograf MJM, Craiova, 2008, p.220 și G. Sorescu, *Marin Sorescu în scrisori de familie*, Autograf MJM, Craiova, 2008, p.118 Privitor la geneza piesei, avem în vedere un amănunt – referirea la eucalipti, în actul I: “Sunt eucalipti americani, aclimatizați de Miciurin în Siberia. Dacă în America creșteau numai la cald, în Siberia cresc numai la frig”(p.51)
- [16] Zaharia Stancu, pe atunci președintele Uniunii Scriitorilor, a păstrat tăcerea, oportuniștii și cei cu funcții (Petru Popescu, Mihai Ungheanu, Mihail Davidoglu etc) au aderat, iar Alexandru Ivăsiuc, Szasz Janos, Adrian Păunescu au criticat măsurile luate deja în presă și au încercat, ca și Marin Preda, să-l convingă pe dictator să renunțe la aservirea ideologică a literaturii. Cu consecințe extrem de grave, Tezele „izolează cultura română de Occident, răstoarnă valorile și denaturează aspirațiile reale ale oamenilor”. Vezi articolul din revista 22, din septembrie 2002 <http://www.revista22.ro/cultura-romana-intre-comunism-si-nationalism-202.htm> și Bujor

- Nedelcovici și invitații săi, *Scriitorul, Cenzura și Securitatea*, în *Observator cultural*, nr 508, din ian. 2010
http://www.observatorcultural.ro/Scriitorul-Cenzura-Securitatea-si-Amintirea*article_ID23023-articles_details.html
- [17] Vezi***, *Cartea Albă a Securității*, Editura Presa Românească, București, 1996
- [18] Vezi <http://www.revista22.ro/?c=dosare&p=21> și <http://www.gandul.info/flux/eugen-uricaru-deconspirat-informator-securitatii-266690>
- [19] Alex Ștefănescu, *O instituție demonizată: Uniunea Scriitorilor*, în *România literară*, nr. 19/2005, http://www.romlit.ro/o_instituie_demonizat_uniunea_scriitorilor .
- [20] „Legiunea” ideologiilor, puzderia lor necontrolabilă și psihologia alimentată de interese de grup și de logica unor complexe de inferioritate/ superioritate sunt aspecte subliniate de Andrei Pleșu , în cap. *Ideologiile între ridicol și subversiune*, în vol. *Despre bucurie în est și în vest și alte eseuri*, Humanitas, 2007, p. 111-133
- [21] Marin Sorescu, *Desfacerea gunoaielor*, Editura Expansion-Armonia, București, 1995, p.7-8
- [22] Idem, p. 94
- [23] Idem, p. 103
- [24] Formula aparține lui Mircea Iorgulescu. Apud Sorin Antohi, op. cit, p. 11
- [25] Ivan Evseev, *Enciclopedia simbolurilor religioase și arhetipurilor culturale*, Editura Invierea, Timișoara, 2007, p.118-119; Hans Biedermann, *Dicționar de simboluri*, vol.I, Editura Saeculum I.O., Buucurești, 2002, p. 88-89
- [26] Vezi Lefter, I. B., *Luptele intelectualilor*, în *Evenimentul Zilei*, din 6 iulie 2004.
- [27] Apud Simuț, Ion, *Arena actualității*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2000, p. 112-113
- [28] Idem, p. 114
- [29] Adrian Marino, *Modern, modernism, modernitate*, Editura pentru Literatură Universală, București, 1969, p. 56. și p. 107.
- [30] Sorescu, Marin, *Singur printre poeți*, InterContemPress, București, 1990
- [31] În *Poezia română contemporană*, vol. II, în cap. „O antologie recuperatoare”, Gheorghe Grigurcu recenzează elogios antologia poezilor postproletcultiști realizată de Constantin Abăluță, care omite poeți importanți, rezervând, în schimb, prezentării propriei creații un spatiu amplu.
- [32] Alex Ștefănescu, *Criticul de poezie numărul 1*, în *România literară* , nr. 4/2001 http://www.romlit.ro/criticul_de_poezie_numrul_1
- [33] Sorescu, Marin, *Ușor cu pianul pe scări*, în *Opere. IV. Publicistică*, Editura Fundației Naționale pentru Știință și Artă, Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2005, p. 574-575
- [34] René Guénon, *Criza lumii moderne*, Humanitas, București, 2008, p.17
- [35] Lucian Boia, *Mitologia științifică a comunismului*, Humanitas, București, 2000, p.128, p. 136, p.147; Lucian Boia, *România, țară de frontieră a Europei*, Humanitas, București, 2007, p. 147-157(deceniile postdecembriste, cu scindările stângii și ale dreptei politice), p. 205(securiști, informatori), p.298(orașul comunist)
- [36] René Guénon, op. cit, p.61-72
- [37] René Guénon, *Domnia cantității și semnele vremurilor*, Humanitas, 2008, p. 118
- [38] Monica Spiridon, *Melancolia descendenței*, Polirom, 2000, p. 90-92
- [39] Popescu, Marian, *Chei pentru labirint*, Editura Cartea Românească, București, 1986, p. 254
- [40] În prefața volumului II de *Teatru*, în care a inclus *A treia țeapă, Răceala și Vărul Shakespeare*, Sorina Sorescu amintește de interzicerea unor poezii în „România literară “ și de destinul nefast al piesei începute în acest fatidic an 1971 – *A treia țeapă*, din care n-a publicat atunci decât un fragment în revista *Cronica*, intitulat “Dimineața, la prânz și seara”. Trilogia istorică proiectată inițial (a urmat *Răceala*, publicată în 1976, iar *Otrăvitorii de fântâni* a rămas o schiță nefinalizată) e completată de *Luptător pe două fronturi* și *Lupoaița mea*, ultimele două creații intercalate fiind mai apropiate de „factura abstract geometrică a teatrului de descendență absurd”, comparabile cu *Casa evantai* și *Desfacerea gunoaielor*. Romanele *Trei dinți din față* și *Japița* au fost , de asemenea, mutilate de cenzură. Vezi prefața Sorinei Sorescu în vol. Marin Sorescu, *Teatru II. A treia țeapă. Răceala. Vărul Shakespeare*, Grupul Editorial Art, București, 2007, p.6 și articolul Luminiței Ciobanu, conținând dezvăluirile biografiei Sorina Sorescu, în *Jurnalul Național* din 13 mai 2009, la adresa <http://www.jurnalul.ro/stire-biblioteca-pentru-toti/trei-dinti-din-fata-sub-lupa-cenzurii-507479.html>
- [41] Andrei Pleșu, apud Aurora Liiceanu, *Prin perdeaa*, Polirom, Iași, 2009, p. 153
- [42] Adrian Marino, *Viața unui om singur*, Editura Polirom, 2010, p. 120-121. Autorul vorbește de tipul de scriitor comunist, fără să exemplifice direct: „nomenclaturist, oficial, activist, carierist, confirmist”, cu „ipocrizia simulării, ferocitatea succesului, instinctul de conservare în continuă alarmă”. Despre Marin Sorescu își amintește dorința acestuia de a câștiga premii internaționale, caracterizându-l „extrem de agil și de abil, cu cobilița etern prin Europa”
- [43] Marin Sorescu, *Jurnal inedit IV*, fragment reprodus în revista *Scrisul Românesc*, Nr. 3 (67), martie 2009

Mistificare și demistificare în discursul critic postdecembrist: strategii identitare în presa culturală post-totalitară*

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Abstract: *The aim at creating a coherent identity image of the cultural Romanians rooted in the iconic paradigm mirroring the specificity of the 're-born' post-totalitarian literature, in other words the collective drive for setting up a valid identity offer functional at the level of inter-national European dynamics, has displayed different debates on the use of critical strategies and criteria appropriate for this type of endeavour. The interchangeable identities, the displacement of the aesthetic relation humanness – History turning the torturer into the tortured are the main key-points of the 'east-ethic' distortion in which the political interplay de-forms the aesthetic function of the reading act, actually more interested in finding 'the guilt' than in analyzing valid fictional constructs now downplayed by the 'moralizing' praxis. In the context of the 'identity reconstruction' drive, the 'post-traumatic memory' displays double significance: it marks dichotomously either the anachronic overbidding of the 'culprit writer' myth or the selection of the 'aesthetically resistant' works facing the 'inquisitory' assault, as the articles published in România literară Revue during 1996-1997 display.*

Key-words: *post-December critical discourse, identity practices, national literature, România literară Revue*

După 1989, în încercarea de a sistematiza modelele literare reprezentative din punct de vedere național și identitar, discursul critic deschide un câmp polemic al „revizuirilor” care, de multe ori, abdică intenționat de la primatul criteriului estetic în favoarea analizei „ideologiei etice” a operei și creatorului său. Atitudinea virulent-contestată atinge, în descendența practicii *est-etice* aplicate „canonului intangibil” - fie ca este vorba de modelele formatoare ale criticii estetizante / „a-politice și non-militante” sau de scriitori neomoderniști reprezentativi - și pe autorii suspectați de „înregimentare” ideologică, realist-socialistă sau naționalist-comunistă. (Im)postura *criticului – actor / jucător*, „cârtitor” prin vocație (amintind de un complex cvasi-național definit de Eugen Simion) își construiește din propriul discurs o scenă pe care își regizează „bătăliile” îndreptate adesea contra „confraților” de breaslă, oferind prin strategia contra-replicii un spectacol discreditant tocmai prin lipsa de coerență estetică a argumentației înlocuite, prin ricoșeu, cu cea a ierarhizărilor moral-etice. Un astfel de exemplu îl constituie disputa în jurul „dosarului Miron Radu Paraschivescu”, autorul *Cântecelor țigănești*, angajând într-o polemică acerbă pe Gh. Grigurcu, care scrie în nr.40 din 9 octombrie 1996 despre *Efectul M.R.P.*, și Ion Simuț, criticul *Familiei*, care glosează într-un număr anterior al *României literare* (nr.34 /1996) despre *Miron Radu Paraschivescu - eretic sau cabotin?* Disputa de idei alunecă de la nivelul recunoașterii poetului ca mentor al non-conformiștilor din anii 70 („un generos, un guru căutat și adorat, o instanță de gust și de promovare a creației novatoare în acei ani plini de obstacole” – Gh. Grigurcu), la postura obsesiv-îndoielnică a autorului *Jurnalului* (Ion Simuț), pentru a se stabiliza în spațiul predilect al revizionismului, „fața moral-civică a lui Miron Radu Paraschivescu”. [1] Sentințele sunt definitive, acordând un vot de blam operei acestuia, acum re-citite prin grila „naturii umane îndoielnice” a creatorului său. Juxtapunerea celor două nivele semnificante – *ficțiunea și discursul biografizant al ficțiunii* – „naște monștri”: „Acesta a fost, neîndoios, un dedublat, prin cele două ipostaze, de aderența la comunism și de respingere a comunismului, pe care le-a învederat alternativ sau concomitent. Un ambiguu, ca și alții, însă și un bolnav cu nervii profund zdruncinați și cu notorii ieșiri anormale (...). A fost unul dintre semănătorii minciunii, derutei, lașității, fățarniciei, pe un sol în care asemenea semințe, ocrotite de sumbra meteorologie partinică, încolțeau lesnicios. Dar, date fiind dezechilibrul său de ordin psihiatric și sinceritatea acută, dureroasă, aerul de damnat cu care și-a reflectat instabilitatea și incoerența, nu e chiar cazul cel mai reprezentativ. Nu e printre cei dintâi ce merită să fie țintuiți la stâlpul infamiei. Nu ne răfuim cu bolnavii și se cuvine a ține seama de gemetele

căinței, emise în intimitate, chiar dacă intermitent, ale unui păcătos.” [2] „Disident decepționat” sau, dimpotrivă, „exultant ideologic al comunismului, care nu șovăia a asimila, ca într-o halucinație, libertatea cu dictatura populară” (Ion Simuț), Miron Radu Paraschivescu, absolvit prin „patologia măștii dedublate” (sau „excitație maniacală” în probatoriul lui Gh.Grigurcu), pre-determină, în viziunea analistului *României literare*, un efect de amplitudine, cu rezonanță aparte în fenomenul „epurărilor” postdecembriste – ”de-tabuizarea tabuizaților”. Cu alte cuvinte, „coborârea de pe pedestal”, „de-canonizarea canonizaților”, re-discutarea „moralității” pactizanților ideologici și a „autenticității umane” a operei acestora - un program revizionist desfășurat în mai multe ”valuri” și cu mize de-conspirative clar diferențiate [3]:

1. De-structurarea modelelor, a scriitorilor / scriiturilor care, cu voia sau fără voia criticului amintit, poartă valențe identitare, de reprezentare a practicii creatoare a unei generații - „Nichita Stănescu și Marin Preda încep a fi examinați cu tot mai multă degajare - o ieșire din extazul admirativ, cultivat cu o notă de tendențiozitate oficioasă - risipindu-se atmosfera nesănătoasă, de unicitate apodictică, de supremație absolută fabricată în jurul lor, care îndemna critica la un exclusiv *drepti cazon*.”

2. De-mascarea „falșilor opozanți” și amendarea dedublării conjuncturale a măștii – „Alteori avem a face cu un abil montaj de *obediță și disidență*, slujirea necondiționată a partidului fiind bizar însoțită de o alură de neînrolare, de un impuls de emancipare. În mai gravă măsură decât la bietul M. R. P., acest aer de *agent dublu* s-a arătat la *fascinanții* precum Paul Georgescu și Alexandru Ivasiuc.”

3. Demistificarea „conjuncturalismului nonstop”, a „adaptabilității serviabile, îndatoritoare, mereu pe fază” (Gh.Grigurcu). Camelonismul circumstanțial ca tară comportamental-morală a tipului colaboraționist este ipostaziat, în aceeași perspectivă acidă a „revizionistului” *României literare*, de Crohmălniceanu, o altă figură canonică a criticii românești – „E cazul unui Ov. S. Crohmălniceanu, metamorfozat într-un îndrumător fără prihană al unor scriitori optzeciști, care-l aclamă, uitând că acțiunea lui prototalitară, vastă și multiformă, a fost mult mai semnificativă decât, bunăoară, cea a *cabotinelui* autodeclarat, M. R. P. Ce să-i faci? Fiecare cu optica sa! Nu am putea contesta calitățile și scrierile valide ale vârstnicului critic, stabilit în Germania, însă nici n-am putea uita trecutul său penibil, care nu pare a-l stânjeni și care, în consecință, se impune a fi analizat de alții, cu condiția ca aceștia să nu sufere de o... miopie a grațitudinii.”

4. Denunțarea „cele mai primejdioase măști a compromisurilor: antumitatea”, protecția tacită a „trădătorilor” contemporani, „duplicitari” în natura lor umană, dar „securizați” de „scutul canonului” actual – „Există printre noi câțiva autori în floarea vârstei, bucurându-se de o prestanță intelectuală și, deopotrivă, administrativă, care... intimidează. Deși larg cunoscute, fluctuațiile, derapările, adaptările lor, s-ar zice că nu tocmai *de amorul artei*, sunt frecvent trecute sub o tăcere diplomatică, de nu întâmpinate cu elogii. Oare e nevoie ca un autor sa plece în lumea umbrelor ca să căpătăm curajul a spune deschis ceea ce credem despre creația, atitudinile, caracterul său? Câți dintre noi cutează a lua acum în discuție nume, oricum, discutabile, ca oricare altele, de la Eugen Simion și Marin Sorescu, la Augustin Buzura, Andrei Pleșu, Mircea Iorgulescu? Pentru a le acuza, a le scuza ori pentru a le supune unei judecăți nepărtinitoare, detașate de rețeaua de relații personale ori instituționale a actualității.”

Programul critic individual astfel construit se erijează în proiect postdecembrist recuperator al „adevărurilor operei și autorilor”, mizând în realitate pe motivații non-estetice ale eșafodajului interpretativ, condiționând miza estetică a scriiturii de evidențele contextuale social-politice. Mai mult, scriitorul însuși este demonizat, biograficul / empiricul (în fapt, opțiunile ideologice ale autorului / dinamica politizantă a contextualizărilor lui intra-doctrinare, pre- sau post-decembriste) sufocând interstițiile valorice ale operei în sine. Ficțiunea ca produs al imaginarului creator, în toate compartimentele sale de valoare, este

anulată de supra-ordonarea prin artefactul scriitorului ca „ficțiune ideologizată”, în realitate o re-ficționalizare legitimantă a „omului în istorie” care creditează acum actul critic în defavoarea primatului estetic. Externalizarea operei, deturnarea ei de la funcția primară de cunoaștere / re-cunoaștere a unui raport personal cu universul, mediind un sens și propunând o ipostază a experienței individului / lumii, nu poate funcționa decât ca o oglindă limitativă și deformatoare, proiectând vindicativ sentințe și nu potențialități de semnificație. „Revizuirea” în sens lovinescian, deturnată de la funcția estetizantă inițială și asumată postdecembrist ca element ordonator al „mărturiei” scriiturii care nu mai probează virtualități de creație ci, dimpotrivă, condiționările extra-literare ale spațiului ficțional intrinsec, articulează un imens „câmp de luptă” al dilemelor contemporane în care polemicile, confruntările, dilemele criticilor „jurați” inter-relaționează într-un spectacol, deseori grotesc, cu actori-scriitori care sunt puși să performeze partitura regizată a „demascării”.

Deviza „judecății nepărtinitoare”, despre care vorbea Gh.Grigurcu în programul său critic, este asumată, în nr. 42 din 23 octombrie/1996 al *României literare*, de un alt „justițiar” postdecembrist, Mircea Mihăieș, care deschide dosarul Petru Dumitriu, un „mit calp” considerat a fi prefabricat în epoca ceaușistă și supralicitat artificial după 1989. În opinia criticului, opera scriitorului plecat din țară în anii 60 se auto-discreditează prin dominanța non-valorii: „În afara unor pasaje din *Cronică de familie*, nu cred că e nimic de reținut din miile de pagini impregnate de-un realism socialist pestilențial. Nici măcar dacă în România ultimei jumătăți de veac nu ar fi existat vreun alt *mare prozator*, Petru Dumitriu nu ar ocupa acea poziție : ca în binecunoscutul banc, el ar fi ieșit pe un loc codaș chiar dacă ar fi candidat singur.” [4] Astfel de poziții critice adjuvante sunt demontate, trebuie să precizăm, prin chiar ipostaza auto-confesată a scriitorului „plăsat într-o istorie” din perspectiva căreia își narează sau deconspiră propriile dileme ale „pactului social” în două splendide și relevante cărți de interviuri publicate anterior, în 1994 și 1995 [5]. Dar se pare că ideile și opțiunile expuse direct, „la prima mână” nu pot opri, prin sinceritatea confesiunii, tăvălugul revizionist. În consecință, „exilatul de la Metz” este acuzat de înscenarea post-revoluționară a unei identități dedublate, a cărei coerență internă satisface servilismul dublu direcționat - față de regimul dejist și cel cripto-comunist iliescian: „Alături de dl. A. Toma, Mihai Beniuc și alți staliniști de primă oră, el a contribuit activ și decisiv la îndobitocirea poporului român. Aceasta e o certitudine. Nu e cazul să mai explic de ce. Uluitor e ca omul care, în interviurile date după 1990, părea să sufere fizic pentru răul pe care îl făcuse poporului său, revine în viața publică și o ia de la capăt, ca și cum nu s-ar fi întâmplat nimic. Atașat valorilor comunismului, nu i-a scăpat decât un singur protagonist din galeria dictatorilor bolșevici: Ceaușescu. La sfârșit de mileniu, i-a fost dat acestui prozator de tristă faimă să facă legătura între primul conducător bolșevic al României, Gheorghiu-Dej, și ultimul supraviețuitor al doctrinei leniniste, Ion Iliescu.” [6] Anatema odată funcțională, romanul său, căruia i-ar fi trebuit recunoscute în primul rând autonomia estetică și principialitatea ficțională, suferă o insidioasă „mutație a valorilor” (care numai lovinesciană nu este), din care nu poate ieși decât perdant. „Ideologia imaginarului” este adusă la tăcere de „ideologia istoriei”, supra-dimensionată și opresivă, în perfectă consonanță cu doctrina agresivă a perioadelor luate ca unic punct de referință. Finalul articolului exclude orice drept la replică: „E dreptul (și poate datoria) d-lui Dumitriu să se comporte precum ultimul pupincurist de provincie aterizat pe covoarele moi de la Cotroceni. Dar dl. Dumitriu nu are nici un drept să interpeleze birjărește poporul român, aruncându-i, în timp ce țesală slugarnic orgoliul iliescian, disprețuitorul *Bă, ați devenit o nație de judecători!* Care judecători, domnule Dumitriu? Judecătorii care nu mai știu nimic de teroriști, de mineriade, de fraude electorale, de datorii externe făcute pentru a înarma poliția și trupele de pază ale președinției? Câți condamnați de către poporul român cunoașteți, domnule Dumitriu, din miile de nomenclaturiști care au adus, prin cinism și incompetență, la sapă de lemn un întreg popor? Care judecători, domnule Dumitriu? Intelectualitatea care acceptă salariile de

mizerie și statutul de underdog absolut, doar pentru a ridica cu un milimetru nivelul de cultură al poporului? Tineretul care e scârbit încă din adolescență de politica murdară a unui regim odios? Populația deprimată și obosită, care a ajuns, după șase ani de paradis iliescian, să facă interminabile cozi la zahar și ulei? Aceștia sunt judecătorii pe care, în ciocoismul dumneavoastră incurabil îi trageți, la indicații cotrocene, de urechi? Temeți-vă, domnule Dumitriu. Pentru că în slugărnicia respingătoare inspirată de vizita la Cotroceni nu ați putut observa că românii nu sunt o nație de judecători. Ci - poate și datorită *marilor* dumneavoastră scrieri - una de condamnați.” [7]

Avalanșa incriminatorie, feroce și contestatară, centrată asupra opțiunilor personale ale *omului* Dumitriu, cere, în virtutea unui mult-reclamat „est-etism” al „lovinescienilor” și reflexul demitizant aplicat operei, tocmai pentru a statua definitiv veridicitatea sentințelor enunțate. În consecință, în numărul următor al revistei, 43 din 30 octombrie 1996, Gabriel Dimisianu se întoarce la „realitatea textului” considerată oglindă fidelă a convingerilor auctoriale – discursul românesc nu poate decât să-i proiecteze scriitorului, în spațiul privat - ficționalizant, doctrina personală enunțată în spațiul public. În sîjalul acestei strategii, analiza lui Dimisianu amendează tezismul și tendențiozitatea romanului „scriitorului înhățat de Putere” și supralicitat, prin „beția de superlative”, ca model al literaturii române postbelice. Încă o dată, politicul interferează cu intenționalitatea actului critic, scriitura *Cronicii de familie* autodenunțându-se, în viziunea analistului, prin „schematismul recriminator” și „viziunea foiletonistic-pamfletară asupra vechii *lumi putrede*.” În plus, *Vânătoare de lupi*, *Noaptea din iunie*, *Drum fără pulbere*, *Pasărea furtunii* sunt puse definitiv la zidul infamiei propagandiste, nefiind „inventariabile critic” decât în calitatea lor de „capodopere cu semn negativ, produse desăvârșit-schematice, perfect înșurubate pe canavaua tezei despre neîncetata ascuțire a luptei de clasă. Proza d-lui Petru Dumitriu, scrisă în țară înainte de 1960, cu excepția atât de promițătoarelor nuvele din *Euridice*, este mînată de tezism și de spirit resentimentar. Cea scrisă în Occident, superioară literar, în special *Incognito*, este și ea resentimentară, în sens invers, plătind polițe morale prin intermediul unor personaje cu cheie.”[8]

În această „gâlceavă a criticilor” postdecembriști care, sub imperativul revizionist, aplică grila „ideologiei legitimize” din poza publică a „scriitorului – veleitar” în analiza „ideologiei estetice” a discursurilor ficționale, intervine Nicolae Manolescu care, în editorialele sale, temperează *ex machina* apele învolburate ale polemicilor. Este cazul articolului publicat în nr.25 din 26 iunie 1996, *Literatura*, în care inventariază trei tipuri de „atitudini” ale regimurilor totalitare față de literatură: monopolul cenzurii care anihilează orice formă rebelă de discurs literar (epoca stalinismului sovietic și deceniul 6 românesc), eludarea comportamentului restrictiv din epoca brejneviană prin publicarea clandestină și literatura *samizdat* din U.R.S.S., Cehia și Polonia, precum și alternativa discursului încifrat și codurile aluzive, simbolice și esopice din spațiul românesc. Contextul socio-dictatorial ceaușist, amplificat de cultul paranoic al personalității Conducătorului, generează breșe de evadare ale scriiturii din normele canonului doctrinar. Așa cum punctează Nicolae Manolescu în finalul intervenției sale, „Prejudecata comună este că scriitorii români au fost privilegiați de un regim pe care l-au slujit pe față și l-au bârfit pe ascuns. Este absolut fals. Scriitorii au profitat de paranoia dictatorului spre a-și consolida un anumit prestigiu social. Ei au creat o literatură care n-a fost pur și simplu una cenzurată. Literatura dintre 1965 și 1989 a fost produsul cenzurii - de la teme la limbaj - în sensul că s-a autoinventat pe sine ca să reziste cenzurii, în conținut, ca și în forme, dând naștere totodată unui nou tip de cititor, complice, în stare să-i înțeleagă mesajul deseori ascuns printre rânduri în comunism.”[9] Afirmția criticului legitimează câmpul estetic al dinamicii scriiturii în totalitarism, creditând valoric paradigma „dublului limbaj” ficțional care și-a creat propriile coduri și sisteme simbolice de semnificație, scurtcircuitând opacitatea și uniformitatea normei pentru a sensibiliza lectorul,

co-participant în această aventură. „Rezistența prin estetic” – formulă a evadării de sub tutela totalitaristă în spațiul generos-compensatoriu al textului, re-configurând manifestările individuale ale „vocii” drept strategii ale „decompensării literare” orientate asupra un sistem de opresiune maladiv – își impune prezența și „corectează” devierile „conjuncturalilor” care fac obiectul exclusiv al polemicilor vitriolante revizioniste, frizând uneori patologicul.

Cea de-a doua direcție demistificatoare care s-a manifestat în critica postdecembristă vine dinspre „ofensiva” postmoderniștilor care atacă atât paradigma neomodernistă a scriiturii, cât și vocile critice legitimizează ale acesteia. Stigmatul periferiei, discursul retrograd, ficțiunea vetustă, tematica rurală reprezentată, în viziunea acestora, principalele „puncte de slăbiciune” ale unei literaturi care nu mai poate spune nimic lectorului contemporan. *România literară* a anului 1996 găzduiește astfel de atitudini iconoclaste, temperate, în egală măsură, de articole-răspuns echilibrante. În numărul 5 din 7 februarie, Ion Manolescu propune *Un manifest postmodernist*, în fapt o pledoarie *pro domo* în favoarea unei scriituri – oglindă a „noilor timpuri” care reclamă, în subsidiar, și o frecvent invocată schimbare de mentalitate critică: literatura șaptezeciștilor / optzeciștilor ar trebui evaluată cu instrumentele unei noi critici care să eludeze, în egală măsură, „intransigența canonică a conservatorilor și permisivitatea exagerată a anti-canonicilor.” [10] „Răsturnarea modelelor”, căutarea deliberată a unui nou canon, relativizarea critică și pluri-interferența dimensiunilor scriiturii sunt noțiunile-cheie care ar trebui să gireze, insistă Ion Manolescu, „literatura novatoare” a prezentului care nu mai admite judecăți critice „impresioniste” de tipul celor care au statuat drept etalon al prozei actuale „o carte publicată... acum patru decenii.” [11] Inerția criticii este cea care ar provoca asemenea derapaje interpretative, „prejudecățile” cu funcție reprezentativă constituind un sindrom invaziv al criticii contemporane, fiind explicitată mai ales prin „neadecvarea discursului analitic la mersul literaturii și stabilirea unor tablouri axiologice care ignoră apartenența autorilor la perioade, curente și sensibilități diferite.” [12] Contribuie la această stare de fapt, notează indignat analistul, „opacitatea criticii” care manipulează subversiv pseudo-alibiuri inautentice de tipul „absența capodoperelor”, „pulverizarea epicului”, „inapetența publicului pentru noua literatură”. Demersul astfel orientat identifică două cauze fundamentale ale disfuncției interpretative actuale: „prejudecata modelului unic, întărită inconștient de reflexele politice ale vechiului sistem piramidal de tip paternalist” și „prejudecata modelului în dispersie”. Prima cauză contra-productivă menționată minimizează prin răscolirea textelor optzeciste (sunt invocate scrierile lui Nicolae Iliescu și George Cușnarencu) evaluate unilateral prin supra-grila canonică a „Părintelui omnipotent (dirijat, cu sau fără voia lui, din culisele criticii literare)”, fiind raportate procustian la opera-model a „scriitorului-instituție, autor al unei opere monumentale destinate să parcurgă rapid treptele sanctificării (...); este cazul lui Marin Preda și Nichita Stănescu, în zilele noastre. Neajunsul acestei prejudecăți stă în faptul că ea alimentează un discurs critic pe cât de inoportun, pe atât de confuz: persuasiunea se obține prin minimalizarea *aspirantului*, care, la urma-urmei, ar putea fi contestat și fără invocarea oraculară a modelului.” [13] Cea de-a doua stereotipie negativistă a criticii, „prejudecata modelului în dispersie” postulează, în descendența primei, asimilarea în sincronie a textelor, judecate liniar în defavoarea axiologiei diacronice. Rezultatul ar fi înregimentarea teoretică a scriiturilor într-un eșafodaj supra-textual desantist, diluând valorile și demontând ierarhiile, oferindu-le compensativ coerență estetică prin exclusivă afiliere la un curent literar. Pornind de la aceste argumente teoretice, analistul inițiază atacul împotriva scriitorilor a căror marcă de reprezentativitate deja este instalată în mentalul critic contemporan, într-o polemică violentă cu ancheta pe tema *Iar n-avem roman?* din numărul 145/1995 al *Dilemei*: „Se vorbește, în general, de Rebreanu, Camil Petrescu și Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, se deplânge absența din librării a unui Buzura, Bălăiță și Toiu, ba chiar se afirmă că romanele lui Buzura, Breban, D. R. Popescu și Ivăsiuc ar fi *extraordinare, năucitoare* și că ar fi provocat,

prin caracterul lor tranșant politic, *adevărate cutremure de conștiință*. Să fim serioși! Adevăratele cutremure de conștiință nu aveau cum să fie provocate de niște cărți infirme, ce rosteau adevărul numai pe jumătate și al căror eșec a și fost semnalat de critica literară odată cu apariția prozei optzeciste. Cu toată valoarea ei contextuală, stilistica eschivei practicate de romancierii șaptezeciști e imposibil de acceptat ca argument documentar: actualitatea ei pălește în fața ororilor pe care memorialistica de detenție sau proza protestatară gen Paul Goma le dezvăluie astăzi. De altfel, caracterul evazionist al romanului politic șaptezecist reiese mai ales din maniera incompletă în care acesta trata realitatea comunistă - eludând sistematic prezentul și ocupându-se în schimb (coincident cu linia oficială) de *greșelile trecutului*.”[14] Anihilarea romanelor „infirme”, care rostesc doar „jumătăți de adevăr”, demascarea pactului voalat cu regimul, asumat sub acoperirea „dublului discurs” sau a mizei evazioniste, sunt coordonatele actualizate ale „epurării” criticii postmoderne cu intenția declarată a impunerii, în ierarhia valorică actuală, a unui alt tip de text, a unui alt imaginar ficțional reverberând tendințele societății computerizate. Tematica „desuetă” este pusă la zid definitiv în virtutea ideii că mentalul cultural al „deschiderii către Europa” nu mai este receptiv la formele „paseismului idilic”, ale „defetismului periferiei”, la ficțiunea marginal-rurală sau, dimpotrivă, la comercializarea inter-culturală a unor mituri limitative prin recurența stigmatului centripet-naționalist: „În era ciberneticii nu se mai poate face literatură ca acum douăzeci de ani, cu doctori care își analizează neîmplinirile sufletului în fraze aluzive, cu mitocani care se îmbată de trupul femeilor iubite pe câte șase sute de pagini, cu luptători pentru dreptate socială care se ascund sub nume simbolice în ținuturi parabolice sau cu activiști omenoși, care țin discursuri progresiste din două în două capitole. Ce impact mai poate avea asupra cititorului postmodern, care obține simultaneitatea printr-un simplu zapping pe tastatura telecomenzii, un roman care începe într-un hambar și se încheie într-o sură? Cine mai pierde timpul citind fel de fel de tragedii shakespeariene strămutate în gospodăriile dintr-un sat obscur, când mijloacele multi-media îi oferă experiența virtuală a celor mai sofisticate decoruri?”[15] „Revoluția” postmodernă a scriiturii reclamă, în perspectiva analistului, renunțarea la ideologia auto-mutilantă a literaturii, totalmente perdantă prin „pășunismul său primitiv” gravitând în jurul personajelor „cu ie, fotă și tundră” care discută „în grajd despre Dumnezeu și la ședința de partid despre Iubitul Conducător.” Nici convenția textualistă a optzeciștilor nu mai convinge, auto-epuizându-se prin recurența manieristă a „micilor drame cotidiene”, prin „tribulațiile sale textuate textuant într-o textură a textului care ar scoate din sărite până și pe cel mai entuziast fan postmodern.”[16] Alternativa pentru acest tip de scriitură auto-devorantă, care și-a dovedit din plin suficiența ar veni, susține Ion Manolescu, dinspre sensibilitatea „noului val” – „textualismul mediatic”, o scriitură-hibrid pe modelele Pynchon, Barth, Rushdie și Kundera care îmbină „mijloacele artei cibernetice (imagerie virtuală, simulări tri-dimensionale, ilustrație fractală, jocuri inter-active, compresie digitală etc. uneori prin intermediul unei colaborări directe cu computerul, ca în cazul prozei electronice E-fiction), pentru a recompune universul într-o totalizare vizuală hipnotică.”[17]

Oferta acestui discurs ar soluționa dilemele creatoare, de metodă sau de „punere în scenă” ale modelelor narrative anterioare, marcând un definitiv clivaj față de „problematika rurală și metafizica grădinii de zarzavaturi” pentru a demonta apoi „elucubrațiile semidocte ale modernismului citadin” și „împinge textualismul scriptic - tematizat exasperant în ultimul deceniu - spre clandestinitate.”[18] Maeștrii arhitecturii textualist-mediatică sunt doi practicieni ai interferenței codurilor care promovează o *scriitură a diferenței* cu miză postmodernă: Mircea Cărtărescu – *Orbitor* (care obligă „critica literară să-și schimbe lentilele fumurii cu unele transparente și, renunțând la ifosele elitiste, să analizeze cu alte instrumente noua literatură ce i se oferă”) și Sebastian A. Corn - *2484 Quirinal Ave.* (un roman al hiper-realității care contrariază „bieții balcanici cu nostalgii interbelice”). Proiectând o viziune *integrată* asupra lumii, în care planurile narrative „clasicizate” își pierd acuitatea estetică, fiind

anulate de imageria virtuală a universurilor interferente și omotetice, romanul mediatic legitimează o evidență virulent amendată de către analist: „Atât romancierul șaptezecist, cât și cel optzecist care încă mai exersează, perseverent în ratare, un textualism scriptic de seminar Tel-Quel-ist se dovedesc la fel de anacronici astăzi. A scrie ca ei înseamnă a îngropa definitiv romanul românesc într-un provincialism cu pretenții.”[19]

O astfel de abordare asupra strategiilor de înnoire a literaturii postbelice nu poate rămâne fără replică. Ea vine din dublă direcție, de la editorialistul teoretician al *României literare* erijat în instanță de echilibrare a unor excese critice și de la Mircea Nedelciu, un practician postmodern direct vizat în ofensiva-manifest al lui Ion Manolescu. În numărul 9 din 6 martie, Nicolae Manolescu intervine în editorialul *Cearta modernilor cu postmodernii*, reproșându-i acestuia „lipsa de nuanțe” și „interșanjabilitatea canoanelor”: „Prima mea obiecție are în vedere o contradicție esențială din articolul lui Ion Manolescu: aceea de a respinge aprecierea prin prisma unui model unic al literaturii moderne și de a proclama totodată existența unui model unic, valabil pentru literatura postmodernă.”[20] Este întâiul efect contradictoriu al manifestului – înlocuirea unei paradigme canonizante cu o alta, de extracție diferită, dar guvernată de același tip de principii normative. Suprapunerea criteriilor de valoare, „culpa morală” a scriitorilor și „culpabilizarea prin reflex” a operei acestora – de unde și tendința de minimalizare absolută a unei întregi perioade de creație, orientare care coordonează implicit întregul demers al manifestului – sunt amendate ca instrumente ale criticii estetizante: „Problema *minciunii*, apoi, care ar roade, ca viermele din măr, întreaga literatură din era comunistă nu era, vorba lui Maioreșcu, în chestie într-un manifest ca acesta care se referă la arta prozatorilor. În plan moral, noi putem constata o diferență între tendința romancierilor de ieri de a-și justifica criticile curajoase făcute unor laturi ale sistemului prin îmbrățișarea unei perspective care părea a justifica sistemul ca atare. E o nuanță, chiar și în reformularea aceasta a problemei *minciunii*! În planul artei, acest aspect al lucrurilor nu are însă nici o relevanță.”[21] Punctând caracterul de *vendetta* personală contra criticilor contemporani cărora le „plătește niște polițe” - sub masca acuzatoare a opacității interpretative și a insensibilității acestora la noile realități scriptice -, editorialistul *României literare* amendează reprobator demersul vitriolizant al lui Ion Manolescu, descalificat prin chiar regulile „părtinitoare” ale propriului manifest.

Aflat în ipostaza unui „acuzat” în rechizitoriul manifestului, a scriitorului-nostalgic care își auto-epuizează propria scriitură prin imposibilitatea detașării de un pattern narativ exercitat monoton până la suficiență, Mircea Nedelciu ripostează într-un articol succulent, *Zap-ul la români. Un manifest postmodernist – între ridicol și superb*, în numărul 6 din 9 martie al revistei literare. El însuși un *homo mediaticus* în perioada petrecută în sudul Franței, având la îndemână opțiunea zapping-ului pentru instituirea unui dialog mediatic cu lumea exterioară, scriitorul constată în programul lui Ion Manolescu ocurența unui „cocktail de confuzii” care alimentează tezist și nejustificat antinomia conceptuală instaurată între *textualismul scriptic* și cel *mediatic*, dar și prezența unei partituri co-participative a lectorului transpus în personaj antrenat în pelerinajul virtual. Mecanismul, susține Nedelciu, presupune instrumente de *manipulare* a cititorului care nu pot deveni, nici în ultimă instanță, coordonate conceptuale specifice unui nou crez artistic. Cu atât mai mult cu cât politica marketing-ului mediatic contemporan constă în strategii de „captare a atenției” și nu în diversificarea ofertei de opțiuni: „De ce se bucură el că cititorul poate să zapeze, să fugă de pe canalul cu șuri și hambare pe canalul cu decoruri sofisticate? A găsit el metoda de a-l face să nu zapeze mai departe? Asta m-a făcut să râd cu hohote ca și declarația celui mai recent înființat partid din România care zice că *se adresează indecișilor din sondaje*. Păi, tocmai d-aia se numesc indeciși cei 35% pe care zisul partid crede că și i-a definit ca electorat: pentru că nu știe nimeni în ce fel se formează în capul lor opțiunea de vot, poate pentru că sunt analfabeți - la propriu, nu doar analfabeți politic, poate pentru că vorbesc o limbă diferită și de limbajul

politic și de textualismul mediatic al d-lui Ion Manolescu. Cum să te declari reprezentantul celor cu care nu ai nici o punte?”[22] Identitatea inconsistentă a lectorului/publicului - țintă, definit aluziv doar prin sintagma „utilizator de mijloace multimedia”, naște controverse privitoare la miza unei astfel de hiper-narațiuni textualizate, care, la nivelul programatic al „noului canon”, nu poate înlocui o formă „vetustă” de manipulare cu o alta, reconfigurată prin alte strategii. Remarcând faptul că demersurile normative ale manifestelor artistice combat, de regulă, tendințele manipulative exercitate în plan politico-social, Mircea Nedelciu consideră ca noua teorie a textualității mediatice se discreditează atunci când susține „orientarea” cititorului către atractivitatea noului tip de discurs. Mai mult, manifestul textualismului *scriptic* optzecist, luat ca punct de referință în validarea, prin opoziție, a celui *mediatic*, nu a existat decât la nivel retrospectiv: antologia lui Gh.Crăciun, *Competiția continuă – generația 80 în texte teoretice* sintetizează, într-un corpus comun, texte cu potențialități programatice, recuperând o atitudine creatoare și o viziune asupra lumii și inițiind deopotrivă un program comun optzeciștilor. Iar modelele aduse ca suport demonstrației, „Pynchon, Barth, Rushdie sau Kundera sunt autori care nu pot dovedi nici un procedeu pe care optzeciștii să nu-l fi încercat. E drept că nici *imagerie virtuală, simulări tri-dimensionale sau ilustrație fractală* n-am prea văzut la ei, dar aștept să văd cum arată chestiile astea la Ion Manolescu.”[23] Într-adevăr, mai târziu, în 2006, Ion Manolescu va scrie un roman, *Derapaj* (publicat la Polirom), considerat reprezentativ pentru mult teoretizatul *textualism mediatic*, o scriitură-hibrid care amalgamează codurile scriptice și imagistice într-un creuzet narativ pluridimensional, omotetic, din care istoriile și discursul *vizual* al acestora curg morfodinamic într-o hiper-realitate configurată fractal. Dar, dincolo de exercițiul demonstrativ al teoreticianului-scriitor care gestionează, în romanul său, „practica actualizantă” a proiecțiilor mediatice, rămân exagerările - demersul de anihilare totală a valorilor perspectivare în diacronia metamorfozelor și „detabuizarea” clamată ca procedeu contra-punctic de normare a unui nou cod de scriitură, „radical postmodern”. O aventură sinuoasă și energofagă la care nu toți criticii postdecembriști sunt receptivi. Mai ales că „liberalizarea” societății românești nu a însemnat, consideră Nicolae Manolescu într-un articol de fond din 14 mai 1997, și așezarea calitativă a valorilor. Din contra, deschiderile postrevoluționare, aspirațiile pro-democratice și pro-europeniste au declanșat o exacerbată avalanșă de prezențe critice, unele amendabile prin precaritatea formațiilor interioare, excesul cantitativ și „deprofesionalizarea continuă și masivă” [24] stigmatizând negator o stare de fapt în care confuzia criteriilor persistă cu obstinență în numele unui mult visat și râvnit succes. După 1989, validarea eurocentrică a literaturii române a generat așadar un fenomen dichotomic, aducând în prim-planul vieții critice ideo-grafii contradictorii: cele care dezbat incapacitatea literaturii române de a se scutura definitiv de jugul ideologic totalitarist, mizând pe texte și autori stigmatizați prin „colaboraționismul” lor de notorietate publică sau care practică un discurs al marginalității prin autohtonismul rural și cele care aclamă „despărțirea de trecut” și „revoluționarea” canonului literar. Poziția mediană, cea care pledează pentru „normalizarea revizuirilor”, în fapt o binemeritată repunere în drepturi a criteriului estetic în re-lectura operelor, aduce echilibrul prin refuzul exceselor motivate moral-politic și prin asumarea unei mize identitare declarate în re-considerarea statutului cultural românesc în oglinda integrării. Mai înainte, „comunismul ne-a țărnut, și el, contactul cu europenismul și un naționalism penibil ne apăra - nu numai prin protocronism - specificitatea noastră tradițională”[25] afirmă Z.Ornea discutând despre *Europenism și antieuropenism*, într-un articol - dezbateră din 21 mai. În perioada postdecembristă, mult-invocatului retard cultural, ca și limitării restrictive într-un „naționalism retrograd, al aderenței exclusiviste la o ierarhie canonică imuabilă”, stimulând colateral efectele localismului cultural ca factor al „defazării” față de Europa, le sunt căutate, cu înverșunare, cauzele. Surprinzător (sau nu) acestea sunt adeseori descoperite în anchetele realizate de reviste literare „oponente”. Este cazul numărului 11-12/1996 al *Caietelor critice*

care dezbate tema literaturii române postbelice, găzduind intervenții și opinii ale scriitorilor și criticilor preocupați de validitatea estetică a textelor perioadei și care stârnește reacții furibunde în comentariul lui Gh. Grigurcu. „Dreptul său la replică”, intitulat sugestiv „*Siberia spiritului*” și *calomnia*, publicat la distanță de un an, în nr. 21 din 28 mai 1997 al *României literare*, este construit resentimentar pe demontarea oricărei idei radiante dinspre „tabăra conservatorilor apolitici”, indiferent de pertinența lor estetică. Intenția, de altfel onorabilă, a *Caietelor* de a medita rațional asupra rezistenței valorice a literaturii generate în spațiul ostil al frecvent invocatei „Siberii a spiritului” (Monica Lovinescu), fără orgolii refulate și ambiții de grup, este agresiv atacată: „Autorii ce n-ar fi dispuși a respecta anume clișee și tabuuri se văd taxați, pentru orice eventualitate, înainte de-a lua cuvântul: <<nu se poate nici să ne blocam într-o atitudine de denunțatori ai clasicilor noștri, să ne complăcem în atmosfera isterică a unui fel de interminabilă ședință de demascare a creatorilor de valori. A proliferat în ultimii ani la noi tipul căutătorului de pete... la alții, de preferință mult superiori lui ca talent, al justițiarului autoînscăunat, care taie și spânzură, după pofta inimii, fără ca necesarele proteste să se facă limpede auzite pe cât mai multe voci.>> Cât privește revizuirea valorilor, aceasta e recunoscută cu un sfert de gură, spre a se denunța, agresiv și, deci, intimidant, <<o forțare aberantă a acestui proces, un fel de asalt dat asupra ierarhiei valorilor, cu scopul, uneori declarat, de a o răsturna, demola, pulveriza.>>” [26] Sindromul ego-marginalității, dublat de un reflex compensativ al auto-validării, forjează evident atacul criticului „revizionist”, un „ilustru neinvitat” la dezbatere [27], care descalifică în ritmuri consecvente proprii „construcții critice interioare” fiecare luare de poziție a participanților la anchetă. „Nodul gordian” este reprezentat de semnificațiile și autenticitatea sintagmei „Siberia spiritului” ca structură geo-mentală, ideologică și simbolică, reprezentativă pentru România de după 1945. Suspectând adversarii („literatori” și „caietnici”) acestui concept aplicabil literaturii din perioada comunistă de „o înverșunare ce ilustrează orientarea mai mult ori mai puțin disimulată a revistei, recte spiritul conservator, nelipsit de un substrat politic, ce-o animă”, analistul *României literare* îi acuză de „calomnie crasă, indice al derutei, disoluției intelectuale și etice.” [28] Argumentele converg, iarăși, sub aparența „îndreptării apelor spre o albie firească”, spre o demonstrația cu finalitate ego-centrată. În dubla ei semnificație, de captivitate într-un spațiu geografic și cultural satelizat, cu „privirea întoarsă definitiv către răsărit” dar și de topos al „supraviețuirii ingrate”, „Siberia spiritului” reprezintă protejarea tacită a „colaboraționiștilor”, dar și prigoana elitelor „inconformiste”: „Întâmplător subsemnatul face parte din rândul celor în măsură a certifica, prin propria lor biografie, o lungă perioadă în care n-au avut dreptul de-a ocupa un serviciu și o lungă perioadă de exil intern. Scutit fiind doar de detenția în închisoare, am avut *privilegiul* de-a cunoaște direct toate celelalte măsuri represive ale regimului comunist. Am experimentat nu doar Siberia generică, lagăr al întregii țări comunizate, ci și multă, foarte multă vreme, Siberia marginalizării, a locului sterp prin izolare și supraveghere polițienească, Siberia domiciliului obligatoriu. <<Nu știu alții cum sunt>>, dar, în felul acesta, Siberia băștinașă a ajuns a alcătui o parte din viața mea ireversibilă, o umbră statornică a conștiinței mele.” [29] Articularea normativă a „exilului intern” - ca enclavă de autentică rezistență care proiectează drame interioare și forjează figuri de „eroi-opozanți ai periferiei” - pe care o întreprinde criticul într-un număr anterior al revistei - își probează acum utilitatea în elaborarea „mitului personal”, a ideo-grafiei „deținutului cultural” la care apelează analistul ca argument suprem în instrumentarea critică a dosarelor „oportuniștilor.” Ca într-o subtilă „comedie umană”, punctând absența unei axiologii de referință, compensată însă prin supralicitarea *exemplum*-ului personal, pus să vorbească ori de câte ori polemica de idei îl pune în inferioritate, Ion Simuț îi creionează un portret memorabil: „Lui Gh. Grigurcu îi lipsește, în primul rând, ideologia critică. Nu sensibilitatea, nu discernământul estetic, nu reacția polemică, nu simțul prezentului - ci Ideea (sau ideile). (...) Gh. Grigurcu este dator cu cel puțin un mare eseu

monografic despre un autor clasic sau modern (ar putea fi E. Lovinescu sau Ion Pillat, N. Davidescu sau Leonid Dimov). Fără îndeplinirea acestor condiții, posteritatea va fi mai severă, dacă nu chiar ostilă, rezervându-i inegalabilului critic un rol secundar. Oricare critic de întâmpinare are aceeași soartă: dacă nu pune ordine în cărțile citite de-a lungul unei vieți, dacă nu le găsește un punct de echilibru și stabilitate în rafturile unei sinteze, se prăbușește biblioteca peste el. Probabil ca proiecția istoriografică sau sinteza ideologică sunt erori, în măsura în care ignoră sau sacrifică unicitatea operei și inefabilul ei. Dar posterității îi plac erorile spectaculoase, solide, încheiate, bine articulate.” [30]

Intervenția *ex machina* lui Nicolae Manolescu, *Critica revizuirii*, din numărul 49 din 10 decembrie 1997, temperează elanul revizionist uniformizator prin reabilitarea necesarului criteriu estetic. Pledând pentru „spiritul critic al revizuirilor”, pentru „un adevăr complet și nuanțat, pentru restabilirea conjuncturilor și pentru explicarea obiectivă a lucrurilor”, fără de care „există riscul de a face ca o discuție principială să semene cu o răfuială personală”, editorialistul *României literare* cere aplicarea unui criteriu de valoare care să nuanțeze diferențiat circumstanțele. Altfel, „din serialul lui Gheorghe Grigurcu, un cititor neprevenit poate trage concluzia că, de la Nicolae Moraru la E. Simion, toată critica anilor '50-'80 a fost o apă și un pământ. Lipsa unui criteriu de valoare, face ca un simplu activist cultural, pe care istoria literaturii nu-l va reține decât într-un subcapitol consacrat proletcultismului, să stea alături de un critic adevărat, a cărui acțiune a fost deseori salutară pentru o literatură aflată mereu în primejdie.” În lipsa necesarelor diferențieri, fenomenul revizuirilor devine „prilej de dispută sterilă, ca un meci de ping-pong, în care să ne aruncăm unii altora mingea la nesfârșit.” [31] Este ceea ce îi reușește din plin lui Gh. Grigurcu.

***Acknowledgement:** This paper is supported by the Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOP HRD), financed from the European Social Fund and by the Romanian Government under the contract number SOP HRD/89/1.5/S/59758. Fragmentul a fost publicat în volumul de autor **Identitate culturală și integrare europeană. Perspective critice asupra discursului identitar românesc în perioada postdecembristă**, Ed. Europlus, Galați, ISBN 978-606-628-006-8, 2011.

Note

[1] Gh. Grigurcu, *Efectul M.R.P.*, în *România literară*, nr. 40 / 9 octombrie 1996.

[2] *Ibidem*.

[3] Obsesia „dosariadei” denotă evidența unei patologii personale bine reprezentate, manifeste în consecvența cu care criticul elaborează liniile directoare ale viitoarelor procese literare – *Ibidem*.

[4] Mircea Mihăieș, „Bă, ați devenit o nație de condamnați!” în *România literară*, nr. 42 / 23 octombrie 1996.

[5] Eugen Simion, *Convorbiri cu Petru Dumitriu*, Ed. Moldova, Iași 1994 și George Pruteanu, *Pactul cu diavolul (Șase zile cu Petru Dumitriu)*, Ed. Universal Dalsi – Ed. Albatros, București, 1995. Amintim aici și numărul 3-5 din 2003 al *Caietelor critice* care, în secțiunea *Remember Petru Dumitriu*, face o analiză pertinentă a complexității operei, autentice și pline de viață, „izbăvind omul care a scris-o” de „culpa morală” de altfel public mărturisită (Eugen Simion). Pentru o panoramă simptomatică a fenomenului revizionist din anii imediat post-decembriști, a se vedea Andrei Grigor, *Căruța lui Moromete*, Editura Eminescu, București, 2001.

[6] Mircea Mihăieș, *op.cit.*

[7] *Ibidem*.

[8] Gabriel Dimisianu, *Beția superlativelor*, în *România literară*, nr. 43 / 30 octombrie 1996.

[9] Nicolae Manolescu, *Literatura*, în *România literară*, nr. 25 / 26 iunie 1996.

[10] Ion Manolescu, *Un manifest postmodernist*, în *România literară*, nr. 5 / 7 februarie 1996.

[11] *Ibidem*. Observația incriminează postura de normă reprezentativă a romanului contemporan atribuită romanului predist *Moromeții I*.

[12] *Ibidem*.

[13] *Ibidem*.

[14] *Ibidem*.

[15] *Ibidem*.

[16] *Ibidem*.

- [17] *Ibidem*. Ion Manolescu dezvoltă conceptul textualismului mediatic și strategiile intrinseci ale „noii literaturi” aderente la paradigma computațională postmodernă în volumul publicat în 2003, la Polirom - *Videologia. O teorie tejno-culturală a imaginii globale*.
- [18] *Ibidem*.
- [19] *Ibidem*.
- [20] Nicolae Manolescu, *Cearța modernilor cu postmodernii*, în *România literară*, nr.9/6 martie 1996.
- [21] *Ibidem*.
- [22] Mircea Nedelciu, *Zap-ul la români. Un manifest postmodernist – între ridicol și superb*, în *România literară*, nr.6/9 martie 1996.
- [23] *Ibidem*.
- [24] Nicolae Manolescu, *Confuzia criteriilor*, în *România literară*, nr.19/14 mai 1997.
- [25] Z.Ornea, *Europenism și antieuropenism*, în *România literară*, nr.20 / 21 mai 1997.
- [26] Gh.Grigurcu, „*Siberia spiritului*” și *calomnia*, în *România literară*, nr.21/28 mai 1997.
- [27] „Îl las la o parte pe subsemnatul, care, deși frecvent amintit în corpusul anchetei, este evident că nu putea fi invitat, neîncăpând în cadrul magnanimității de <<libertate reală a spiritului>> și de <<respect pentru opinia celuilalt>>”, propus de *Caiete critice*. Recunoaștem că nu ne-am făcut nici un fel de iluzii în această privință” – *Ibidem*.
- [28] *Ibidem*.
- [29] *Ibidem*.
- [30] Ion Simuț, *Ce-i lipsește criticului Gheorghe Grigurcu?* în *România literară*, nr. 33/20 august 1997. Contra-replica celui vizat nu întârzie să apară, desfășurându-se în două ample articole-răspuns intitulate *Pe marginea unui „profil”* – nr.37/17 septembrie și nr.38/24 septembrie 1997.
- [31] Nicolae Manolescu, *Critica revizuirii*, în *România literară*, nr.49 / 10 decembrie 1997.

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Recenzii / Comptes rendus

Nicolae FELECAN, *Între lingvistică și filologie*, Editura Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2011, 477 pag., ISBN 978-606-543-125-6

Lect. univ. dr. Oana Magdalena Cenac
„Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati

Editura clujeană Mega publică în 2011 lucrarea *Între lingvistică și filologie* semnată de cunoscutul lingvist Nicolae Felecan. Volumul cuprinde o selecție a studiilor și articolelor autorului pe care le-a elaborat în decursul carierei sale universitare începută în 1964. Toate aceste lucrări, publicate în diverse reviste de specialitate sau în volumele unor conferințe naționale și/sau internaționale, nu au beneficiat de un tiraj extins și astfel nu au putut fi consultate de publicul interesat alcătuit cu preponderență din lingviști, cercetători, profesori, studenți, într-un cuvânt oameni preocupați de problemele limbii române actuale și nu numai.

Titlul volumului încearcă să acopere cele două ipostaze între care s-a situat activitatea științifică a autorului: cercetarea limbii sub toate aspectele sale (etimologie, gramatică, lexicologie, cultivarea limbii, antroponimie) în cadrul domeniului amplu al filologiei.

Structural, volumul este alcătuit din șase capitole, fiecare dintre acestea reunind articole din domeniile de interes ale autorului.

Astfel, primul capitol intitulat *Etimologii* reunește articole foarte interesante între care pot fi amintite câteva titluri: *Semnificația toponimului „Sprie”, Originea și evoluția semantică a termenului „cuvânt”, Românescul „corp”, moștenit sau neologic?*

Capitolul al doilea încearcă să lămurească o serie de aspecte aduse în atenția publicului de noua gramatică academică: problema complementului posesiv, a unor componente necircumstanțiale (secundar, comparativ, intern, prepozițional) precum și analiza în detaliu a construcțiilor cu prepoziția *de*.

În capitolul al treilea, dedicat problemelor de cultivare a limbii, autorul evidențiază o serie de aspecte privind ortografierea siglelor și abrevierilor, valorile gramaticale și stilistice ale pleonasmului, analiza unor cuvinte și expresii latinești din presa românească etc.

Problemele de lexicologie sunt abordate în capitolul patru, unde sunt analizate o serie de aspecte privind: *Metafora în terminologia meseriilor, Terminologia creștină în limba română, Sacru și profan în structura semantică a unor termeni religioși din limba română, Omonimia și polisemia în sistemul limbii, „Limba de lemn” în lucrări lexicografice ș.a.*

Capitolul cinci, intitulat *Antroponimie*, aduce în discuție cazul structurilor antroponimice și toponimice din Țara Oașului, corelația nume oficial / nume neoficial în Țara Oașului și influența vocativului asupra nominativului la numele de persoană în subdialectul maramureșean.

Ultimul capitol, *Cultura română*, abordează o serie de aspecte între care reținem: *Lucian Blaga, Poemele luminii (ediție tetraglosă), Nichita Stănescu, Încifrarea și descifrarea poeziei, Gheorghe Bulgăr, lexicograf, și nu în ultimul rând Rost, rosti, rostui etc.*

Prin prezentarea obiectivă și echilibrată a tuturor aspectelor avute în vedere de autor, lucrarea lui Nicolae Felecan se dovedește a fi o lectură pe cât de complexă, pe atât de captivantă pentru toți cei preocupați de problemele limbii române, deschizând drumul spre noi lecturi și cercetări în domeniu.

Alina Crihană, *Aspecte ale memorialisticii românești posttotalitare: între pactul autobiografic și pactul cu istoria*, Editura Europlus, Galați, 2011, 207 pag., ISBN 978-606-628-001-3

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Radiografiind, în punctul de plecare, contextul socio-cultural postdecembrist – profund marcat de o criză a memoriei culturale și colective, de bulversarea canoanelor estetice stabilite înainte de 1989 și de tentativele „revizioniste” de demitizare a unor personalități ale scenei literare și culturale postbelice, prin negarea programatică a „rezistenței prin scriitură” – autoarea volumului *Aspecte ale memorialisticii românești posttotalitare: între pactul autobiografic și pactul cu istoria* își asumă, declarat, un demers deopotrivă necesar și recuperator: „Această carte se dorește a fi o analiză, din perspectiva mai multor metode critice, a „povestirilor vieții” publicate de scriitorii postbelici după 1989, în măsură să permită atât radiografierea rolurilor asumate de autori la nivelul topicii imaginarului socio-cultural totalitar și posttotalitar, cât și reliefarea importanței *rezistenței prin estetic* pentru configurarea canonului literar postbelic. Demersul nostru se înscrie în sfera dezbaterilor contemporane asupra „angajamentului” intelectualului în istoria dictaturii, fixându-se asupra tipurilor de poziționare simbolică a scriitorilor în câmpul cultural (inclusiv prin prisma raporturilor cu puterea politică și cu narațiunile legitimize ale acesteia). Vom avea în vedere perspectivele scriitorilor înșiși, ca actori principali pe scena literară a trecutului, dar și a prezentului posttotalitar, raportabile la un context al „uitării forțate” – sub dictatură, apoi la cel actual, al „fragmentării memoriei”.” (*op. cit.*, pp. 11-12)

Pornind de la un corpus format din texte memorialistice, autobiografice și eseistice, publicate, începând din anii '90, de scriitori și critici literari de prestigiu, majoritatea angajați în bătăliile canonice actuale și, în anumite cazuri, puternic afectați de „dinamitarea” miturilor culturale ale trecutului (N. Breban, E. Simion, M. Călinescu, A. Buzura etc.), autoarea își propune o abordare interdisciplinară a „povestirilor vieții” selectate – sprijinindu-se pe un instrumentar teoretico-metodologic tributar sociologiei literaturii, hermeneuticii, poeziei „genurilor biograficului”, dar și mitocriticii, mitanalizei și esteticii receptării – justificată, cu argumente convingătoare, în primul capitol al lucrării.

Sunt citate, aici, studii deja consacrate ale unor cercetători celebri ai genurilor biograficului (Ph. Lejeune, Elisabeth W. Bruss, Jean-Philippe Miraux, Georges May, Georges Gusdorf, Jean Starobinski, Gisèle Mathieu-Castellani, Thomas Clerc, Daniel Madelénat, Sébastien Hubier, Philippe Gasparini, Vincent Colonna, E. Simion etc.), ale filosofilor preocupați de problematica raporturilor dintre istorie, memorie și punerea lor în povestire (îndeosebi Paul Ricoeur), ale „miticienilor” interesați de „topica socio-culturală” a imaginarului și de dinamica miturilor, inclusiv a celor identitare, într-un context dat (G. Durand), ale sociologilor care au cercetat problema „ideologiei biografice” în povestirile vieții (Pierre Bourdieu, Daniel Bertaux etc.) – tot atâtea repere valorice în analiza interdisciplinară asumată în „Cuvântul înainte”.

În cele patru capitole dedicate deopotrivă analizei și interpretării (*Spațiul totalitar și „ficțiunile eului”, Între interpretarea istoriei și ficționalizarea de sine: aspecte ale eseului autobiografic, De la „teroarea istoriei” la „teroarea iluziei” (auto)biografice: scriitorul în oglinzile „cărții vorbite”, Mitologii identitare în memorialistica românească posttotalitară, În fine... lectorul*), autoarea urmărește – așa cum declară de la bun început – atât „particularitățile discursului / proiectului *autobiografic* reperabile în diverse tipuri de scriitură personală”, cât și raporturile dintre istoriile personale și „istoria fabricată de putere, dintre memoria individuală și memoria „programată” de regimul totalitar”, dintre miturile identitare

ale memorialiștilor studiați și miturile politice „de atunci și de acum, dintre trecutul (*istoria*) care circumscrie „spațiul experienței” și prezentul posttotalitar în care se construiește *povestirea* (despre această istorie)” (*op. cit.*, p. 16), fără a neglija rolul lectorului (real și *implicit*) în structurarea „povestirilor vieții”.

Interesul pentru „ideologia [auto]biografică” mai mult sau mai puțin asumată de memorialiștii, autobiografii și eseștii studiați, pentru particularitățile „mito-istoriilor” identitate patente sau latente reperate în textele corpusului și raportate la topica socio-culturală totalitară și posttotalitară, pentru modalitățile prin care se construiesc ipostazele lectorului în scriitura personală ia forma, în capitolele citate, a unor analize pertinente, a căror noutate este dată de deschiderea interdisciplinară, mai puțin prezentă în abordările – fie istorice, fie sociologice, fie tributare exclusiv poeziei genurilor biograficului – cercetătorilor români ai „povestirilor vieții”.

„Luat complice” (pentru a împrumuta termenii autoarei), cititorul volumului „este invitat să descopere” aici, dincolo de analiza povestirilor personale ale unora dintre cei mai importanți scriitori și critici postbelici, o meditație asupra unei lumi a valorilor culturale și literare românești, pe care „abuzurile” actuale ale memoriei ar putea să o condamne la dispariție.

* **Acknowledgement:** This paper is supported by Project SOP HRD - TOP ACADEMIC 76822.

Rezumate / Résumés / Abstracts

Les héroïnes de Fatou Keita : un modèle de détermination

Aboua Kouassi Florence
Université de Cocody -Côte d'Ivoire

Abstract: *In spite of their late entry in the national literary life, the women writers of the Ivory Coast did not remain in margin of the social and political changes. Fatou Keita does not escape this reality so much its novels testify to its time and its company. In this realistic painting of the company, she focusses on the woman. Its heroines appear as rebellious women who try to leave the yoke in which they were placed.*

Key words: *feminine literature, african woman determination, literary history, Ivory Coast*

Sensitivité et sexualité chez Duras dans *L'Amant*

Professeur-Assistant, dr. Amraoui Abdelaziz
Université Cadi Ayyad, Marrakech

Abstract: *Write to Marguerite Duras is a style's exercise. It is a solemn appeal to the fusion of the arts through the medium of language, great unifying disparate elements of the field of art since antiquity. The lover is one of those literary creations where the photo was joined this theory as the absolute picture exists only in the mind of the narrator. Thus begins another year, that of memory and remembrance on the one hand and the gaze of the other. In our article, we will e optical arsenal in the novel after talking about the genesis of the story, pure product of the ekphrasis.*

Key words: *photography, ekphrasis, look, lover, love*

La perspective de la féminité dans la poésie pour enfants chez Elena Farago et Otilia Cazimir

Asist. univ. dr. Marta Albu
Universitatea din Craiova

Abstract: *Looking back, we can speak of a female lyrical journey starting in the nineteenth century - Matilda Cugler-Poni, Veronica Micle, Maria Cunțan, Julia Hasdeu, Elena Văcărescu, Elena Farago, Alice Calugaru, Claudia Millian, Otilia Cazimir, Nina Cassian, Maria Banus, etc. Ana Blandiana - of an active presence in local poetry, deep sensitivity, a wide horizon of knowledge. In this article, our goal is to analyze Elena Farago and Otilia Cazimir works that embodies admirable the concept of femininity, through a complex and vigorous literary creation, a poetry of great sensitivity, from the erotic, the poetry of nature, the poetry of social and intellectualist attitude to literature for children. In their works, we find a diversity of influences that go beyond European literature, we identify that "style of soul", unique ways of creative femininity. Are significant not only the visions of the writers about the idea of femininity, but also their image reflected in the consciousness of contemporaries and posterity.*

Key words: *poetry, femininity, moral, melancholy, tenderness, eroticism.*

Défense et illustration de la féminité dans *Le deuxième sexe* de Simone de Beauvoir

Conf. dr. Carmen Andrei
"Dunărea de Jos" University of Galati

Résumé: *Compagne du philosophe best-seller, J.-P. Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir s'avère l'un des beaux exemples de femmes-écrivains dont l'œuvre provoque de forts retentissements. Son essai de 1949, Le deuxième sexe a provoqué de vifs débats pro et contra non seulement relatifs aux thèses exposées mais aussi à la personne Beauvoir, pour s'être refusé le mariage et la maternité. Le mouvement féministe s'est approprié ce livre comme son texte-manifeste, même si le livre ne finit pas par un appel à la lutte pour changer les mentalités. L'essai aborde témérairement des sujets tabous : la liberté sexuelle, l'accouchement, l'avortement, la condition de la femme-objet, etc. ce qui attire sur son auteure tous les anathèmes. Soixante ans après, l'essai de Beauvoir reste original et unique pour avoir réussi à réécrire une histoire exhaustive de la femme à travers les temps, tout en remettant en question les stéréotypes et les affirmations péremptoires longuement colportées par les penseurs et les anthropologues. Sa tentative de mettre à mal tous des préjugés et d'explorer « les chemins de la liberté de la femme » est au moins révolutionnaire, et le retentissement du livre montre que son auteure pèse profondément*

sur nos idées et nos comportements, notamment pour le fait d'avoir contribué à l'émergence d'une conscience féminine capable de surmonter la fatalité de sa condition, ce qui est, somme toute, le sens même de l'existentialisme.

Mots-clés : *essai, féminisme, existentialisme, stéréotype, autre, mentalité*

Aspecte teoretico-metodologice privind procesul de predare - învățare a problematicei personajului feminin din romanul *Baltagul*

Prof. Marian Antofi

Școala Gimnazială nr. 22 „Dimitrie Cantemir”, Galați

Abstract: *Being very important in the process of pupils' ethical-aesthetic / axiological formation process, Baltagul, Sadoveanu's novel, points out different types of feminine behaviour within the moral-civic education displayed by both a patriarchal and contemporary society. Thus, nowadays didactical methodology will relate the behavioural traits of the feminine protagonist to the teaching process specific to Romanian language and literature discipline.*

Key words: *didactical methods, feminine character, teaching process, moral-civic education.*

Scriitura intimă feminină între memoria recuperatorie și miza identitară

Prof. univ. dr. Simona Antofi

„Dunarea de Jos” University of Galați

Abstract: *Annie Bentoiu's confessing narrative enhances a special type of recollection-focused discourse generated from the point of view of a woman who has proudly passed through the harsh post-war history and will strongly believe that written words are able to save the next generation from the possible – and similar as well – moral and spiritual disaster. The identity restoration objective of such narrative becomes the main point of interest of the author's ethic project through which the woman writer tries to redefine herself along her intimately encounter with her own personal history.*

Key words: *recollection, autobiographic discourse, scriptural identity, authorial ego.*

Feminitatea – complementaritate și / sau contradicție. Glose pe marginea textelor exegetice ale lui Vasile Lovinescu

Drd. Mariana Anton

Colegiul Național „Vasile Alecsandri” Galați

Abstract: *The analysis of the female character, especially in Ion Creangă's tales, is in Vasile Lovinescu's opinion, a genuine means of emphasizing complexity. Gathering many meanings, femininity is first of all the necessary way to accede to the "Big" and "Short mysteries." On the other hand, its presence can often attract counterbalance. Mystical and/or Prophet gifts, can turn into a true measure of the identity crisis that can travel and become masculine in its path. At the edge of the complementary and / or contradiction, the feminine character can be considered a refinement, an ego guide.*

Key words: *feminine, masculine, complementary, spiritual alchemy, symbol, myth, tradition*

Female presence in Romanian Folk Customs

Lect. univ. dr. Valeriu Bălțeanu

“Dunarea de Jos” University of Galați

Abstract: *The analysis of the system of Romanian folk customs may result in discovering the existence of a significant female presence in the field: female characters playing secondary roles; the female procession; the female group; female characters playing main ritual roles. The present paper may represent a landmark for conducting a detailed study in the field; what is also worth remembering is that such a study is currently missing from the specialized bibliography, as male ritual presence predominantly enjoys more attention from researchers.*

Key words: *folk rituals, Romanian folk customs, female actants*

Ipostaze ale feminității în proza lui Vasile Voiculescu

Drd. Marilena Bobîrnilă (Niță)

“Dunarea de Jos” University of Galați

Résumé : *Au fil du temps on a pu identifier des modèles de la féminité spécifiques aux diverses époques historiques. Le modèle de la féminité a beaucoup changé en même temps que l'évolution historique, en temps et*

en espace. En ce qui concerne le fait que dans tous les récits de Vasile Voiculescu l'action se déroule dans un village archétypal, qui n'est pas situé dans l'espace et en temps, on ne peut pas identifier un modèle de féminité spécifique à une certaine époque ou à une certaine vision. Ce qui apparaît dans l'œuvre de Vasile Voiculescu il y a seulement des hypostases de la féminité, comme : la femme comme simple chimère, la femme comme incarnation de l'élément séduisant, la femme comme épouse, la femme comme mère. Tous les personnages qui apparaissent dans l'œuvre de Vasile Voiculescu sont chargés de signification symbolique. Les personnages féminins ne font pas exception de cette règle, sans égard à leur présence dans le texte comme des apparitions réelles ou simplement comme des chimères des autres personnages.

Mots-clés : *féminité, modèles, hypostases, archétypal, signification symbolique.*

Mutații psihologice ale personajului feminin: de la Ana la Polina

Drd. Ramona Buruiană

Colegiul Național „Al. I. Cuza” Galați

Résumé: *De Liviu Rebreanu à Marin Preda, le regard sur les personnages du roman paysan a beaucoup changé. M. Preda considère que ni le paysan roumain ni la paysanne roumaine ne sont ceux décrits par Rebreanu. Ion est instinctuel, Ilie Moromete est réflexif. Si Ana est une victime, Polina se révolte et lutte pour son amour. Pourtant, ce que les deux héroïnes partagent est l'amour vrai, au-delà de la famille, la fortune, la tradition et les préjugés. Ana paraît née sous le signe du malheur, prédestinée à une existence tragique. Polina est forte et, menée par la vengeance et la liberté reçue par l'amour de Birică, réussit à triompher, maîtrisant ainsi « la voix de la terre » - la sur-individualité du premier âge du roman dorique.*

Mots-clés : *victime, amour, préjugés, liberté*

Gender Relationships in Translating Literature for Children

Drd. Cristina Chifane

“Dunărea de Jos” University of Galați/

“Constantin Brâncoveanu” University of Brăila

Résumé : *Notre travail vise à démontrer que la traduction de la littérature pour les enfants développe une vraie relation plus ou moins évidente avec les études de genre. Pour y parvenir, l'accent est mis sur: l'état de la littérature pour les enfants et sa traduction qui a été semblable à celui de la littérature féminine, la même position marginale dans le polysystème littéraire; la plupart des livres pour les enfants ont été signés par des femmes; un sous-genre de la littérature pour les enfants est la fiction narrative pour les filles qui donnent certaines fonctionnalités aux livres dans cette catégorie; la plupart des traducteurs de la littérature pour les enfants sont des femmes et les théoriciens des études de traduction dans la littérature pour les enfants aussi. En plus, le processus de traduction lui-même traite de certaines questions spécifiques aux études de genre: les concepts d'autorité et de responsabilité, les différences grammaticales l'appropriation de la violence, la médiation culturelle ou les relations de pouvoir. Enfin, en explorant l'échange mutuel de livres pour les enfants entre la langue et la culture roumaine et la langue et la culture anglaise, l'œuvre souligne que la recherche en ce qui concerne la littérature pour les enfants de la perspective du genre éclaire le processus de production et réception des traductions littéraires pour les enfants.*

Mots-clés: *la position marginale, l'attitude patriarcale, les stratégies de traduction*

Des projections féminines dans l'espace littéraire et culturel central-européen

Drd . Georgiana Ciobotaru

“Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati

Abstract: *Joseph Roth proves his sympathy as he often empathises with women who are deeply affected by misfortunes like poverty, war and men's betrayal. The First World War destroyed the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and its imperial power, bereaving millions of women and having a negative impact on them. The cycle of 33 articles entitled Le genre féminin comprises excerpts taken from Joseph Roth's complete journalistic work written between 1924-1939, mirroring the writer's keen attachment as a fervent defender of the women renegated by society and wronged by law. Roth's work portrays quite a wide range of women in different places such as streets, night clubs, gipsy neighbourhoods or Berlin's sordid slums. Roth also witnessed the woman's emancipation and was mesmerised at the sight of the pilot woman, the embodiment of the modern woman. Joseph Roth representative gallery of women is also found in works like La Crypte des Capucins or La Marche de Radetzky and the present paper aims at analysing the feminine projections in the Central-European society as well as the literary representations from the Austrian writer's work.*

Key words: *embodiment, feminine projections, gallery, emancipation, genre*

Early Modern Representations of the Feminine Bodily Canon

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Résumé : Cet ouvrage se propose d'expliquer les mentalités, les discours et les pratiques culturelles pré-modernes liés au corps féminin et à l'idée de féminité prescrits par le nouveau canon apparu aux temps pré-modernes et aux valeurs que celui-ci allait représenter. Le canon a été conçu le long de deux axes: le canon médiéval versus le canon pré-moderne, et le canon pré-moderne classique du corps féminin achevé et l'anti-canon. Le corps est analysé par les diverses hypostases dans lesquelles celui-ci est représenté pendant la période pré-moderne et en comparaison avec le Moyen Age : la relation avec l'église, la représentation du corps à travers la mode, les interprétations et les représentations du corps dans l'art et la littérature. On a choisi une approche interdisciplinaire et on a utilisé des ressources tirées de la littérature (les pièces de Shakespeare), de l'histoire de l'art, de l'histoire des idées et des mentalités, de la sociologie qu'on a interprétées du point de vue des études culturelles.

Mots-clés : corps, féminité, canon, anti-canon, représentation

Portraits de la femme dans les poèmes de Dimitrie Bolintineanu

Asist. univ. dr. Ana-Elena Costandache
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Résumé : Notre démarche propose une mise en œuvre de quelques poèmes de Dimitrie Bolintineanu qui imposent des images-portraits des femmes, qui représentent l'éternel féminin. Les portraits surprennent des qualités situées aux antipodes (ange ou démon, jeune innocente ou femme au foyer, femme active ou mélancolique, déesse ou maîtresse, jeune fille ou mère). Les noms des femmes proviennent soit de l'espace roumain (Maria, Dochia, Zina), soit de l'espace oriental (Leili, Fatmé, Esmé, Almelaiur).

Mots-clés : femme(s), symbole(s), portrait(s), modèle, espace roumain, espace oriental.

L'aventure comme possibilité chez les personnages féminins de Marguerite Duras : Un barrage contre le Pacifique

Lect. univ. dr. Alina Crihană
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Résumé : S'inscrivant dans « l'espace autobiographique » (Ph. Lejeune) qui circonscrit tous les écrits de Marguerite Duras, *Un barrage contre le Pacifique* est, à une lecture de surface, un roman réaliste, violemment anticolonialiste. De fait, les aventures des personnages, dont l'authenticité est garantie par l'ancrage tant dans les réalités de l'espace colonial – l'Indochine française – que dans l'histoire personnelle de l'auteure, y sont projetées dans le mythe, à travers une écriture symbolique, hantée par les figures répétitives de la nostalgie des origines (y compris la figure archétypale de la « mère terrible », mais également « nourricière »). Condamnés à une existence tragique, dans un monde clos situé sous l'emprise de la fatalité naturelle (condensée dans le symbole de la grande marée de juillet) et humaine (l'injustice coloniale), les personnages et, en particulier, les femmes se laissent séduire par les fantasmes du bonheur, en substituant à la réalité misère des univers compensatoires, et à l'aventure réelle – l'aventure comme possibilité.

Mots-clés : roman anticolonialiste, parabole, symbole, figures mythiques féminines

Reprezentări ale feminității în *Matca* de Marin Sorescu: Irina – gnoză și dialectică hegeliană

Drd. Elena Luminița Crihană
Colegiul Național „Al. I. Cuza” Galați

Résumé : La pièce *Matca* achève la trilogie „vouée à des personnages de la solitude” dont la „chute” réside dans le repli sur soi-même et dans la recherche de la liberté absolue. Si pour Iona, la thèse stoïque de la réconciliation avec les lois de l'univers trouvait son expression dans le déchargement gnostique de la matérialité, par le truchement de l'éventration, pour le Sacristain, le solipsisme offrait la solution erronée du passage vers la transcendance par le biais d'une création individuelle illusoire – la cathédrale de fumée, dans *Matca*, Irina symbolise l'irruption de la sagesse divine dans l'humain et l'Esprit hégélien en immanence, ayant parachevé la synthèse. L'héroïne s'avère être la représentation de l'archétype maternel dans le sens de Goethe, la Femme, le principe qui tient en balance la vie et la mort, ayant donné du sens à l'existence à travers l'enfantement et ayant sauvé l'humanité de l'anéantissement. Or, ce principe est renforcé par les symboles féminins de l'eau et de l'arbre, autant comme éléments constructifs et aussi conservatoires, en rappelant les renaissances périodiques de la nature. Entrée dans les creux du chêne en tant qu'espace d'une réclusion mystique et d'une concentration de la conscience de soi-même dirigée vers le surgissement dans le monde avec

un but conscient assumé, suite à une évolution, noyée par les eaux en même temps initiatrices et destructives, Irina réussit par sacrifice personnel, l'acte créateur d'une renaissance postdiluvienne de l'humanité purifiée et régénérée en croyance et esprit, en annulant ainsi les associés au thème de la mort dans la littérature de l'aquatique: le complexe de Caron et le complexe d'Ophélie.

Mots-clés : *l'archétype maternel, les symboles féminins, la gnose, la dialectique et l'Esprit hégélien, le complexe de Caron et le complexe d'Ophélie*

Procédés textuels de qualification de la femme dans les poèmes courtois

Lect. univ. dr. Mirela Drăgoi

“Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati

Abstract: *Starting with the 12th century, the courteous society grants the woman with a new role together with the changing of XXXX and of gender relations. This is a deeply enrooted in the historical, social and political background from the „second feudal age and it has an aristocratic and elitist meaning. The woman's newly acquired statute is perfectly illustrated by the collective imaginary of the 12th - 14th centuries and it stands for the main theme of troubadours' literary creation. A brief presentation of several feminine characters from courteous lyrical texts points out the main features of the moral and esthetical doctrine set in medieval France as well as the basic aspects of an authentic and rich art.*

Key words: *courteous lyricism, Middle Ages, feudality, aristocracy, feminine character.*

Être femme sur la scène des hommes : archéologies de l'identité féminine dans *Les Enfers ventriloques* de Sylviane Dupuis

Conf. dr. Liliana Foşalău

Drd. Dana Monah

Universitatea Al. I. Cuza Iaşi

Abstract: *The protagonist of Sylviane Dupuis's play *Les Enfers ventriloques* (2004) is a young dramatist lacking inspiration, who descends into her past in search for her personal identity and in the past of the theatre in search for an artistic identity. Disguised as a man and guided by the Maternal Shadow, the young woman visits the masculine, paternalistic universe of the world's most famous playwrights. Her confrontations with Eschyle, Shakespeare and Brecht, but also with the characters that these authors have created help her assume herself as a writer and find her artistic inspiration.*

This paper aims at interrogating the way in which the triad identity/ femininity/ creation is inscribed into this text which turns the voyage into the one's memory (the personal and the artistic one) into a source of the reinvention of the self, both as a human being and as a creator.

Key words: *identity, femininity, francophone theatre*

“Watercolor Women”: Configuring the Chicana Female Subject

Drd. Maria-Cristina Ghiban (Mocanu)

Universitatea “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” Iasi

Abstract: *Second wave feminism in the United States has brought about new voices of minority communities in the framework of literary studies. Drawing on distinctions among concepts regarding the female experience and on the standpoints of Chicana feminism as both integrative and integral part of postcolonialism, the proposed paper aims at configuring a typology of the female subject in the borderlands. By appealing to a number of literary works by Chicanas, as well as tracing some of the performative aspects of writing “as a Chicana”, the paper formulates a number of instances in which the Chicana female subject is invariably conceptualized (such as *la Virgen, la Malinche, la victima, la soldadera, etc.*), as well as more abstruse ones such as the threatening woman or the incestuous mistress. Furthermore, the analysis shall shed a light on the recurrence of these conceptualized female subjects within the Chicana literary environment by reasoning that the later justifies both the writers' intentionality and their commitment to the feminist views of the movement.*

Key words: *Chicana, feminism, female subject, performativity, intentionality*

Ursula Le Guin and the Left Hand of Feminism

Conf. dr. Petru Iamandi

“Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati

Abstract: *Feminist SF starts with Ursula Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), a novel about a planet on which sexuality is constructed completely differently and where androgyny is the norm. Unaffected by the gender characteristics which shape human lives, this society without fixed gender strikes the reader by its*

harmony and lack of aggression, which makes it far superior to our own. The book is one of the first serious analyses of gender to be attempted in all literature.

Key words: science fiction, feminism, gender, androgyny, utopia

Personajul feminin – între abordarea literară și concretizările psiho-pedagogice

Prof. univ. dr. Nicolae Ioana
“Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati

Résumé: *En prolongeant toute une série de stéréotypes interprétatives mises en circulation par certaines exégèses critiques « consacrées » ou « canoniques », les démarches didactiques actuelles visant l'analyse des héroïnes de la littérature roumaine témoignent souvent l'asservissement à des préjugés de genre, dont l'effet est la minimisation de la complexité des personnages féminins. Dans la mesure où ces approches didactiques sont censées transmettre certaines valeurs intellectuelles, morales et esthétiques incarnées dans les figures féminines analysées et susceptibles de donner naissance à des modèles comportementaux parmi les jeunes générations, une nouvelle perspective sur le problème en question s'avère non seulement féconde du point de vue critique, mais aussi nécessaire du point de vue psychopédagogique.*

Mots-clés: littérature roumaine, personnages féminins, stéréotypes critiques, approches didactiques

Wide Sargasso Sea: Telling the Untold

Drd. Anca Manea
Drd. Monica Eftimie
“Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati

Résumé : *Le roman La prisonnière des Sargasses (Jean Rhys) anticipe l'action de Jane Eyre en donnant la parole et une identité au personnage précédemment marginalisé, l'épouse de Monsieur Rochester, Antoinette. On peut dire que, de cette façon, l'auteur crée simultanément un passé pour Antoinette et un avenir pour Jane. La prisonnière des Sargasses devient, donc, l'un des nombreux romans qui re-discutent les aspects présentés dans Jane Eyre, en élargissant beaucoup son champ d'interprétation et en soulignant les possibilités infinies de l'interpréter. La présente démarche se propose d'analyser Jean Rhys, sa double fonction comme lecteur du roman canonique Jane Eyre et comme auteur du roman La prisonnière des Sargasses ainsi que l'effet de son propre roman sur les lecteurs des romans discutés.*

Key words: author, text, reader, character, woman writer

Ofensiva feminității în cultura europeană a secolului al XX-lea

Drd. Doina Marcu Matei
Colegiul Național „Costache Negri” din Galați

Abstract: *Women have always been objects of pleasure in a men's world. Obligated for millenia to shut up and listen, in the last century they succeeded to overcome their limitations. They became heads of state, prime-ministers, journalists, scientists, writers, artists, sportswomen. The offensive of femininity demanded of them a double struggle: with their own weaknesses and with the mistrust of a misogynous world. Strong personalities emerged from the shadows of anonymity and wrote everlasting pages of history and world culture. They were victorious because they wanted to avenge the thousands of women condemned to obedience and because behind any strong man there is always a strong woman.*

Key words: femininity, European culture, feminine roles, cultural models

Symbols of Femininity in John Fowles's *A Maggot*

Asist. univ. drd. Cristina Mălinoiu (Pătrașcu)
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Résumé: *A Maggot, le dernier roman de John Fowles, nous propose une des représentations les plus fascinantes de la féminité de toute son oeuvre. A côté de Rebecca, le personnage féminin principal de ce roman qui est une de plus complexes héroïnes de Fowles, une autre figure féminine impressionnante est La Dame en Argent (The Lady in Silver) qui est représentée comme une trinité féminine personnifiant la Sagesse de l'Univers ou Magna Mater. Beaucoup d'autres symbols de la féminité (comme la description du paysage en termes féminins ou l'utilisation métaphorique des fleurs) se trouvent au long du roman et invitent le lecteur a décoder leur sens pour gagner son droit d'accès au mystérieux 'espace' féminin imaginé par Fowles.*

Mots-clés: féminité, le Moi, anima, Magna Mater, paysage feminisé, le symbolisme des flowers, mandala

Teatrul politic cu teză și proba timpului: Lucia Demetrius

Prof. univ. dr. Doinița Milea
“Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati

Résumé : *La mémoire des œuvres permet la reconstitution de l'horizon d'attente en rapport avec lequel l'œuvre a été créée et reçue. Les textes montrent avec quelle attention ou avec quelle passion leurs auteurs répondent à des implications et à des circonstances politiques. En même temps, l'univers du lecteur actuel, dont les attentes ont changé, permet une juste mise en balance de l'idée du succès de l'œuvre, grâce à l'adhérence au discours officiel, et l'idée de la valeur, en elle-même. Telle est la situation actuelle des écrivains dont les œuvres reflètent les clichés et les thèses du réalisme socialiste. Les pièces de théâtre de Lucia Demetrius peuvent-elles résister à l'épreuve du temps?*

Mots-clés : *discours officiel, thèses du réalisme socialiste, l'épreuve du temps*

La femme et le livre à la fin du Moyen Age

Lect. univ. dr. Christina Andreea Mitariu
Universitatea Creștină „Dimitrie Cantemir”, Timișoara

Zusammenfassung: *In Zusammenhang mit dem Ende des Mittelalters, ist die Entstehung einer weiblichen Autorin in künstlerischen und intellektuellen Landschaft noch über wiegendmännlich, nicht nur sehr wichtig, sondern auch warnend. Die Rolle der Frau verändertsich, von einem bloßem Objekt der Lust in einem gefürchteten Konkurrent der Männer. Die Tatsache, das König Karl den V. wählte Christine de Pizan als seine persönlichen Biographin beweist, das sie über das intellektuelle Niveau der Männer gestiegen ist. Das Buch besetzt von nun an eine Spitzenposition im kollektiven Bewusst sein. Sobald die Stufe der Vertrautheit der Rezeptoren mit der Literatur in Mundart über windenwurde, nimmt das Buch selbst eine andere Dimension. Es ist wichtig zu betonen, dass die Beziehung Frau-Buchwird von diesem Moment an berechtigt und lebensfähig.*

Schlüsselwörter: *Buch, Autorin, Mittelalter, Darstellung, Volkssprache*

The Feminine Ideal in John Fowles' Vision

Drd. Iulia-Alina Mocanu
“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași

Résumé: *Les romans postmodernes de John Fowles apportent un éclairage différent sur la problématique controversée du rôle de la femme dans le cadre du processus complexe d'individuation souffert par les protagonistes mâles. Le lecteur est confronté non plus aux aspects anciens du rapport homme-femme mais à une nouvelle perspective concernant l'idéal féminin. Chez John Fowles le rôle de la femme acquiert une importance capitale et représente la source intime de toutes les métamorphoses auxquelles sont soumis les mâles. L'idéal féminin est illustré par l'écrivain sous la forme de plusieurs hypostases, s'embellissant de nouvelles nuances avec chaque représentation. Il apparaît sous le visage d'une muse – Erato- qui interfère avec la configuration du texte, il est incarné dans la personne d'une femme mystérieuse – Sarah Woodruff – qui dévoile un des côtés secrets de la féminité, il est à retrouver dans une lumière bipolaire, voire le cas de Julie/June dans Godgame ou il s'enrichit d'un rôle rédempteur comme dans le cas de Rebecca Lee du roman A Maggot.*

Mots-clés : *métamorphose, Anima, individuation, féminité, rôle rédempteur*

Negotiating Femininity and Nation in Three Plays of the Irish National Theatre Movement

Conf. dr. Ioana Mohor-Ivan
“Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati

Abstract: *One common locus for the Irish dramatic tradition has proved to be the almost obsessive preoccupation of finding the proper formulae and images through which national identity can be projected. Due to Ireland's vexed colonial past, and the ensuing nationalist decolonization politics, the Irish theatrical scene has often been marred by the interplay of diverse ideologies aimed at defining an authentic Irish identity, which have also subsumed representations of femininity, symbolically merging womanhood and nation within the collective mentality. Through the broad lens of cultural studies, but focusing the angle in keeping with feminist and reception theories, the paper aims to investigate the dramatic productions of the Irish theatrical movement prior to the foundation of the Abbey Theatre, in order to highlight the close interconnection between cultural image and its scenic projection. The chosen corpus of plays includes three key texts in this tradition (W. B. Yeats's *The Countess Cathleen* and *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, and J. M. Synge's *In the Shadow of the Glen*), which allows us to underscore the dynamics of the relationship between the three participants in the theatrical act –*

subject matter, author and audience –, and demonstrate how the representations of femininity and nation are negotiated by the latter on the pre-Abbey Irish stage.

Key words: Irish theatre, identity, cultural representation, gender roles, reception

Stereotyped Images of Women on the Moroccan Public Space: Ideological implications

Dr. Touria Nakkouch

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Résumé : *L'usage idéologique du stéréotype – entant qu'idée fixe, fiction idéologique- est encore plus courant dans le domaine de la représentation visuelle qu'il ne l'est ailleurs. Les stéréotypes qui perpétuent le plus dangereusement certains aprioris du comportement social sont générés par les mass média et constituent le trait principal du discours non-égalitaire, que ce dernier soit sexiste, colonial ou propagandiste. La présente communication interpelle le premier, et se veut une analyse interdisciplinaire de deux images stéréotypées de la femme marocaine en milieu urbain, images représentatives du discours sexiste sur la féminité, la masculinité et les relations genre au Maroc. Elle étudie également les retombées idéologiques des deux images en question : l'adolescente aux cheveux blonds et à la silhouette svelte, et la femme voilée. Ma démarche se situe au carrefour de la théorie culturelle sur la représentation (Michel Foucault 1984, 1988), la presse écrite marocaine (Miss, Citadine, Femme Actuelle), la recherche anthropologique (Leila Hessini 1990, Ghaleb Bensheikh 2005) et la littérature féminine (Fatema Mernissi 1997,2003).*

Mots-clés : *féminité, modèles sociaux, représentation, idéologie, fondamentalisme, différence*

Le personnage d'Odette. Proust et la peinture

Dottoranda di ricerca Maria Elisabetta Nieddu

Università degli Studi di Cagliari

Abstract: *Within a large analysis, which studied the painting references in the A la Recherche du Temps Perdu by Marcel Proust, we have found an important issue about the analysis of the character of Odette through the painting references concerning her. If some of literature has studied for years which real persons are hid in the fictitious characters in the Recherche (Painter, 1966), we have studied which characters of the art history and which artists have been used by Proust to describe his feminine characters. The usage of art by Proust is functional to the narration, it is not limited to the pure description, but it has often a role of moral elevation of the character concerned in the artistic similitude. Then we must not be surprised if the artist who has been often associated to Odette is the Botticelli of the Venere and even of the Madonna Del Magnificat. The art has been used to give a valid certificate of morality to the beauty of Odette. Just when Swann sees her resemblance with Sephora, la figlia di Jetro, Botticelli's character, he begins to feel something for Odette. Proust, through the eyes of Charles Swann, holds Odette of a moral purity that only art can give to her.*

Key words: *painting, Marcel Proust, Botticelli, woman, beauty, image*

Feminist Theories on Technology

Lect. univ. dr. Daniela Petroșel

“Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava

Abstract: *This paper looks at the ways in which Feminist thinking combines with cultural theories on technology. Starting from the viewpoint according to which technology causes cultural and social mutations, we are looking to outline a working theory regarding the role of technology in creating or modifying gender identity. From a feminist point of view, the consequences of technology are numerous and, sometimes, paradoxical: as a product of scientific thinking, technology is often associated to masculinity. To that extent, women were considered technophobes. Still, technology played a decisive role in women emancipation (home appliances), in enhancing gender differences (plastic surgery), or even in annulling them (hybrid identity in posthuman theories).*

Key words: *feminism, technology, gender identity, emancipation, gender stereotypes*

Sasha Comaneshțeanu – the Portrait of a Romanian Lady

Prof. univ. dr. Floriana Popescu

“Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati

Résumé: *Ce papier a comme sujet la brève présentation de Sacha Comaneshțeanu, un personnage clef de la littérature roumaine et une de ses premières héroïnes romanesques. Bien aimée par son entourage tout comme par les lecteurs du roman, elle est une des figures proéminentes du roman La vie à la campagne, écrit par Duiliu*

Zamfirescu, une des personnalités remarquables du commencement du vingtième siècle roumain. Docteur es loi, avocat, procureur, et puis engagé dans le service de la diplomatie roumaine, Zamfirescu a contribué à la culture roumaine pas seulement avec ses œuvres originaux (nouvelles et romans, volumes des poèmes et même une pièce de théâtre aussi que des discours politiques) mais aussi avec des traductions de la littérature italienne en roumain. Des tous ses mérites on y mentionne celui d'avoir été le seul auteur roumain qui a synchronise son œuvre littéraire avec les tendances européennes de son époque.

Mots-clés: roman fleuve, chronique, féminité, fresque sociale

Discursive Practices and Constructions of Womanhood

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Résumé: *Les discours sont des pratiques sociales comportant une dimension politique, qui concernent des faits et des actions, des objets et des êtres et qui, par conséquence, reflètent les divers aspects de la réalité. Cependant, la réalité change toujours, et, de la même façon, les discours changent eux-mêmes. L'objectif de cet article est d'analyser les côtés sociaux et politiques de la (re)construction de la réalité par des pratiques discursives et en même temps le rapport entre la réalité et le discours, entendu comme relation dialectique entre les deux (relation qui implique l'influence de la réalité sur le discours et la modification de la réalité par le discours). Cet article se propose aussi d'analyser le rôle des pratiques discursives dans l'exercice des rapports de pouvoir impliqués par tout échange verbal, avec une attention particulière accordée à la manipulation. Dans ce contexte, l'accent sera mis sur la construction de la féminité dans le film *Occident*, de Cristian Mungiu. L'approche choisie est celle de l'Analyse Critique du Discours (Critical Discourse Analysis). Cette approche combinée permet de mettre en valeur les éléments caractéristiques du système social roumain (par cela on comprend les attitudes, les valeurs, les représentations mentales, les idéologies, l'éducation, le contexte culturel et historique concernant le statut de la femme) et aussi la manière dont tous ces éléments fonctionnent dans le processus de la communication interculturelle.*

Mots-clés: discours, féminité, (re)construction

Recycling the Past. Women on Screen

Prof. univ. dr. Michaela Praisler
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Résumé: *Au long des années, les constructions sociales féminines ont constitué le sujet favori des romanciers et des producteurs de films. Les uns les ont reflétées, les autres les ont narrées de manière réfractaire, mais ils ont tous ajouté une critique plus ou moins nette de la femme en tant que sous-culture de l'entier patriarcal. D'un roman à l'autre et du livre au grand écran, les images de la féminité se sont constamment métamorphosées, aspect que ce travail se propose de dévoiler. Les cas soumis à l'analyse sont ceux qui sont présentés dans *Orgueil* et *préjugés*, remanié dans *Le Journal de Bridget Jones*, et *Madame Dalloway*, repris dans *Les Heures*. Sapant la stabilité du canon, dont la centralité a imposé une nouvelle zone marginale aux femmes, les stratégies exhibées dans le texte et le film expriment de la colère et invitent à considérer la politique qui domine sa composante stylistique.*

Mots-clés: femmes, représentation, intertexte, roman, film

Squaw, Mistress or Princess? – Stereotypical Representations of Native American Women in Hollywood Narratives

Emilia Mădălina Prodan, PhD candidate
"Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași

Abstract: *This paper investigates mainstream visual representations of Native American women in several films belonging to different historical periods: John Ford's *My Darling Clementine* (1946) and *The Searchers* (1956), Delmer Daves's *Broken Arrow* (1950), Terrence Malick's *The New World* (2005), Disney's animation *Pocahontas* (1995), as well as James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009). The narratives within the dominant discourse have stereotypically delineated the American Indian women as the "squaw", a household drudge and beast of burden; the seductive (mixed-blood) mistress; or the Indian princess, a modest, but exotically beautiful maiden, usually the chief's daughter. My aim will be threefold: firstly, the analysis of the prevalence of these clichés in films produced at certain points in time. Second, the paper will focus on gender construction, as well as on the male-female/white-Indian dynamics and on the issue of miscegenation. Finally, the paper will analyze the construction of gender and ethnicity in the contemporary American mainstream cinema.*

Key words: film, Native American, gender, (mis)representation, miscegenation

Feminitatea în capcana istoriei și a destinului

Drd. Livia Silvia Rău (Marcu)
„Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati

Abstract: *The totalitarian dystopian speech is situated in an aesthetic and ideological index committed to multiple analysis, which enable an ethic, political and contradictory moral canvas. Writer George Balaita codifies the totalitarian mechanism's critique, and the novel "The world in two days" (1975) represents a projection of the myth of power. The creation becomes a chronotop, a parable of contemporary man's dramatism, expressing the communication crisis, fear, terror, alienation. Beyond the myth of power, which despises the personal legend, Romanian space proposes hypostasis of femininity, which prove that existence is a palimpsest type of story, in which tragical destinies are consumed.*

Key words: *the myth of power, existential chronotop*

Les figures féminines dans *Des rêves et des assassins* de Malika Mokeddem

Djoher Sadoun
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Abstract: *The woman holds a special place in Algerian society. It is primarily grandmother, mother, sister and wife ... the statutes that confer regarding rights, legitimacy, in the sense that it is possible to rub the woman saw that the right promulgated by social or religious law. This is what was for long the relationships between men and women, because in these conservative societies, women represent the honor of the tribe, its purity is the guarantor and that of his family, his home. This is why it is subject to so many restrictions and confinements. The rise of religious radicalism and fundamentalism, saw appear new forms of deprivation that relate exclusively women. Considered a reincarnation of the devil, because of the temptations it brings, it will be relegated to a lower than man, lord in every sense of the dark creature whose only value lies in its offspring status. But the problem in the advent of the "new religion" is Algerian society itself, because in these 90 years, women from Independence or born at that time took an important place in nation building. Fighter weapons equally alongside their brothers in the bush, their status in the early years of freedom, has changed dramatically. They are not only mothers or sisters but above all women. They invest the street, privileged rights and working to build a democratic country where they think they have the place they deserve. The women we will paint a picture in the following pages, meet these criteria, but some have another "advantage", that of being in these times of hatred facing Algeria, abroad and more particularly in France. These are women who, for the most part, followed their husbands during the war, or who immigrated after independence in search of a better life for themselves and their children.*

Mots-clés : *enfant, mère, identité, femme, société, intégrisme, famille*

Portrait de l'écrivain amoureux : Marin Preda vu par Aurora Cornu

Asist. univ. drd. Raluca Cristina Sarău
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Abstract: *The paper aims at analyzing the conversations between Eugen Simion and Aurora Cornu, published in The portrait of the enamoured writer. Marin Preda. It is a dialogue between two writers, but more than that, it is a dialogue between a good friend and literary critic and once the wife of another writer, Marin Preda, regarded in different times and from different perspectives. The conversations are eventually transformed into a book, but nevertheless manage to retain the particularities of speech: the improvisation, intended and unintended repetitions, fragmented presentations, discontinuity and side topics. The result proves to be nothing less than remarkable: the dialogue captures the intellectual society of the 1950s and also adds interesting elements to the portrait of such a well known and spoken about writer.*

Key words: *Marin Preda, portrait, conversation, literary perspective*

La dualité identitaire dans *L'Enfant de sable* et *La Nuit sacrée* de Tahar Ben Jelloun

Dr. Rajaa Al-Tamimi Subhi
Université Lumière – Lyon 2, France

Abstract: *L'Enfant de Sable and La Nuit Sacrée, two texts in which Tahar Ben Jelloun wavers between reality and fiction. A father takes an intolerable and criminal decision, motivated by a sense of divine injustice: he diverts the existing laws for the sole purpose of creating an illusion, according to his desire for a son. His eighth daughter will be declared and presented as a male named Ahmed. We will analyze the impact of this dual identity. At first we try to see how to find a balanced identity that could reconcile the carnal and the spiritual when it is divided between two images of the body, while in the second part,*

we will examine how this division and the transition of each other through processes of self ambiguous multiplier. In the third part, we will see that the quest for that person is no longer that of a man or a woman, but is to find someone to whom to speak. She found an identity because it is not finally recognized as male or female but as a human being.

Mots-clés : Tahar Ben Jelloun, dualité identitaire, La Nuit Sacrée, L'Enfant de sable, le dédoublement, la recherche de l'identité féminine, personnages féminins.

Feminism in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*

**PhD Assistant Lecturer Oana Iuliana Ilinca Ștefănescu
University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Craiova**

Abstract: The aim of the present study is to analyse Virginia Woolf's contribution to feminism in her two works "Mrs. Dalloway" (1925) and "To the lighthouse"(1927). The study presents the very way in which she transformed herself as a distinguished feminist woman writer in her treatment of woman's helpless situation. She used her novels in order to show women from her period the way in which they could obtain meaning in life and realize their own identities. She unveiled, thus, through her novels the causes of women's oppression and gave solutions and gave solutions for their problems.

Key words: feminism, confusion, novels, woman

French Feminist Awareness

Drd. Florin Toma

„Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati

Abstract: My intention in producing this study is to provide a compendium of information about women writers and the world they lived in. Space limitations forced me select only a few. My first decision was to limit the women authors included to those writers who lived and worked mainly in France. In terms of my methodological approach, I asked the reader to focus on the development of a "feminist" consciousness, on each writer's awareness of the ways in which her gender shaped her outlook and her opportunities, and to reflect on the way categorizations, structures, and terms used to describe literary works have been defined for women and the ways in which women writers have responded to these definitions.

Key words: French women, French literature, feminism, feminist consciousness

Polivalența termenilor mitofolclorici: ipostaze ale feminității

Lect. univ. dr. Valeriu Bălțeanu

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Résumé : L'étude du lexique populaire du point de vue ethnolinguistique permet une meilleure connaissance de la spiritualité traditionnelle. L'analyse ethnolinguistique en met en évidence des aspects tels que: l'étymologie, les évolutions sémantiques, les dérivés des termes étudiés. C'est dans une telle perspective qu'on se situe dans notre travail, à travers l'analyse de certains personnages féminins du folklore roumain.

Mots-clés : personnages féminins, folklore, approche ethnolinguistique

A Case Study in Translation Practice: Male/vs/Female Authorship

Conf. dr. Gabriela Dima

„Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati

Abstract: The domain delineated by the theory and practice of translation constitutes an endless source of interdisciplinary approaches, beginning with a typological analysis of the text to be translated and continuing with considering translation a product, and more recently a result of not only the translator's personality and gender, but also of the social, ideological and cultural influences reflected both in the source and target text.

Key words: translation, descriptive text, gender analysis, meaning, equivalence

Impactul educațional al modelelor comportamentale în formarea resursei umane

Associate Professor PhD Simona Marin

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Abstract: In the context of rethinking education system is imperative that the initial training, to develop a methodological framework that provides legal and functional prerequisite skills certification specific to education. The paradigms of change is marked by the tendency of the European Union to bring a common educational efforts, to create the European Higher Education Area, offers the opportunity of education to

restructure and adapt initial and continuing training of teachers in rethinking, reformulation, re-institutionalized components. From this perspective, the professionalization of teaching involves a redefinition of the powers of nature competences which is based on effective teaching practices, including, apart from knowledge and skills and schemes of thinking/reasoning, interpretation, creation of hypotheses, the anticipation of decision.

Key words: professionalization of teaching, knowledge and skills, key competences

Sex-role behavior of adult women between traditional and modern

**Lecturer, PhD. Sandrina Mindu
“Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati**

Abstract: *In recent years, within the social system, there is a tendency to merge and delete behavioral differences between genders, sometimes creating ambiguity and unease in the assumption of socially-expected gender roles. The multitude of statutes that the contemporary woman has leads to an accumulation of roles that overlap and for which special efforts are needed in order to balance them which can often consume its psychological resources. So, overlapping roles of women in contemporary social system generates the emergence of new behavioral patterns and hence new feminine typologies.*

Key words: feminine typologies, sex-role behavior, the traditional models of femininity.

New approaches and educational policies in human resources training in education

**Associate Professor PhD Simona Marin
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Abstract: *This article recommends the extension of the issue addressed in other papers devoted to a similar theme, this time focusing on a long-awaited and necessary implementation of a grantable credit system in the professional teaching development, as well as methods for approved recognition through certification and validation of skills acquired through various forms of training and conversion. The main objective of this paper is to illustrate the tenets according to which the methodology and axiological frame of the whole process is structured, as well as some actual forms and applications in educational practice.*

Key words: teaching career, professional credit transfer system, the paradigm of the competences approach.

Sur le décodage de l'image identitaire dans les manuels de FLE

**Conf. dr. Angelica Vâlcu
“Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati**

Résumé : *L'image identitaire qui circule dans les manuels de FLE découle de l'imaginaire patrimonial engendré par un contexte, une histoire, etc.... et combine plusieurs aspects : genre, ethnicité, religion, origines sociales et familiales ou expériences stigmatisantes. Cette image peut être produite soit par les sociétés elles-mêmes (autoreprésentation / stéréotype), soit par le regard des autres (hétéro représentation/stéréotype) et se forge dans la relation à l'Autre. Notre communication vise à étudier la relation entre les textes du manuel de FLE et les référents socioculturels qui déterminent le décodage de l'image de l'Autre dans ce type de textes.*

Mots-clés : identité, identité culturelle, image identitaire, stéréotype

Curriculum-ul scolar, cadru pentru manifestarea stereotipurilor de gen

**Asist. univ. drd. Rodica Țocu
„Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati**

Abstract: *This article examines the ways in which curriculum is influenced, and influence at his turn, gender-based stereotypes. It will discuss the research on sex-role stereotyping in the curriculum, with emphasis on the development of gender equity in education.*

Key words: curriculum, educational system, gender stereotype, gender identity,

Simbolul – modalitate critică de (re)configurare a universului autohton

**Drd. Mariana Anton
Colegiul Național “Vasile Alecsandri” Galați**

Abstract: *The symbol engages a variety of categories, many notions and also considerable meanings, which should be judged as an act of deciphering culture, opening various interpretative ways. In the local cultural space, the temptation of the analysis focused around the symbol belongs to numerous researchers who care about mythical-archetypal senses, literary criticism, but and also to philosophers or folklorists. An important role in diachronic concerns values the demonstrations on Romanian spiritual existence. Although most of them*

there are not true mythical exegesis or mythical-archetypal analysis, numerous Romanian writings appeals to the symbolic approach, which reveals true concerns for original national values, no matter of the point of hermeneutic point of starts: theological, philosophical, religious or metaphysical.

Key words: *symbol, mythical exegesis, mythical-archetypal analysis, cultural space*

Literature on its own

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Abstract: *In the past half-century or so, the form, structure, status and conception of literature have been subjected to all sorts of pressures, a quite a number of changes occurred at various levels, adding up to something that might be called a literary (or cultural, rather) paradigm shift, which, in our view, may be only a superficial one.*

Key words: *critical reading, critical thinking, literature*

Grimasele tranzitoriului posttotalitarist în „povestea” piesei *Desfacerea gunoaielor*, de Marin Sorescu

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Résumé : *La critique littéraire actuelle est sur le terrain de lutte des évaluations des résultats de la « bataille culturelle » postmoderniste dont Marin Sorescu a eu l'intuition dès 1971, année où il avait conçu la pièce « L'abrogation des ordures », qu'il ne publie qu'en 1995, grâce à l'universalité et à l'actualité des motifs circonscrits au thème de l'immixtion du politique dans la vie de l'écrivain. Cette parodie à l'adresse du système communiste pourri (action claire de dissidence, idée ignorée par les critiques !) exprime, d'autre part, la satire amère envers la crise (néo)moderniste subjuguée de nouveau par l'ingérence du politique dans l'époque post-totalitaire, quand l'auteur publie cette pièce ayant un statut incertain (rejetée par la censure communiste ? expression du refoulement ? « littérature de tiroir » ?). L'auteur aperçoit aussi les formes de début de la globalisation (la culture de consommation, les cultures alternatives, l'autoréférentialité, la littérature du prosaïque etc.) régurgitées par le mécanisme postmoderniste qui reprend les « vieilles ordures » - les thèmes consacrées et distribue les « nouvelles ordures », européennes, à une déplorable Roumanie second-hand, qui attend, résignée, à la queue de l'histoire, échouant l'acclimatation des « eucalyptus » littéraires (qui, que Dieu nous en garde !, pourraient même changer notre climat...) et le miracle du complètement du cercle de la solidarité des écrivains. Cela ne peut plus arriver, car l'Enfant (terrible) aux velléités de dirigeant bouscule le Retraité du canon (soupçonné collaborateur de la Securitate) et les habitants de la Rue du Nouveau Demi-cercle et ceux de la Rue du Vieux Demi-cercle se réunissent pour « avancer en ralentissant » dans la grande place, où pullule la « queue aux ordures », cirque organisé sur le principe du « donner-prendre », du jeu à la « bâza » et celui à l'hasard « comptage par multiple de trois », sous un temps qui court et qui échappe à la compréhension...*

Mots-clés : *transition, révisions, anticommunisme, post-décembriste, parodie, post-modernisme, crise, La distribution (répartition) des ordures*

Mistificare și demistificare în discursul critic postdecembrist: strategii identitare în presa culturală post-totalitară

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Abstract: *The aim at creating a coherent identity image of the cultural Romanians rooted in the iconic paradigm mirroring the specificity of the 're-born' post-totalitarian literature, in other words the collective drive for setting up a valid identity offer functional at the level of inter-national European dynamics, has displayed different debates on the use of critical strategies and criteria appropriate for this type of endeavour. The interchangeable identities, the displacement of the aesthetic relation humanness – History turning the torturer into the tortured are the main key-points of the 'east-ethic' distortion in which the political interplay de-forms the aesthetic function of the reading act, actually more interested in finding 'the guilt' than in analyzing valid fictional constructs now downplayed by the 'moralizing' praxis. In the context of the 'identity reconstruction' drive, the 'post-traumatic memory' displays double significance: it marks dichotomously either the anachronic overbidding of the 'culprit writer' myth or the selection of the 'aesthetically resistant' works facing the 'inquisitory' assault, as the articles published in România literară Revue during 1996-1997 display.*

Key words: *post-December critical discourse, identity practices, national literature, România literară Revue*