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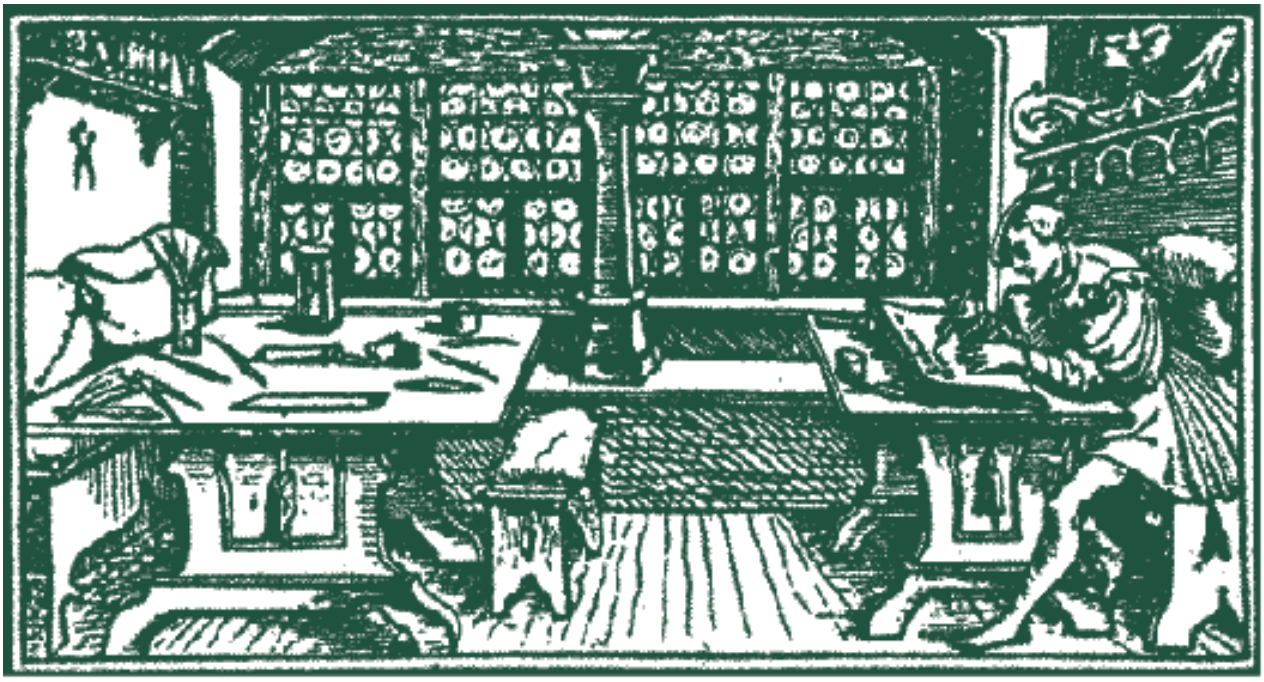

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ZIONISM AND GENDER AWARENESS: A CASE STUDY OF JEWISH WOMEN IN PRE-WAR ROMANIA

BIANCA DORIS BRETAN[1]

ABSTRACT. ***Zionism and Gender Awareness: A Case Study of Jewish Women in Pre-War Romania.*** One goal of the current study was to briefly examine the gender issue in Zionism, a topic connected to historical and social changes that took place in society in early modern times. The study makes references to the role that Jewish women had in the Eastern European society with a closer look on Romania. Additionally, the study focused on the relationship between gender and Zionism and the women's issue within an ideology that was alleged predominantly male. Specifically, the article examined the presence of women's voices in the Romanian Zionist press in an attempt to explore whether they were marginal or not.

Key words*: Zionism, gender, press, emancipation.*

REZUMAT. ***Sionism şi conştiinţa de gen: cazul femeilor evreice din România antebelică***. Articolul de faţă îşi propune să arunce o privire de ansamblu asupra modului în care s-au manifestat femeile evreice în cadrul presei sioniste de limbă română în perioada 1897-1938. Se abordează noţiunea de gen în cadrul ideologiei sioniste şi dezvoltarea temelor feministe în cadrul acesteia. De asemenea se urmăresc rolurile îndeplinite de femei în cadrul societăţii evreieşti din acele timpuri, aruncând o privire asupra şcolarizării lor şi a prezenţei lor în societate.

Cuvinte cheie*: sionism, gen, feminism, presă, emancipare.*

The formative years of Zionism overlap in a way with the rise of feminism and gender consciousness in Eastern Europe, a geographical area that faced modernity confronted with a multitude of social and ethnical conflicts. It was the same decade when most European Jews realized that their

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traditional culture was undergoing a process of transformation (Hyman, 1997:51). The historical facts responsible for that situation were the following (Bretan 2010:7):

- The accelerated industrial development;
- The restrictive governmental policies that aimed at the exclusion of Jews from key sectors of economy;
- Secularization of Jewish society and erosion of traditional culture;
- The greater demand for fashioning a new type of Jewish woman.

One possible source of the shift that women experienced in mentality was the exposure of young girls to secular culture in public schools. By the beginning of the twentieth century traditional east European Jews continued to provide a classical Torah education for their sons. However, the same families sent their daughters to public primary schools where functioned a secular curriculum (Hyman, 1997:54). The results were sometimes unexpected: many young women became more prone to assimilation while some others became aware of the career opportunities they had by pursuing their studies. An example that illustrates the first situation is provided by the number of Jewish converted women in Krakow: 259 from 1887 to 1900 compared to 120 men in the same period of time (Hyman, 1997:74). In the meantime, a large number of women became more and more eager to take initiative economically and to continue their studies. In this respect, we have some autobiographies that recorded their efforts to acquire secondary and higher education (Hyman, 1997:75-76). Besides these literary samples we have statistics that keep account of female students and show that at the University of Paris in the decade before the First World War Russian and Romanian women, most of them Jewish, made up more than one-third of all the female students (Hyman, 1997:77).

The large number of students coming from Romania is a result of the ambivalent attitude that authorities had in that period of time regarding the access of the Jewish population to education. To be more specific we have to delimitate between two phases: the first one overlaps with the birth of a new, modern state when the authorities acknowledged the importance of public instruction and passed a law (1864) that stipulated primary education as compulsory. Jewish people were encouraged to send their children to study together with the Romanian ones. This initiative was well received and resulted in an unexpected growth in the number of Jewish pupils in public schools (Iancu, 1996:219):

Table 1.

The number of Jewish pupils in Romanian public schools from 1878 to 1883

Schools	1878-1879	1882-1883
Primary public schools		
Boys	1432	2950
Girls	1793	2741

The interpretation of the figures from the table leads us in two directions: on one hand they are an indicator of the remarkable interest that Jewish people had in education (even though it was a secular alternative) and on the other they give us a clue about the number of women who attended public schools.

Unfortunately this trend was dramatically slowed down around the year 1893 when the Romanian government decided to intervene abruptly in order to limit the access of Jewish population to learning. "The Jewish invasion of schools" was perceived in the long run as a menace for the emergent labor market where the Romanians were supposed not to have competitors. Legislation was changed in order to allow "numerus clausus" and the modifications affected primary schools as well as higher education.

That particular situation obliged the Jewish community to react and to come up with a solution that would give hope to future generations: the Jewish school. This new institution developed gradually, encompassing three distinct stages: 1851-1855, 1870-1895 and 1893-1914 (Rotman, 1999:95-97). Starting with 1893 this new body had been considered as a priority for the Jewish community that did not spare any financial, pedagogical or technical efforts to put that aspiration into practice (Rotman, 1999:388).

It is also remarkable that the new education system did not forget to involve girls and young women in learning: in the last decade of the nineteenth century a public network of schools for girls was opened in urban areas as well as in small towns (Bucharest, Focsani, Botosani, Piatra Neamt, Moinesti, Panciu). That trend was encouraged and sustained by the Jewish Colonization Association, an organization that financially supported education throughout Europe (Rotman, 1999:144).

Taking into consideration the facts and figures presented above we can draw the conclusion that the modern paradigm in education that accepted women as participants in the process reshaped both women's role in society and the economic pattern that considered men as traditional breadwinners. An outcome was the phenomenon of female labor in the marketplace where women from lower classes began to work outside the home earning money for their families. We can also say that interest in learning and detachment from some of the traditional values of Jewish women from Romania and Eastern Europe represented a fertile background for emancipation and rise of feminism.

Another factor that provided women with an unexpected opportunity for expression was the various political movements that offered them a chance to activism and leadership. Young Jewish women who had broken with traditional life were attracted by the range of parties that sought to improve the status and condition of the Jews and transform society: they could join the Labor Party-the Bund or affiliate with any of the different branches of the

Zionist movement (Hyman, 1997:77). Of all these options, politicized Jewish women gravitated to the Bund, apparently because it offered leadership positions (Hyman, 1997:77).

The lack of women leadership in Zionism puts into question the issue of gender in Zionism. If we want to measure the degree of involvement we have to take into consideration two factors: the dynamics of recruitment and the number of women that succeeded to be in key positions. For the first criterion we can collect data from documents and the press of the time. According to these there was a very low participation rate of women to the First Zionist Congress which took place in 1897: only a dozen women among its 250 delegates (Berkowitz, 1993:19). However, wives and daughters of delegates were allowed to attend the sessions (Vital, 1975:356-357) and that might be interpreted as part of their traditional role, shadowing men. Another hint into that direction is the printing of two pamphlets targeting female readers in order to involve them in the movement. However, their function was limited to the usual one as wives and mothers (Hyman, 1997: 146).

Zionism was an ideology that promoted the image of the physically fit male, a prototype of the new Jew that returned to work the land. Women were not excluded (in theory Zionism promised equality between the sexes) but their representation was that of sustainers of the Jewish family, cultural contributors to the spiritual rebirth of the Jewish people (Hyman, 1997: 146). That image was supported by remarkable Zionist personalities such as Herzl, Buber, Sokolow. In addition, women were facing unfriendly attitudes from the Orthodox Mizrachi movement that was reluctant to recognize women as possible leaders and from the *halutzim* (male pioneers prepared to immigrate) who treated their female counterparts as maids (Hyman, 1997: 80). These factors provide an explanation for Zionism's inability to promote women to the leadership ranks.

However, things began to change after the World War I and the explanation takes us in divergent directions. On the one hand there were external influences: at that time women became familiarized with the activities and achievement of feminist movements across Europe and considered that ideology as the best representation of their need to obtain social equality (Hyman, 1997: 80). On the other hand, the importance of labor Zionism increased and that fact played an important role in the revaluation of gender: it was time to come with a new feminine ideal. As immigration to Palestine accelerated there was a growing need for working force and women were finally accepted to work beside men. Women's role grew in importance during the formative years of myth-making in the 1920s and 1930s when educational institutions from Palestine created heroes to inspire Jewish youth on "the Land" and in Diaspora: the Labor movement encouraged the creation of a corpus of heroic

literature that presented pioneers as modern versions of Biblical heroes (Berg, 2001:135). An example is the collection of memoirs gathered by the Council of Women Workers devoted exclusively to women pioneers that contains testimonies of endurance in the face of hardships, including those created by some of the women's male colleagues (Berg, 2001:135). This was also the moment when female voices found expression through the popular media.

The press is an important source of data regarding the presence and the involvement of Jewish women from Romania in Zionism. This way is revealed a significant piece of information about the degree and the nature of participation to political activities and events compared with the situation in Eastern Europe where Jewish male leadership did not give the same attention to women as their male counterparts in the West (Hyman, 1997:81).

First, the purpose of the Romanian-Jewish press was to express the natural desire of an entire community to obtain its political and social emancipation (the first newspaper was "Israelitul Român" in 1857). Latter on, the press developed and improved year after year forming its own audience of readers and offering a new perspective to hundreds of Romanian Jews who had the opportunity to choose among four different trends: pro emancipation, socialist, pro assimilation and Zionist.

In its early years the Zionist movement in Romania was influenced by the other trends that existed in the Jewish community such as the constant struggle for emancipation or socialism. Newspapers and magazines entirely dedicated to political Zionism were issued only from the fall of 1897. The event that decisively made a contribution in that direction was the First Zionist Congress in Basle. The personality who played a crucial role in funding the Zionist press in Romania, was Karpel Lippe, delegate to the Congress.

Characteristic for the period of time between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century is the large number of newspapers and magazines that were published (10 newspapers were printed between 1897-1901), most of them ceasing to exist after a few issues (the first on this list is "Darabana" with only one issue). The explanation can be the lack of experience of some of the editors and the fact that the Jewish readers sometimes preferred different ideologically oriented newspapers. Then, in the interwar period Zionism became stronger and the press supporting it gained in importance and improved in quality.

Generally, the topics discussed in the Zionist press were:

- propaganda articles about the Zionist ideology, the activity performed by Zionist groups in Romania and abroad, reports from Zionist Congresses
- cultural issues: translations of important Zionist works (Herzl's "The Jewish State", Pinsker's "Autoemancipation"), literary works (poetry, sketches, short stories) by Jewish authors, articles on cultural events concerning the Jewish community.

- the permanent fight against the danger of assimilation ("Rãsãritul") or emigration ("Viitorul").
- the gender issue: the roles of women in Zionism
- reports from Palestine

In the first decade of the twentieth century the Zionist press was by far the most developed journalistic sector probably as a result of the strong impact that Zionism had with the Jews in Romania. Here we can find valuable information about the roles ascribed to women in the Romanian sector of the Zionist movement. The articles could be grouped into two sections according to the time when they were issued: from 1897 to 1914 and from 1918 to 1930. From the first phase the current article will analyze the following five newspapers: *Dorul Sionului, Macabeul, Ahawat Zion, Curierul Zionului, Stindardul and Zion. Dorul Sionului* was published in Bucharest on December 23 1899. Although the ambition of its editors was to make it a powerful Zionist voice, the magazine had only two issues. *Macabeul* (September 1900 - January 1901) was the last unsuccessful attempt of the Zionist press in Bucharest at the turn of the century with few pages but quite good reports on the Zionist movement in Romania and abroad. It had only 8 issues. *Ahavat Sion* was published in Galaţi (1898). The newspaper touches again the problem of the relationship between Hovevei Zion and the political Zionism. An issue is dedicated to the Zionist Conference in Galaţi (April 5-6 1898), an event with extremely important results: for the first time there was established one central leadership of the movement. *Curierul Zionului* from Bucharest (1904) was a weekly newspaper with propagandistic aims: its purpose was to provide information and update the readers with the latest news in Zionism. *Stindardul* (1883) was issued in Galati and like the large majority of the first Zionist papers it was concerned mostly with propaganda. The same is true for *Zion* (16 November 1897), issued in Brăila and considered the first political Zionist newspaper.

In the first number of *Dorul Sionului*[2] there was one anonymous article that brought into public's attention the revaluation of gender roles at the turn of the century. "Women should no longer be obedient and submissive to men. They should be companions and advisors of men in taking decisions." The article described Jewish women as active and eager to be part of the changes that took place in society, explaining that way the interest showed in "the rebirth of the Jewish people" represented by Zionism. In *Macabeul*[3] a short article entitled "A Call to Our Sisters" aimed to invite all interested Jewish women from Paşcani to join the Zionist cause: "Zionists be a model to your brothers who will be impressed by your determination and therefore be more eager to participate to our cause". The article was obviously written for propaganda purposes and

[2] D.S. April 10, 1900.
[3] M. November 20, 1900.

proved the efforts made in order to involve more women into Zionist activities. *Ahawat Zion*[4] pleaded for the union of the different groups that women had within the Zionist movement in Romania. Zionism was compared to a child that needed a mother and Jewish women needed to be ready to take that role and be a vehicle for spreading Hebrew to younger generations. *Curierul Zionului*[5] was in favor of women playing an active role in Zionism and gave examples from western Europe. According to the article, Romania made efforts to be part of that trend by organizing sections exclusively ran by women. Husbands who tried to restrict their wives' rights to participate to Zionist meetings were heavily criticized, the article underlining this way that hardships and hurdles for women should not have come from their male counterparts. In the newspaper *Zion*[6] there was an article plea for the involvement of the young women from Iasi in the Zionist movement; they are invited to join a group called "Benoth Zion" and to spread the Zionist ideology. The same type of article could be found in *Stindardul*[7] a newspaper that aimed to encourage and support emigration to Israel. The appeal was addressed to the association of Jewish women in Iasi in an attempt to involve it in fundraising activities for the first two colonies established by Jewish immigrants coming from Romania (Rosh Pinah and Samarin).

In conclusion, the first phase of development of the Zionist press contained some articles that were meant to sensitize the female readers to the Zionist cause, to familiarize them with the new ideology and to encourage them to take active roles as educators, fund-raisers and collaborators of men in that enterprise. In the second stage of development, part of the Zionist press paid special attention to the feminine public: it is the case of the long-standing "Ştiri din lumea evreiască". Its editors decided to print a supplement, a magazine of distinction called "The Jewish woman" with articles devoted to various topics of interest for that particular segment of readers: highlights from everyday life in Palestine with reports about the contribution that women had to the common effort of building a new country by working hard in agriculture and industry. The aim was to give an example and a model of social involvement of women as factors of progress. It was not forgotten the traditional role of woman as an educator, this time not only at home but also in communities, in kindergartens and schools seen as "fundamental institutions for the healthy development of children" (F.E.:1937). An authentic feminist article could be read in the same magazine: "Women and Zionism" by Helene Hanna Thon, reporting from Palestine (F.E.:1937). The author analyzed the two terms in the title commenting on the strong impact that Zionism had on women's lives by giving them a new cultural and spiritual perspective and support in front of the evils that affected

[4] A.Z. nr. 17, 1898.
[5] C.Z. January, 1904.
[6] Z. nr.6, 1897.
[7] ST. March 7, 1883.

society at that time: assimilation and anti-Semitism. Zionism was seen as a step forward in the direction of reshaping a new type of woman, independent, career oriented and aware of her social importance. Therefore, we can say that in the second period (starting from 1918 to 1930) there was a shift in the approach that the press had towards feminism: propaganda articles and calls to action were gradually replaced by more topic consistent articles addressed to educated female readers that were able to make their own life decisions.

As a general conclusion it can be said that Zionism offered to Jewish women in Romania opportunities for political activism that not only transformed their private lives but also allow them to participate to the common effort of building a national identity and transforming society in the meantime. Although female voices were "never at the very centre of the Zionist narrative they constituted a significant part of it"[8] contributing discreetly but decisively to history-making.

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NADINE GORDIMER: WRITING BEYOND APARTHEID

LUIZA CARAIVAN[1]

ABSTRACT. ***Nadine Gordimer: Writing Beyond Apartheid*.** The paper analyses the new perspectives in Nadine Gordimer's writings, focusing on her post-Apartheid works. The notions of home, location versus relocation, cultural diversity and the issue of the otherness are examined as they represent significant factors in redefining South Africa and in repositioning its multicultural and multiracial communities on the universal map of the 21st century world (seen as a global village).

Keywords*: globalization, ecology, illness, multiculturalism, otherness, relocation, South Africa, violence*

REZUMAT. ***Nadine Gordimer: scriitura dincolo de perioada apartheid*.** Lucrarea analizează noile perspective prezentate de Nadine Gordimer în perioada post-apartheid. Sunt examinate noţiunile de relocare, diversitate culturală, violenţă şi problemele ridicate de prezenţa „Celuilalt", deoarece ele reprezintă factorii cheie în definirea şi înţelegerea comunităţilor multiculturale şi multirasiale din Africa de Sud.

Cuvinte cheie*: Africa de Sud, alteritate, globalizare, ecologie, maladie, multiculturalism, relocare, violenţă*

In her latest volume of short stories Nadine Gordimer states that "The world of others talked back from what The World was set to make of those others – its own image" (2007:105). In fact, this is the answer expected by many critics who were reluctant about the South African writer's ability to adapt to change (the end of the Apartheid era) and who assumed that the 'old guard', the influential "white quartet" (Kellas 2004) formed of J. M. Coetzee, Nadine Gordimer, André Brink and Breyten Breytenbach would turn to

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journalism. In this respect, Gordimer underlines the changed status of South Africa which is no longer at the margin of the empire but at its centre: "That other world that was the world is no longer the world. My country is the world, whole, a synthesis" (Gordimer 1996:134). Since the end of the Apartheid era, South Africans have been reshaping their country's national identity in the light of global events that write universal history, offering citizens the chance to escape the confines of their country and bring in or take out elements that are essential when determining the specific attributes of a community in the process of globalization. As a matter of fact, South Africa mixes various 'ingredients' from North and South America, Europe and Africa in order "to become that delicious hybrid of West and South" (Temple-Thurston 1999:xi). Having grown up in the post-colonial South Africa and having lived through the various stages of its Apartheid regime, Nadine Gordimer has analysed what Apartheid, this extreme form of governing based on the principles of 'divide and rule' and 'separate development', did to people.

After the abolition of Apartheid laws, her protest was directed towards the attacks of both white and black military groups on civil population, towards the violence that has situated South African cities on top of the list of towns having the highest crime rate in the world. The novels *None to Accompany Me* (1994), *The House Gun* (1998) and *The Pickup* (2001) belong to what Gordimer calls the 'post-Apartheid literature of transition'. The first two novels concentrate on violence and its consequences in the new South Africa, whereas *The Pickup* illustrates Gordimer's change of focus from the African to the Arabian world introducing new themes and issues (such as displacement, economic exile, and alienation) along with the ones used in her previous works (migration, freedom, identity, 'the Self and the Other' theme). The novel *Get a Life* (2005) appears to deal with the lives of comfortably situated characters surviving various threats to middle-class life: disease, loneliness, and marital discord. Nevertheless, the novel also explores and reflects on environmental issues in South Africa, viewed as a small part of the 'global village', narrating the place and its history while examining a white middle-class family that has to isolate one of its members.

In this 2005 novel, Nadine Gordimer examines how the healthy caregivers structure their relationships with the ill, using as a specific example cancer and AIDS. Concepts such as fear (of radiation and isolation expecting a cure), body self-image, illness and family relationships, disease and health, nature, memory and survival are used in *Get a Life*. The threat to the young man's body posed by an aggressive group of cells is employed to delineate the threat posed to South African territories: the exploitation of its resources, at any cost. Gordimer examines the body scarred and cured by treatment for serious diseases, and seeks the answer to the question about the possibility

and necessity to depict the sick body in order to render illness and health experiences tangible. The body is invested with the capacity to heal itself with the help of extreme treatment (radiation) so that it may return to normality and order may be restored. The disease is eliminated by therapy and the positive outcome, in Gordimer's case, is not only the healed body but also the multiple transformations that actually take place when human bodies and medical treatments converge.

Many analysts of Gordimer's work have noticed her concern with the new South African social and political context correlated with the new world order imposed by the concept of globalisation. Ileana Dimitriu (2006:159-160) has noted Gordimer's engagement in the 1990s with the concept of 'civil imaginary'. The critic also underlines Gordimer's new preoccupation with private life "as not being inextricably linked to the public domain", which "can be seen in retrospect, to signal a kind of liberation from the burden of excessive social responsibility within large historical events". The South African writer resists the temptation "to turn, or return, to the imaginative and literary circles of the northern hemisphere". In turn, J. M. Coetzee (2007:255) has remarked that Gordimer "has been exercised by the question of her own place, present and future, in history" since the beginning of her career. Instead of replacing Apartheid themes and subject matters in the new South Africa, post-Apartheid writers have more social than political issues to solve, more races and ethnicities to tolerate and integrate in this new post-Apartheid, postcolonial, multicultural and multiracial era. The new world order has imposed a new approach to social issues and Gordimer has complied with the new rules, especially because they were amended as she has predicted they would be "the nurture of our writers, our literature, is a priority which should not create for us a closed-shop African 'world literature', a cultural exclusivity in place of the exclusion, even post-colonial, that has kept us in an ante-room of self-styled 'world literatures'" (Gordimer 2000:28). Thus, we can read about multiculturalism in post-Apartheid South Africa, the status of the writer, the banalisation of violence due to mass-media coverage, the reconciliation with the violent past, the implications of economic and cultural globalization, the struggle against illness, HIV/ AIDS, sexual liberation, globalization and loss of cultural and national identity, displacement, economic exile and migration. Leon De Kock, who proclaimed the death of South African literature in his essay 'Does South African Literature Still Exist? Or: South African Literature is Dead, Long Live South African Literature' (2005:76), considers that Gordimer has made a "remarkable move outwards, from closely observed turns" of South Africa's social and historical aspects, manifesting interest in "how issues of national identity are traversed by the surges of global and transnational flows, means and potentialities".

The process of othering has been employed to identify differences and to distance the Self from the Other which may cause exclusion or marginalization from the group. The result may be a creation of stereotypical images, or multi-generational hatred and violence. Yet, acknowledging otherness has more positive than negative outcomes: national identities are preserved, the 'silent' and effaced Other has made claims to speak (women, natives, minorities, deviants, subalterns are able to speak for themselves) reorganizing the world order in radical ways. Michael Chapman (2008:9) underlines 'the value of difference': "Difference, or *différance* (as defined by Derrida), does not confirm division, but transforms 'othering' from negative to positive premise". On the same note, Pia Brînzeu (2008:25) notices that difference becomes possible when combining "involvement with detachment", when adapting "the images of otherness to suit self-images, completing the more frequent stereotypes of the natives with a new set of attitudes brought from abroad". The articulation of otherness is possible "in concordance with social or minority perspectives, with the on-going negotiations that seek to authorize cultural hybridities, with the persistence and/or re-invention of tradition, the restaging of the past, and the consensual or conflictual engagements of cultural difference" (27).

According to Abdul R. JanMohamed, "genuine and thorough comprehension of Otherness is possible only if the self can somehow negate or at least severely bracket the values, assumptions and ideologies of his culture" (1985:84). He maintains that such a negation or 'bracketing' is impossible due to the fact that individuals are culturally formed and they cannot negate themselves. Although narratives rarely change the way the Other is perceived, they often attract attention to the ones that are ignored, silenced or exploited. Literature is the means to designate the Other, to find the answer to the question who the Other is nowadays. Ania Loomba (1998:243) considers that there is an interest in recovering the Other ("recovering subaltern voices") and in reconciling it with the Self because we are "invested in changing power relations". Thus, if subaltern voices are to be heard and listened to "we need to uncover the multiplicity of narratives that were hidden by the grand narratives, but we still need to think about how the former are woven together" (241).

The issues of otherness and victimization are related to exile, as Gordimer listens to the 'voice' of the Other, due to the fact that exiles and immigrants find it difficult to make themselves heard. The means they use in order to communicate their message within the *target-community* include becoming the victim, getting involved in violent acts, or fighting peacefully as political activists. As any postcolonial society, South Africa requires the creation of a space for the memories of immigrants and exiles, which must be integrated in the collective memory and identity of the community. Nadine Gordimer presents four categories of exiles and migrants who are faced with relocation

due to economic, social or political reasons. The first one is represented by white immigrants into South Africa, who regard the host-community as unstable and fragmented, but do not have the choice of return. Their former homeland is no longer welcoming due to political or financial insecurity and their only inheritance is their mother tongue. The fear of forever leaving behind their original homes is attenuated by the ability to preserve their mother tongue and religion in order to maintain some kind of contact with their past and individual memories.

The second category is that of exiles and emigrants forced out of South Africa, who cannot adapt to their condition of outlanders. They experience exile as hostile, threatening and stifling and prefer to isolate themselves, especially when they learn that they are not allowed to return home.

The third category is that of the returnees who feel responsible for the future of South Africa and "bring the burdens and insights of exile" (Gready 1994:512) back to their country, as they are permitted to repatriate. The fourth category is that of pseudo-exiles, South Africans who are forced to find refuge within the borders of their own country, as they consider their home lost both in space and time. Hybrid spaces that may be created by the host-community encourage them to think Other-wise, although they display reluctance to cooperate with the others. The pseudo-exiles (Caraivan 2003:140) are South Africans who are forced to find refuge within the borders of their own country. Their world is defined by relocation, loneliness and nostalgia, as their 'imagined country' is placed out of the context of reality. Communication is hindered either by their inability to speak the same language or by their incapacity to understand the rules of what they consider the marginal Others and adapt to their world.

As an interpreter of life in South Africa and its conscience, Nadine Gordimer's protest was directed towards the attacks of both white and black military groups on civil population, towards the violence that has put South African cities on top of the list of towns having the highest crime rate in the world. The novels *None to Accompany Me*, *The House Gun* and some of her post-Apartheid short stories concentrate on violence and its consequences in the new South Africa, on the transformation of people in the transition towards reconciliation and tolerance. This new South Africa is not a romantic place: there are deaths by violence, corruption, political rivalries. Coming to terms with social change and questions of culpability, connivance, and compromise are the main preoccupations of South African writers at the beginning of a new stage of national literature. Transition, by nature, implies entering a crisis, and every crisis requires self-examination. Gordimer presents families in crisis, as microcosms, to expose South Africa in state of transition and quandary: she is expressing the questions that trouble her people concerning

their position within society and as a society, their beliefs and their acceptance of the past. Another core theme in post-Apartheid South African literature is the deconstruction of the term 'post-Apartheid' and a consideration of the subsequent social conditions of this period. Some scholars compare it to the postcolonial period of other "liberated" nations, in which people have control of the election process, but there are still unequal economic conditions and oppressive class structures, which lead to riots and random acts of violence.

At the very beginning of the post-Apartheid period, Gordimer draws her readers and critics' attention to a poem written by South African Mongane Wally Serote, and she uses one of his lines as a title for her essay: "How shall we look at each other then?" (Gordimer 2000:140). She reflects on the issue of the impossibility of forgiving and forgetting violence, as it would be a "complete reversal" of the order imposed upon South African nations for centuries. Conquest, colonialism, Apartheid, all "avatars of racism", made violence "the South African way of life".

In another essay, "Hanging on a Sunrise", Gordimer (1996:28) criticizes the so-called 'peace in South Africa', where white are cocooned in their ignorance while blacks suffer "daily the cruelty and violence associated with wars".

Moreover, in her novels, Gordimer emphasizes the switch from one type of violence to another during the post-Apartheid period, and one example is to be found in the novel *None to Accompany Me*. "The effects of Apartheid are felt in *None to Accompany Me* in the violence which is always a threat at the periphery of the characters' lives" (Şora 2000:95). The main character - a white lawyer, Vera Stark - is attacked when she is travelling together with one of her black apprentices. Gordimer accentuates the fact that colour does not matter for the attackers. The "post-Apartheid obsession with crime" (Şora 2000:103) is reflected both in outside and inside events, the reference point being Vera Stark's life. Another account is of an attack at a party in the Suburbs and another has Vera Stark as a central character: after a short visit to her black colleague's village, where his wife and children live, Vera and Oupa (her colleague) are attacked and robbed by armed men. They feel like "castaways in the immensity of the sky" (Gordimer 1995:197) and they describe the whole scene as "tears and blood", the same words that could be applied to any war-like conflict.

The House Gun presents a possible outcome when a gun is "lying around in the living-room, like a house cat" (Gordimer 1998:271), the consequences of violence and the strong ties that it builds among people at a time when 'something terrible happened'. The opening line of the novel announces the South Africans' concern with the terrible things that take place in their country during its transformation: guilt, punishment, confession and violence, to name just a few of the issues faced by the 'rainbow nation'. Gordimer depicts the vain attempts of a society to shield itself from the violence within, which was forced into everyone's life.

Moreover, in her novels, Gordimer emphasizes the switch from one type of violence to another during the post-Apartheid period, and one example is to be found in the novel *None to Accompany Me*. "The effects of Apartheid are felt in *None to Accompany Me* in the violence which is always a threat at the periphery of the characters' lives" (Şora 2000:95). The main character - a white lawyer, Vera Stark - is attacked when she is travelling together with one of her black apprentices. Gordimer accentuates the fact that colour does not matter for the attackers. The "post-Apartheid obsession with crime" (Şora 2000:103) is reflected both in outside and inside events, the reference point being Vera Stark's life. Another account is of an attack at a party in the Suburbs and another has Vera Stark as a central character: after a short visit to her black colleague's village, where his wife and children live, Vera and Oupa (her colleague) are attacked and robbed by armed men. They feel like "castaways in the immensity of the sky" (Gordimer 1995:197) and they describe the whole scene as "tears and blood", the same words that could be applied to any war-like conflict.

In *Get a Life*, medical and ecological issues are brought forward instead of Gordimer's favourite theme - racial politics. Paul Bannerman, the white ecologist in South Africa, one of the main characters, is diagnosed with papillary carcinoma of the thyroid at the age of 35 and has to undergo surgery to have his malignant thyroid gland removed. Four weeks after the surgery, he is treated with radioactive iodine to obliterate any residual cancerous cells. Paul remains radioactive for 16 days and has to avoid any contact with his family - the healthy Self. From this moment on, he starts to consider himself as a present-day leper, a diseased citizen of that other country represented by illness.

The lives mentioned in the title are those of the Bannermans, a white family confronting a series of personal crisis. Lyndsay and Adrian, a successful couple in their 60s, and their son, Paul, with his wife, Berenice, are focused from the moment when their lives are changed by the fact that Paul develops serious cancer requiring intense radiation treatment, forcing him to quarantine himself at his parents' house. These South African characters become the means for exploring the word 'life', and they all contribute with a different meaning to it. The significance of life for every character in the novel is mostly personal. As a result, the political involvement that used to be dominant in Gordimer's earlier fiction seems peripheral. Illness, death, sexual and emotional betrayal, the attempt to bring into being a child, adoption of a sick child, all these topics add "crucial layers of significance to personal choice", whereas political activity that used to contribute to the shaping of personal identity, "represents choices already made, settled into" (Vital 2008:92).

Paul Bannerman works on environmental issues and the irony is that he is being cured by the same kind of science that he is trying to stop in South Africa. His main project at the time he is diagnosed with cancer is fighting

against a nuclear power plant in an ecologically protected area. The ecologist speaks against highways and dams that would permanently damage major ecological systems and transform rural life. When he becomes radioactive, he perceives the impact of radiation both on a large scale – the fragile South African environment – and on the miniature ecosystem of his family. Moreover, South Africa is the representative microcosm of the complex structure that is the Earth. Thus, a form of cancer that takes over a man's body, a man who is concerned with the health of his country provides Gordimer with the opportunity to draw attention to global politics.

In essence, the individual health crisis parallels a family crisis and the threat that South Africa faces: exploitation of its resources and disregard for its people and environment. Two of Paul's black colleagues - Derek and Thapelo - are also rejecting any development that could threaten rural areas, and, in an ideal world, they would struggle to find another job instead of the well-paid one that implies the exploitation of the nation's natural and human resources. Gordimer's activists are involved in three different projects (opposing the development of a pebble-bed nuclear reactor, the dams in the Okavango Delta, and the Pondoland national toll road and mining scheme) and regard their work as having broad-based social consequences. Paul and his fellow activists have strong connections with their social circle and, although they oppose the Australian mining company's projects, they are considering various international agencies (including those that use culture for profit) as an opportunity to raise funds. In her 2005 novel *Get a Life*, Gordimer revisits the theme of the vulnerable Other connecting violence and disease and underlining that the consequences of the two violent nuclear attacks over Japan in the 1945 were felt decades after, when "they [the Japanese] have had to make 'ordinary' the presence of children born, generations after the light greater than a thousand suns, with a limb or some faculty of the brain missing" (Gordimer 2005:67). In her opinion, violence and disease are interrelated:

> The direct of all threats in the world's collective fear – beyond terrorism, suicide bombings, introduction of deadly viruses, fatal chemical substances in innocent packaging, Mad Cow disease – is still 'nuclear capability'. Another catch-all: the possession as natural resources, in a country, of certain primary elements and the ability to mine and refine these for its own nuclear armament or for sale to that of others. (Gordimer 2005:99)

To conclude, post-Apartheid literature has manifested its capacity to rewrite and reinvent new identities, new stories that have aroused profound interest and continue to generate curiousness, defining the individual as part of the collective and mapping new trajectories to explore. Rita Barnard (2007:4) observes that "despite the fact that two South African writers have

been awarded the Nobel Prize, South African literature is still in some ways an emerging field of inquiry, and one that continues to require redefinition in view of the changed circumstances in the country".

Njabulo Ndebele (1992:436) in his 1986 essay "The Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Some New Writings in South Africa", considers that South African authors "have a penchant for the spectacular", for the dramatic presentation of the injustices of the Apartheid system. He suggests that they should "rediscover the ordinary," by focusing more on the details of the everyday lives of the South African people. They should turn away from the "crude and too political" writings (440) and thus, produce a type of literature that can "break down the barriers of the obvious in order to reveal new possibilities of understanding and action" (446). Nadine Gordimer has presented both sides of the story: the spectacular and the ordinary, focusing both on the political, racial and social aspects of South African life and on various expressions of ordinary life, thus, paralleling microcosm and macrocosm.

Stephen Clingman (1986:2) observes that Gordimer faces the impossibility of writing a history of the whole South African society, and this is the reason why she has created works that have "responded to the whole history of her society". Gordimer is a 'profoundly' historical writer, mainly because historical relevance gives her work its "consciousness of history". When Gordimer contextualizes South African experiences she uncovers "the radical historicality of South African existence" (1986:18).

The new South Africa has more social than political issues to solve, more races and ethnicities to tolerate and integrate in this new post-Apartheid, postcolonial, multicultural and multiracial era. On different occasions, Gordimer has quoted Flaubert's observation "I have always tried to live in an ivory tower" and she has always added her own incisive comments: "the poached tusks of elephants, the profits of exploitation of an African resource, a fit symbol of tranquillity and comfort gained, anywhere and everywhere in the world, by the plunder of the lives of others" (Suresh Roberts 2005:14), demonstrating Gordimer's concern with the South African communities and everyday life and her lifetime belief that writers should perceive every local event as having a global impact.

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GENDER INFLUENCES IN DORIS LESSING'S *THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK*

ELISABETA SIMONA CATANĂ[1]

ABSTRACT. ***Gender Influences in Doris Lessing's The Golden Notebook.*** The essay focuses on the feminine gender power of shaping the main character's particular vision upon the world and upon literary writing in a postmodernist context. The hair-splitting manner of writing specific to a feminine author such as Doris Lessing, the feminist discourse defining the main character's identity, the feminine capacity to express the abstract essence of the world through symbols will be focused on in this essay.

Keywords: *feminine gender, consciousness, language, dream, identity, world, feeling, vision, parody.*

REZUMAT. ***Influenţe de gen în Carnetul auriu de Doris Lessing***. Lucrarea evidenţiază capacitatea genului feminin al personajului principal de a contura viziunea acestuia asupra lumii şi asupra scrierii literare într-un context postmodernist. Lucrarea va puncta maniera de realizare a unei opere literare prin accentul pe detaliu, specific în opera lui Doris Lessing, capacitatea discursului feminist de a defini identitatea personajului feminin principal, capacitatea autorului feminin de a prezenta esenţa abstractă a lumii prin simboluri.

Cuvinte cheie: *genul feminin, conştiinţa, limbajul, visul, identitatea, lumea, sentimentul, viziunea, parodia.*

Introduction

Analysing Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* and its theme of the feminine consciousness in search for the perfect match and for the perfect word to reveal its deep-going concerns and inner truth, this essay lays emphasis on the novelist's subtle technique of self-conscious writing marked by gender influences

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and haunted by the Postmodernist crisis of language and values. The essay shows that the author's concern with the progress of women's writing and thought in the literary, social and political world, as well as the author's concern with the feminine gender split between its natural aspiration to a perfect match and a desperate attempt to cope with a cold, tough world of compromised moral values, lay the groundwork for a literary style pertaining to a professional feminine psychologist in search for the perfect word to express her deepest states of mind and acknowledged truth. The narrator, Anna Wulf, a successful novelist, a divorced mother going through various sexual experiences and love affairs in search for the perfect match, keeps five *Notebooks* which echo in terms of style and thematic concerns and which investigate the world through an open dialogue with her various interlocutors and lovers. We witness a self-conscious narrator who investigates her own manner of writing and literary concerns and who evinces the following ideas: recognizing and repeating the same pattern of things in the world – the idea that "There's nothing new under the sun" (Lessing 10); experiencing a crisis of language and human values; the feminine gender conducting a never ending search for the perfect match for a meaningful existence.

The Golden Notebook is a well-organized, cyclical novel consisting of five essays entitled *Free Women*, which are third person narrative, and five *Notebooks – The Black Notebook*, *The Red Notebook*, *The Yellow Notebook*, *The Blue Notebook* and *The Golden Notebook*, which are first person narrative. Each of the first four essays entitled *Free Women* is followed by fragments from *The Black Notebook*, *The Red Notebook*, *The Yellow Notebook*, *The Blue Notebook*. After the fourth recurrence of these four *Notebook* fragments, we read *The Golden Notebook* and the fifth essay, *Free Women*, which the novel ends with. The well-planned, careful organization of the novel, its big length – 650 pages – as well as its feminist discourse stand for the women's bent for order and for a hair-splitting manner of investigation. The novel is a mixture of diary and short stories replete with minute details regarding Molly and Anna's present social circumstances, their social life and sexual experiences, their political beliefs, their tormenting thoughts and concerns. It is a fragmented postmodernist novel whose author enters her creation to explain her literary intentions, making allusions to other literary works in order to support her vision on language, life, sexuality and literary creation.

In Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*, the feminine gender reflects the feminine power to keep control of the world through a nostalgic search for the origins associated with a trustworthy LOGOS (the word) and with a trustworthy EROS, or the perfect match, the perfect love. The multiple references to the protagonist's sexual affairs and experiences suggest the feminine nostalgia for its primordial wholeness including the feminine and the masculine principles in a perfect match. Anna Wulf, a keen psychologist, remarks that women's search for an ideal world and feeling stems from their *naivety*, which is presented as a

theme of the novel in *The Yellow Notebook*. Naivety stands for a state of inner innocence, not for a state of ignorance or weak-mindedness. The *naïve* feminine consciousness longs for an imaginary old pattern of things associated with deep-felt reciprocal love and responsibility to be expressed in meaningful and trustworthy language.

The five essays, *Free Women*, echo the style and the themes of the five *Notebooks*. Putting these Lego pieces of the novel together, readers will also have to put the hints of the feminist discourse together in order to understand the feminine protagonists' identity and values. The adjective "free" associated with "women" lays emphasis on the feminist ideal of breaking with tradition, making free choices of existence and language, free sexual experiments for accomplishing their knowledge goals and for better understanding the world. The colours, which are nothing but well-chosen symbols attributed to the five *Notebooks*, indicate the feminine bent for identifying states of mind and states of affairs: the *Black*(*Notebook*) – the author's strive to write and make light in the darkness of chaos by finding appropriate words to illuminate and reveal the truth; the *Red* (*Notebook*) – the author's strive to stick to the socialist, egalitarian principles associated with the communists' red colour; the *Yellow* (*Notebook*) – the author's strive to find the perfect match, analyzing her lovers' attitude, wives, language, overcoming her jealousy – symbolized by *yellow* – by a balanced judgement and by doing her maternal duties responsively and affectionately; the *Blue*(*Notebook*) – the author's strive to convey her vision on writing, on language and life, to present her symbolic dreams and her interpretation in a free way symbolized by the colour of freedom; the *Golden* (*Notebook*) – the royal colour of victory over the inner darkness of chaos through one's literary creation in a free language and judgement. The different stories in the different *Notebooks* echo in terms of themes and outcomes. Paul and Ella's story in the *Yellow Notebook* echoes Anna's own story. The protagonists go through the same experiences and realize that their belief in men's honesty, in pure love is nothing but a naïve vision upon a cold, harsh reality. As Anna confesses, concepts like honesty and love do no longer have the expected meaning. That is why she complains that words cannot express what these concepts signify at the moment. It is Anna's belief that objective truth cannot be expressed by words. It is difficult to grasp the same as pure, honest love.

The Feminine Consciousness in Search of a Trustworthy Language in a Postmodernist Context. Gender Influences

> "I don't know why I still find it so hard to accept that words are faulty and by their very nature inaccurate. If I thought they were capable of expressing the truth I wouldn't keep journals which I refuse to let anyone see – except, of course, Tommy" (*The Golden Notebook* 636).

A gifted, sensitive novelist, Doris Lessing attaches great importance to her feminine characters' "country of feeling" (Lessing 636) which cannot be perfectly expressed by the existing words. Throughout the novel, Anna Wulf, the narrator of the essays entitled *Free Women* and the author of the five *Notebooks*, complains of the inability of language to convey the truth of feeling, the truth of her reality and history. Words can no longer signify the complex reality, the complex mental, social and sexual experiences Anna Wulf and her friend Molly go through. Words are no longer trustworthy. Nothing is more reliable than the women's feelings and thoughts leading to their hair-splitting analysis and necessity to acknowledge the results of their social and sexual experiences, the results of their work and maternal care for their children. Concerned with the art of writing, Anna prefers abstract symbols to words:

> The fact is, the real experience can't be described. I think, bitterly, that a row of asterisks, like an old-fashioned novel, might be better. Or a symbol of some kind, a circle perhaps, or a square. Anything at all, but not words. The people who have been there, in the place in themselves where words, patterns, order, dissolve, will know what I mean and the others won't (Lessing 618).

The feminine consciousness is too complex to be revealed by the mere existing words which put forth clichés and an incomplete state of affairs. In a postmodernist fashion, Anna Wulf perceives a crisis of language which cannot depict the world and one's experiences objectively. She views literature and history as piecemeal, fragmented accounts presented from her perspective and from her interlocutors' perspective.

> It seems to me this fact is another expression of the fragmentation of everything, the painful disintegration of something that is linked with what I feel to be true about language, the thinning of language against the density of our experience (Lessing 298).

Claiming that "words lose their meaning" (Lessing 344) and that "words mean nothing" as "they have become (…) not the form into which experience is shaped, but a series of meaningless sounds, like nursery talk, and away to one side of experience" (Lessing 466), Anna implies that the relation signifier–signified has been broken off. The signified, which we can associate with the woman's complex feelings and experiences, does not have an appropriate signifier. This theory is enlarged upon by Judith Butler (1993) in *Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* where she argues that an artistic representation of women's body experiences escapes an appropriate signifier:

> The linguistic categories that are understood to "denote" the materiality of the body are themselves troubled by a referent that is never fully or permanently resolved or contained by any given signified. Indeed, that referent persists only as

> a kind of absence or loss, that which language does not capture, but instead, that which impels language repeatedly to attempt that capture, that circumscription – and to fail (Butler 1993: 67).

In a permanent dialogue with her friend Molly, with her lovers, visitors and colleagues, Anna discovers their opinions on her best-seller, *Frontiers of War*, on their present political situation and state of affairs. She introduces her thoughts with the verb *think* repeated obsessively throughout the novel, giving the impression that she would keep these thoughts for herself, questioning the truth of her subjective perception and the ability of words to convey her inner vision. In order to prove her theory, she makes references to other literary works concerned with the inconsistency of language. Thus, in the *Red Notebook*, she refers to *Finnegans Wake*: "I have been thinking of the novels about the breakdown of language, like *Finnegans Wake*. And the preoccupation with semantics" (Lessing 296). In the *Blue Notebook*, she alludes to James Joyce's ability to use the literary language in a free and revolutionary manner: "…when James Joyce described his man in the act of defecating, it was a shock, shocking. Though it was his intention to rob words of their power to shock" (Lessing 333). She admits her exaggerate state of being too conscious of her feelings, of her physiological processes, of her mental states as well as of the world around and her obsession with presenting all facts and thoughts in writing: "Simultaneously I am worrying about this business of being conscious of everything so as to write it down, particularly in connexion with my having a period" (Lessing 333).

Anna Wulf's bent for a hair-splitting analysis of her world and of the outcomes of her love affairs is conducive to stories replete with minute details, important and unimportant details. Her feminine gender influences her perspective on the world and on life which is presented in minute details to put forth the complexity of events, feelings, states of mind and states of affair. One's gender influences one's vision upon the world, one's manner of viewing and presenting the surrounding reality. The feminine protagonist evinces a vast sea of detailed evidence for her concluding remarks: unrequited love, doubtful honesty, meaningless language. The feminine gender urges the feminine characters to be more and more careful for and conscious of their feelings, of their partners' honesty, of their words, of their desire to love and to be loved.

Women's writing, such as Doris Lessing's writing concerned with investigating the feminine consciousness, personality and approach in a network of social relations with different types of protagonists, partners, acquaintances, pays great attention to an appropriate written expression of inner feelings, vision and interpretation of reality. Moreover, it is marked by a great attention to a symbolic representation of the world, of one's creation, of one's personality. For instance, Anna's symbolic dream, presented in *The Blue*

Notebook (pp.246-248), mirrors her key idea of the novel: having lost their ability to express the complex character of women's feelings and consciousness, words are no longer reliable and no longer able to express the truth. Existing words and concepts like truth, love, honesty become the Lego pieces of the feminine character's literary game for discovering and acknowledging the essence of the present world. The dream is a metaphorical projection of Anna's world: the *casket* she has in her dream symbolizes her novel; the crowd of people waiting to be given the *casket* symbolizes the audience waiting to read her book; the room where she is in her dream is a symbolic projection of the room where she meets Mrs. Marks, her psychotherapist. A parodic representation of Mrs. Marks's real room, "almost like an art gallery" with statues and walls "covered with reproductions of masterpieces" (Lessing 233), "a dedicated room" which "gives" her "pleasure, like an art gallery" (Lessing 233), the room in her dream is "a long room, like an art gallery or a lecture hall, full of dead pictures and statues" (Lessing 247).In her dialogue with Mrs. Marks whom she tells her dreams, Anna talks about their parodic nature which echoes the parody of Realism in *The Golden Notebook*:"I took dozens of dreams to Mrs. Marks today – all dreamed over the last three days. They all had the same quality of false art, caricature, illustration, parody" (Lessing 232). Talking about her dream, Anna admits to being the protagonist of her own literary creation:

> Suddenly I saw they were all characters in some film or play, and that I had written it, and was ashamed of it. It all turned into farce, flickering and grotesque, I was a character in my own play. I opened the box and forced them to look. But instead of a beautiful thing, which I thought would be there, there was a mass of fragments, and pieces (Lessing 247).

Anna's dream of the *box* full of "a mass of fragments, and pieces", of "not a whole thing, broken into fragments, but bits and pieces from everywhere, all over the world" (Lessing 247),is a metaphor for her theme of "fragmentation of everything, the painful disintegration of something that is linked with what I feel to be true about language, the thinning of language against the density of our experience" (Lessing 298). In her dream, all of a sudden, *the fragments* turn into a crocodile, whose nature stands for the evil chaotic forces with their deceptive power, deceptive language Anna struggles with. The devouring power of the crocodile is a metaphor for Anna's fictive world which she views as doomed to disaster: "It seems to me that ever since I can remember anything the real thing that has been happening in the world was death and destruction. It seems to me it is stronger than life" (Lessing 231). The crocodile's "large frozen tears (…) turned into diamonds" stand for Doris Lessing's literary fiction whose idea is that language is deceptive and cannot express the objective truth, that love is deceptive and a mere naïve thought of what it should be like. Anna's "laugh" at the situation in her dream, where the

people around her were "businessmen, brokers, something like that" (Lessing 247), is the novelist's ironic laugh at whoever does not understand the deceptive power of fictional language, the meaning of the symbols and hints in a fictional creation: "I laughed out aloud when I saw how I had cheated the businessmen and I woke up" (Lessing 247). Since Anna associates her image with "the grin on the snout of that malicious little green crocodile" (Lessing 248), the creature can stand for the novelist's voracious consciousness and hair-splitting accounts which must be correctly approached for turning chaos into order and for the readers' illumination. We witness what Patricia Waugh (1984: 74) calls "parodistic effects":

> A metafictional text which draws on a whole plethora of parodistic effects, both stylistic and structural, is Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*. The novel uses parody both to achieve a comic effect by exposing the gap between form and content, and to reveal frustration and despair (Waugh 1984: 74).

Anna Wulf parodies Realism and frequently complains of the dissolution of truth, of objectivity, of the meaning of words. She does not attach any importance to the past, be it the historical or the cultural past. She only lives in a present marked by what she considers "fragmentation of everything" (Lessing 298). Her vision of the world as pastiche, her vision of a parodic world is expressed by her idea that language is an *echo* of other contexts of communication: "Do you realize how many of the things we say are just echoes? That remark you've made is an echo from communist party criticism" (Lessing 47-48). Moreover, she considers part of her work a pastiche: "If I've gone back to pastiche, then it's time to stop" (Lessing 531).

The Woman's Identity in *The Golden Notebook*

Defined by her discourse and insight into her surrounding reality, the narrator and the main character of the novel, Anna Wulf is a cultivated feminist idealist dissatisfied with what she perceives as contrary to her ideas and ideals. An educated woman, an intellectual and a novelist, Anna defines herself as "a boulder-pusher" (Lessing 208) – an opener of new doors to undiscovered truth, a daring figure, an idealist and a socialist sticking to her political principles and hopes. In her view, "boulder-pushers" are knowledgeable and creative. She invokes Ella whom she tells that women have to take it upon themselves to be "boulder-pushers" so that they are no longer inferior to men and they could succeed in what she calls "the real revolution" of "women against men" (Lessing 210):

> It is our task, Ella, yours and mine, to tell them. Because the great men are too great to be bothered. They are already discovering how to colonize Venus and to irrigate the moon. That is what is important for our time. You and I are the boulder-pushers. All our lives, you and I, we'll put all our energies, all our talents,

> into pushing a great boulder up a mountain. The boulder is the truth that the great men know by instinct, and the mountain is the stupidity of mankind. We push the boulder. I sometimes wish I had died before I got this job I wanted so much – I thought of it as something creative (Lessing 208).
>
> 'My dear Ella, don't you know what the great revolution of our time is? The Russian revolution, the Chinese revolution – they're nothing at all. The real revolution is, women against men' (Lessing 210).

Anna Wulf's identity is a sum of her principles and words. Her feminist discourse defines her as a daring searcher of the best words to express her feelings and vision upon the political and personal experiences she goes through. She admits that the feminine identity asserts its unique power in a relation with men who empathize with their status: "And women always respond at once to men who understand we are on some kind of frontier. I suppose I could say that they 'name' us. We feel safe with them" (Lessing 472). At the same time, Anna suggests that *men* and *women* become constructs created out of instinct through a particular vision, language and mentality: "For the truth is, women have this deep instinctive need to build up a man as a man. Molly for instance. I suppose this is because real men become fewer and fewer, and we are frightened, trying to create men" (Lessing 474). The construct is always different depending on its creator and on his/her flexibility of interpretation. To prove this theory in one of the short stories presented in *The Yellow Notebook*, Anna focuses on the ability of women to bring out different, flexible personalities according to the partners they encounter and who they feel like pleasing or not:

> Same theme as Chekhov's *The Darling*. But this time the woman doesn't change to suit different men, one after another; she changes in response to one man who is a psychological chameleon, so that in the course of a day she can be half a dozen different personalities, either in opposition to, or in harmony with him (Lessing 529).

Anna admits having played various roles in her literary creation associated with her dreams: "I was astonished at how many of the female roles I have not played in my life, have refused to play, or were not offered to me. Even in my sleep I knew I was being condemned to play them now because I had refused them in life" (Lessing 590). In *The Golden Notebook*, Anna, in a state of drunkenness, confesses her revolt against her woman's condition defied by men: "for now it was not only I III, but I against women. Women the jailors, the consciences, the voices of society, and he was directing a pure stream of hatred against me, for being a woman" (Lessing 615). Therefore, she associates the *conscience* with the feminine gender, both sharing the complex essence of the concept of *Mother – Mother Nature* keeping

the world under control, under equilibrium through a primordial wisdom and logos as well as through a permanent communion with the masculine principle. At this point, we witness a theatrical representation of a tragic heroine. In her discourse, she repeats the first person pronoun *I* several times to focus on her hurt ego and revolt against men's approaches: "Then I IIIII, I'm going to show you all with your morality and your love and your laws, I III. So I took off the Armstrong, and put on his music, cool and cerebral, the detached music for men who refuse the madness and the passion (…)" (Lessing 614).Her feeling of being cheated is theatrically evoked: "I felt in myself the weak, soft sodden emotion, the woman betrayed. Oh boohoo, you don't love me, you don't love, men don't love women any more" (Lessing 615). Based on this discourse in *The Golden Notebook*, Anna can be associated with a tragic heroine in a Greek drama. In the article *Playing the Other: Theater, Theatricality, and the Feminine in Greek Drama*, F. I. Zeitlin argues that "the feminine is a tragic figure on the stage; she is also the mistress of mimesis, the heart and soul of the theatre. The feminine instructs the other through her own example – that is, in her own name and under her own experience – but also through her ability to teach the other to impersonate her – whether Pentheus or Dionysus" (in McClure 2002: 122-123).

Anna's identity is shaped by the way she reacts to and analyses her present circumstances. A cultivated woman marked by the desire to know, to experience and to share love for a caring, trustworthy world and word, as well as a sensitive psychologist having what Linda Hutcheon (2002: 139) calls "interest in representation", Anna Wulf is a postmodernist feminist who argues for her principles and thoughts on hundreds of pages in Doris Lessing's novel which proves what Linda Hutcheon (2002) remarks about the common points of postmodernism and feminism:

> The reason for the nonetheless quite common conflation of the feminist and the postmodern may well lie in their common interest in representation, that purportedly neutral process that is now being deconstructed in terms of ideology. (…) Few would disagree today that feminisms have transformed art practice: through new forms, new self-consciousness about representation, and new awareness of both contexts and particularities of gendered experience. They have certainly made women artists more aware of themselves as women and as artists; they are even changing men's sense of themselves as gendered artists (Hutcheon 2002: 139).

Conclusion

In Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*, the feminine gender reflects the feminine power to keep control of the world through a nostalgic search for the

origins associated with a trustworthy LOGOS (the word) and with a trustworthy EROS, or the perfect match never to be found by Doris Lessing's characters. Anna Wulf, the main character of the novel, is a cultivated woman and a self-conscious novelist, a feminist who aspires to the primordial wholeness including the feminine and the masculine principles in a perfect match. She associates *conscience* with the feminine gender which influences her vision, her manner of writing with minute details for a hair-splitting analysis. She is the voice of *free women*, of the "boulder-pusher" (Lessing 208), the feminine voice of a postmodernist society undergoing change and complex experiences which cannot be depicted by the existing words. Language loses its ability to depict the objective truth of one's feelings, thoughts, experiences. It can just reveal incomplete aspects of reality, of one's consciousness. Struggling with a crisis of language and with men's defiant approaches of the woman's condition, the feminist postmodernist character, Anna Wulf, becomes a tragic heroine the same as in a Greek drama.

Doris Lessing's writing attaches great importance to a symbolic representation of the world and of the feminine consciousness. Anna's dream of *the box* containing parts of different things stands for a symbolic representation of her literary world. The dream is a parody, a pastiche of Anna's fictional world. It echoes her vision of the world presented in the five *Notebooks*.

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UNE POÉTESSE EN TEMPS DE DÉTRESSE: NINA CASSIAN

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ABSTRACT. ***A Woman Poet in Times of Distress: Nina Cassian*.** This paper follows Nina Cassian's poetry on three defining dimensions – the antifascist and antiwar commitment, the ironic anticommunist commitment, and the American exile – in order to show that in times of distress, poetry records the ideological conversion of an individual who can be labeled disloyal, but not insincere.

Keywords: *Nina Cassian, war, Fascism, Communism, irony, Romanian poetry, woman, exile*

REZUMAT. ***O poetă în vremuri de restriște : Nina Cassian***. Lucrarea de față urmărește poezia Ninei Cassian în trei ipostaze definitorii – cea a angajamentului antifascist și antirăzboinic, cea a angajamentului ironic anticommunist și cea a exilului american – cu scopul de a demonstra că, în vremuri de restriște, poezia înregistrează conversia ideologică a individului căruia i se poate imputa, după caz, nu atât lipsa de sinceritate, cât lipsa de loialitate.

Cuvinte cheie: *Nina Cassian, război, fascism, communism, ironie, poezie românească, femeie, exil*

Née en 1924, Nina Cassian, poète roumain d'origine juive, vient de laisser en jachère une biographie poétique qui commence au coucher de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale afin de finir pour toujours en 2014, l'année du centenaire de la Première Guerre Mondiale. Conçu entre ces deux piliers historiques tellement éloignés, son destin littéraire impose tout d'abord l'emploi

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d'une lentille critique assez tolérante, qui puisse expliquer les paradoxes et les coups de théâtre idéologiques d'une création poétique immense dans leur diachronie productrice. Car le fait de vouloir pénétrer en synchronie la vérité d'une œuvre qui naît à l'ombre de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale, mûrit en pleine époque communiste et vieillit dans l'exile américain, ne peut être que difficile et finalement impossible. C'est pourquoi il serait opportun de remplacer avant toute chose le terme d'*insincérité* – souvent imputé à Nina Cassian dans les débats roumains concernant son engagement militant entre 1948 et 1957 et sa position anticommuniste ultérieure – avec celui de *déloyauté*, plus adéquat étant donnée qu'« il est possible de rester sincère en changeant de cause alors que la loyauté, quant à elle, exclut l'abandon de sa parole, le revirement face aux conséquences de son discours ».[2] Il faut, en grandes lignes, accepter que non seulement Nina Cassian, mais aussi d'autres poètes de sa génération (la soi-disant « génération de la guerre »), comme Geo Dumitrescu ou Eugen Jebeleanu, ont été également honnêtes en tant que partisans au début et, plus tard, en tant que critiques – plus au moins cachés, selon le cas – du régime communiste. Fascinés dans leur jeunesse par l'utopie totalitaire, ils ont fini sidérés par la dystopie résultée, mais leur fascination et leur dégoût n'ont été qu'une réaction sincère à un système menteur.

De l'antifascisme

La distinction antérieure est très importante pour le devenir de la poésie de Nina Cassian qui, publiquement admonestée à son début littéraire en 1947 – le volume *La scara 1/1* [*A l'échelle 1/1*][3] étant considéré, à cause de sa charge esthétique, « nuisible » par les autorités communistes – donne cours immédiatement à une littérature asservie. Son engagement militant procommuniste prend ainsi la forme d'une campagne antifasciste, donc anti-guerrière. Les volumes *An viu nouă sute şi şaptesprezece* [*L'année vivante neuf cent dix-sept*][4] et *Tinereţe* [*Jeunesse*][5] contiennent des poésies militantes qui blâment la guerre et louent pathétiquement le pouvoir libérateur et pacifiste du nouvel ordre soviétique, révélé par la Révolution d'Octobre, selon la confession de l'auteur même : « dans chaque événement que j'ai essayé surprendre dans les poèmes de ce volume il y a une flamme allumée par le vent historique qui a libéré les peuples soviétiques et, par cela, l'humanité entière ».[6]

[2] Mahamade Savadogo, *Pour une éthique de l'engagement*, Presses Universitaires de Namur, col. « Philosophie », Namur, 2008, p. 115.
[3] Nina Cassian, *La scara 1/1*, Forum, Bucureşti, 1947.
[4] Nina Cassian, *An viu nouă sute şi şaptesprezece*, Editura pentru Literatură şi Artă a Uniunii Scriitorilor din R.P.R, Bucureşti, 1949.
[5] Nina Cassian, *Tinereţe*, Editura Tineretului, Bucureşti, 1953.
[6] Nina Cassian, *An viu nouă sute şi şaptesprezece*, *ed. cit.*, p. 7.

Par conséquent, entre 1948 et 1957, Nina Cassian choisit d'adopter le langage politique recommandé. Elle ne se réfugie pas complètement dans la littérature pour les enfants écrite durant cette période, mais elle compose – contrairement à Geo Dumitrescu, par exemple, qui, durant sa période de « disgrâce » (1954-1963), choisit de se taire complètement – de nombreux poèmes anti-guerriers, rudimentaires, souvent pénibles pour la capacité expressive de l'écrivain, de même que pour la prétendue émotion d'une expérience personnelle vérifiable biographiquement : « *[...] Je me souviens très bien. / Ses yeux de sapin. / Quand il prenait mon bras : / « -Allons nous promener ! »/ Et quelles promenades !/ Hautement veillées par le Parti - / Au dessous des étoiles [...] »* (*Balada femeii care şi-a pierdut iubitul în război* [*Balade de la femme qui a perdu son amoureux à la guerre*][7]). Construites autour d'une tristesse féminine causée par la séparation du couple en temps de guerre[8], les textes de cette période s'expliquent parfaitement par le besoin de la rédemption politique de l'écrivain en disgrâce.

Pourtant, cet élan militant qui se ressent aussi dans le cycle intitulé *Documente din lupta revoluţionară şi rezistenţa antifascistă bulgară* [*Documents de la lutte révolutionnaire et antifasciste bulgare*], du tome *Dialogul vântului cu marea* [*Dialogue du vent et de la mer*][9], publié en 1957, devient légèrement bizarre dans le volume de 1963, *Să ne facem daruri* [*Qu'on se fasse cadeaux*][10], où le poète renforce son adhésion au communisme à travers de nouveaux déclarations identitaires : « *[...] Quand je dis tout simplement, parfois / « je suis communiste » - / je vois avec clarté / ma vraie identité »* (*Identitate* [*Identité*][11]). Ceci n'était qu'un dernier cri militant en sachant que, une décennie plus tard, Nina Cassian allait remplacer l'assertif antifasciste avec le dubitatif anticommuniste.

De l'anticommunisme

Suite aux changements politiques produits par les *Thèses de juillet* 1971 – annonçant la «révolution culturelle» de Ceauşescu, c'est-à-dire la ré-idéologisation de la littérature après une période de «dégel» idéologique –, la perspective poétique de Nina Cassian sur la réalité change aussi. En 1972, son

[7] V. Nina Cassian, *Tinereţe*, *ed. cit.* (*[...] Mi-amintesc parc'ar fi azi./ Ochii lui – ace de brazi./ De un braţ mă apuca:/ «Haide, fată, ne-om plimba!»/ Ce plimbări erau acele!/ – 'nalt veghiate de Partid –/ Sub puzderia de stele [...]*). [*n.t.*]

[8] Pour la relation entre la poésie et la guerre v. Nicolas Beaupré, *Ecrire en guerre, écrire la guerre. France, Allemagne 1914-1920*, préface par Anette Becker, CNRS Edtitions, Paris, 2006.

[9] Nina Cassian, *Dialogul vântului cu marea*, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură, Bucureşti, 1957.

[10] Nina Cassian, *Să ne facem daruri*, Editura pentru Literatură, Bucureşti, 1963.

[11] *Ibidem*. (« *[...] Când spun atât de simplu, uneori/ «sunt comunistă» –/ mi se învederează, dintre toate,/ adevărata mea identitate* »). [*n.t.*]

message poétique porte le signe du dubitatif, suggérant, en *Loto poeme* [*Loto poèmes*], la pratique d'un discours équivoque : « *Et si je dirai : « NON ! » / - vous allez croire que rien, / rien ne changera. / Et si je dirai : « OUI ! » // - vous allez voir un passe-partout [...]* » (*Şi dacă* [*Et si*][12]). Comme Eugen Jebeleanu, un de ses collègues de génération, Nina Cassian rentre maintenant dans le jeu des affirmations contradictoires, des sens détournés, un jeu qui est, selon Laurenţiu Ulici, loin d'être comique:

> « Cependant en *Loto poèmes* le jeu n'est plus un jeu, même si, par-ci, par-là, il semble l'être, c'est un jeu aux lèvres serrées et aux coins de la bouche penchés, il y en a quelque chose d'amer, de fronde sceptique [...] Le poète pratique l'ironie culte, elle a un mode ostentateur de faire des blagues lyriques, elle feint parodier des tons et des états, parfois elle parodie vraiment, mais les poèmes, à très peu d'exceptions, sont un colloque de masques qui laisse entrevoir un visage ombragé de nostalgies » .[13]

Il s'agit donc non seulement d'un renoncement à l'engagement militant, mais aussi de l'adoption d'une ironie amère, désenchantée. La nostalgie qui couvre les masques du poète accompagne cette ironie coupable qui remémore, au moment de la condamnation des ennuis présents, le succès hypothétique des idéaux passés. Les regrets ne concernent pas seulement les réalités d'autrefois, mais plutôt les promesses des réalités futures jamais concrétisées. On vise ainsi le projet de la captivante utopie communiste échouée, qui provoque, avec le titre du volume de 1978[14], le « virage » attitudinal de Nina Cassian, préoccupée par le dénonce du résultat obtenu : « *Le mode de vie du froid / donne une bizarre impression d'ordre. / En fait, sous les lignes conventionnelles, / je me doute d'un mouvement sauvage, / chacun reste les dents serrées dans la carotide de l'autre, / les ongles poussés dans la chair de l'autre. / Sous la plaque transparente du froid / il y a chaque jour un carnage [...]* » (*Frigul* [*Le froid*][15]).

La dénonciation du *froid* dans ses deux acceptions, d'absence de la chaleur et d'absence de la solidarité humaine, approche de manière très intéressante Nina Cassian de sa correspondante polonaise Wislawa Szymborska, poète qui propose, dans une poésie traduite en roumain en 1977, une vision similaire sur les réalités polonaises du même régime politique : « - *La Pologne ? La Pologne ? Il fait très froid là-bas, n'est-ce pas ? - / m'a demandé*

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[12] V. Nina Cassian, *Loto poeme*, Albatros, Bucureşti, 1972. *„Şi dacă vă voi spune: «NU!»/ – voi tot veţi crede că nimica,/ nimica nu se va schimba./ Şi dacă vă voi spune: «DA!»// – veţi crede că-i un paspartù [...] "*. [*n.t.*]

[13] Laurenţiu Ulici, *Jocul şi drama*, în *Confort Procust*, Eminescu, Bucureşti, 1983, p. 157.

[14] Nina Cassian, *Viraje/Virage: 50 poèmes*, édition bilingue en collboration avec Eugène Guillevie et Lily Denis, Eminescu, Bucureşti, 1978.

[15] *Ibidem*. (« *Modul de viaţă al frigului/ dă o ciudată impresie de ordine./ De fapt, sub liniile convenţionale, / bănuiesc o mişcare sălbatecă,/ fiecare stă cu dinţii înfipţi/ în carotida celuilalt,/ cu unghiile crescute în carnea celuilalt./ Sub transparenta placă de frig/ are loc un zilnic măcel [...]* »). [*n.t*]

soulagée. Tant de choses qui se passent dans / le monde, le plus rassurant c'est de parler du temps. / - O, madame – je veux lui dire – les poètes de mon pays écrivent / les mains dans les gants. / Je ne dis pas qu'ils ne les enlèveraient jamais ; / si la lune brille, alors oui. Dans les strophes composées de / larges éternuements, ils imitent la vie simple des bergers de phoques. / Les classiques griffonnent la neige avec des stalactites en glace. Qui veut se noyer a besoin d'une hache / pour creuser un point. O madame, o, ma chère dame ! je voulais lui dire / cela. Mais j'ai oublié comment on dit phoque en français. Je ne suis pas sûre ni de stalactite ni de point. / - La Pologne ? La Pologne. *Il fait très froid là-bas, n'est-ce pas ?/* - Pas du tout – *je répond froidement.* » (*Cuvinte* [*Mots*][16]). Par l'insertion du monologue sur l'existence anti-bucolique des poètes polonais dans le cadre de ce dialogue international qui planifie d'éviter justement le sujet qu'il va aborder, Wislawa Szymborska présente la « météo » politique de son pays usant d'une ironie galante et froide. Elle construit une ample prétérition afin de décrire l'expérience du *froid* dans un soliloque qui n'est pas transposé en dialogue, car cette expérience ne peut pas être communiquée directement, et encore moins dans la langue d'un peuple qui ne l'a pas vécue. L'ironie sert ainsi de liant entre les deux espaces culturels, polonais et roumain, comme Czeslaw Milosz, un autre poète polonais dont la biographie le rapproche de Nina Cassian, l'observait dans son ouvrage, *Témoignage de la poésie* : « La poésie des pays qui, à la suite de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, se sont trouvés dans l'orbite soviétique, ne confirme pas les promesses des lendemains joyeux. Au contraire, la poésie polonaise, par exemple, a su distiller au mieux l'ironie et le sarcasme […] »[17].

Cependant, à part l'ironie, on peut facilement établir un « dialogue international » entre la poésie de Wislawa Szymborska et celle de Nina Cassian si on suit d'autres détails, comme les correspondances biographiques (les auteurs font partie de la même génération biologique et s'affirment la même année, 1945) et existentielles (derrière le rideau de fer, les deux écrivent de façon militante et, plus tard, de manière ironique), qui se reflètent dans leur création littéraire. L'attitude ironique des poèmes qui démasquent le nouvel « âge de glace » de l'histoire contemporaine reste, bien sûr, un point principal de contact et de ressemblance, même si l'ironie a une intensité

[16] V. Wislawa Szymborska, *Bucuria scrierii*, traduction et préface de Nicolae Mareş, Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1977. (« - La Pologne? La Pologne? *Acolo e tare frig, nu-i aşa? - / m-a întrebat şi a răsuflat uşurată. Atâtea se întâmplă în/ lume, că cel mai sigur e să vorbeşti cum e vremea./ - O, doamnă – vreau să-i spun – poeţii din ţara mea scriu/ cu mănuşile în mâini. Nu spun că nu şi le-ar scoate deloc;/ dacă luna străluceşte, atunci da. În strofele compuse din/ strănuturi tari, imită viaţa simplă a păstorilor de foci./ Clasicii mâzgâlesc cu ţurţuri de cerneală pe nămeţi de/ zăpadă. Cine vrea să se înece trebuie să aibă un topor/ să-şi sape copcă. O, doamnă, o, draga mea doamnă! Astea/ vroiam să i le spun. Dar am uitat cum se spune focă în/ franceză. Nu sunt sigură nici cum se spune ţurţur şi copcă./* - La Pologne? La Pologne. *Acolo e tare frig, nu?/* - Pas du tout **–** *răspund rece.* »). [*n.t.*]

[17] Czeslaw Milosz, *Témoignage de la poésie*, traduit par Christophe Jezewski et Dominique Autrand, PUF, Paris, 1987, p. 31.

différente dans un poème comme *Păcurar* [*Huilier*], publié par Nina Cassian dans le volume *De îndurare* [*Du supportable*][18], de 1981: « *Il fait nuit maintenant. / Il fait froid maintenant. / Aucune perte. / Serre la laine du mouton/ autour de ton corps fragile / et allume le feu. / Emballe le mouton, / le mouton sans laine / autour de ton corps fragile / et intensifie le feu / avec tes mains / jusqu'au cendre. / Aucune perte. / Il fera chaud / et il fera jour dorénavant.* ». Malgré les différences de nuance, l'attitude des deux poètes n'est, pour rejoindre Czeslaw Milosz, qu'une réaction à la pression du même contexte politique qui met en difficulté l'acte créateur : « *Si les larmes / sont les œufs de l'oiseau de pluie / si l'oiseau est la nervosité de l'air / qui est lui-même / un corps à travers des corps / - comment puis-je écrire un livre dans ce tombeau commun ?* » (*Presiuni* [*Pressions*][19]).

La réponse à cette dernière question est donnée par les livres du poète : avec une distance critique obligatoire et avec beaucoup d'ironie désenchantée. La poésie *Lumina* [*Lumière*][20] prolonge ainsi le fil de l'ironie désappointée : « *Si tu veux absolument / écrire à la lumière, / creuse un tunnel / dans tes sept vies, / jusqu'à ce que tu verras au bout / une sorte d'œil en or. // Ce n'est plus nécessaire de sortir ».* Comme le thème du *froid*, qui renvoie au manque de chaleur à la fois physique et affective, le problème de la *lumière* peut être interprété également comme incapacité des individus d'entrevoir une solution salvatrice et comme absence effective de l'électricité, phénomène qui complète le paysage des carences dans la société communiste.

Le ton sombre sera gardé dans les poésies du volume suivant, *Numărătoarea inversă* [*Compte à rebours*][21], publié en 1983: « *La fin de l'été / ressemble à la fin du monde. / Tout est abandon et angoisse. / Le jour baisse / jusqu'à la perte de sa dignité. / Nos corps glissent dans des dalles de chiffon humides : / les manteaux déprimés. / Ensuite, accroupis, s'empêtrant, / dans les creux de la rue Hiver, / au coin de la rue Du Déclin …// Quel serait le but de vivre / avec l'idée de printemps / – dangereuse comme toutes les utopies ?* » (*Şi când vine sfârşitul verii* [*Vers la fin de l'été*][22]). Conçues dans une logique métonymique,

[18] Nina Cassian, *De îndurare*, Eminescu, Bucureşti, 1981. (« *Acum se întunecă./ Acum cade frigul./ Nu e nicio pagubă./ Strânge lâna oii/ pe trupul tău şubred/ şi aprinde focul./ Învelește oaia,/ oaia fără lână/ cu trupul tău şubred/ şi-nteţește focul/ cu mâinile tale/ până se fac scrum./ Nu e nicio pagubă./ Şi va fi căldură/ şi lumină acum* »). [*n.t.*].

[19] *Ibidem*. (« *Dacă lacrima/ e oul păsării de ploaie/ dacă pasărea e nervozitatea aerului/ care e el însuşi/ e un trup peste trupuri/ – cum mai pot scrie o carte în această groapă comună?* »). [*n.t.*].

[20] *Ibidem*. (« *Dacă vrei neapărat/ să scrii la lumină,/ scormonește un tunel/ în cele şapte vieţi ale tale,/ pân-ai să vezi la capăt/ ceva ca un ochi de aur.// Nici nu mai e nevoie să ieşi.* »). [*n.t.*].

[21] Nina Cassian, *Numărătoarea inversă*, Eminescu, Bucureşti, 1983.

[22] *Ibidem*. (« *Şi când vine sfârşitul verii,/ parcă vine sfârşitul lumii./ Totul e pustiire şi spaimă./ Ziua scade/ până la pierderea demnităţii./ Pe trupurile noastre cad/ lespezi ude, de postav:/ paltoane deprimate./ Şi-apoi, zgribuliţi, poticnindu-ne,/ prin hârtoapele străzii Iarnă,/ colţ cu Declinului.../// Ce rost are să mai trăim/ cu ideea de primăvară/ – primejdioasă ca toate utopiile?* »). [*n.t.*].

les personnifications suggèrent une contamination dégradante entre l'être et son milieu social, dévoilant le tableau d'une saison apocalyptique. La conclusion annule caustiquement l'espoir dans un monde meilleur par la position réservée du poète devant toute utopie sécularisée, ce qui signifie que la leçon de la précaution élémentaire a été acquise. Dans d'autres poèmes, l'ironie se détend légèrement, quoique l'image soit décourageante : « *L'étranger me dît : / Des bateaux de guerre à l'horizon. / On vit sous menace / sur nos propres bords. / Personne ne se fait faire une maison / - à quoi bon ? / […] Peux d'enfantes sont nés. / Les poètes préparent leurs larmes / pour toute éventualité. / Mais ce n'est pas vrai. / Seulement quelques nuages passagers à l'horizon : / un prétexte / pour pouvoir être désespérés / par d'autres raisons.* » (*Străinul îmi spuse* [*L'étranger me dît*][23]). La perspective reste sceptique, et le jeu ironique met l'accent sur les fausses menaces venues de l'extérieur pour insinuer que les vraies sources du désespoir général sont de nature interne.

Si, chez Nina Cassian, observe Ion Pop, « les apparitions bizarres, disharmoniques, souvent agressives, manipulées avec la dextérité d'un marionnettiste et contemplées avec une ironie inquiète, surprennent *un monde renversé* »[24], cela n'est pas seulement l'indice du jeu avec la convention littéraire, mais aussi avec les conventions sociales. Le monde renversé apparaît comme un monde du bonheur général, où la présence du moi lyrique devient incommode, parce que son discours pessimiste est perturbateur : « *Je n'ai pas le droit de troubler le bonheur général / avec mon air abattu. / Mes drames, je n'ai pas le droit / de les éclabousser sur le bonheur général, / avec des brosses violentes. / Tout le monde rit, chante et danse, / c'est pourquoi je me retire, je me retire, / et je tire le siècle par-dessus ma tête* » (*Nu am dreptul să tulbur veselia generală* [*Je n'ai pas le droit de troubler le bonheur général*][25]). Même si la posture de clown triste n'utilise pas des images visuelles très fortes, elle se fonde sur la relation tendue du moi avec l'altérité. La même acception du moi-clown est maintenue dans le volume *Jocuri de vacanţă* [*Jeux de vacances*][26], puisque la maladie de la société crée de nouvelles victimes, fait qui ne peut pas passer inaperçu : « *L'année a été bonne. Quelques-uns sont morts / mais moi je suis vivant. / Un continent s'est effondré / mais ma venelle /*

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[23] *Ibidem*. (« *Străinul îmi spuse:/ Vase de război la orizont./ Trăim ameninţaţi/ pe ţărmurile noastre./ Nimeni nu-şi mai face casă/ – la ce bun?/ Nu mai arăm/ şi nu mai semănăm./ Se nasc copii puţini./ Poeţii pregătesc bocete/ pentru orice eventualitate./ Dar nu-i adevărat./ Doar nişte nori trecători la orizont:/ un pretext/ pentru a putea fi disperaţi/ din cu totul alte motive.* »). [*n.t.*].

[24] Ion Pop, *„Ora de joc" a Ninei Cassian*, în *Jocul poeziei*, Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă, Cluj-Napoca, 2006, p. 227.

[25] Nina Cassian, *Numărătoarea inversă*, *ed. cit.* (« *Nu am dreptul să tulbur veselia generală/ cu aerul meu posac./ Dramele mele, nu am dreptul/ să le împroşc pe fericirea generală,/ cu pensule violente./ Toată lumea râde, cântă şi dansează,/ de aceea mă retrag, mă retrag,/ şi-mi trag secolul peste cap.* »). [*t.n.*].

[26] Nina Cassian, *Jocuri de vacanţă*, Cartea Românească, Bucureşti, 1983.

se trouve au Pays de Cocagne. / On annonce la peste / Peut-être pour les autres/ je vais bien du reste » (*Ego*[27]). Le texte est inclus dans le cycle *Obsedantul deceniu* [*La décennie obsessive*], artifice par lequel Nina Cassian note ironiquement la recrudescence d'une maladie impossible à guérir. Devant cette impuissance, la poésie accepte son handicap, mais ne perd pas (encore) l'espoir.

De l'exil américain

Toutefois, au fur et à mesure, l'ironie commence à diminuer sa résistance face au drame de la communauté que le poète allait quitter définitivement en 1985, quand elle s'établit aux Etats-Unis. Quelques poèmes rédigés après cette date – comme ceux du volume *Desfacerea lumii* [*La délivrance du monde*] *(1985-1991)*, inclus dans l'anthologie *La querelle avec le chaos*[28] et intéressants pour cette approche dans la mesure où le moment de leur écriture, selon la chronologie de l'auteur, ne dépasse quasiment pas la chute du communisme en Roumanie – confirment la détente du ton ironique et le devancement du drame dans un registre humoristique : « *Je taille mes crayons et j'écris des bêtises / comme le lapin de l'ancienne anecdote / car, bien sûr, le loup n'a pas peur de moi, / à vrai dire, ni moi du loup / mais je n'arrive pas à lui toucher la moustache, / ni à lui changer le caractère, / j'ai même peur de ne pas l'aggraver / grâce à mes crayons si beau taillés / et à mes bêtises si naïves* » (*I*[29]). Intégrée dans le cycle *Dialogul meu cu dictatura* [*Mon dialogue avec la dictature*], la poésie résume l'inefficacité des armes subversives utilisées contre le dictateur et libère, au dernier vers, l'autoironie. Puisque le « dialogue », cette fois-ci à distance, est maintenu en équilibre («*le loup n'a pas peur de moi, / à vrai dire, ni moi du loup* »), la prudence des attaques ironiques antérieures – observée par Mircea Iorgulescu au moment où il apprécie qu' « il a toujours existé dans la poésie de Nina Cassian une tentation de contourner la limite, irrésistible comme une obsession [...] mais aussi une inhibition, une timidité, causée par la prévision du danger, une attente sécurisée » – disparaît. L'ironie humilie son cible : « *Mon proteste linguistique / est impuissant. / L'ennemi est analphabète* » (*II*[30]), mais s'avoue vaincue.

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[27] *Ibidem*. (« *A fost un an bun./ Au murit câțiva/ dar eu sunt viu./ S-a prăbușit un continent/ dar pe ulița mea/ umblă câinii cu covrigi în coadă./ Se pare că vine o ciumă./ Poate pentru alții –/ pentru mine, mumă.* »). [*t.n.*].

[28] Nina Cassian, *Cearta cu haosul. Versuri și proză (1945-1991)*, anthologie, préface et chronologie par Nina Cassian, Minerva, București, 1993.

[29] *Ibidem*. (« *Și așa îmi ascut eu creioanele și scriu prostii/ ca iepurașul din anecdota cea veche/ pentru că, bineînțeles, lupul nu se teme de mine,/ ce-i drept, nici eu de lup/ decât că nu-i pot clinti măcar un fir din mustață,/ nici năravul nu i-l pot schimba,/ ba mă tem că i-l mai și agravez/ datorită creioanelor mele atât de frumos ascuțite/ și atât de suavelor mele prostii.* »). [*t.n.*].

[30] *Ibidem*. («*Protestul meu lingvistic/ n-are putere./ Dușmanul e analfabet* »). [*t.n.*].

À quoi bon ...?

Si la conception de Jean-Paul Sartre, pour lequel la poésie n'admet pas l'engagement, étant une utilité sans fin, tandis que « la prose est utilitaire par essence »[31], reste encore valable dans le cas de la poésie réflexive, isolée dans sa tour d'ivoire exclusivement esthétique, elle ne s'applique pas pour la poésie ironique de Nina Cassian qui s'avère plutôt transitive, se configurant comme une poésie éthique, intéressée par le référentiel quotidien. De ce point de vue, elle est une poésie engagée, si on comprend, avec Benoît Denis, l'engagement en sens large, en tant que préoccupation pour la vie sociale ou politique manifestée d'une manière ou d'une autre dans l'écriture[32]. Cela veut dire que cette poésie attire, en guise de conclusion, une interrogation autour de son « utilité » durant la période communiste. Vu qu'après avoir suit son parcours sur le fil de l'abandon de la solennité procommuniste pour l'adhésion à l'ironie anticommuniste, la poésie de Nina Cassian ne s'est pas montré insincère, si on reformule la fameuse question de Hölderlin (« A quoi bon des poètes en temps de détresse ? »), dans un registre féminin (« A quoi bon une poétesse en temps de détresse ? »), la réponse ne devrait pas se laisser longtemps attendue : à montrer que poésie et vie vont ensemble, que le manque de sincérité n'est, d'un autre côté, qu'un manque de loyauté et que, finalement, la voix d'une bonne citoyenne ne sert pas seulement à endormir les enfants, mais aussi, grâce à l'ironie[33], à s'engager, c'est-à-dire à réveiller les grands de leur sommeil profond sous un long régime obscur comme la nuit.

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POLISH FEMALE WRITERS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON WOMEN'S PUBLIC ACTIVITY. THE CASES OF JÓZEFA KISIELNICKA AND ELIZA ORZESZKOWA

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ABSTRACT. ***Polish Women Writers and Their Influence on Women's Public Activity. The Cases of Józefa Kisielnicka and Eliza Orzeszkowa.***This essay presents the personalities of two Polish women at the turn of the nineteenth century: Józefa Kisielnicka (1865 – 1941) and Eliza Orzeszkowa (1841-1910). The former was actively involved in public life and focused on charity work and the people's educational needs. The latter was a great activist. Her political views, social involvement and literary achievements were widely recognized by the women with liberal political views.

Keywords*: Polish, writer, woman, public life, gender equality, northeastern Poland, education, liberal*

REZUMAT. ***Scriitoare poloneze şi influenţa acestora asupra activităţii publice a femeilor. Cazul Józefa Kisielnicka şi Eliza Orzeszkowa.*** Eseul prezintă personalitatea a două poloneze la sfârşitul secolului al XIX-lea: Józefa Kisielnicka (1865 – 1941) şi Eliza Orzeszkowa (1841-1910). Prima a fost foarte activă în viaţa publică şi s-a preocupat de activităţile caritabile şi de nevoile educaţionale ale oamenilor. Cea de-a doua a fost o mare activistă. Opiniile ei politice, implicarea ei socială şi realizările ei literare au fost recunoscute de către femeile cu opinii politice liberale.

Cuvinte cheie*: polonez, scriitoare, femeie, viaţa publică, egalitate, Polonia de nord-est, educaţie, liberal*

We have to consider Józefa Kisielnicka (1865 – 1941) and Eliza Orzeszkowa (1841-1910) in the context of northeastern Poland which at the turn of the nineteenth century was under the political domination of tsarist

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Russia. These Polish territories can be characterized as a province of rough backwardness from the point of view of Western civilization. They stretched between the Warsaw and the Vilnius districts, but were not under the authority of these metropolises. This was a truly multicultural region where people of different ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds lived and cooperated. The largest ethnic minority were the Jews who inhabited mainly the towns and constituted up to 50% of the urban population. Other minorities included the Russians, who generally occupied clerical positions and were responsible for the legislative acts, and the Lithuanians, who inhabited mostly the rural areas alongside the Polish-Lithuanian border. The Poles constituted the ethnic majority of this area. The peripheral location of the province and its civilizational backwardness influenced the women's public activities.

Józefa Kisielnicka and Eliza Orzeszkowa had great authority and their written works and public activity influenced the women inhabiting those territories. One of the most important factors in spreading and accepting the gender issues was the activity of the political parties dominating a specific area and their attitude towards social and gender issues. In these Polish territories which were under the tsarist Russia, political activity could only take the form of conspiracy and political manifestos with patriotic and national ideas. In the northeastern territories of Poland, the most popular political parties were those with national Catholic programmes which imposed a traditional model of women in society. This behavioural pattern combined household chores, raising children, the wife's duty to support her husband in all the spheres of his professional and social life. The only kind of social work that woman could do was charity work. In bigger towns and cities, liberal political parties and their programmes gained a lot of support. Liberal parties led the discussions on women's rights and gender equality and they supported women in their aspirations and involvement in public initiatives far more than the national–Catholic groupings.

At the end of the nineteenth century women started to develop different forms of public activity and implement them in public life. Until that time, women's activity was coordinated by the local church and state-run charity associations. Now women became more and more involved in educational and national issues. This pattern of developing public awareness and activism was to be observed by the members of the gentry inhabiting the rural areas, as well as by the representatives of the intelligentsia residing in the urban areas. It is worth emphasizing that, at the turn of the nineteenth century, the public awareness and involvement concerned only a small percentage of women, namely elite women. A vast majority of women was preoccupied with their household chores and raising their children. Public activity was mostly seen as an additional form of social engagement.

Józefa Kisielnicka (1865–1941) worked as a teacher for wealthy families of the Polish gentry since her youth. In her literary works (published in "Kurier Warszawski", "Bluszcz", "Kurier Codzienny", "Niwa") she depicted women's everyday life. The general image of her characters was very negative. Women were portrayed as petty creatures that were interested merely in social entertainment and had no serious or valuable aspirations. She was influenced by French novelists and women writers. Kisielnicka was dedicated to the countryside and she represented female members of the Polish gentry, both in her written works and in social activity. Józefa Kisielnicka is considered to be a representative of the Polish gentry's elite. She was also actively involved in running the household, bringing up her children and taking care of her estate near the town of Lomza (*Polish Biographical Dictionary* 499 – 500). She serves as a role model of the perfect wife, mother, landlady and, at the same time, a local social leader and initiator of local public life. Books describing her life and achievements present the range of her involvement in public initiatives and her devotion to the area where she came from in a very detailed way:

> … she worked on increasing literacy in the region, she organized libraries in villages, she supported and supervised the two instructors, the graduates of the teachers faculty in Żyrardów, she is the founder of many schools across the Kurpie Region and thanks to her work and devotion, a house for young artists in Korzeniste was opened (Lasocka 44 – 45).

It should also be noted that Józefa Kisielnicka popularized her social views, including her outlook on the place of women in society, in "Kurier Warszawski". Moreover, the newspaper printed her acknowledged novel "Pages From the Life of Women" which had won the newspaper's award (Lasocka 43).

From the above description of Kisielnicka's activities one can learn about the essential public activities typical of the landladies living in the northeastern province of Poland. The activities were accepted as well as financially supported by the landowners, husbands, and guardians of these women. As Zofia Jabłońska accurately points out in her description of the families in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, much greater individualism is to be observed among women belonging to the intelligentsia. Obviously, these activities became more or less popular with the society depending on the attachment to tradition as well as on the principles and customs related to women's responsibilities in a given family. Notably, the majority of the intelligentsia came from the gentry, which resulted in the adoption of the behavioural patterns of the landowners in urban families. Thereby, the women from the intelligentsia as well as the landladies showed a particular stability in their attachment to the family responsibilities, rules of running the household, and raising children. A similar attitude characterizes

women's functioning in other environments where respect and submission to husbands or guardians is to be observed (56-68).

Certainly, many obstacles in the initiation and implementation of the tasks relating to women's public life originated from their domestic responsibilities. This was especially true of women representing land owning communities. The memoirs of Józefa Kisielnicka often report on the variety of women's everyday activities in a rural environment:

> I got up at half past seven ... Before I went downstairs; I received a few unpleasant news items. Meanwhile, we ate breakfast preceded by a common prayer … I plan the errands for Lomza, mainly to the drug store. Both of my dear ones leave, and I continue running to and fro doing my things... So the pantry ... then dairy. After that, the inspection of milk ... I distribute butter, milk and cream in the kitchen. Then the instruction of the keeper, and a round with the governor to the foremen of builders... Then the consultation over the nursery and off to the garden to talk over a few matters with the gardener. Next, writing down the household accounts and their comparison. Lunch, then letters, correspondence connected to business (Józefa Kisielnicka 6).

It is assumed that a female representative of the intelligentsia would, to a greater extent than a landlady, enjoy leisure time which she could spend with various forms of public activity. The influence of the family and the local environment upon Kisielnicka should be emphasized and seen as the decisive factor shaping her own views on the role of women. Most of the North-eastern provincial landladies had conservative views on women's place in society and their participation in public life. As a representative of the land owning female elite, she was perfectly aware of the women's wide public involvement in the Polish lands, and certainly of women's public activity in other European countries. From the role model popularized by Józefa Kisielnicka emerges an image of women conscious of their rights, but also of women whose views on women's participation in public life were consistent with the views presented by their husbands. Namely, one can perceive Kazimierz Kisielnicki as an example to be followed by other landowners residing in the North-eastern provinces in terms of successful running of the estate as well as a model of a political activist of the national-Catholic ideology, which was very important in understanding his wife's views. In this national-Catholic political mainstream society the traditional place of women was of significant importance. The place of women was based on the fact that the main field of female activity should be the home environment and family, whereas political life was a sphere of activity reserved exclusively for men. Some activity, limited mainly to initiating charitable or educational operations and not directly related to politics, was allowed. Apart from that, husbands and guardians accepted women's activity in the field of writing, but only when the writing did not

relate to political issues or broadly defined, to the struggle for equal rights of women or feminists (Dajnowicz 125-138). This traditional image of women in society was also agreed on and accepted by most women in the land owners' society in the Polish province of the North-east.

Józefa Kisielnicka was one of the most active landladies in public life in the North-eastern provinces. Undoubtedly, her interest in the so-called women's issue was spurred by the writings of the recognized novelist Narcyza Żmichowska. Żmichowska was a children's teacher - a governess in the house of the Kisielnicky's in the years 1841-1843. According to many reports, Narcyza Żmichowska felt the atmosphere of devotion to patriotic values as well as the positive attitude to literature reading in the house of the Kisielnicki's (Narcyza Żmichowska, Julia Baranowska 154). Supposedly, Narcyza Żmichowska, while staying at the estate of the Kisielnicki's, often travelled to Warsaw to take part in the broader and more savoury intellectual and social life which had developed in the capital, and after returning to the provinces she conveyed to her masters complex information on the social and journalistic activities of women. Consequently, Józefa Kisielnicka became absorbed in writing herself. Kisielnicka stepped into the Narcyza Żmichowska's footsteps and later she would write to one of the prominent capital newspapers in order to cooperate and have her works published (Goik 264).

It was in the period after the January Uprising (1863-1864) when social and charitable initiatives began to be organized by women from the elite, thanks to the greater legislative possibilities of initiating Polish social life. A significant activity in terms of more common public initiatives from women and their public appearances in the fight for equal rights can be observed on the Polish territories in the period after 1905. Then, to a much greater extent than in the late nineteenth century, Polish newspapers, including those with women's contributions, were founded as well as a variety of community organizations exclusively for women. This process was associated with the introduction of more liberal legislation on social life after 1905.

Eliza Orzeszkowa (1841-1910) married Piotr Orzeszko at a young age. From the first years of their marriage, she dedicated her energy to social work. She was in charge of rural schools and also travelled to Warsaw on several occasions where she became interested in the problems of the Jewish assimilation into the Polish community. After the January Uprising, Orzeszkowa became engaged in helping the insurgents. Her marriage to Piotr Orzeszko was miserable. In 1869, after many years of efforts from Eliza, the annulment was granted. She then married her faithful friend Stanisław Nahorski. Eliza Orzeszkowa devoted a lot of time and commitment to social and philanthropic activities. She also cooperated with the weekly "Bluszcz". Her numerous works ("A Few Words about Women" to cite an example) related to the place of women in society and gender equality (Jankowski 133).

In comparison to Józefa Kisielnicka, Eliza Orzeszkowa had far more liberal views on women, their position in society and involvement in public life. At the turn of the nineteenth century, she lived in Grodno, a bordering city in the North-eastern part of the Polish province. Her literary activity drew a lot of attention from the liberal circles of the Polish intelligentsia inhabiting important towns and cities in this region. One of these towns was the town of Suwalki, located between Lomza (the town of the writer Józefa Kisielnicka) and the city of Vilnius, which was often compared to Warsaw. In Vilnius, many social, cultural and educational initiatives were launched and developed.

In recognition of Eliza Orzeszkowa's outstanding achievements, the Suwalki intelligentsia founded a committee to support the Institute of Eliza Orzeszkowa. Under her influence, many educated women, especially those representing liberal political views, became involved in public and social initiatives and set up an organization called Women's Equality Association. The main aim of this organization was to enable and facilitate women's public activities and their involvement in important social and political issues. Eliza Orzeszkowa was recognized as the main founder of this institution and was awarded the title of leader on the way to gender equality (the Institute of Eliza Orzeszkowa).

The dominant view concerning women's issues was that the traditional role of a woman in society should be sustained. It was common not only among the gentry class, but also typical of many representatives of the intelligentsia class. In these circumstances, the progressive group of women in Suwalki found it necessary to popularize the idea of gender equality in society. Anna Staniszewska, a member of the Suwalki intelligentsia, was one of the women leaders who spread the idea of gender equality. She organized a series of lectures on gender issues for the whole community of the town. Her political and social views were influenced by her husband who popularized liberal ideas on women's issues. Eliza Orzeszkowa and Anna Staniszewska organized a series of educational lectures entitled "A Women's Issue". They were published in the *Weekly Newspaper* in Suwalki. In her lectures, she brought up such topics as the complexity and difficulties concerning women's financial situation, the new basis and aims of the girls' upbringing, the need of taking university courses and obtaining a university degree by women, the importance of professional equality. Orzeszkowa started the dispute on the issue of marriage, considered by many as the only possible way of ensuring happiness, satisfaction and fulfilment in a woman's life. In a very critical way, she referred to the way girls were raised in Polish society. From a very early age, this educational strategy imposes on girls obedience and subjection to moral and ethical rules of social codes, and inculcates the belief that a girl is of no value, unless she is found attractive by a man.

Marriage was seen as the only alternative for women, and thus, according to Anna Staniszewska, deprived woman of her personal desires, ambitions and values (4). A very important issue raised by Anna Staniszewska was women's occupational discrimination. In the opinions presented by Anna Staniszewska and Eliza Orzeszkowa, there was a great convergence concerning the institution of marriage and job equality. Therefore, one can draw the conclusion that Eliza Orzeszkowa's views and literary output had a great impact on Anna Staniszewska's opinions. While writing about the situation of Polish women, Orzeszkowa stated that

> the status of women in both family and society is low and unsatisfactory and ignores women's importance. Man has an unlimited power and control over woman and he holds the privileges of being her judge and master. By law, woman is totally subject to and dependent on her husband (5-81).

According to Eliza Orzeszkowa, this situation was consistent with the existing model of woman in society, which imposed on women the role of a wife and mother, while for men the area of dominance was the public and the political sphere. In Orzeszkowa's opinion, the practical realization of the idea of gender equality could only be achieved by women's occupational development, as it was the case in several European countries, e.g. Great Britain or Belgium. Eliza Orzeszkowa emphasized that, if certain goals are to be achieved, it should not only be based on the examples of other countries but all the political, moral and local factors of a society should be taken into consideration as well. What connects the two women activists is that they both stressed that education can bring more benefits than legal regulations in equalizing gender rights (Orzeszkowa 81-107).

The female activists of the Suwalki intelligentsia also referred to and fought against the legal discrimination against women. In her written works, Eliza Orzeszkowa outlined numerous aspects of gender inequalities in many countries of Europe (96-106). A number of newspapers gave detailed examples of law infringement against women and this would usually lead to heated discussions which emphasized the need to introduce certain legal regulations (Kwestia kobieca 4). As it can be noticed, the press played a significant role in this issue. The press was the public arena for discussing new legislative projects and legal solutions to overcome the problems connected to gender inequalities ("Ustawa o rozszerzeniu praw kobiet" 5).

Women's aspirations to found a women's association in Suwalki was not very popular. There was opposition even among some members of the local intelligentsia. However, in 1908 in Suwalki, due to women's great work and involvement, the Association for Gender Equality was founded. Anna Staniszewska became the leader of the Association. The members were recruited mostly from the intellectual circles of Suwalki. The main aim of this

association was to stimulate and develop women's involvement not only in the field of charity or education, but mostly in the sphere of public life and occupational competence. Careful consideration was given to political issues and women's active participation in politics ("Ze spraw stowarzyszeń" 8-9).

In 1908, in the local "Suwalki Weekly", an article titled "Do Women Need Political Rights?" was published. The author, writing under the pseudonym of N.Z., claimed that the issue of women's involvement in public and, as a consequence, political life, cannot be omitted from the wide public discourse. He predicted that the statute of women in Poland would change due to many factors, not only local ones, but also as a result of social changes taking place in Europe and around the world. N.Z. also claimed that women deserve to be active members of politics because of their hard work and commitment in various important spheres of life (3-5). It seems that the women activists in Suwalki, under the influence of Anna Staniszewska and thanks to the support of Eliza Orzeszkowa, had a chance to see the social and gender changes taking place in Western Europe (Orzeszkowa 277-280). They appear to have had quite a considerable amount of theoretical knowledge on gender issues. At the same time, they still held the traditional view on the so-called "women's issue" and noticed the causes of their unequal status in themselves, their inactivity, their lack of interests outside their family or personal life.

There were two major approaches to women's involvement in public life. On the one hand, women's actions were praised and gained a lot of public appreciation. On the other hand, there was strong opposition to and critique of their actions. There was a tendency to divide women into two groups: the first group included women who became involved in social or even public life, the second group included those who remained passive and did not want or could not devote themselves to anything else except their personal lives. Among the intellectual circles in Suwalki, the dominant view on the gender equality issue was to support women in their aspirations. However, the majority of people inhabiting the area of Suwalki supported the traditional view of woman's position in society. This traditional role model imposed on women involvement in their family life, but restricted their public activity to charity work.

In conclusion Józefa Kisielnicka and Eliza Orzeszkowa radically influenced the patterns of public activity among women. Józefa Kisielnicka had the typical activities of a landlady living in the Polish northeastern province. She was involved in charity work and education. Eliza Orzeszkowa had far more liberal views on women, their position in society and involvement in public life. Her public involvement, literary activity and devotion to gender issues gained a lot of attention and appreciation from the liberal circles of the Polish intelligentsia inhabiting cities and towns in the northeastern territories of Poland. In their aspirations to achieve gender equality, the women activists

from Suwalki found support from their husbands who had liberal views and they appointed Eliza Orzeszkowa as their leader. The foundation of the Association for Gender Equality was a remarkable achievement for those times. It was common, not only among the women of the gentry class, but also typical of many representatives of the intelligentsia class, to see political life as a sphere of activity reserved exclusively to men. The two women writers set a new pattern of women's public involvement of women in the northeastern province of Poland. In their works, they dealt with women's everyday life, their attitudes towards social issues, and women's aspirations towards equality in society. Józefa Kisielnicka and Eliza Orzeszkowa had a great influence on developing public initiatives among the women inhabiting the province and they deserve to be known and remembered.

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MARGUERITE YOURCENAR OU L'ÉCRITURE EST-ELLE DE GENRE MASCULIN ?

ALINA SILVANA FELEA[1]

ABSTRACT. ***Marguerite Yourcenar or is writing masculine?*** Marguerite Yourcenar was the first woman to become member of the French Academy on March 6, 1980. Given the genuine value of Yourcenar's work, this decision is not surprising. It is, however, shocking how this decision was justified: she was a woman-writer who had the artistic force of a male-writer! Using Yourcenar's *Mémoires d'Hadrien*, we have attempted at finding out what this means.

Keywords*: literature, novel, writer, character, Roman emperor, man, woman, humanity, history.*

REZUMAT. ***Marguerite Yourcenar sau este scriitura de genul masculin?*** Marguerite Yourcenar a fost prima femeie care a devenit membru al Academiei franceze în 6 martie 1980. Dată fiind valoarea incontestabilă a operei lui Yourcenar, această decizie nu este deloc surprinzătoare. Şocant este însă modul în care a fost justificată această alegere de către juriu: scriitoarea în cauză scrie precum un bărbat! Folosind ca punct de plecare *Memoriile lui Adrian*, am încercat să înţelegem ce ar putea însemna acest lucru.

Cuvinte cheie: *literatură, roman, personaj, împărat roman, bărbat, femeie, umanitate, istorie.*

Le 6 mars 1980 Marguerite Yourcenar devenait la première femme élue à l'Académie française. C'était un fait sans précédent, inouï pour la vénérable institution qui suivait une tradition misogyne et n'acceptait que des hommes en qualité de membres. Mais la motivation de cette élection est encore plus inattendue, puisque le choix de la comission a été déterminé par la capacité de Yourcenar d'écrire « aussi bien qu'un homme » ! En 1980 Marguerite Yourcenar, cette brillante helléniste qui militait pour les valeurs

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d'un humanisme moderne, se trouvait à l'apogée de sa carrière littéraire. Elle était connue et reconnue non seulement dans le milieu artistique européen mais aussi dans celui américain où elle vivait depuis longtemps. Et puisqu'on veut apprendre ce qu'écrire « comme un homme » signifie (si cette chose est vraiment possible...), nous avons choisi nous rapporter à son chef d'oeuvre *Mémoires d'Hadrien*, roman qui s'est réjoui d'un succès international.

L'homme et l'homme-dieu

Dans ses « Carnets de notes » de *Mémoires d'Hadrien*, Marguerite Yourcenar cite une phrase inoubliable écrite par Flaubert « Les dieux n'étant plus, et le Christ n'étant pas encore, il y a eu, de Cicéron à Marc Aurèle, un moment unique où l'homme seul a été ». « Une grande partie de ma vie – ajoute l'écrivain – allait se passer à essayer de définir, puis à peindre, cet homme seul et d'ailleurs relié à tout » (p.321). Et elle a trouvé dans l'empereur romain, Hadrien, l'expression la plus pure, non seulement du génie et donc de l'unicité, mais aussi les traits qui nous rassemblent tous dans le destin commun de l'humanité. Il est vrai, en même temps qu'une affinité d'ordre personnelle a pu l'attirer vers cette figure historique imposante. Les préférences homosexuelles de l'empereur et son amour si profond et dramatique pour le beau Antinoüs ont fait assurément ce personnage encore plus intéressant à scruter pour cet auteur qui a eu à son tour ce penchant pour l'amour lesbien.

L'habileté artistique de Marguerite Yourcenar consiste dans le mélange subtil des traits qui fait du personnage principal de ce roman un homme avec ses qualités, ses défauts et ses vices, un génie et un dieu en même temps. Il s'agit d'un accord entre ces instances qui composent une personnalité historique devenue un personnage de roman non seulement crédible mais aussi exemplaire. Les mémoires d'Hadrien reconstituent un tracé existentiel depuis l'enfance du futur empereur jusqu'aux derniers jours de sa vie, un parcours quasi initiatique. On enregistre le progrès intelectuel et spirituel constant, l'apogée et puis la décadence de l'homme vaincu par la maladie. Il a été un réformateur génial de l'économie, de l'armée, de l'appareil d'état et il s'est attaché à remettre en ordre l'empire. Le système administratif a été réglementé par son *Edit perpétuel*, et il s'agit ici des réalités historiques reconstituées fidèlement par Marguerite Yourcenar qui fait une oeuvre d'érudition égale à celle de fiction. En bon et raffiné connaisseur de littérature et de poésie, lui même auteur de vers, art qu'il pratiquait à l'occasion, Hadrien en fait des remarques pertinentes. Il aimait aussi les arts visuels, la sculpture en spécial, l'architecture et l'urbanisme où il a la décision. « Je me sentais responsable de la beauté du monde » dit l'empereur esthète qui désirait la perfection pour « le beau corps de l'humanité » ! De plus, Hadrien sait qu'il a marqué définitivement

le destin du monde entier et qu'il a assuré ainsi l'immortalité de sa Rome : « Je me promettais d'éviter à ma Rome ce destin pétrifié d'une Thèbes, d'une Babylone ou d'une Tyr.(...) Aux corps physiques des nations et des races, aux accidents de la géographie et de l'histoire, aux exigences disparates des dieux ou des ancêtres, nous aurions à jamais superposé, mais sans rien détruire, l'unité d'une conduite humaine, l'empirisme d'une expérience sage. Rome se perpétuerait dans la moindre petite ville(...). Elle ne périrait qu'avec la dernière cité des hommes » (p.125). A tout pas dans ce roman on est à la rencontre d'une personnalité impressionnante par sa lucidité, intelligence, visionnarisme. L'empereur Hadrien qui refusait d'obéir au système et qui protestait contre la politique de conquêtes, accepte la guerre quand il est nécessaire, pourtant il aime la paix dans les rues, la paix aux frontières. Il est autoritaire et sans pitié, et il reconnaît plus tard l'erreur faite en 130 lorsqu'il a écrasé sans remords la révolte de Bar Kochba, en détruisant purement et simplement Jérusalem. Mais il n'est pas toujours inflexible et borné face aux compromis à faire. Il a une puissance presque absolue et l'intelligence de savoir utiliser « sa fortune ».

A quarante-quatre ans il commence à se sentir dieu, aussi « parfait » que sa nature lui permettait. Il s'imaginait secondant le divin:

> « J'étais l'un des segments de la roue, l'un des aspects de cette force unique engagée dans la multiplicité des choses, aigle et taureau, homme et cygne, phallus et cerveau tout ensemble, Protée qui est en même temps Jupiter » (p.159). Par conséquent, il accepte comme naturels les titres divins que les hommes lui accordent, Évergète, Olympien, Épiphane, Maître de Tout... Hadrien est-il tombé victime de sa propre grandeur et les délires du pouvoir se sont emparés de sa vie? A ses dires pourtant il continue d'être homme, conscient de sa nature vulnérable : « J'étais dieu, tout simplement, parce que j'étais homme » (p.160) et précisément parce qu'il avait lutté de son mieux pour cultiver « le sens divin dans l'homme, sans pourtant y sacrifier l'humain » (p.181). « La figure yourcenarienne d'Hadrien – souligne Paul-Laurent Assoun – dégage donc l'impression curieuse d'une souveraineté soucieuse de se maintenir au niveau de l'humain, un équilibre entre « impérialisme » et banalité » (p.22). N'oubliant pas cette dimension humaine de son être il ne risque pas de perdre le sens de la réalité. Quand même l'empereur, qui s'est considéré l'égal des dieux, dépasse ainsi les limites et commet un *hybris*, le péché qui attire la sanction. La mort par suicide d'Antinoüs, son bien-aimé avec lequel il a ressenti une telle félicité qu'il se croyait invincible, paraît être le prix qu'il doit payer pour cet excès qui avait fâché les dieux. Même s'il ne se rende pas compte en quoi a consisté sa faute, Hadrien est prêt à accepter qu'il a été pris par le vertige de son succès.

L'empereur romain Hadrien a été vraiment un individu aux vertus exceptionnelles, il a atteint une stature prestigieuse, c'est pour cette raison que Marguerite Yourcenar accorde toute l'attention à la vie personnelle de son

personnage aussi : « Si cet homme n'avait pas maintenu la paix du monde et rénové l'économie de l'empire, écrivait dans ses carnets de notes l'auteur, ses bonheurs et ses malheurs personnels m'intéresseraient moins » (p.335). Et Hadrien du livre de Yourcenar n'est pas seulement l'empereur, l'homme d'état qui conquiert presque le statut de dieu, il est aussi l'homme avec ses faiblesses, ses vulnérabilités, ses peurs... Les âges de la jeunesse et de la maturité ont été les âges de l'éducation, de l'expérience gouvernée par la raison, de l'accord parfait entre son corps et son esprit, les âges où tout était possible, où son corps lui obéissait docile, sans protester face aux conditions les plus dures de la vie de soldat, avec des campagnes épuisantes, et des conditions climatiques très sollicitantes. Il était courageux, il aimait le risque, il aimait la chasse qui le faisait se sentir « guépard aussi bien qu'empereur » (p.14). Hadrien apprend à connaître son corps qui le sert intelligemment et plus que ça il a l'intuition du réseau subtil des relations qui unissent l'esprit, l'intellect et le corps, le fait que même les rapports les plus intellectuels se manifestent à travers le système de signaux du corps. Les critiques ont parlé d'une oscillation du personnage entre l'épicurisme et le stoïcisme. Dans ses décisions politiques il s'avère stoïque, dans sa vie privée plutôt épicurien. En fait, il est une personne cérébrale et une nature sensuelle, émotionnelle, à la fois, attiré par la volupté et les délices de la vie soit qu'il s'agisse du plaisir sensuel de manger un fruit ou de boire un très bon vin, soit qu'il s'agisse des voluptés érotiques. Il s'abandonne éperdument à l'amour pour Antinoüs et sa souffrance lorsqu'il le perd prouve qu'il n'est point la personne égocentrique, préoccupée exclusivement de son bien être qu'il pourrait être grâce à son statut privilégié d'empereur. Pourtant il a des regrets tardifs, après la mort de son favori, puisqu'il n'a pas su observer qu'il se passait quelque chose avec Antinoüs, qu'il n'a pas pu empêcher l'acte extrême du suicide.

La mort de son préféré marque le début de la décadence de l'homme Hadrien. L'empereur garde tous ses attributs augustes et son autorité est intacte. Toutefois il constate que son corps ne supporte plus aussi bien que naguère les fatigues d'une campagne, qu'il commence à perdre sa souplesse d'esprit, sa curiosité d'autrefois pour tous les aspects de la vie intellectuelle se résume seulement à l'espionnage des lettres personnelles des gens de son entourage. L'insomnie, les maux de tête, les crises d'étouffement, l'épisode où les battements de son coeur se précipitent et puis cessent annoncent la maladie grave de coeur qui allait l'emporter. Il continue néanmoins d'être l'empereur responsable, conscient qu'il doit laisser un successeur digne de sa mission : diriger la moitié du monde... Et après la mort de Lucius, qui a été son premier choix, il s'arrête à Antonin qu'il estime sans l'aimer. Enfin, il lui reste la dernière « affaire » à régler : il se propose « d'entrer dans la mort les yeux ouverts... », la métaphore des « yeus ouverts » étant très chère à Marguerite Yourcenar qui l'utilise pas une seule fois dans son oeuvre...

On se trouve donc face à un personnage qui s'impose par sa complexité, par son syncrétisme, ses contrastes, la multitude d'éléments constitutifs. « Doué d'éminentes qualités intellectuelles et d'une vaste culture, Hadrien est un monde de contrastes : généraux mais inconstant, simple mais méprisant, sobre et fastueux, magnanime et colereux, les historiens de son temps saluent son intelligence plus que sa grandeur d'âme (...) Un personnage à qui Rome dut un demi-siècle de paix et de prospérité (...) Une personnalité aux multiples facettes » (Catherine Malinas p.40). Et il s'agit non seulement de son portrait mais de son tracé existentiel aussi ; le personnage évolue dans le temps. *Varius Multiplex Multiformis*, c'est le titre de la première partie du roman qui rassemble des termes sémantiquement voisins, presque redondants pour mettre en évidence non seulement la diversité du personnage mais aussi l'abondance de ses idées, la mobilité de sa pensée. « Ma versatilité, avoue le personnage, m'était nécessaire, j'étais multiple par calcul, ondoyant par jeu » (p.72). En effet le personnage est réellement fascinant par la multitude des aspects qui lui construit l'identité qui a une évidente nature composite. Il est le résultat de vingt ans de lectures, de méditations préalables, de travail effectif en quelques reprises (entre 1924 et 1926, 1934 et 1936-1937). Marguerite Yourcenar, évitant avec intelligence la pensée unique, la vision unidimensionnelle, est-elle la romancière qui écrit et construit son personnage effectivement comme sa contrepartie masculine, comme un romancier ? Assurément son oeuvre a de la force et l'autoritarisme manifesté par Yourcenar dans la vie civile se lit en palimpseste dans les lignes du roman. Pourtant ce n'est pas la « virilité » de son écriture ou la présupposée virilité qui l'impose comme une valeur.

Le sens de l'authenticité, la distance et le rapprochement de son personnage

Les « Carnets de notes » de l'auteur sont un document très précieux qui nous aide à comprendre tous les efforts qu'elle a fait pour construire un personnage non seulement viable mais immortel. Toutes les recherches, la documentation que la romancière a faite, la quête du point de vue du livre (elle se compare à un peintre qui cherche la bonne perspective), les années nécessaires « pour apprendre à calculer exactement les distances » entre l'empereur et l'égo de Yourcenar sont la preuve indubitable du désir de mieux cerner le personnage, de la volonté de cet écrivain de s'effacer de l'écriture pour laisser une seule voix à y résonner, celle de l'empereur. Il est vrai, c'était une démarche extrêmement difficile, parce que l'auteur a eu besoin du temps et elle a travaillé assidûment pour organiser « ce monde vu et entendu par un homme ». Marguerite Yourcenar a fait une oeuvre d'érudition et un roman magique à la fois puisqu'elle s'est transbordée dans la pensée de cet empereur,

elle a refait, comme l'affirmait, « du dedans ce que les archéologues du XIXe siècle ont fait du dehors » (« Carnets de notes » p.327). Il s'agissait de « la prise de possession d'un monde intérieur » et de la capacité de « vivre en symbiose avec le personnage » pour le comprendre et pour le reconstruire à l'echelle de sa valeur car elle écrivait « la vie d'un grand homme. De là, plus de respect de la vérité, plus d'attention, et, de ma part, plus de silence ». (« Carnets de notes » p.341). La vérité dont la romancière parle ici est tout simplement la vérité historique parce qu'elle s'appuyait sur une documentation historique précise. Le roman a des sources que Yourcenar même indique : Dion Cassius et L'*Histoire Auguste*. Pourtant il y a une autre vérité qu'elle n'espère pas vraiment la retrouver, « Il en va de cette vérité comme de toutes les autres : on se trompe *plus ou moins* » parce que « Tout nous échappe, et tous, et nous-mêmes. La vie de mon père m'est plus inconnue que celle d'Hadrien. Ma propre existence, si j'avais à l'écrire, serait reconstituée par moi du dehors, péniblement, comme celle d'un autre » (« Carnets de notes » p.331). Ce qui lui reste est seulement l'authenticité qui n'est pas – la romanicère elle-même l'indique – la même chose que la vérité ! « La vie de l'art a l'avantage d'offrir au lecteur les conditions d'une authenticité véritable, ce qui n'est pas toujours le cas dans la vraie vie. La vie en société, la vie réelle est chargée de contraintes, de méfiances et de mensonges. Dans toutes les civilisations on se compose une contenance, on se donne un look pour se vêtir d'une image valorisante et, ce faisant, on s'ampute de soi-même. Ces travestissements ne sont pas nécessaires en art ».(Münch, p.116). Hadrien le personnage n'est assurément pas l'image-miroir de la personne historique, cette chose est impossible puisque même la vérité personnelle de chacun d'entre nous est inconnaissable. Néanmoins, en comprenant ce caractère, en déduisant la configuration de ses actes par l'analyse des résultats de son règne et des sources documentaires, elle peut le reconstruire. Par quelle voie ? Les critiques considèrent qu'il s'agit d'un dédoublement qui institue l'écriture yourcenarienne (Paul-Laurent Assoun) et que derrière le narrateur fictif il y a le narrateur réel. C'est pour cette raison qu'on peut parler d'un entrelacement de l'égo d'Hadrien à celui de la romancière. Pourtant le personnage de Yourcenar n'est pas calqué sur elle. L'écrivain a réussi à prendre ses distances du sujet (qu'elle choisit quand même par sympathie et affinités) et s'est impliquée à la fois, en prêtant à l'empereur ses façons de penser ou de sentir. Un Hadrien parent peut-être d'Hadrien réel, sa version fictive mais pas mensongère. N'oublions pourtant pas que Marguerite Yourcenar regardait avec révolte la « grossièreté » de ceux qui lui disaient « Hadrien, c'est vous ». (« Carnets de notes », p.341). Elle refusait donc l'identification avec son personnage.

Parmi toutes les oeuvres de Marguerite Yourcenar, il y a trois romans, *Alexis ou le traité du vain combat* (1929), *Le coup de grâce* (1939) et les *Mémoires d'Hadrien* (1951) écrits à la première personne et avec des héros

narrateurs hommes. Peut-on conclure de ce fait que l'écriture yourcenarienne est masculinisée ? Il est vrai que l'écrivain qui a été élevé et éduqué par son père (la mère est morte à quelques jours après la naissance de Marguerite), a subi une influence indubitable de son père et sa perspective du monde s'avère marquée par l'empreinte masculine. On dit que l'écrivain avait une tendance à dominer dans la vie personnelle, une sorte d'autoritarisme dont la source est la même, son père. D'ici à la conclusion que la figure paternelle ou le « complexe paternel » organise essentiellement son écriture n'était plus qu'un pas. De surcroît, il y a un autre aspect à mentionner dans sa biograhie. La bi-sexualité de Marguerite l'a conduite, étrangement à s'éprendre, au moins deux fois dans sa vie, des hommes qui aimaient....les hommes. Vers la trentième de Yourcenar l'aimé était André Fraigneau, son éditeur chez Grasset et vers sa quatre-vingtième année, après la mort de Grace Frick, sa compagne américaine, le jeune Jerry Wilson, qui meurt du sida à 35 ans avant elle, comme Antinoüs avant l'empereur.

Dans une étude jungienne, Irène Moillo explique cette propension yourcenarienne vers le pôle masculin : « Qui parle en Marguerite Yourcenar ? L'inconscient personnel mais aussi le Transpersonnel. Retrouvant le passé, l'inconscient personnel le recrée, lui donnant une force et une consistance bien énigmatiques. Que sont ces Mémoires ? Un rapt de la parole qui conduit Marguerite Yourcenar à se projeter dans une figure masculine, ce qui nous permet de voir à l'oeuvre l'instance archétypique de l'ANIMUS.(...) Il est tout aussi évident que Marguerite Yourcenar semble avoir eu un fort *Animus*, elle sut tenir compte de sa spiritualité masculine, de sa disposition au *logos*, bien intégré dans son être. Ces *Mémoires* montrent que Marguerite Yourcenar a pu s'affirmer face à « l'homme intérieur », puisqu'il est devenu force créatrice » (p.60). Un *Animus* proéminent. Il est possible, oui, de parler d'une profondeur spirituelle redevable comme le dit toujours Irène Moillo à « l'homme intérieur » de la *psyché* féminine (p.61). Mais il est fort possible aussi, dans cette logique et si on suit la même lignée jungienne que la force créatrice d'un homme soit redevable à une *Anima* puissante, la dimension féminine de sa psyché ! Et alors notre écrivain se trouve au pôle opposé. Marguerite Yourcenar a compris si bien l'âme masculine, mais à force de cet argument son écriture n'est pas devenue masculine, purement et simplement parce que cette chose n'a pas du sens autant qu'*Animus* et *Anima* participent d'une partie égale à la création artistique, en général parlant. Dans sa personnalité artistique s'équilibrent harmonieusement féminité et virilité et c'est justement parce qu'elle a eu la science et le talent de construire son sujet et son objet d'étude comme tous les grands écrivains le font que son écriture figure parmi les valeurs littéraires universelles, de patrimoine. Il est très évident que les oppositions binaires qui se sont perpétuées dans la culture occidentale depuis les lois d'Aristote (une

personne est soit homme soit femmme, soit de couleur soit blanche, soit maître soit esclave...) sont coercitives. Les écrivains et les critiques féministes ont cherché justement à annuler ces oppositions strictes et mettre à leur place la vision de l'unité. D'autant plus que les différences et les catégories ne sont pas naturelles, elles ne tiennent pas de l'essence humaine mais sont plutôt des constructions idéologiques et culturelles.

L'écriture d'art n'a pas de genre, le sexe n'étant pas en matière de création littéraire qu'un détail, un fait contingent, irrélevant. Ou peut être justement *l'écriture féminine*, dont parlait Hélène Cixous, qui imposait ce concept, insiste sur la nécessité de contredire toute une histoire de l'écriture qui a coïncidé avec la tradition phallocentrique. En revanche, la bi-sexualité, vue comme caractéristique de la femme (l'exemple que l'oeuvre et la biographie de Yourcenar offre est très édifiant) est l'indice de l'annulation d'une vision restrictive qui oppose radicalement le masculin au féminin. Il n'existe donc pas une liaison directe ou un conditionnement entre la qualité de l'écriture et la manifestation plus forte de l'*Animus* ou de l'*Anima* dans la pensée créatrice! Il y a en fait une force vitale qui arrose les uns des esprits humains et l'idée de les partager après le critère du sexe lorsqu'il s'agit de la littérature n'a aucun sens.

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REASON AND MATRIMONIAL POLITICS IN THE LONG EIGHTEENTH CENTURY[1]

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ABSTRACT. ***Reason and Matrimonial Politics in the Long Eighteenth Century.*** Eighteenth-century women writers were particularly conscious of the restricted role their female characters had to play when 'entering the world.' The marriage market and the ways to deal with it were present in most of their texts from the beginning of the century onwards. Novelists such as Mary Davys, Sarah Fielding, and Eliza Haywood tackled these issues in their different fictional writings. The gender perspective will form the theoretical framework of this paper in order to analyze literary texts by the above-mentioned eighteenth-century women writers.

Keywords*: matrimonial politics, eighteenth-century fiction, Mary Davys, Sarah Fielding, Eliza Haywood, David Simple, Betsy Thoughtless, Familiar Letters*

REZUMAT. ***Raţiune şi politici matrimoniale în lungul secol al XVIII-lea*****.** Scriitoarele secolului al XVIII-lea erau extrem de conştiente de rolul limitat pe care personajele lor feminine îl puteau juca când 'intrau în societate.' Piaţa matrimonială precum şi modurile de adaptare la aceasta sunt prezente în majoritatea textelor acestor scriitoare, încă de la începutul secolului. Romanciere, ca Mary Davys, Sarah Fielding şi Eliza Haywood, au abordat aceaste probleme în diversele lor scrieri literare. Studiile de gen formează cadrul theoretic al lucrării de faţă care îşi propune să analizeze operele scriitoarelor menţionate mai sus.

Cuvinte cheie: *politici matrimoniale, beletristică din secolul al XVIII-lea, Mary Davys, Sarah Fielding, Eliza Haywood, David Simple, Betsy Thoughtless, Familiar Letters*

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Eighteenth-century novel writers explored the idea of emancipation from very many different perspectives, which did not necessarily include full independence, but only different steps which would make women advance in that direction. In this line, some of them simply played with the idea of new relationships between men and women, which involved only friendship and not necessarily any other purpose, and considered that reason should not be contrary to matrimonial politics, and that heroines were the ones to have an opinion on their future lives in literature. The desire for emancipation is present in literature by women in the long eighteenth century. It may be reflected either overtly or covertly, but is in the origin of most texts written in this period, whether fictional or philosophical. Most of these novels depicted middle-class ladies, often belonging to the lower gentry. They suffered both for not being rich enough to be able to choose whatever role they wanted to play in life, and for not being allowed to have a professional life either, which would eventually secure their personal and social independence to make decisions of their own. An early example in essay writing is offered by Mary Astell, who, in *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies of Great Britain* (1694), advocates the constitution of a female community in which women could be rulers and not only subsidiary members in the nuclei they lived in, usually their families. This position may seem somewhat radical for a rather conservative lady, but it may be understood both as a symbol of desperation and of the search for an intellectual way out for the oppressive *status quo* for women, and this female utopia would be developed later by Sarah Scott in a novel, *A Description of Millenium Hall* (1762).

A case in point is Mary Davys (1674-1732), an Irish writer who used women as the central element in her novels, and who explored how they were, or were not, able to lead their own lives. In *Familiar Letters betwixt a Gentleman and a Lady* (1725), she poses that question by means of an epistolary novel. In it the hero leaves the city of London and goes to the country for some time while she agrees to continue, albeit in letter form, the conversations she was usually having with a male character in London. The condition imposed by Berina for the correspondence to be accepted was that it had to be on the grounds of friendship. It starts in this manner, but Artander, the male character, changes the tone and the subject matter of the discourse progressively in such a way that she is forced to follow the paths designed by him or lose the otherwise fruitful intellectual relationship. She advocates freedom for women and rejects both marriage and love, equated in the novel –respectively- to "a Yoke that galls for life" (270), or to "a bait gorged by a fool" (307). The novel finishes somewhat abruptly without any clear indication of the future nature of the relationship between the two characters, but with the idea that the social pressure put on women to accept unequal alliances with men through marriage

is so strong that it cannot be avoided. The only possible escape so far belongs merely to the world of ideas, but without any possible implementation in the real world, as Berina laments: "but then the dismal Effects of not loving, to be call'd Ill-natur'd, and an old Maid, who would not rather chuse to be undone, than lie under such scandalous Epithets?" (297). Being a single woman had already been described by Daniel Defoe in *Moll Flanders* (1722) as "that frightful State of Life call'd an old Maid" (75).

Another interesting approach to the discourse of emancipation in early eighteenth-century novels is provided by Eliza Haywood's *Love in Excess* (1719-20). In it we are confronted with the plight of women, and how difficult it is for them to enjoy emotional and erotic pleasure without being socially ostracised for having lost their virtue. In this text we are confronted with a male character belonging to the lower aristocracy, who follows the pattern of the rake in Restoration drama, i.e. a male predator who takes please in seducing young women who want to explore their emotional entrance into the world and, ultimately, are socially rejected due to it. In this novel, young women surrender to desire either unconsciously or while dreaming but, after recovering their conscience, they suddenly abandon their active role in love and go back to their negation of sexual pleasure, thus following the social rules imposed by patriarchy.

The topic of women's emancipation is dealt with by Eliza Haywood in a more explicit manner in the maturity of her literary career. In *Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751) we are confronted with a heroine who wants to be independent and not to get married, as marriage is viewed rather negatively for women in the text:

> Mr Munden's notions of marriage had always been extremely unfavourable to the ladies – he considered a wife no more than an upper-servant, bound to study and obey, in all things, the will of him to whom she had given her hand: and how obsequious and submissive soever he appeared when a lover, had fixed his resolution to render himself absolute master when he became a husband (470).

Another instance of marriage perceived by some female characters as an absolutely unfair deal for them is the following:

> 'I wonder,' continued she, 'what can make the generality of women so fond of Marrying? It looks to me an infatuation; just as if it were not a greater pleasure to be courted, complimented, admired, and addressed, by a number, than be confined to one, who, from a slave, becomes a master; and perhaps, uses his authority in a manner disagreeable enough. […] they want to deprive us of all the pleasures of life, just when one begins to have a relish for them. (451-2)

Haywood's heroines are strongly pressed to accept marriage, in order to have someone who would help them in their powerless situation in life. Nonetheless, they have a crystal-clear perception that friendship is better than

marriage for women, as equality is possible between friends, but not between husband and wife, or even between men and women in general, as can be seen in the following excerpts: "'It is strange,' said she [Betsy] to herself 'that a woman cannot indulge in the liberty of conversing freely with a man, without being persuaded by him to do everything he would have her [do]'" (93), since the capacities of women are not socially valued: "[I]t was a pity she was not a man –she would have made a rare minister of State" (108). Due to the double standard applied to women, they feel that they are forced to develop a strategy of feigned submission in order to subvert the *status quo*, as can be seen in Haywood's *The Female Spectator* (1744-46):

> A modest wife should never affect the virago, and for her own sake to be wary, even the most provoked, that nothing in her behaviour should bear the least resemblance with such wretches [prostitutes just described]. I have in a former *Spectator*, taken notice, that it is not by force our sex can hope to maintain their influence over the men, and I again repeat it as the most infallible maxim, that whenever we would truly conquer, we seem to yield (2 : 179 in Schofield, 1985: 110)

Some heroines may not consider marriage uninteresting but they do object to their not having a say in the choice of husband. In Sarah Fielding's *David Simple* (1744) Cynthia rejects the assumption that young women should accept their father's opinions regarding marriage propositions without their own opinions being considered:

> 'One Day, at Dinner, my Father told me, *if I would be a* good Girl, *I should be* married *very soon.* I laugh'd and said, I hoped, I should see the Man who was to be my Husband, at least an Hour before-hand. *Yes, yes*, replied he, *you shall see him time enough; but it suffices I have an Offer for you, which I think to your Advantage, and I expect your Obedience; you Know, your Mother always obeyed me, and I will be Master of my own Family.* (107)

An instance of dramatic irony when rejecting her father's authority in arranging a marriage without ever having asked her about it is also seen in her subsequent words:

> […] I was greatly surprised after dinner, at my Father's calling me out of the Room, and telling me, *that was the Gentleman he designed for my Husband; that he expected me to receive him as such, and he would take the first Opportunity to leave us together, that my Lover might explain himself.* […] I had so ridiculous an Idea of being thus shut up with a Stranger, in order to be made Love to, that I could not resist the Temptation of making a little Diversion with a Person who appeared to me in so despicable a Light. The Gentleman took three or four strides across the Room, looked out of the Window once or twice, and then turned to me, with an *aukward* […] Bow, and an *irresistable* Air, (as I fancy he thought it) and made me

> the polite Compliment, of telling me, *that he supposed my Father had informed me that they two were agreed on a* ***Bargain***. I replied, I did not know my Father was of any **Trade**, or had any **Goods** to dispose of; but if he had, and they could agree on their Terms, he should have my Consent, for I never interfered with any Business of my Father's (108, boldface mine).

In this excerpt the heroine, a member of the gentry, reacts against her being used as a commodity in a marriage transaction by means of the new language and values used by the emerging commercial bourgeoisie. However, the gentleman goes on with his humiliating proposal using insulting economic terms:

> But he soon recollected himself, for he had the Assurance of a Man, who from knowing he has a good *Fortune*, thinks he does every Woman an *Honour* he *condescends* to speak to; and *assured me, I must interfere in his Business, as it more particularly concerned me. In short, Madam*, continued he, *I have seen you two or three times, altho' you did not know it; I like your Person, hear you have a sober Education, think it time to have an* **Heir to my Estate**, *and am willing, if you consent to it, to make you my Wife; notwithstanding your Father tells me, he can't let you down above* ***two thousand Pounds****. I am none of those nonsensical Fools that can whine and make romantick Love, I leave that to* younger Brothers, ***let my Estate speak for me****; I shall expect nothing from you, but that* ***you retire*** *into the Country with me, and* ***take care of my Family.I must inform you, I shall have every Thing in order; for I love good*** **Eating and Drinking,** ***and have been used to have my own Humour from my Youth, which, if you will observe and comply with****, I shall be very kind to you, and take care of the* main Chance *for you and your Children.* (108-109, boldface mine)

After such a proposition, which she considers appropriate for an upper Servant, and that brings about seclusion, and taking care of him and his children in his own way, and not taking care of her desires at all, she cannot help equating it to prostitution:

> 'I could not help reflecting on the Folly of those Women who *prostitute themselves, (for* ***I shall always call it Prostitution, for a Woman who has Sense, and has been tolerably educated****, to marry a Clown or a Fool)* and give up that Enjoyment, which every one who has taste enough to employ their time, can procure for themselves, tho' **they should be obliged to live ever so retired, only to know they have married a Man who has an Estate**; [...]. (109-10, boldface mine)

This scene in *David Simple* may well be an antecedent for Elizabeth Bennet's reaction when receiving a marriage proposal by Mr. Collins in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Both texts present parallel situations, a previous marriage arrangement, an absence of love on the part of all partners -which is deemed to be the only necessary element for the female characters- and the subsequent clear rejection by the heroines by means of irony.

In *The Lives and Cleopatra and Octavia* Sarah Fielding developed the analysis of the role of women and how their emancipation and their falling in love should not be opposing ideas, and proved that only the reconciliation of both elements would result in the future happiness of the female characters. In this novel the two women characters represent both sides of a coin. Octavia is so virtuous and generous that she loses even her self-respect and renounces her intelligence in order to regain her husband's love and her emotional stability. Cleopatra's vanity and power ambition makes her prostitute her actions. Both women are criticized in the novel: the former for possessing an excessive good will but lacking personal autonomy, and the latter due to having used perverse methods in order to have an independent life. Thus, characters that use freedom in a wrong way are punished in this text: Cleopatra dies, and Octavia is rewarded for her virtue when she regains her freedom through widowhood.

Another approach to emancipation taken by female novelists and essay-writers was not that of advocating an equally accepted marriage, but a position in favour of being single. It was not widely accepted by society, as women were considered to be single due to circumstances or out of necessity, but not by choice. As that desire was considered an extravagant luxury for a girl who did not possess a fortune of her own, she suffered every possible pressure so that she would accept a wedlock arrangement, and not be a nuisance to her family all her life. However, for women spinsterhood might be considered both positive and negative at the same time. It was positive in that it offered them some autonomy, although somewhat unsafe if not belonging to the wealthy, as women would be condemned to be dependent all their lives. Eighteenth-century patriarchal credos perceived spinsterhood as dangerous, although Defoe tackled the issue again in a positive way, albeit ironic, in *Roxana* (1724), in which it can be read: "while a woman was single, … she was controul'd by none, because accountable to none, and was in subjection to none… while she was thus single she was her own …" (148-49)

Sarah Fielding, an eminent eighteenth-century novelist and critic belonging to Samuel Richardson's literary circle, wrote a piece of literary criticism on Richardson's *Clarissa,* entitled *Remarks on* Clarissa (1749), in which -referring to one of the characters in the novel- she remarks "She thought a single Life, in all Probability, would be for her the happiest; cherishing in her heart that Characteristic of a noble Mind, especially in a Woman, of wishing … to pass through Life unnoted." (52) However, financial instability and dependence was a constant for many single women, and particularly for women writers, as Sarah Fielding herself showed in her "Advertisement to the Reader," printed only in the first edition of *The Adventures of David Simple* (1744), "Perhaps the best Excuse that can be made for a Woman's venturing to write at all, is that which really produced this Book –Distress in her Circumstances- which she could not remove by any other Means in her Power. If it should meet with Success, it will be the only

good Fortune she has ever known." This author deals in her novel *The History of Ophelia* (1760) with the explicit participation of women both in private and public spheres, such as in governing the 'res publica,' although being fully aware that they would not be allowed to do so: "What, you're teizing Miss with your **Politicks**, I suppose, What the Devil have women to do with the Nation! You want a Petticoat Government, I warrant? Was I a King, I would make a Universal Salic Law, that should not allow you the Government of your own Lap-Dogs." (175, my emphasis) In fact, the main character in the novel is so deprived of freedom both mentally and physically in the houses in which she lives as a recluse that she considers either accepting slavery or committing suicide. Another case in point is that of Frances Sheridan's *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, in which the heroine – ironically enough- has to accept patriarchal roles imposed by her mother. Although the young girl has moments of vision in which she identifies the problem and a possible solution, no way out of an unacceptable marriage is available to her.

This emancipation debate was present in the long eighteenth century and many writers approached it in various ways. For instance, Jane Collier dealt with the possible ways single women of a certain rank had to earn their living and be somewhat autonomous, namely being ladies' companions. Their position is so dependent in the household that they are rated by Collier as being in a lower position than servants: "There are many methods for young men … to acquire a genteel maintenance; but for a girl I know not one way of support that does not by the esteem of the world, throw her below the rank of the gentlewoman" (Jane Collier, *An Essay on the Art of Ingeniously Tormenting* (1753), quoted by Jill Grey, *Governess* 14), "[the servant] receives wages, and the humble companion receives none; the servant is most part of the day out of your sight; the humble companion is always at hand to receive every cross word that rises in your mind…" (58). Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) summarized her position in the phrases: "Unable to work, ashamed to beg" (157). Unsurprisingly, Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* would follow the path trodden by antedating female writers.

As a conclusion, it can be said that emancipation was an ongoing verbal controversy in the so-called Age of Reason. This leads us to think that schizophrenia is present in some eighteenth-century texts as the plight of women is clearly delineated, but no easy solution is offered to the heroines, other than playing a socially-acceptable role that does not offer them any personal happiness. As the long eighteenth century progressed, although some texts envisaged solutions and possible ways for the emancipation of women, most of them were unable to provide alternative ways of life, thus anticipating nineteenth- and even twentieth-century heroines, who were -more often than not- unable to cope with their lives and with what society offered them as fixed, standard roles.

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TRADUCTRICES ROUMAINES AU XIX^{E} SIECLE

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ABSTRACT. ***Romanian Female Translators in the Nineteenth Century.*** This study aims at presenting briefly the most representative female translators' life and activity. They became famous for offering Romanian versions of many works belonging to European literature. Their option for women's literature – often connected to their journalistic or teaching activity – was presented only to the extent of its relevancy. Special interest is given to the publication of these translations both in books and in the journals of the time or their presence on the Romanian stages.

Keywords*: female translator, women's literature, francophone world, cultural in-between, woman's status, girls' education, Catinca Sâmboteanca, Constanța Dunca-Schiau, Maria Flechtenmacher.*

REZUMAT. ***Traducătoare române în secolul al XIX-lea.*** Studiul de față își propune să prezinte succint viața și activitatea câtorva dintre cele mai reprezentative traducătoare care și-au legat numele de pătrunderea în versiune românească a unei bogate serii de opere aparținând literaturii europene. Opțiunea unora dintre ele pentru literatura feminină, adesea legată de activitatea lor publicistică sau în domeniul învățământului, este reliefată în măsura în care este considerată relevantă. Un interes deosebit este acordat publicării nu doar în volume, ci și în presa vremii a acestor traduceri, sau a reprezentării lor pe scenele românești.

Cuvinte cheie*: traducătoare, literatură feminină, francofonie, intermediari culturali, statutul femeii, educația fetelor, Catinca Sâmboteanca, Constanța Dunca-Schiau, Maria Flechtenmacher.*

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La littérature féminine, soit-elle originale, soit-elle sous la forme des adaptations et traductions littéraires, n'a pas joui dans l'histoire et la critique littéraire roumaine de la faveur dont l'essor contemporain des études de genre semble la combler. Longtemps ignorées par le canon officiel, traitées souvent avec plus de rigueur que leurs contemporains masculins ou même sciemment négligées, les Roumaines qui se sont dédiées, la plume à la main, à prouver qu'elles valaient bien, dans le domaine des traductions, leurs contemporains masculins, sont souvent des figures romanesques et attachantes, possédant parfois une vraie formation professionnelle, allant jusqu'aux études, parfois de niveau supérieur, à Iassy, Bucarest, mais aussi à Paris. Leur contribution au XIXe siècle au processus d'intégration culturelle de la Roumanie dans l'espace européen mérite aujourd'hui d'être réévaluée, en lui accordant des dimensions plus proches de ce que fut la réalité.

Leurs traductions des œuvres littéraires étrangères en roumain (mais aussi leurs commentaires personnels inspirés par ces lectures[2]), publiées dans les journaux et revues ou en volumes, a largement servi à la diffusion de la littérature étrangère dans les milieux cultivés roumains. La francophonie des lettrées roumaines est restée leur voie royale d'accès à l'espace littéraire européen (francophonie qui les mena, dans certains cas, jusqu'à la production littéraire originale[3]), mais souvent elles précisent aussi qu'elles traduisent directement de l'allemand ou de l'italien. Elles se sont dédiées à construire par leur activité de traductrices, de journalistes, de professeures, d'actrices, une sorte d'espace culturel européen, une République des Lettres plus ouverte à la perspective féminine, à ses goûts et à ses intérêts. Si leurs préoccupations de traductrices n'excluaient point les hommes et leurs œuvres, elles s'ouvraient en revanche de manière significative au niveau de leurs lectures aux créations des autres femmes[4], comme le prouvent également leurs articles sur G. Sand (Maria Rosetti[5]), Mme de Staël (Constanţa Dunca-Schiau[6]) ou Mme de Sévigné (Maria Flechtenmacher[7]).

[2] Dont j'ai donné un bref aperçu dans mon article « Des femmes par des femmes : la réception de la littérature féminine par des écrivaines roumaines au 19e siècle » (*Caiete critice*, 6(284)/ 2011, pp. 56-61).

[3] Aux noms connus d'Hélène Vacaresco, Anna de Noailles, Marthe Bibesco, il faudrait ajouter peut-être bien d'autres écrivaines moins connues et pourtant jouissant d'une certaine notoriété, comme Dora d'Istria, Hérmione Asaki-Quinet, Iulia Hasdeu ou bien Constanţa Dunca-Schiau.

[4] Voir le tableau ci-dessous où, pour différencier les auteurs traduits d'après leur genre (dans le but de montrer en quelle mesure nos traductrices étaient intéressées par les ouvrages réalisés par des femmes), j'ai ajouté un « F » au nombre d'écrivaines et un « M » au nombre d'écrivains qui avaient intéressés chacune de nos traductrices.

[5] La chronique a été publiée sous le pseudonyme *Elena* dans le journal *Românul,* les nos. 130-131, pp 516-517 et 519-520. Voir aussi *Bibliografia relaţilor literaturii române cu literaturile străine în periodice,* sous la direction de Ioan Lupu et Cornelia Stefănescu, t. II, Bucarest, Ed. Academiei, 1982, p. 53, entrée 8260. Voir aussi Ileana Mihaila, « Le rôle des idées politiques dans la réception de G. Sand en Roumanie », dans *George Sand lue à l'étranger – Recherches nouvelles* no. 3, Actes du Colloque d'Amsterdam réunis par Suzan van Dijk, CRIN 30, 1995, pp. 68-79.

[6] « Cum se ucide o femeie ilustră », dans *Amicul Familiei,* 1864, nos.13-14, p. 503.

[7] Dans son magazine *Femeia Română*, an III, le 15 juin 1880, p. 1.

En tant que lectrices, elles semblent aussi avoir déterminé, par leur demande, une traduction plus significative des ouvrages féminins[8] ou, tout simplement, des œuvres qui pouvaient les intéresser par leur sujet. En ce sens il faut aussi songer à elles comme à un facteur déterminant dans la production littéraire du XIX^e siècle roumain, originale, ou d'adaptation, ou traduction.

Il faut ajouter que si une telle recherche est aujourd'hui envisageable dans l'espace culturel roumain c'est grâce notamment à la réalisation d'une bibliographie intégrale de la presse roumaine du 19^e siècle (continuée, par ailleurs, pour la première moitié du 20^e siècle)[9], qui permet une approche assez complète et qui puisse correspondre aux exigences d'une recherche philologique. La parution de quelques bons dictionnaires de la littérature roumaine[10] et de quelques histoires de la littérature roumaines[11] rend aujourd'hui possible une telle entreprise, qui reste néanmoins pleine de surprises et d'imprévu, car les fonds des bibliothèques, souvent rendus incomplets par les vicissitudes du temps et de l'histoire, sont d'accès difficile, surtout pour les périodiques. Quant aux archives, très mal organisées et

[8] Voir, en ce sens, Carmen Duţu, *Masculin-feminin in romanul romanesc postpasoptist. O abordare de gen,* Timisoara : Ed. Brumar, 2011.

[9] Les ouvrages qui nous permettent aussi bien une approche statistique qu'une analyse nuancée des cas les plus représentatifs sont *Bibliografia analitică a periodicelor româneşti* [La Bibliographie analytique des périodiques roumains], réalisée par Ioan Lupu, Nestor Camariano et Ovidiu Papadima, Bucureşti : Ed. Academiei, 1966-1972, deux volumes ayant trois tomes chacun (mais dont seuls les deux tomes 3 sont réservés à la réception des littératures étrangères), *Bibliografia literaturii române cu literaturile straine în periodice (1859-1918)* [La Bibliographie des relations de la littérature roumaine avec les littératures étrangères dans la presse périodique (1859-1918)], Bucureşti : Ed. Academiei, 1980-1985, 3 vols, réalisée sous la direction de Zoe Dumitrescu-Buşulenga, qui signe la Préface, ouvrage collectif (Ioan Lupu, Luminiţa Beiu-Palade, Ana-Maria Brezuleanu, Catrinel Pleşu, Michaela Şchiopu, Cornelia Ştefanescu et Ileana Verzea) et *Bibliografia literaturii române cu literaturile straine în periodice (1919-1944*) [La Bibliographie des relations de la littérature roumaine avec les littératures étrangères dans la presse périodique (1919-1944)], ouvrage collectif (Ana-Maria Brezuleanu, Ileana Mihăilă, Michaela Şchiopu, Cornelia Ştefanescu, Viorica Nişcov, Préface (t. 1) Dan Grigorescu, Préface (t. 10) par Eugen Simion), 10 vols. Bucureşti : Ed. Saeculum, 1997-2009.

[10] Il faut mentionner tout d'abord *Dicţionarul literaturii române de la origini până la 1900* [Le dictionnaire de la littérature roumaine des origines jusqu'à 1900], réalisé par un collectif de chercheurs de l'Institut de linguistique, histoire littéraire et folklore de Iaşi, sous l'égide de l'Académie Roumaine (Bucureşti: Ed. Academiei, 1979), qui non seulement offre des informations précieuses sur beaucoup d'écrivaines considérées mineures et normalement exclues du *canon*, mais qui réserve aussi une place à part aux traductions des écrivains étrangers, en ajoutant à chaque nom la liste des noms des traducteurs roumains (mais pas d'autres détails sur les traductions elles-mêmes), auquel s'ajoute le monumental *Dicţionar General al Literaturii Române* [Dictionnaire général de la littérature roumaine], réalisé par un collectif sous la direction d'Eugen Simon et sous l'égide de l'Académie Roumaine (Bucureşti: Ed. Univers Enciclopedic,7 vols., 2004-2009)

[11] La meilleure entre toutes reste *Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent* [Histoire de la littérature roumaine des origines jusqu'au présent], Bucureşti : Fundaţia regală pentru literatură şi artă, 1941, œuvre inégalable due à George Călinescu (rééd. 1988).

entretenues par le Ministère de l'Intérieur à l'époque communiste, elles sont souvent inabordables ou inutilisables ou dispersées, ce qui rend fort compliquée la reconstitution du parcours biographique de nos écrivaines, dont les biographies, rarement, voire même nullement banales, offriraient un cadre remarquable à l'analyse de leur activité littéraire.

Je me suis proposé donc de montrer quelles ont été ces Roumaines qui, malgré le manque quasi-absolu de tradition en ce domaine chez nous[12], se sont préoccupées, dès le début du XIXe siècle, à ouvrir à leurs contemporaines et surtout à leur postérité la voie royale des intermédiaires culturels qui assurent par leurs traductions une meilleure connaissance entre les différentes cultures européennes, en prouvant largement leur capacité d'être à la hauteur de cette tâche.

Ce n'est nullement par hasard que, parmi les noms de ces traductrices, il faut compter justement avec les initiatrices du mouvement féministe roumain. L'histoire commence par Sofia Cocea[13], traductrice de Mme de Genlis, mais aussi militante pour l'Union des Principautés Roumaines; par Hermione Asaki[14], qui, avant de devenir Mme Edgar Quinet, traduisait de la

[12] Les premières traductions des langues modernes en général et du français en particulier ne remontent qu'au milieu du XVIIIe siècle ; quant aux femmes-traductrices, elles ne font leur apparition qu'au début du XIXe.

[13] (15 juin 1839, Fălticeni - 27 octobre 1861, Vaslui). Ecrivaine et militante pour l'Union des Principautés Roumaines, une des initiatrice du mouvement pour les droits des femmes. Elle a fait des études à Iassy, mais on lui nia une bourse dont elle avait besoin pour parachever ses études pédagogiques en France. Elle épousa à 20 ans le professeur G. Hrisoscoleu et déploya à son tour une carrière pédagogique dans plusieurs villes moldaves (Târgu-Neamt, Vaslui). Elle a contribué par ses articles, souvent polémiques, au succès de la presse pro-unioniste et rédigea aussi quelques dix poésies. À treize ans elle a publié la traduction d'un roman de Mme de Genlis (*Palmira şi Flaminia sau Secretul*, Iassy, 1852) et un drame d'Alexandre-Vincent Pineux, (dit Alexandre Duval), *Maria sau mustrările unei mame* (Iassy, 1852).

[14] Hermione (Ermiona) Asachi est née le 16 décembre 1821 sous le nom de Glicheria Melirato, un des trois enfants résultés du premier lit d'Eleonora Tayber (fille du compositeur viennois Franz Tayber) avec Kiriako Melirato, commerçant grec. Restée veuve, Eléonora devient la maîtresse (1822), puis elle épouse (1827) le grand lettré roumain Gheorghe Asaki, à l'époque représentant officiel de la Moldavie à Vienne. Ce dernier adopte et s'occupe comme un vrai père de l'éducation des enfants (Ermiona ses frères, Dimitrie et Alexandru) et amène sa nouvelle famille avec lui, à son retour à Iassy. Si ses deux frères prouvent de l'intérêt pour les mathématiques et pour le dessin, la jeune fille en revanche montre des dons spéciaux pour la littérature et la musique (notamment pour la harpe). À 18 ans, elle épouse le prince Alexandru Moruzi, fils d'un ancien prince régnant de la Moldavie, mais le mariage ne dure pas longtemps. Ils ont néanmoins un fils, George, dont s'occupera Gheorghe Asaki pendant les huit premières années de vie, puis le garçon accompagnera sa mère à Paris et à Bruxelles, où il mourra en 1956, à presque 17 ans, à la grande détresse de sa mère et de son nouveau père adoptif, le célèbre historien Edgar Quinet.

Ermiona déploie à Iassy une activité d'écrivaine, mais surtout de traductrice, qui date en bonne mesure de la période de sa grossesse. Elle traduit, entre autres, une nouvelle physiologique d'Emile Deschamps*, Rene-Paul şi Paul-Rene* (1839), qui attira l'attention de M. Eminescu à cause du thème très romantique du double, le poème biblique en prose *Rut* de l'écrivaine autrichienne Karoline Pichler (1839), quelques contes bibliques rassemblées dans *Istoria sfântă pentru tinerimea*

littérature française en roumain ; par la révolutionnaire quarante-huitarde admirée par Jules Michelet[15], Maria Rosetti[16], l'Anglo-française Mary Grant devenue

moldo-română (1840) et le traité de morale de Silvio Pellico, *Despre indatorirele oamenilor* (1843). Elle laisse aussi en manuscrit le début une pièce d'August von Kotzebue, *Fiul pierdut*. Tous les historiens s'accordent pour reconnaître à la jeune traductrices des qualités littéraires remarquables.

Elle ira ensuite, en 1845, après son divorce, en France, afin de suivre les cours du Collège de France. À Paris elle fréquente le cercle des intellectuels révolutionnaires français où elle se distingue par sa culture et par son charme et assiste aux cours du brillant professeur Edgar Quinet, dont elle deviendra vite une amie dévouée. C'est avec les papiers officiels d'un ami roumain, Al. G. Golescu, et dans la compagnie de la princesse Maria Cantacuzino, amie d'Ermiona devenue Hermione, que Quinet réussit à s'enfuir en Belgique le 12 décembre 1851, tandis que la dévouée Ermiona Asaki sauvait ses manuscrits et son archive à Paris.

Son mariage avec Edgar Quinet coïncide avec le début de l'exil en Belgique, en 1852, de ce dernier, resté veuf depuis 11 mars 1851, date de la mort de son épouse, Minna Moré. Son père adoptif, Gheorghe Asaki, lui offre une dote consistante, obtenue en mettant en gage sa propre maison à Iassy, ce qui leur rend l'exile un peu moins pénible. (D'ailleurs, Gheorghe Asaki, incapable de payer sa dette, allait par la suite perdre sa maison. Ermiona allait avoir une forte présence aux côtés de son mari, entretenant un important réseau épistolaire féminin et masculin et recopiant les manuscrits d'Edgar Quinet. Notre Ermiona noue aussi des relations d'amitié avec des étudiants roumains qui font des séjours académiques en France tels Alexandru Odobescu et avec ceux qui avaient participé à la Révolution de 1848 qui étaient exilés à Paris à l'époque : Maria Rosetti et C. A. Rossetti, les frères Golescu, les deux Bratianu. Elle a une correspondance suivie avec C. A. Rossetti et A. G. Golescu qui, après leur retour en Roumanie, vont activer pour la cause de l'Union, et obtient de son mari un appui actif à la cause roumaine, concrétisé dans des articles publiés dans la *Revue des deux mondes*, publiés en volume sous le titre *Les Roumains*, puis traduits en roumain et publiés sous le titre *Românii Principatelor Dunărene* à Iassy en 1856. On ignore le nom du traducteur, mais G. Călinescu laisse à supposer que ce serait toujours l'œuvre de l'infatigable Hermione Asaki-Quinet, même si c'est l'année de la mort de son fils.

En 1858 elle va s'installer avec son époux à Veytaux, en Suisse, où ils recevront la visite de Chassin (le premier biographe de Quinet), Pierre Leroux, Jules Ferry, Paul Bataillard, Maria Cantacuzino. Les Michelet également feront quatre séjours à Veytaux et Glion auprès des Quinet, en 1861, 1865, 1867 et 1868. Son activité principale est donc celle de secrétaire de son époux ; elle transcrit ses écrits en vue de la publication, recopie chacune de ses lettres avant de les confier à la poste impériale tout au long des années 1852-1875. Elle se dédie, après la mort de son mari en 1875, à la postérité littéraire de son illustre époux, en publiant plusieurs livres sur lui (mémoires et correspondance : *Mémoires d'exile, Cinquante ans d'amitié : Michelet – Quinet*, etc.) et en s'occupant de l'édition posthume de ses ouvrages, pendant le quart de siècle qu'il lui restait à vivre, et qu'elle signa humblement Mme Edgar Quinet. Fatiguée et malade, elle n'allait plus jamais revoir la Roumanie, malgré son désir et ses efforts en 1890, lors de l'inauguration de la statue de son père adoptif, Gheorghe Asaki, devant leur maison à Iassy.

[15] Qui lui dédia le chapitre « Principautés Danubiennes » des *Légendes démocratiques du Nord*. Paris, 1853.

[16] Née Mary Grant, le 25 février 1819 à Guernsey, Angleterre fille de l'Ecossais Eduard Grant et de la Française Marie Lavasseur, la future Maria Rosetti arrive en 1837 à Bucarest à son frère Effingham Grant qui était devenu sécretaire de Robert Gilmour Colquhoun, le consul de l'Angleterre à Bucarest. Elle est employée comme institutrice des enfants d'Ion Odobescu, elle enseigne à Alexandru Odobescu, le futur écrivain et homme politique. Elle fût aimée par le jeune ami d'Ion Odobescu, celui qui deviendra l'époux de Maria Rosetti, à savoir C. A. Rosetti. Au début de l'année 1848, Maria Rosetti est saisie par l'effervescence révolutionnaire. Elle connaît Nicolae Balcescu, Cezar Bolliac, Dimitrie Bolintineanu, Ion Ghica. Sa maison devient le lieu de la préparation de la révolution de Munténie de même que la librairie du chemin de Mogosoaia. Elle participe activement à la révolution de 1848 en sortant dans

la première journaliste roumaine ; par les deux autres deux journalistes et polémistes ferventes Constanţa Dunca-Schiau[17] et Maria Flechtenmacher[18],

la rue avec son enfant de quelques mois pour être présente le 13 juin sur la Colline du Palais Métropolitain et le 15 juin sur la plaine de Filaret à l'Assemblée Populaire. Accompagnée par C. D. Rosenthal, elle suit les exilés de la révolution Nicolae Balcescu, Ceux qui ont écrit sur la vie de Maria Rosetti ont enregistré à partir de cette rencontre un épisode mémorable, qui témoigne encore une fois le courage et la dévotion de cette femme pour son mari et pour sa patrie. Ainsi, sous le prétexte de donner un baiser à son mari, Maria Rosetti lui glisse dans la bouche une feuille de papier sur laquelle était inscrit le jour de leur future liberation et C. A. Rosetti glisse à son tour, dans les couches de sa fille Liby «une protestation des détenus adressée à Constantinople». En novembre 1848 commence l'exil qui durera jusqu'en 1857. Maria Rosetti a fait aussi des traductions du roumain en français pour rendre connu l'esprit des Roumains. Ainsi, en ce qui concerne *Hronicul vechimii româno-moldovlahilor,* la traduction du premier volume a été faite par Eugeniu Carada, les corrections du deuxième volume appartiennent à C. A. Rosetti et une copie appartient à Maria Rosetti. Elle a traduit aussi en français des ballades et des complaintes populaires roumaines et Alfred Dumesnil a eu l'intention de publier un volume de poésies populaires valaques traduites par elle. Le 9 avril 1851 elle commence à écrire *La légende de la Roumanie*, le titre initial étant *Les Principautés Danubiennes*. Elle est considérée la première journaliste roumaine et publia beaucoup dans la presse libérale ou dans son propre magazine, *Mama si copilul.* En 1885, C. A. Rosetti meurt et 8 ans après, le 14 février Maria Rosetti meurt aussi. Son désir a été d'être enterrée dans la cimetière Serban Voda.

[17] Née à Botosani en 1843, fille d'un grand avocat moldave, elle fit ses études à Vienne et à Paris, au College de France. Elle y obtint un certificat de hautes études et encore un diplôme pour des cours de pédagogie (1862). Elle fut professeur de pédagogie (par concours) à l'Ecole Centrale (le lycée pour les jeunes filles) de Bucarest (1863-1872). Ecrivaine, traductrice, militante pour les droits des femmes (*Feminismul în România*, 1904), notamment dans l'enseignement, elle rédigea un mémoire à ce sujet (*Fiicele poporului*, 1863) dont le prince régnant Al. I. Cuza tint compte dans la rédaction de la loi, en couronnant d'un prix spécial l'auteur.

Elle dirigea et rédigea le magazine *Amicul Familiei* (1863-1865 ; 1868) et publie aussi dans la revue *Familia*. Elle écrivit plusieurs romans et pièces de théâtre et un roman en français, *Eléna ou les Roumains et les Fanariotes* (1862), traduit en roumain sous le titre *Elena Mănescu* dans la revue *Amicul Familiei* (1863-1864). À la parution de son roman sont traduits dans la presse roumaine (*Românul*) deux articles qui le présente aux lecteurs français, le premier dû à Léon Plée et publié à l'origine dans *Le Siècle* du 29 octobre 1862 (paru chez en 1862, dans le no. 319, p. 998-999 (en réalité 1044-1045) et le second à Élie Berthet publié en trad. roum. en 1869, 4 février, p. 104. Elle publia ses traductions dans la presse (d'après Victor Hugo, Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, Malherbe, Ossian, etc.) mais aussi une série d'article sur Madame de Staël et sur Shakespeare. Beaucoup d'entre ses ouvrages parurent sous des pseudonymes : E. D'Albon, Constantia Dunca de Sajo, Camille d'Alb. Mariée au conseiller impérial Antoniu de Schiau en Transylvanie, son activité s'interrompt, puis, vers 1904, elle disparait complètement de la vie publique.

[18] Née Maria Mavrodin (1838, Bucarest), orpheline dès son enfance, ce qui la fit arrêter ses études après les quatre classes primaires. Elle suivit les cours d'art dramatique dans l'école de Costache Mihăileanu et se remarqua en tant qu'actrice, d'abord à Craiova, puis, pendant 18 ans, sur la scène du Théâtre National, à Bucarest, où elle s'était établie après son mariage avec le compositeur Al Flechtenamcher. Professeur de déclamation à l'Asile Elena Doamna, elle écrivit pour ses élèves petites saynètes moralisatrices, tout en assurant aux scènes bucarestoises des vaudevilles et adaptations et aussi des traductions. Elle publia un volume, *Poezii şi Proză* (1871) et d'autres articles (notamment concernnat l'activité dramatique et la situation des femmes) et des traductions, notamment des poésies, dans la presse du temps – *Românul* (1871), mais surtout dans *Femeia*

dont les journaux, dans la seconde moitié du siècle, allait tant contribuer au développement du féminisme roumain et qui s'impliquèrent à fond dans la question de l'éducation des filles. Enfin, à la frontière entre les siècles, la scène est occupée par la militante de gauche Sofia Nădejde[19], dont le premier article, écrit quand elle était à peine une adolescente, fut publié justement par Maria Flechtenmacher dans son journal *Femeia Româna*, qui lui céda avec générosité *la une* et la rubrique qu'elle y avait créée, *Cestiunea Femeilor.* Mais il ne faut point oublier pour autant les trois pionnières, les premières traductrices connues jusqu'à présent dans les trois principautés habités par les Roumains, Maria Burada[20] en Moldavie, Catinca Sâmboteanca (ou Ecaterina Sâmboteanu[21])

Română, magazine qu'elle créa, dirigea et soutint entre 1878- 1881. Elle réussit à attacher à la cause féminine des plumes illustres de son époque, parmi lesquelles celles des poètes de premier rang comme Vasile Alecsandri ou Al. Macedonski, ou des prosateurs tels C. Bacalbasa ou Barbu Stefănescu Delavrancea. La revue sera d'ailleurs constamment préoccupée par la promotion de la littérature féminine. La partie la plus importante de son activité littéraire est formée, sans doute, par les longs articles où elle prend énergiquement la défense des femmes face aux préjugés et les discriminations, parfois en s'attaquant à des noms de grande notoriété, et dont elle combat avec arguments scientifiques et culturels les affirmations défavorables concernant les femmes. Un bon exemple en ce sens est sa longue étude « Amorul, femeile si căsătoria » [L'amour, les femmes et le mariage], où elle s'attaque notamment aux idées philosophiques exprimées par A. Schopenhauer, très en vogue en Roumanie à cette époque-là (publiée le 21 février 1880 (an III), nos.173-174). Elle allait mourir en 1888, à Bucarest.

19 Née Sofia Băncilă, 14 septembre 1865, Botoşani – 11 juin 1946, Bucarest), écrivaine et militante pour les droits des femmes. Elle fit ses études dans le pensionnat pour les jeunes filles dans sa ville natale et épousa Ion Nădejde à qui elle donna six enfants. Elle est aussi sœur du peintre Vasilea Băncilă. Elle a publiée plusieurs romans et traductions et collabora activement à des journaux et revues d'orientation féminine (*Femeia română*) ou de gauche (*Viaţa nouă*). Très active comme traductrice, elle a traduit de la littérature fran'vaise, russe, anglaise, allemande, italienne, polonaise.

20 Burada, Maria (15 juin 1812, Iassy – 11 février 1886, Iassy). Première traductrice moldave de pièces de théâtre. Fille du *şătrar* Ioan Isăcescu, elle connaissaitt le grec, le français, le russe et peut-être l'allemand. Elle épousa en 1831 le vornic Teodor Burada, mémorialiste et est la mère du folcloriste et historien du théâtre Teodor T. Burada. Elle a traduit la pièce de théâtre *Le Sonneur de Saint-Paul* de Joseph Bouchardy (1810-1870) (*Clopotarul de la Sf. Pavel*, Iasi, Tip. Albinei, 1849), représentée avec succès le 15 mars 1848 à Iassy. La pièce, aujourd'hui oubliée, avait été également été traduite aussi à Bucarest par Petre Teulescu, en 1846.

21 Même si tous les dictionnaires roumains nous assurent que sa biographie soit inconnue, on peut apprendre dans les sources locales qu'elle était née à Târgu-Jiu au début du XIXe siècle (après 1815), où elle mourut emportée par le choléra avec ses trois fils en 1848 ou 1849. Elle épousa en 1838) du professeur Constantin Stanciovici Brănişteanu, futur maire de Târgu-Jiu, à qui elle donna trois fils et une fille, Tincuţa. Du nom de son mari est lié le début de la vie théâtrale de cette ville (première représentation, en 1834).Avec ses élèves, il met aussi en scène *Mérope* de Voltaire, dans la traduction de sa femme, traduction réalisée en 1836, pour les représentations du Théâtre National de Bucarest (sa parution est annoncée dans *Gazeta Teatrului Naţional* en 1836, mais elle n'a jamais été publiée).Un an auparavant elle avait publié la première traduction du *Diable Boiteux* en roumain (*Diavolul Schiop*, publié en volume en 1835; un fragment du chap. Ier, dans la revue *Foaie pentru minte…*, II, 1839, pp. 380-384).

en Valachie, Lucreţia Suciu-Rudow[22] en Transylvanie, ni les traductrices qui furent aussi mères, grand-mères, filles ou sœurs, voire aussi les épouses ou les muses des hommes illustres tels le critique littéraire Titu Maiorescu (son épouse fut Ana Maiorescu[23], sa sœur, Emilia Maiorescu-Humpel[24], sa fille, Livia Maiorescu-Dymsza[25]), notre grand poète Mihaïl Eminescu (dont Veronica Micle[26]

[22] Poète et traductrice, née et morte à Oradea, (3 septembre 1859 – 5 mars 1900), fille de Maria Suciu (née Bosco, fille et épouse de prêtre orthodoxe, 1841, Tăut, Bihor -1891, Budapest) première Roumaine en Transylvanie qui écrivit et publia des poésies (dans les revues *Familia* (Oradea), *Amicul Familiei* (Bucureşti), *Noul curier românesc* (Iaşi). Lucreţia Suciu continua l'activité de sa mere, réunissant chez elle un petit cercle littéraire fréquenté par G. Coşbuc, G. Bogdan-Duică, A. C. Popovici. Mariée au professeur Wilhem Rudow, docteur en philosophie à Halle, auteur d'une histoire de la littérature roumaine en allemand. Ils réalisèrent ensemble à Oradea l'hebdomadaire *Foaia literară* (1897), où allaient publier George Coşbuc, Ilarie Chendi, Maria Cunţan. La création littéraire de Lucreţia Suciu-Rudow, publiée également dans *Convorbiri Literare* (Iaşi) ou *Tribuna poporului* (Arad) allait être remarquée par Titu Maiorescu et, plus tard, par Nicolae Iorga.

[23] Née Rosetti (17 mars 1854, Bucarest – 28 avril 1914, Heidelberg), sœur de l'épouse de Iacob Negruzzi, elle fut la seconde épouse de Titu Maiorescu. Elle débute comme traductrice en 1881 et collabore avec des traductions aux *Convorbiri literare* (certaines sont publiées en volume, parfois postumément).

[24] Née à Craiova, en 1838, sœur ainée de Titu Maiorescu, elle fit des études en Roumanie et à l'étranger, qu'elle mit à profit dans son activité dans l'enseignement, où elle marqua une page lumineuse. Avec son mari, Wilhelm Humpel, elle fonda à Braşov un Institut d'éducation et d'instruction pour les jeunes filles (1872), qu'elle transféra en 1872 à Iassy, où il devint l'Institut-lycée pour les demoiselles, qui eut une longue et glorieuse histoire, comptant parmi ses professeurs des noms insignes comme Maiorescu lui-même, A.D. Xenopol, N. Culianu, P. Poni, Gr. Cobălcescu, A. Lambrior, etc. et où allait se former toute une pléïade d'intellectuelles roumaines : Ana-Conta-Kernbach, les filles de Veronica Micle, Virginia et Valeria, Elena Sevastos, etc. Elle réalisa une des meilleures traductions de Schiller dans la culture roumaine du XIX^{e} siècle. Elle mourut à Vienne, en 1918. L'activité de son Institut est décrite par Ionel Teodoreanu dans son roman *La Medeleni*, car c'est bien là que font leurs études Olguţa Deleanu et son amie Monica.

[25] Née le 28 mars 1863, fille de Titu Maiorescu et de sa première épouse, Clara Kremnitz, elle participe, dans son adolescence, aux réunions de la société littéraire *Junimea* et publie dans *Convorbiri literare* quelques traductions de Mark Twain, mais aussi des deux écrivaines de langue allemande, la reine de la Roumanie, Carmen Sylva, et sa propre tante, Mite Kremnitz. Elle fit des études à Berlin et épousa en 1892 un ingénieur des chemins-de-fer, E. de Dymsza, avec lequel elle s'établit en Lituanie (à Rokiskis). Après la mort de son mari, en 1918, elle voyagea beaucoup, puis elle revint en Roumanie, en 1941, à Câmpulung. Elle mourut le 26 août 1946 et repose à côté de son père, au cimetière Bellu (Bucarest).

[26] D'origine modeste, Veronica Micle (née Ana Câmpan, à Năsăud, le 22 avril 1850) était la seconde fille (posthume) d'un cordonnier. Veuve, sa mère passe en Moldavie et finit par s'établir à Iassy où sa fille devient boursière de l'École centrale pour les jeunes filles et change son nom en Veronica. Elle achève ses études en 1863 et est mariée à 14 ans au professeur universitaire Ştefan Micle. Elle rencontre, en 1872, lors d'un voyage à Vienne, le poète Mihaïl Eminescu, et entre eux naquit une histoire d'amour devenue légendaire dans la culture roumaine. La mort de son mari, en 1879, la laisse dans une situation trop précaire pour se permettre un mariage avec le poète, malade à partir de 1883 et qui mourut le 15 juin 1889. Cette nouvelle perte la pousse, semble-t-il, au suicide (la même année, au monastère Varatec, le 3 août ; elle y est enterrée). Elle publie ses

fut le grand amour et l'inspiratrice d'une grande partie de ses poésies), ou le grand historien et historien littéraire Nicolae Iorga (toujours fier de Zulnia Iorga[27], sa mère et d'Elena Draghici[28], sa grand-mère). Écrivaines, elles ont su laisser leur trace dans le paysage littéraire roumain non seulement par leurs vies ou par leurs œuvres littéraires mais aussi par leurs traductions.

Le tableau ci-dessous essaie de présenter un bref aperçu sur l'activité des principales traductrices roumaines au XIX^e siècle et de leurs choix littéraires. Bien sûr, un tel travail ne saurait viser l'exhaustivité, mais il peut toutefois nous permettre de tirer quelques conclusions générales. Malgré la prépondérance évidente des auteurs français, ces dix-neuve Roumaines qui sont sûrement, sinon les seules, en tout cas parmi les plus représentatives pendant cette époque, s'intéressent à un nombre assez considérable de littératures européennes (9), quoique l'accès direct aux textes semble être réduit, à part les textes français, aux ouvrages rédigés en allemand et italien, peut-être en russe ; il est à présumer que le reste des auteurs aient été lus en traductions françaises. Il faut aussi prendre en considération que, l'auteur grec Héliodore mis à part, la plupart des auteurs appartiennent aux XVIII^e – XIX^e siècles, avec quelques exceptions notables toutefois (Dante, La Fontaine et son collaborateur Charles de Champmeslé). Une bonne partie des auteurs sont aujourd'hui moins connus (dans ce cas j'ai ajouté leurs dates de naissance et de décès), beaucoup d'œuvres élues pour la traduction ne sont certes pas des chefs d'œuvres. On peut présumer que la lecture des œuvres classiques se réalisait en original, le français étant largement répandu dans la société roumaine du XIX^e siècle, mais aussi que les grands auteurs et leurs œuvres principales étaient en quelque sorte réservés aux traducteurs masculins (sans prendre forcément en considération le sexe de l'auteur traduit).

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vers et ses traductions dans la presse du temps, notamment dans les *Convorbiri literare* et, de son vivant, elles sont réunies dans le volume *Poesii* (1887). La publication en 2000 de sa correspondance inédite avec M. Eminescu (*Dulcea mea Doamna / Eminul meu iubit*) éclaire bien des aspects de leur relation et nous révèle ue fois de plus son talent littéraire.

[27] Fille du *postelnic* Manolachi Drăghici, née en 1842, décédée le 6 avril 1934, Zulnia bénéficia d'une très bonne éducation, qu'elle mit à profit dans ses traductions du français ; mais certains manuscrits que son fils assure avoir vus se sont perdus. Elle publia néanmoins un recueil d'ouvrages originaux et de traductions propres sous le titre *Flori literare*, en 1892.

[28] Drăghici, Elena (c. 1822 – 28 juin 1860, Iassy), fille du grand *vornic* Iordache Drăghici et mère de Zulnia Iorga. Eduquée dans les pensionnats français de Iassy, elle laissa quelques manuscrits renfermant ses écrits, vus par son petit-fils, Nicoale Iorga, dont la traduction d'*Adolphe* de Benjamin Constant (*Adolf,* publiée à Iassy en 1858) et, semble-t-il, des œuvres d'Alexandre Dumas.

Traductrices	France	Angle-terre	Alle-magne	Italie	Russie	Autriche	Grèce	Dane-marque	Pologne
Ermiona (Hermione) Asachi-Quinet (1821-1900)	1 M[29]			1M[30]		**1F**[31]			
Blaiter, Elena (fin XIX[e] siècle)	1 M[32] **1F**[33]								
Maria Burada (1812-1886)	2 M[34]								
Ecaterina Chinezu (seconde moitié du siècle)							1M[35]		
Maria Chițu (Chițiu) (1846-1930)	1M[36]			2M[37]					
Ana Ciupagea (1865-1908)	6M[38]							1M[39]	
Sofia Cocea (1839-1861)	1M[40] **1F**[41]								
Elena Drăghici (1822-1860)	1M[42]								
Constanța Dunca-Schiau (1843 – après 1905)	4 M[43] **1F**[44]	1M[45]	1 M[46]		1M[47]				

[29] Émile Deschamps (1791-1871) : *René-Paul şi Paul-René*, 1839. (Les titres sont ceux des traductions roumaines, les dates sont celles de la publication en roumain).
[30] Silvio Pellico, (1789-1854) : *Despre indatoririle oamenilor*, 1843.
[31] Karoline Pichler, (1769-1843) : *Ruth*, 1839.
[32] Alphonse de Lamartine : *Jocelyn*, 1892.
[33] Stéphanie-Félicité du Crest de Saint-Aubin de Genlis (1746-1830) : *Clara sau victima virtuții*, 1875.
[34] Alain-René Lesage : *Crispin,* 1836 ; Joseph Bouchardy, (1810-1870) : *Clopotarul de la Sf. Pavel*, 1849.
[35] Héliodore (III[e] siècle) : *Istoria lui Teaghen și a Erato*, 1866.
[36] Charles Crosnier de Varigny (1829-1899), *Kiana,* 1884.
[37] Dante Alighieri : *Infernul*, 1883; *Purgatoriul*, 1888 ; Alessandro Manzoni, *Logodnicii*,1884.
[38] Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais : *Nunta lui Figaro*, 1898 ; Charles Chevillet de Campmeslé (1645-1701), Jean de La Fontaine : *Cupa fermecată* ; Alexandre Dumas : *Domnișoarele de la Saint-Cyr* ; Paul Ferrier (1843-1920) : *Războunarea amorului* ; Ernest Legouvé (1807-1903) : *Muma din popor* ; Catulle Mendès (1841-1909) : *Femeia lui Tabarin* ; Charles Favart (1710-1792) : *Trei sultane* (pieces de théâtre jouées vers la fin du XIX[e] siècle).
[39] Herman Bang (1857-1912) : *Frații* (piece de théâtre jouée vers la fin du XIX[e] siècle).
[40] Alexandre Duval (1762-1842) : *Maria sau mustrarile unei mame* (1852).
[41] Stéphanie-Félicité du Crest de Saint-Aubin de Genlis (1746-1830) : *Palmira si Flaminia sau Secretul*, 1852.
[42] Benjamin Constant : *Adolf,* 1858.
[43] Victor Hugo : *Oda VI*, 1864 ; François de Malherbe : *Ode,* 1864 ; Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, *Psalmul XLVIII, Ode,* 1864.
[44] Claire de Kersaint de Duras (1777-1828) : *Urica sau Africana in Francia.,* 1858.
[45] Ossian (James Macpherson) : *Cântece din Selma*, 1863.
[46] Heinrich Heine, *Poezii* [4], 1877.
[47] Alexandre Pouchkine : *Mozart și Salieri*, 1864.

Traductrices	France	Angle-terre	Alle-magne	Italie	Russie	Autriche	Grèce	Dane-marque	Pologne
Maria Flechtenmacher (1838-1888)	6M[48] **2F**[49]			1M[50]					
Zulnia Iorga (1842-1934)	1M[51]	2F[52]							
Ana Maiorescu (1854-1914)		**1F**[53]	1M[54]						
Emilia Maiorescu-Humpel (1838-1918)			1M[55]						
Livia Maiorescu-Dymsza (1863-1946)			**2F**[56]						
Veronica Micle (1850-1889)	2M[57]								
Sofia Nădejde (1856-1946)	6M[58]	1M[59]	1M[60]	1M[61] **1F**[62]	4M[63]				1M[64]
Maria Rosetti (1820-1893)	3M[65] **1F**[66]								

[48] Jacques Délille : *Catacombele Romei,* 1878 ; Alphonse de Lamartine: *Lacul,* 1871, *Dumnezeu către om,* 1878, *Moartea creştinului,* 1878, *Omul către Dumnezeu,* 1878 ; Alexandre de Lavergne (1808-1879) , *Elisa. Albert către Manuela* [fragments d'un roman épistolaire), 1861 ; Audebrand Philibert (1815-1906), *Roza Alpilor,* 1860 ; Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve (1804-1869) : *Doamna de Sévigné*, 1880 ; Eugène Scribe (1791-1861) : *Rebeca* ; *Armele femeii* ; *Ministromania* (jouées au Théâtre National de Bucarest vers 1870-1880).

[49] Mme de Staël : *Despre entuziasm,* 1878 ; Mme de Genlis : *Florile şi artiştii,* 1878

[50] Dante Alighieri : *La Madonna col bambino,* 1859.

[51] Alfred de Musset, *Petru şi Camilla,* 1875.

[52] Marie Maréchal, *Nepoata preşedintelui,* 1876; Louise Lambert, *Convorbirele în familie sau Consiliuruile unei mume*, 1877.

[53] Mme Burnett, *Lordul cel mititel,* 1918.

[54] W. von Kotzebue, *Din Moldova. Descrieri şi schiţe,* 1884.

[55] Fr. Schiller, *Moartea lui Wallenstein,* 1864.

[56] George Allan (Mite Kremnitz), *Un caracter de artist,* 1885 ; Carmen Sylva (Elisabeth de Wied), *Bate la uşă,* 1887.

[57] A. de Lamartine, *Nemurire; Invocare,* 1887 ; Th. Gautier, *Cea din urma frunză,* 1878.

[58] Erckmann – Chatrian, *Jidovul leşesc,*1882 ; E. Zola, *Roma,* 1895-1896; *Visul,* 1897 ; J. Verne, *Minunile şi grozăviile Indiei,* 1908 ; A. Theuriet, *Prăvălia la foi crapi,* 1909 ; C. Flammarion, *Visuri înstelate,* 1909 ; P. Mérimée, *Don Juan,* 1911.

[59] Ch. Dickens, *Vălul negru,* 1884 (en collab. avec Ioan Nădejde); *Vremuri grele,* 1894-1895.

[60] Karl May, *Saiwa-Tjalem* (sans date).

[61] E. de Amicis, *Cuore (Inimă),* 1916.

[62] Matilde Serao, *Visul unei nopţi de dragoste, Idila paiaţei, Cicotto,*1915.

[63] I. Turgheniev, *Poeme în proză,* 1883-1884 (en collab. avec Ioan Nădejde); N. A. Nekrasov, *Mama şi poetul,* , 1887 ; M. Gorki, *Omorul,* 1912 ; L. Andreeev, *Prăpastie,* 1912.

[64] H. Sienkiewicz, *Viaţa la sate. Schiţe cu cărbune (Natură şi viaţă),* 1908; *Fără credinţă,* 1908; *Prin foc şi sabie,* 1909-1910.

[65] Chateaubriand, *Cataractul Niagarei,* 1865; Erckmann-Chatrian, *Melcul unchiului Bernard,* 1865; Alexandre de Saillet (1811-1866), *Micii fricoşi*, 1866.

[66] Mme de Genlis, *Zuma sau Descoperirea Quinquinei,* 1866.

Traductrices	France	Angle-terre	Alle-magne	Italie	Russie	Autriche	Grèce	Dane-marque	Pologne
Catinca Sâmboteanca (après 1815-1848)	2M[67]								
Elena Sevastos (1864-1929)	**1F[68]**								
Lucreția Suciu-Rudow (1859-1900)			1M[69]						
	44	5	7	6	5	1	1	1	1

Ces traductions réalisées par des femmes, dont le nombre (76) est assez important, sont d'une diversité impressionnante. Les œuvres appartiennent à tous les genres (et à des écrivains, le plus souvent, de premier ordre), et leur choix peut être considéré sans doute une réponse non seulement du marché du livre à la demande des lecteurs et des lectrices roumaines, mais aussi des femmes elles-mêmes, de plus en plus désireuses de faire la connaissance d'une perspective féminine à travers leurs lectures et de trouver l'expression de leurs intérêts dans les ouvrages qu'elles traduisaient. Leur activité s'inscrit souvent dans le contexte d'un mouvement soutenu tout au long du siècle concernant les droits des femmes : droits à l'instruction, tout d'abord, droits sociaux et, finalement, droits politiques, qu'elles allaient finalement obtenir par la Constitution de 1923. Il est néanmoins intéressant de constater que, d'après mes recherches[70], le nombre de traducteurs roumains des ouvrages féminins à la même époque est toutefois quatre fois plus grand que celui de nos traductrices, ce qui nous montre que l'intérêt pour la littérature féminine européenne n'était nullement une affaire réservée aux femmes. Comme on peut le constater dans le tableau ci-dessus, elles n'ont choisi de traduire que 12 textes écrits par des femmes, par rapport à 64 ouvrages réalisés par des hommes. Un autre détail significatif est que pour George Sand, de très loin l'écrivaine la plus traduite (et la plus célèbre !), nous avons dix traducteurs et pas une seule traductrice. Si pour Mme de Genlis le nombre en est presque égal (six traducteurs, quatre traductrices), pour Mme de Staël, assez proche

[67] Alain-René Lesage : *Diavolul schiop,* 1836 ; Voltaire : *Merope*, 1835.

[68] Louise Ackermann, *Cometei din 1861,* 1897.

[69] Lessing, *Laokoon,* 1889.

[70] Présentées dans la communication « La contribution des Roumaines dans la réception des littératures étrangères dans l'espace culturel roumain (XIXe siècle – début du XXe siècle) », au colloque « Les rôles transfrontaliers joués par les femmes dans la construction de l'espace européen, de la Renaissance au XXIe siècle », Université Charles de Gaulle - Lille III, 16-18 juin 2011, Lille, France (publiée sous le même titre dans *Les Rôles transfrontaliers joués par les femmes dans la construction de l'Europe,* Préface Suzan van Dijk. Dir. Guyonne Leduc, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2012, p. 147-156.).

(deux traducteurs et une traductrice), dès qu'il s'agit d'un auteur considéré de premier rang, comme George Sand, sa traduction semble devenir « une affaire d'hommes ». De même, une poétesse comme Ada Negri, qui connut une certaine notoriété, ne fut traduite que par des hommes, ce qui semble confirmer notre hypothèse. Pourtant, pour revenir à Madame de Genlis, si dans la première moitié du siècle ses traducteurs sont des hommes, les dernières décennies voient paraître seulement des traductions en roumain réalisées par des femmes (et parfois dans les magazines qu'elles-mêmes dirigeaient, comme ce fut le cas de Maria Rosetti ou de Maria Flechtenmacher).

Toute cette riche activité fut déployée dans le contexte de l'effort de toute la société roumaine du XIX^e siècle d'assurer une intégration réelle dans la modernité européenne. Rapide, impatient, même si parfois un peu superficiel, dont une des spécialités semble avoir toujours été de brûles les étapes, ce peuple que l'histoire, plus que la géographie, avait placé à l'orée de l'Europe, allait néanmoins conquérir pendant ce XIX^e siècle non seulement l'union des Principautés roumaines dans un État national sous le nom de Roumanie (1856-1859) et l'indépendance par rapport à la suzeraineté turque (par la guerre de 1877-1878), mais aussi des marques certaines de son entrée en Europe du point de vue culturel. L'histoire de nos écrivaines et traductrices du XIX^e et du début du XX^e n'en est certes qu'un détail, mais un détail lourd de conséquences pour l'avenir. Car il s'agit de l'effort de quelques générations héroïques à qui l'on doit la présence des femmes dans la culture roumaine actuelle.

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ELLEN GLASGOW'S *THE BATTLE-GROUND*: AN UNCONVENTIONAL PLANTATION ROMANCE

IULIA ANDREEA MILICĂ[1]

ABSTRACT. ***Ellen Glasgow's The Battle-Ground: An Unconventional Plantation Romance.*** Ellen Glasgow's novel *The Battle-Ground* has long been dismissed as a more conventional and romantic work of youth. At a closer look, though, this novel functions as a bridge between the more conventional and idealized representation of the American South in the nineteenth century Southern literature and the great Renascence of Southern letters in the twentieth century. The purpose of the paper is to examine the manner in which Glasgow undermines the conventions of the plantation romance carrying her protagonists through times of peace and war, plenty and deprivation, towards a liberation from the limiting conventions of the Old Order and an understanding of individually created connections against culturally imposed hierarchies.

Keywords*: plantation romance, Virginian literature, tradition, Civil War, slavery, Southern aristocracy, Southern belle, poor white, otherness.*

REZUMAT. ***The Battle-Ground de Ellen Glasgow: un romanţ de plantaţie neconvenţional.*** Romanul lui Ellen Glasgow *The Battle-Ground* a fost mult timp considerat de critici un romanţ de tinereţe, romantic şi convenţional. La o privire mai atentă, însă, acest romanţ este o punte între reprezentarea idealizată a Sudului american specifică literaturii secolului al XIX-lea şi Renaşterea literaturii sudice din secolul al XX-lea. Scopul acestei lucrări este de a evidenţia maniera în care Glasgow demontează vechile convenţii literare şi culturale. Protagoniştii romanţului său trăiesc experienţe limită prin care se confruntă cu constrângerile propriei lor culturi şi dobândesc o înţelegere mai profundă a relaţiilor umane dincolo de distincţii artificial create.

Cuvinte cheie*: romanţ de plantaţie, literatura din Virginia, tradiţie, Război Civil, sclavie, aristocraţie sudistă, frumoasa sudistă, albul sărac, alteritate.*

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Ellen Anderson Gholson Glasgow, or better known as Ellen Glasgow, is remembered in the history of Southern studies as the first woman writer to break with the Southern romance tradition and try to impose a more realistic attitude towards Southern myths and idealizations. On the other hand, she is also considered, by some critics, as too romantic and too indebted to her Virginian aristocratic upbringing, which she owed to her dear mother, to have been able to discard all romantic impulses in order to realistically depict the new South. This tension between realism and romanticism, between seeing her as the descendant of the plantation romancers of the nineteenth century or the worthy ancestor of the great twentieth century Southern writers described both her personal life and her writings. Her existence was conditioned by the clash between her mother's aristocratic heritage and her father's practical-mindedness and lack of sensitivity. This tension is visible in her writings in which she oscillated between a more romantic attachment to her homeland, Virginia, and the desire to give the South an important place in American literature by following the path of realism and naturalism. Ellen Glasgow remained, till the end of her life, a Southern lady, but, at the same time, she managed her affairs with a business-like ability and she depicted, throughout her literary and non-literary writings, the problems and dilemmas of Southern women, educated in the spirit of a rigid and confining code of behavior, limited in their options by the status of "belle," and forced to give up their selfhood for the requirements of "good wife" and "good mother." In changing times, Ellen Glasgow's heroines bring forward feminist issues that were not (or were rarely and avertedly)[2] represented in fiction, and especially in Southern fiction, before her.

The duality in the reception of Ellen Glasgow in time is also conditioned by the huge changes that occurred in Southern letters during her lifetime. She was born at a time when writers such as Thomas Nelson Page or John Easten Cooke lamented the loss of the Old Order and glorified the Lost Cause. Thus, when she started writing, towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, her novels appeared as revolutionary in comparison to the Southern fashion of the time. When she received the Pulitzer Prize in 1941, Carson McCullers and Eudora Welty were also publishing their writings and, by comparison, Glasgow's novels were rather conventional. This passage is inevitable since her life was marked by

[2] We refer here to the fact that many of the nineteenth century Southern female writers have been conveniently labeled as "local colorists," their fiction being dismissed as superficial, romantic and unrealistic. Nevertheless, their writings are now re-evaluated and critics start acknowledging their important role in the depiction of the real problems of women living in the nineteenth century. Kate Chopin with her novel *The Awakening*, but also with her short stories is only one of the most famous examples. The criticism on Ellen Glasgow keeps placing her in the "Southern Renascence" by making connections between her and the future female writers, such as Katherine Anne Porter, but rarely connects her with the female writers before her.

important changes and she witnessed the rise of, probably, the most important Southern writers from a "Sahara of Bozarts" (as Mencked called Southern letters at the turn of the century). It is important, though, to acknowledge the important role that she played in this process (Rubin Jr. 1).

The dual nature of her writings is well represented in Alfred Kazin's words:

> She began as the most girlish of Southern romantics and later proved the most biting critic of Southern romanticism; she was at once the most traditional in loyalty to Virginia and the its most powerful satirist; the most sympathetic historian of the Southern mind in modern times and a consistent satirist of that mind. She writes like a dowager and frequently suggested the mind of a nihilist; she was at once the most old-fashioned of contemporary American novelists and frequently the wittiest. (258)

Kazin's words, maybe not among the most flattering, point out one crucial fact: she was a Southerner in a period of transition. She wrote in and about the South, not from a desire to individualize the region from the American context, but dedicated to the task of promoting Southern letters in the context of American literature. She did not and could not discard her aristocratic Virginian heritage and she did not fight it, she only challenged its weaknesses and flaws, and treated it with irony as well as understanding and compassion. As Susan Goodman remarks in the "Introduction" to a more recent edition of *The Battle-Ground* (2000), "the strength of Glasgow's social history comes largely from its complex, rather than polemical, vision of human experience" (xxviii). Understanding Ellen Glasgow, thus, requires, as most recent (and especially feminist) critics remark, a re-evaluation of her fiction not in the light of how challenging and modern her style is, or how polemical and critical she proves towards the Southern tradition, but more how she understands that the past and its heritage cannot be changed or forgotten, and so it needs to be accepted and assumed. She is also recognized today as one of the first Southern female writers who managed to realistically address the issue of Southern female identity, the painstaking passage from "belle" to "new woman" and how women are supposed to be the carriers and preservers of tradition, but also the strong spirits that can forge a new world where men lose their courage. Resilient, even rebellious female characters dominate her fiction from the earliest novels and remain the trademark of her writings.

The Battle-Ground is only her fourth novel, published in 1902 and it is not very often included in the numerous critical essays dedicated to Ellen Glasgow that focus on her later texts, such as *Virginia*, *Barren Ground, They Stooped to Folly, Sheltered Life* or *Vein of Iron*. Not even its reception is very consistent. John Wesley Hoag considers that the novel is still marked by sentimentality (7), while Alfred Kazin sees it as a "conventional Civil War

romance" (259) filled with "girlish sentimentality" (260), though a "superior sword-and-cape romance on the legend that the Civil War was fought between gentlemen and bounders" and "the first of her many comedies of humor" (260).

More recent critical voices, on the other hand, re-evaluated the novel. The "conventionality" with which it was charged comes from the place it occupies in Southern literature. *The Battle-Ground* lies at the crossroad between two literary traditions: the nineteenth century Southern plantation romance and the twentieth century criticism of Southern idealism as well as between her own literary growth from convention to realism and feminism:

> The qualities that made it [*The Battle-Ground*] a popular book of its time are those it shared with costume novels about the American Civil War, especially its battle heroics, romantic clichés, and evocations of a courteous serene antebellum South. Even so, it indicates directions in which she will move in the future, for its early plantation romance – 260 pages of the 512-page novel – chiefly provides a contrast to and target for the realism that follows. (Raper 405)

It is not a conventional plantation romance or "moonlight and magnolia" representation of the South, though it carefully uses all the conventions of such traditional Southern writings. The novel becomes a subtle analysis of the way in which such conventions can no longer be representative for the real South, in literature and in real life. The readers of the time would have recognized the tradition dear to them, but they would have seen how this tradition lives its last days, because it cannot offer a solution to the problems and pressures of modernity.

In spite of the fact that half of the novel is a chronicle of two Virginian families and focuses on the love-story between the heirs of the two houses, and so it can be seen as a plantation novel, *The Battle-Ground* can be seen as a Civil War novel as well, and one of the first written in the South to represent the Civil War in a different light than before, discarding the legend of heroes and gentleman for an individual's outlook on suffering, pain and loss. It is included by Robert A. Lively in his selection of best civil war novels (1957), together with Faulkner's *The Unvanquished*, Stark Young's *So Red the Rose*, Allen Tate's *The Fathers* or Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* (to mention some of the most famous). The following comprehensive analysis of Civil War novels is David Madden and Peggy Bach's (1991). They refer to Lively's selection as still valid and keep his list of representative Civil War novels (4), thus considering, almost half a century later, that Glasgow's novel can still be ranked among the most interesting literary representations of this crucial conflict in American history.

The Battle-Ground follows the destinies of two neighboring Virginian families, the Lightfoots and the Amblers, and the effects the Civil War has on them as individuals and on their way of life. The depiction of the two families

during more than a decade before the War is a good opportunity to touch a variety of aspects pertaining to the Virginian (and, by extension, Southern) world. The social aspects are represented by the plantation world, the relationships between the white masters, the black slaves and the poor whites, the status of the free blacks, the roles of men and women. The political aspects are embodied by the two opposing attitudes to the political problems of the time embodied mainly by Major Lightfoot, a fervent secessionist and a firm believer in his God-given right to own slaves, and by Governor Ambler who does not want secession, but fights for the Confederacy out of regional patriotism and favors the emancipation of slaves and the plan of relocating them to Africa. The romantic touch is given by the developing love story between Major Lightfoot's grandson Dan and Governor Ambler's daughter Betty and is fulfilled at the end of the War.

These conventional elements are continuously challenged and debated. The most obvious point of departure from the plantation romance convention is to be found in the portrayal of the protagonists. Betty Ambler is not the typical Southern belle, but a fiery red-headed creature that holds together two plantations during the War, saving from starvation two families and their slaves. Dan Montjoy is the offspring of the elopement of Major Lightfoot's daughter with a brutal and abusing man who kills her. Through them, Glasgow argues that "the South must stake its future on character, rather than blood. Glasgow read and rejected contemporary theories of heredity that promulgated a silent law of genetics, which determined the social and economic structure of society" (Goodman xx). Individual characteristics, in her fiction, supersede traditional hierarchies and codes.

Her novel, therefore, aptly depicts the slow change of mentalities in the South as a result of the unsettling War experience, but it also points to the elements that remain unchanged in a South that is too stubborn to relinquish its old values, or, better said, its illusions: "In the end, *The Battle-Ground* reaffirms many myths of the Old South, but it dispels a few as well. Without slaves, the aristocracy did not exist; with freedmen and yeomen, the South began to rise again—that it was so slow to rise might be attributed to the continued exploitation of labor" (Wright 33). Glasgow's young lovers start a new life, based on their own abilities, but their families continue to live off the exploitation of the freed slaves, clinging to old reminiscences saved from the burning plantation manor.

The novel's division in two parts, one describing the plantation life and the other following the main characters through the Civil War, allows a deeper exploration of the effects of the War on a whole society. The depiction of plantation life is not, for Ellen Glasgow, a romanticized return to the plantation romance and an idealization of the Old Order. On the contrary, by employing

the same conventions that were used by the Southern romancers, she manages to challenge traditions and suggest the negative aspects of the Southern world that the plantation romance conveniently chose to discard.

The connection with the literary convention of the plantation romance is clear through structure and plot, as well as through in-text references. The characters live their lives molded on the examples of the romance heroes that shape their imagination. Over and over again, all through the novel, allusions are made to texts that have influenced the Southerners' literary imagination as well as the manner in which they saw their society. It is no wonder, then, that Walter Scott holds a prominent position: Miss Lydia had read Scott "and enshrined in her heart the bold Rob Roy" (Glasgow 52). Another lady, Mrs. Lightfoot weeps over *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, an early nineteenth century historical romance written by the Scottish Jane Porter, while dismissing the contemporary realistic turn in literature: "Ugh! don't talk to me about them! I opened one of Mr. Dickens's stories the other day and it was actually about a chimney sweep—a common chimney sweep from a workhouse! Why, I really felt as if I had been keeping low society" (Glasgow 199). Later, the female protagonist, Betty, finds in Jane Lightfoot's room a copy of *Morte d'Arthur*. Jane herself was the tragic example of a young lady whose mind was influenced by romantic representations of men and who eloped with one who was not the hero she expected, but a brute. Despite this obvious fact, Betty imagines her own lover as if emerging from the faded leaves of the book: "A tremor ran through her limbs, and going to the window she placed the book upon the sill and read the words aloud in the fragrant stillness. Behind her in the dim room Dan seemed to rise as suddenly as a ghost—and that high-flown chivalry of his, which delighted in sounding phrases as in heroic virtues, was loosened from the leaves of the old romance" (Glasgow 335-6). In fact, this image of Dan is very far from the truth, and he comes home, spiritually vanquished and physically maimed, and very unlike a medieval knight, at the end of the War. Just as Betty idealizes her lover, the Southerners created an idealized image of their world, exaggerating the aristocratic traits and embellishing the negative aspects.

Several important aspects are highlighted through Glasgow's insistence on a literary convention that had dominated Southern literature for a long time. First of all, it emphasizes the idea that women are the victims of the society. Miss Lydia, a spinster living in the house of her relatives, Jane, prisoner in an abusive marriage that caused her death and, to some extent, Betty, a free spirit imprisoned by the conventions of her class and gender, tried to shape their lives according to what they read in the novels and they expected the society to be like that. All of them, in different degrees, are disappointed by the reality. Secondly, the values of the Old Order are emphasized by the preference for the historical romance, a literary convention that was still respected at the end of the nineteenth

century. By using the convention, Glasgow attempts to criticize "the dominant project of the traditional historical novel (to romanticize and idealize the Old Order), endeavoring to analyze and subvert the values of the very order, and in particular to reveal the sources and transformations of power within the Old Order as it passed through the Civil War" (Dillard 64). It is interesting to stress, at this point, the success of her novel at the time of its publication precisely because it employed a set of literary patterns that the Southerners knew, recognized and cherished. She does not impose the criticism abruptly, but rather subtly, disguising it in an apology of the Old South.

Such a subtle warning that the text is not a romance, though it takes on the shape of one, is clear from the very beginning. The idyllic world of childhood is subverted by, on the one hand, the competition between girls and boys, suggesting that women are taught from an early age that they are inferior to men, and the image of the female slaves carried off to be sold after the death of their master. The scene is dominated by white children (a boy and two girls) and slaves (a slave boy and the group of slave women) and reveals Glasgow's interests" "Slaves, children and mothers, to Glasgow, all constitute categories of people who, because of age, biology, and/or social convention have been denied freedom of choice" (Dillard 65). By dedicating the first pages of her novel to them, she makes it clear that her intention is not to write another story of a planter-hero, adored by those around him, but rather the story of the silenced, the "other," those whom the plantation system forces in a subdued position (in different degrees, of course).

Ellen Glasgow is not indebted only to the historical romance in general, for influence and basis for criticism, but also to the Virginian tradition, a branch of Southern literature that had given a gallery of famous promoters of the plantation romance, such as John Pendleton Kennedy, George Tucker, to Thomas Nelson Page and John Esten Cooke. The Virginian writer is usually influenced by his or her regional belonging in the creation of types and plots. No writers omit the fact that Virginia is one of the oldest regions, and that many of the founders of the United States, such as Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, James Madison were Virginians and gentlemen, as the tradition says, and they set the standard for the Southern gentleman: a loyal, patriot, honorable, courteous, just man. The literary types belonging to Virginian literature are men and women abiding to a certain code of behavior. Ellen Glasgow adopts these types and uses them as a source for her criticism of the Virginian gentleman and lady, as idealized figures of the Old Order.

According to Jay Hubbell, in the literature of the Virginian writer, "the status of the slaveholding planter carried its obligations, its ideal of *noblesse oblige*. He must look after his slaves when they were old or sick and unprofitable. He must not permit them to be exploited by overseers or itinerant traders. Except

for the field hands on the larger plantations, the slaves were in a sense now difficult to explain, members of the family" (46), while the Virginia lady "was thoroughly feminine. […]She was often well-read, but she did not wish to be regarded as intellectual. […] By modern standards the Virginia lady's life was provincial and narrow, but she was highly honored, especially if she was beautiful and charming. In Virginia the belle was an institution" (Hubbell 54).

Thus, following the line of her fellow Virginian writers, Ellen Glasgow depicts two Virginian gentlemen who represent two different types. Major Lightfoot is the typical plantation owner, a little too temperamental, but kind-hearted. He is kind to his slaves and is ready, on the spur of the moment, to buy a slave from an abusive master. He has no patience for cruel masters, but he is a firm believer in the God-given right of white people to own slaves, convinced that without slavery there is no aristocracy. As far as his political opinions are concerned, Major Lightfoot is a "fire-eater" (Cooper & Terrill 328), belonging to the secessionists, ready to go to battle for the preservation of the Southern lifestyle, hating Lincoln's supporters and aiming "to destroy the Union, which they pictured as a dagger poised to plunge into the heart of the South" (Cooper & Terrill 359). His counterpart, Governor Peyton Ambler is the liberal Virginian. A slave-holder himself, he thinks of freeing his slaves and supports the idea of relocating the emancipated slaves to Africa. He does not favor secession and believes that the Union needs to be preserved, so, he tours the region to convince the people against secession. He represents the attitude of the "Upper South," more reluctant to secede, even after Lincoln's election, but he joins the Confederate army when called to enroll in the Union army in order to attack the seceding states, thus testifying his loyalty to the South and remaining a Virginian patriot even if his views were different than those of the Southern Confederate slaveholders.

Neither of the two figures stands the test in the conflict with history. Major Lightfoot goes on stubbornly believing in the glory of his world, while seeing his house burnt to ashes and forced to live in the overseer's cabin. Governor Ambler is compelled to fight for a cause he does not believe in and dies for that cause far away from his home and from the ones he holds dear. Although he appeared to be the more revolutionary figure, Governor Ambler errs in choosing a middle path when the times required more firmness. He is a victim of historical circumstances caught between the allegiance and love to his own home and the belief that the lifestyle supported by the Southerners is no longer a viable option for a modern world[3].

The feminine counterpart of the gentleman is another cliché present in Southern fiction: the Southern belle and the Southern matron are two of the

[3] Such an attitude is, in fact, quite typical of the twentieth century Southerner and it is investigated in Southern fiction. One of the most famous examples is that of Faulkner's Quentin Compson who declares that he hates the South but cannot free himself from it.

most cherished figures. For a writer such as Ellen Glasgow, the depiction of such characters offers the possibility to investigate the traditional roles appointed to women that limit the fulfillment of their own desires.

From the beginning of the novel, the roles, obligations and rights of women are discussed. The child Betty appeals to an old free black woman, Aunt Aisley, to conjure her hair black from red, knowing from that early age that her red hair is not a feminine quality. Indicatively, her sister, Virginia, with her black hair and pristine clothes, announces the future belle. Though, after growing up, Virginia becomes the center of male attentions, perfectly but dispassionately playing the role of belle, she is not fit to survive the challenges of War. In fact, it is indicative that she is called Virginia, like her region, as she epitomizes the typical belle: beautiful, elegant, mannered, charming, calm and serene who gets married and turns into her mother: the beauty gradually fades and the delicacy turns into weakness. This ideal is unfit for the difficult times of the War and Virginia loses her life incapable of bearing the stress of pregnancy, war and the news of her husband being wounded. Unlike her sister Betty who takes on the administration of two plantations, buries her father, looks after her sick mother, feeds the slaves and cares for her older neighbors, Virginia is a symbol of a dying world as well as of a dying model of female behavior.

Women, therefore, are expected to be quiet and subdued. The lovely belle ages before her time as the care of the plantation falls to her responsibility. Hubbell summarizes the image of the matron as it appears in Southern fiction since its beginnings, in John Pendleton Kennedy's *Swallow Barn*:

> The Virginia matron is pictured in fiction as delicate, frail, and overworked. The planter might delegate some of his responsibilities to an overseer if he was wealthy enough to employ one, but the matron was not always fortunate enough to have a spinster aunt, sister, or cousin to assist in the discharge of her numerous duties. In addition to the training of her children, the direction of the household, and the entertainment of numerous guests, she had the care of the black family on her hands. She had to superintend the making of clothing, the distribution of provisions, and the cultivation of the flower and vegetable gardens. She looked after the servants when ill, watched over their conduct, and gave them religious instruction. Besides all this, 'Ole Miss' often sewed, cooked, and washed her fine china dishes with her own hands. She was the keystone of the whole domestic establishment, and her big basket of keys was the symbol of her authority" (55).

The same image is depicted by Glasgow in Governor Ambler's wife, Julia:

> As he looked after her, the Governor's face clouded, and he sighed beneath his breath. The cares she met with such serenity had been too heavy for her strength; they had driven the bloom from her cheeks and the lustre from her eyes; and, though she had not faltered at her task, she had drooped daily and grown older than her years. The master might live with a lavish disregard of the morrow, not

> the master's wife. For him were the open house, the shining table, the well-stocked wine cellar and the morning rides over the dewy fields; for her the cares of her home and children, and of the souls and bodies of the black people that had been given into her hands. In her gentle heart it seemed to her that she had a charge to keep before her God; and she went her way humbly, her thoughts filled with things so vital as the uses of her medicine chest and the unexpounded mysteries of salvation." (Glasgow 48)

This dedication to the home comes from an education that prepares women solely for this role: "There, there, Betty," Mrs. Ambler tells her rebellious daughter, Betty, "[…] you mustn't get such foolish thoughts into your head. If the Lord had wanted you to be clever, He would have made you a man" (Glasgow 49). In fact, Julia is not an educated woman, being tutored at home and only for the mission that is meant for her, being a wife, a mother and a slave-owner, and she imposes the same education on her daughters, while the neighbor's grandsons go to college. Women are nurturers, not intellectuals, as the prevailing belief at the time before the Civil War was that education endangers the femininity of a woman and, while confined to the domestic sphere, she is totally controlled by her male guardian (father, husband, brother), bowing to his judgment and caring for him. This is another role to be challenged and undermined. Julia loses her will to live when her husband dies. Like her daughter, Virginia, she is incapable of surviving the new age and she fades silently from the novel, not dying, but not living either, like a ghost of the past that refuses to disappear completely, just as the idealized representation of the Old South lingered in the post-War imagination.

The only female character who is able to adapt to the difficult War times is Betty. She is interesting in that she is a rebel, but she does not discard the past completely either. Thus, she appears as a totally different character from Virginia, the belle, assuming roles that are not conventional for women, but she builds her resilience on inherited traits. In her character, as well as in the depiction of Dan Montjoy, her lover, Glasgow's readings of Darwin, as well as of the naturalistic fiction of her time, from Hamlin Garland to Guy de Maupassant, become indicative. On the one hand, she recognizes the importance of inheritance, or, as in the case of Dan Montjoy, of "good" and "bad blood." However, she rejects a deterministic approach, uprooting the biological determination, in the case of Dan (Dillard 71), and the social one, in the case of Betty. Raised to be feminine and subdued, to obey the social and gender hierarchies imposed by the Old Order code, Betty is forced to assume masculine roles during the War, to bury her father, care for her mother and manage two plantations. The upbringing that teaches her to be subdued and not smarter than a man, clashes with her strength, assertiveness and independence, which are, in fact traits inherited from her family: "Certain sources of her extraordinary resilience go back to family members, for she possesses (much like Glasgow herself) her ''father's

head and her mother's heart.'' She also draws, however, on a will to survive that appears to have small precedent in the world she inherits. In contrast to her sister Virginia, a pretty, prim, bashful, and finally doomed belle, Betty proves herself resolute, defiant, assertive, competitive, saucy, spirited, independent; she also acts on a well-developed sense of compassion" (Raper 407). Betty is, therefore, a sum of contrasting elements: inherited features from her parents and rebellion against traditional assumptions of female roles in society, compassion and resilience. Ironically, this is exactly what gives her the strength to resist and carry on in times when most of the characters lose their courage. Thought taught to be inferior to men, she assumes the role of a man when the times require it.

The conventions of the plantation romance are also evident in the creation of slave characters and in the relationships between the white masters and their black slaves. Glasgow presents different types of slaves that suggest a harmonious relationship between slaves and their master and the fact that slaves prefer their life in bondage (Wright 25). The slaves on the Lightfoot and Upland plantations are well treated by their kind masters and most of them remain on the plantation even after the Emancipation, which was not uncommon after the Civil War, but neither very typical (Cooper & Terrill 251). The cruel masters are not accepted by the society of gentlemen and many of the slaves who are ill-treated by bad masters are saved by the "gentlemen" while those whose masters die are bought by other kind masters. The slave trade exists in this world but not as a cruel weapon against the slave. At least, this is the image that the plantation romance projects. Glasgow, however, carefully undermines this attitude by introducing the tragedy of the broken slave families through the story of Sarindy, the wife of the free slave Levi, who was sold up the river when their master died and through the image of the women slaves carried away to be sold after the death of their master.

Other conventions of the plantation romance are in place, such as the contempt of the domestic slaves for the field slaves and for the poor whites, and the contempt of both white and black for the free black. The only ones who break these conventions are, once more, Betty and Dan. Betty's compassion for Levi pays off when, during the War, he gives her a basket of eggs to feed her sick mother. Similarly, her warm, compassionate yet not pitiful attitude towards the slaves ensures their submission to her authority during the hard days of War.

In her article on African American characters in *The Battle-Ground*, Susan P. Wrights considers that Glasgow failed at presenting the harmonious relationship: "If Glasgow intended in *The Battle-Ground* to illustrate that slaves, especially house servants, were a pampered lot, she failed, for the reader is struck not by the simplicity of the tasks performed, but rather by the tedium of the work as well as by the plantation owners' absolute physical dependence on their servants, a reliance that apparently began early in childhood" (27-9). She refers to the depiction of the young slave girl, Mitty, whose sole role is to

find her mistress' glasses, which appalls the Northern tutor hired to educate Dan and Champe. However, at a closer look, it is not a failure, but rather one of the successes of the book, since each positive depiction of the master-slave relationship is undermined by a presentation of the negative aspects of slavery. She does not let the reader be soothed by idealized representations of slavery and, whenever slavery appears a kind and humane, she introduces such small, almost unnoticeable details that unsettle the reader.

Moreover, growing up in a rich family, with aristocratic roots, Glasgow has a more nuanced understanding of this extremely complicated relationship between masters and slaves than someone coming from the outside. Without forgetting that slavery, as an institution, was an utter wrong, the relationships were formed among human beings and not among institutions, and thus, they were diverse and subtle. Thus, she depicts individual relationships that stand the test of Emancipation and War: Betty and Levi, Dan and Big Abel, Governor Ambler and Hosea.

Similarly, in her depiction of slavery, in spite of a milder outlook, Glasgow is not oblivious of the danger lurking in a system that encourages the enslavement of a race by another race. The exploration of the white man's uncertainties about his slaves' loyalty is hinted at in Major Lightfoot's quick dismissal of Big Abel, a slave loyal to his family, whose only fault ever was to choose to follow his young master Dan and leave the plantation. No matter how right his decision was, in the slave system, the slave is not allowed to make a choice for himself and Major Lightfoot generalizes: " 'They are all alike,' he [Major Lightfoot] sweepingly declared. 'There is not a trustworthy one among them. They'll eat my bread and steal my chickens, and then run off with the first scapegrace that gives them a chance' " (Glasgow 271).

A deeper analysis of the uncertainties and discomfort provoked by the slave system is prompted by John Brown's attack on Harpers Ferry arsenal (October 1859). This event was a major source of concern for the slave-owners who faced the danger of slave rebellion. While Major Lightfoot is certain that the slaves are loyal to him, Governor Ambler is more realistic:

> 'Reached me?—bless my soul!—do you take me for a ground hog?' he cried, thrusting his red face through the window. 'I met Tom Bickels four miles back, and the horses haven't drawn breath since. But it's what I expected all along—I was just telling Congo so—it all comes from the mistaken tolerance of black Republicans. Let me open my doors to them to-day, and they'll be tempting Congo to murder me in my bed to-morrow.'
> 'Go 'way f'om yer, Ole Marster,' protested Congo from the box, flicking at the harness with his long whip.
> The Governor looked a little anxiously at the negro, and then shook his head impatiently. Though a less exacting master than the Major, he had not the same childlike trust in the slaves he owned. (Glasgow 244)

Congo's words of loyalty to his master are contrasted with his gesture: "flicking at the harness with his long whip," a sign of the subdued danger. In fact, at the back of their minds, all the Southerners were aware that, if they rose, the slaves would be extremely dangerous and many measures were taken, in the Southern slave history, to prevent such moments.

The anxiety produced by the events at Harpers Ferry is depicted from Governor Ambler's perspective which enhances the atmosphere of danger. A more liberal mind than many Southerners, Ambler would not, theoretically, be the victim of discontented slaves. However, he is sensible enough to be concerned about the possibility that all the whites might suffer the consequences of the injustice they inflicted on an entire race. He goes home to protect his family in the event of an attack from his own slaves, which suggests that the plantation is not quite a family, as the pre-War defenders of the slave system wanted to imply, or an idyllic place:

> Yesterday those tales had been for him as colourless as history, as dry as dates; tonight, with this new fear at his heart, the past became as vivid as the present, and it seemed to him that beyond each lantern flash he saw a murdered woman, or an infant with its brains dashed out at its mother's breast. This was what he feared, for this was what the message meant to him: "The slaves are armed and rising."
>
> And yet with it all, he felt that there was some wild justice in the thing he dreaded, in the revolt of, an enslaved and ignorant people, in the pitiable and ineffectual struggle for a freedom which would mean, in the beginning, but the power to go forth and kill. It was the recognition of this deeper pathos that made him hesitate to reproach even while his thoughts dwelt on the evils—that would, if the need came, send him fearless and gentle to the fight. For what he saw was that behind the new wrongs were the old ones, and that the sinners of to-day were, perhaps, the sinned against of yesterday. (Glasgow 246-7)

It is also the only time in the novel when we have a glimpse of the field slaves who are not as close to the masters as the domestic ones and whose lives are definitely harder. Upon returning home, Governor Ambler is terrified to discover that his dear wife, Julia, is in the Negro quarters, called at the sick bed of a slave, and not safe, at home. While going to find her, the Governor reveals his ignorance of his slaves. He is a stranger to the cabin quarters and there is a sense of estrangement and otherness as he roams from cabin to cabin looking for his wife who was sitting at the deathbed of Mahaley. He does not know where that Mahaley lives and has to ask from house to house. When he reaches the cabin of the dying slave he feels a sense of responsibility for her destiny:

> He should hardly have known her had he met her last week in the corn field; and it was by chance only that he knew her now when she came to die.

> As he stood there the burden of his responsibility weighed upon him like old age. Here in this scant cabin things so serious as birth and death showed in a pathetic bareness, stripped of all ceremonial trappings, as mere events in the orderly working out of natural laws—events as seasonable as the springing up and the cutting down of the corn. In these simple lives, so closely lived to the ground, grave things were sweetened by an unconscious humour which was of the soil itself; and even death lost something of its strangeness when it came like the grateful shadow which falls over a tired worker in the field. " (Glasgow 250)

Such extreme events throw the veil off the reality of slavery, of inhuman treatment and overwork, of loss of self and humiliation. Even after this event, Governor Ambler goes to War siding with those who wanted to perpetuate this injustice. Thus, even if it is a mistake to generalize upon masters and slaves, old habits and conventions are still hard to break and even if there were many Southerner with enlightened views on slavery, the rigid Southern conventions prevailed over individual ideas.

A very interesting relationship between a white man and his black slave is that which develops between Dan Montjoy and Big Abel. It is here that a true evolution prompted by the Civil War and Emancipation but having its rood in individual relations is explored. Big Abel becomes Dan's slave when the latter, a child, arrived at his grandfather's plantation, and constantly follows him in his childhood adventures, during his college years, in his separation from his family and during and after the War. The close relationship between them is suggestive of the manner in which an understanding of the Southern white identity is meaningless without the integration of its relationship with the black. In fact, all along the text, we have the feeling that it is Dan who depends on the assistance of Big Abel and not the other way round. Before the War, he performs the tasks that are typical of a body servant, but his real value for Dan is acknowledged the moment he leaves his home, after a quarrel with his grandfather and he thinks he can manage on his own. The arrival of Big Abel and the soothing sight of freshly-brushed clothes suggest that Dan (or the Southerner) is not prepared to survive without the assistance of the black.

During the War, Big Abel's assistance is crucial, saving Dan from the battlefield, taking care of him during his illness, finding food and carrying him when he was unable to walk. If for the white man the War is a terrifying experience that affects his psyche and destroys his health, for the black man it is another test of endurance, just like slavery, in which he has to carry the white man along to ensure the survival of both of them. At a certain point, the reader feels that without Big Abel, Dan would not have survived the War experience. Due to this, the relationship between the two changes during the War which brings them together, at the end, on a more equal footing when Dan realizes that he has to work for his bread just as Abel works for his. Glasgow suggests that it is the Southerner himself who must recognize the

importance of the black in his own survival and not the other way round as well as the intrinsic connection between the white and the black in making up the South. It is not the type of relationship that can be regulated by Northern laws or understood lightly. It is also one of the particularities of the Southern world.

The same changing relationships affect the representation of the poor white in the Southern mind. The poor white is a type of character rarely portrayed in the plantation romance and usually to his detriment. Glasgow undermines the paternalistic code by depicting the changing attitudes of the white planter towards the poor white War companion. It is obvious that only War conditions could change the prevalent attitudes of the white planter towards groups of people that he despised, such as the slaves, or the poor white. Just as in the case of the relationship between white and black, such changes cannot occur at home, on the plantation, where habits and prejudices are more resilient. It takes an uprooting conflict to alter firmly set frames of mind. The evolution of the relationship between slave-owner and poor white is prepared in the first half of the novel through numerous allusions to the importance of being a gentleman and to the refusal to mix with "trash," which is meant to highlight the importance of the poor white in the survival of the planter. In a letter written to his grandfather from college, Dan Montjoy mentions that he does not want to mix with those who are not "gentlemen:"

> "You know, I had always thought that only gentlemen came to the University, but whom do you think I met the first evening?—why, the son of old Rainy-day Jones. What do you think of that? He actually had the impudence to pass himself off as one of the real Joneses, and he was going with all the men. Of course, I refused to shake hands with him—so did Champe—and, when he wanted to fight me, I said I fought only gentlemen. I wish you could have seen his face. He looked as old Rainy-day did when he hit the free negro Levi, and I knocked him down." (Glasgow 73)

To which his grandmother replies: "And I am sure, if I had known the University was so little select, I should have insisted upon sending him to Oxford, where his great-grandfather went before him." (Glasgow 75)

The same attitude is perpetuated at the beginning of the War, when the young and spoiled sons of planters refuse to obey the orders of their lieutenant who was not an aristocrat: "Look at that fellow Jones, now," Dan tells his friends. "He thinks because he happens to be Lieutenant that he's got a right to forget that I'm a gentleman and he's not." (Glasgow 289)

The beginning of the War is regarded with superficiality and the young gentlemen think that it is no more than a gentlemen's game that is conducted according to their own rules, just like everything else in their life. On the other hand, though, in reality the "low life" is a Lieutenant appreciated by his superiors, while Dan and his "gentleman" companions remain mere soldiers,

suggesting the rise of the poor white and the decline of the Southern aristocrats. The intrusion of the poor white in the group of young gentlemen is slow and almost unnoticeable.

> "Well, I'm willing enough to do battle for my country," said Jack Powell, "but I'll be blessed if I'm going to have my elbow jogged by the poor white trash while I'm doing it."
> "He was scolding at us yesterday because when we were detailed to clean out the camp, we gave the order to the servants,' put in Baker. "Clean out the camp! Does he think my grandmother was a chambermaid?" He suddenly broke off and helped himself to a drink of water from a dripping bucket that a tall mountaineer was passing round the group. (Glasgow 289)

The irony of the scene is evident in the fact that they actually "jog elbows" with the "white trash" who gives them water to drink, more attentive to the simple fact of survival and placidly listening to the bombastic rhetoric of the spoiled brats without arguing, complaining or feeling hurt. Later, the tall mountaineer becomes Pinetop, Dan's companion through battles, marches, victories and defeats, when the hardships of War obliterate the social distinctions that had governed their existence in times of peace. His invisibility in the above quoted discussion is indicative for his invisibility in the planter's world. There is no real place for him, he is not a slave-owner and a gentleman, but competes with the white man by sharing his race, and he needs to find work, competing with the black on the labor market. It is through Pinetop that Dan's awareness of the complexity of the South and of human relationships is revealed and still, because of Pinetop, Dan realizes his responsibility, as a member of the Southern ruling class, for the inferior position in which these people have been forced when he realizes that his friend is illiterate:

> For the first time in his life he was brought face to face with the tragedy of hopeless ignorance for an inquiring mind, and the shock stunned him, at the moment, past the power of speech. Until knowing Pinetop he had, in the lofty isolation of his class, regarded the plebeian in the light of an alien to the soil, not as a victim to the kindly society in which he himself had moved—a society produced by that free labour which had degraded the white workman to the level of the serf. At the instant the truth pierced home to him, and he recognized it in all the grimness of its pathos. Beside that genial plantation life which he had known he saw rising the wistful figure of the poor man doomed to conditions which he could not change—born, it may be, like Pinetop, self-poised, yet with an untaught intellect, grasping, like him, after the primitive knowledge which should be the birthright of every child. Even the spectre of slavery, which had shadowed his thoughts, as it had those of many a generous mind around him, faded abruptly before the very majesty of the problem that faced him now. In his sympathy for the slave, whose bondage he and his race had striven to make easy, he had overlooked the white sharer of the negro's wrong. To men like Pinetop, slavery,

> stern or mild, could be but an equal menace, and yet these were the men who, when Virginia called, came from their little cabins in the mountains, who tied the flint-locks upon their muskets and fought uncomplainingly until the end. Not the need to protect a decaying institution, but the instinct in every free man to defend the soil, had brought Pinetop, as it had brought Dan, into the army of the South. (Glasgow 42-3)

Thus, *The Battle-Ground* challenges, especially through the two protagonists, Betty and Dan, the codes, hierarchies and traditions of the Old Order. By depicting the conventional plantation and the effects of the War on it, she suggests that the destruction of the South was not caused only by the War, as many Southerners wanted to believe. The seeds of the fall were inherent in the idealization of an obsolete type of society, based on false presumptions about its members, founded on an utter injustice and perpetuating an illusion. For Glasgow, the War is only the climax of a process that started long before. For her two protagonists, Betty and Dan, the War is meant to be a personal experience, allowing them to grow out of the illusions of their childhood, as well as a regional experience, making them reach a broader and deeper understanding of their home world and of the roles that they have in it. At the end of the Civil War, enriched by new experiences and by a new understanding of their world, Dan and Betty start a new life. Unfortunately, their world does not change overnight. Born a decade after the end of the Civil War and living up to the end of the Second World War, Ellen Glasgow was aware that changes do not occur very rapidly. Dreams of the old glory and a perpetuation of older hierarchies that gave a privileged and safe position to the white planter undermined the modernization of the post-War South and the process of emancipation of the freed African Americans. The ending of the novel alludes to such problems.

Though *The Battle-Ground* is a novel of youth, Glasgow pinpoints the important issues that characterize her region: the odd mixture of illusion and reality, the stubborn attachment to a dying world while refusing to move into the future, the breaking of hierarchies under the pressure of history. By combining the plantation novel with the War novel, she shows the importance of the Old South distinctions of race, class and gender and the manner in which the War dismantles such distinctions in the creation of a new Southern identity. By choosing Betty, the woman, Big Abel, the slave, and Pinetop, the poor white, to accompany the male protagonist, a planter's heir, Dan, Glasgow depicts the manner in which the roles and hierarchies of the Old Order are changed, but, at the same time, she points to the fact that they do not change easily. All of these people have reached a new understanding of their roles and of their dependence on the others around them, but the society will force them to return to their old ways of life, Big Abel as servant, Betty as wife and Pinetop isolated in his Tennessean wilderness.

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DIDACTICISM AND THE FEMINIST QUEST: THE CASE OF *MRS. DALLOWAY* AND *BEIRUT 75*

TAREK MUSLEH[1]

ABSTRACT. ***Didacticism and the Feminist Quest: The Case of Mrs. Dalloway and Beirut 75***. This paper compares the British prose writer Virginia Woolf and the Arab writer Ghada al-Samman. Western society is liberal and consequently, literature represents freedom by characters that are not usually manipulated by ideology. On the other hand, Arab culture is largely oppressive and literature is often dominated by preaching especially when writers, such as feminists, feel enthusiastic about a case.

Keywords*: feminism, didacticism, artistic distance, dramatization, Arabic Literature, English Literature, Virginia Woolf, Ghada al-Samman.*

REZUMAT. ***Didacticismul şi căutarea feministă: cazul Doamna Dalloway şi Beirut 75.*** Această lucrare este o comparaţie între prozatoarea britanică Virginia Woolf şi scriitoarea arabă Ghada al-Samman. Societatea occidentală este liberală şi, în consecinţă, literatura reprezintă libertatea prin personajele care, de obicei, nu sunt manipulate cu ajutorul ideologiei. Pe de altă parte, cultura arabă este, în mare măsură, opresivă, iar literatura este adesea dominată de didacticism, mai ales atunci când scriitorii, de exemplu feministele, se entuziasmează în legătură cu o situaţie anume.

Cuvinte cheie*: feminism, didacticism, distanţă artistică, dramatizare, literature arabă, literature engleză, Virginia Woolf, Ghada al-Samman.*

Men and women have lived on earth for many millions of years. Presumably, they have been interacting together in a world of survival. They passed on their consciousness and unconsciousness from one generation to the other. Both developed knowledge, understanding, sympathy and even

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identification with one another, although some men, who were in a position of power, abused women throughout history. This long history implies that instinctively men can penetrate the nature of women and vice versa to such an extent that made the great psychologist Carl Young develop his well-known theory of the anima and the animus. This theory challenges the purity of each sex and insists that in every man there is a little woman and in every woman there is a little man; hence the ability of writers of both genders to penetrate the personality of the other sex.

A great writer should be able to visualize how his characters, whether they are males or females, think and react to life in different situations. As a principle in fiction, a thief has to be illustrated as a thief, not as a preacher, who every now and then intrudes into the narrative to deliver a moral judgment. Similarly, if a male writer depicts the life of a female he should, temporarily at least, abandon his own masculinity and imagine how a woman actually thinks and behaves in the situations that he creates. It is generally assumed that a female writer is able to handle female characters more convincingly than her male counterpart.

However, despite the partial reality of this generalization, in the literary tradition there are many examples of male writers who could draw a comprehensive picture of the female, so much so that their works have become archetypes. *Antigone* by Sophocles, *Pamela* by Richardson, *Madame Bovary* by Flaubert, *Anna Karenina* by *Tolstoy, The Portrait of a Lady by James, Women in Love by Lawrence, A* Street Car Named Desire by Williams, are all outstanding examples of the many works about women that were written by men. All the issues of feminism, whether related to the suffering of women, their equality with men, or depicting their own femininity from within, were given a powerful and dramatic image by these well-established classics.

Certainly one can suspect the purity of almost anything in our age of doubt. There is nothing absolutely special about women writing except the simple fact that a particular work is written by a sensitive female who has a first hand experience of the main issues of feminism. Perhaps a woman would be more honest and less artificial in outlining her problems and exploring her psyche. However, the result can be negative at times, especially when the authoress becomes very enthusiastic and preaches feminism directly through her mouthpieces. That is why some feminist writings, despite their special insight into the nature of women, are marred by didacticism. On the other hand, a great female writer can both illustrate feminist issues powerfully as she experiences them herself and, at the same time, maintain an artistic distance between herself and her material. Whatever the situation is, men and women are united by their humanity, which is handled by great writers regardless of gender.

I have chosen two works for my demonstration. The former one is *Mrs. Dalloway* by a typical Western writer who belongs to a liberal and democratic culture and has both the background and artistic ability to present the female character convincingly. The latter is *Beirut 75* by an Arab feminist who is, perhaps unconsciously, part of a somewhat oppressive tradition where ideology dominates at the expense of artistic requirements.

Virginia Woolf could be taken as an example of an English culture where writers are principally committed to their art and personal existential experience. Her characters are fully explored through internalization, which allows them to particularly dramatize their inner life, past and present, with little manipulation from the narrator. She is one of those writers who are able to penetrate the psychology of their characters of both sexes with great success, although the female takes the better part of her genius. As a critic, and novelist she challenges the traditional concept of characterization and chronological plot and accuses Bennett, Galsworthy, and Wells, the writers who dominated the English literary scene at the turn of the century, of producing skeletons rather than real people. Their writing is marked by excessive attention to a deterministic view of man. These writers, in Woolf's opinion, distorted human nature and produced social types rather than individual human beings with inner conflicts. In her novels she is bent on revealing the reality and the depth of the human psyche. The outer life is just the surface of a much troubled life within. Woolf's novels do not ignore social life, but she emphasizes that the essence of man's reality lies much deeper than the outside movements.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, inner life is shown to be far more important and real than the superficiality of the ruling class. Authenticity is well established as an ideal that allows the characters to probe into some existential issues. Right and wrong are solipsistic values and decided by personal experience, rather than imposed by an outside force. The idea of conversion is ridiculed through the character of Doris Kilman, who symbolizes imposition, if only too obviously by her type name. Even psychologists who are supposed to provide a balanced view of normality are satirized and shown to be part of the oppressive forces of society that are driving some individuals to become mad and suicidal. There is no definite conclusion and Clarissa Dalloway has to be accepted as she is, despite, or because of, her unpredictability, and this is part of her charm.

Throughout *Mrs. Dalloway* everything seems fine on the surface but within the recesses of human nature there are waves that cannot be halted. As a female restricted within the limitations of her society, Clarissa Dalloway can only devote her life to the world of appearances. Her preparation for the party apparently delights her, and she likes to make of it a great successful event; but the whole party splendor falls on the floor when she hears the psychiatrist

Sir William Bradshaw talk about the suicide of an unknown young man called Septimus Smith. In fact, she is shocked and shattered to the extent that she feels a strong sense of association and even identification with Septimus. Furthermore, she is almost unconsciously driven to go imaginatively through the process of suicide, which she visualizes as a challenge and a failure of communication on the part of psychologists and the whole society. In other words, her so-called superficiality is just one thin layer of a tormented soul.

Woolf gives the impression that the female has to be accepted on her own terms and the domestic concerns of Mrs. Dalloway have to be visualized as no less important than the life of politicians and army generals who lead wars. The end of Mrs. Dalloway is quite significant; Clarissa's old admirer, Peter Walsh, is suddenly overwhelmed with a sense of "terror, ecstasy, and extraordinary excitement" (102), and ends the novel with the expression, 'for there she was' (124), implying that both Clarissa's weak and strong points that he has experienced are part of her charm and humanity.

Woolf is not so much worried about typical male chauvinistic accusation that women are inferior to men, especially in connection with their intellectual ability and main interests. Unlike other feminists who have fallen into the trap of this accusation and tried enthusiastically to prove the opposite, Woolf is just bent on exploring the female as she is, regardless any male prejudice or expectation. Her heroine is, at times, superficial, worldly, with little knowledge of the intellectual life and without any public concern outside her small world. She thinks of her parties as an offering, which is difficult to be understood by men, and she is amused by their ignorance of a world that is simply not hers:

> She muddled Armenians and Turks; loved success; hated discomfort; must be liked; talked oceans of nonsense; and to this day, ask her what the Equator was, and she did not know. All the same, that one day should follow another; Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday; that one should wake up in the morning; see the sky; walk in the park; meet Hugh Whitbread; then suddenly in came Peter; then these roses; it was enough. After that, how unbelievable death was! - that it must end; and no one in the whole world would know how she had loved it all; how, every instant. (*Mrs. Dalloway* 69)

In 1923 when *Mrs. Dalloway* was published, men valued travel, adventure, work, dedication to country and national heroism. By contrast, women's life was more domestic and obscure, and they usually found accomplishment in personal relationships, reading memoirs, and cultivating their own children. No one can logically conclude with any certainty that the values of men should be considered superior. They are just different and each value demands a special talent. Woolf always hated male power and the supposition that men should have the upper hand in society. Although

Clarissa's life is not shown to be directly influenced by male domination, the whole atmosphere of a Patriarchal age has partly shaped her femininity and made her cautious of any form of control in her life.

Despite the fact that Clarissa seems to be enjoying life on the surface, deep down she has a strong sense of insecurity. Recently she has suffered an illness that turned her hair white and she seems preoccupied with death. Already in her youth she witnessed the death of her sister who was killed by a falling tree, an accident which shattered her illusions about life and stability. The choice of Richard Dalloway as her husband rather than Peter Walsh could be traced back to her need of both security and independence. Richard is definitely more competent, predictable, and steady and can protect her against the shocks of life.

Peter, on the other hand, is romantic, adventurous and full of gayety, but he would be intrusive and domineering without realizing the 'otherness' of her personality and her need for privacy. Her choice of Richard is perhaps that of a lesser evil; for neither man would help her to fully realize herself. Her frigidity unequivocally demonstrates that there are aspects in her personality that have to be sorted out. Perhaps Richard is partly responsible, but her past life gives a clear sign that her development was not quite sound in a typical patriarchal society. Her lesbian experience with Sally Seton may be interpreted as a reaction against a patriarchal society partly represented by Peter Walsh who, despite his special charm, would not understand properly the real potentiality of the female. Symbolically, Peter appears immediately after her moments of ecstasy with Sally Seton, which Clarissa describes in almost religious terms:

> Then came the most exquisite moment of her whole life passing a stone urn with flowers in it. Sally stopped; picked up a flower; kissed her on the lips. The whole world might have turned upside down! The others disappeared; there she was alone with Sally. And 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* 29)

In those days both Sally and Clarissa spoke of marriage as a catastrophe. Immediately after this experience, Peter proposes to Clarissa and he is rightly and expectedly rejected. The lesbian experience can also be interpreted in psychological terms and may be traced back to the intricate process of coming to terms with Oedipus complex. According to Freud, man has to substitute a woman in the same shape of his mother in order to overcome this complex. In the case of woman, it is more difficult since the substitution is far more demanding and the substituted male figure is entirely different from the mother.

Society sometimes does not understand the intricate nature of the female development and some women may yearn to go back to the "garden" of their mother's womb that is substituted by another woman. If Freud is right, then Clarissa's lesbian experience can be seen as a reaction against a patriarchal society which pays little, if any, attention to the female's sensitive and delicate nature. Thus, her present frigidity is probably caused by the kind of man Richard is, but more so by her past. It is quite likely that she represents her creator who similarly had to tackle a patriarchal society that did not even allow her to have a systematic education.

Virginia Woof insists again and again that Clarissa should be fully accepted on her own terms, although typical male chauvinists may find it difficult to stomach some of her attitudes. Perhaps there is a hidden Clarissa in every female, but some societies would not allow her to appear on the surface. Clarissa is not traditionally classified as a great woman who challenges a whole community as, for example, Antigone did, but in her own way she represents the sensitive female whose charm is the result of her fragility and complexity, and who constantly invites the reader to accept her as she is despite, or because of, her limitations.

The question of didacticism is probably related to culture. Virginia Woolf belongs to a liberal democratic tradition where characters are generally accepted for what they are. In traditional Arab culture everything has to be supervised. Many Arab writers are committed to society, nationalism and/or religion; and they try one way or another to reform the individual. Literature is there to change people and instruct them about how to conduct the best form of behavior. Narrators are usually intrusive and they particularly appear in authorial mouthpieces that every now and then bombard the reader with religious and popular slogans such as "murder will out," or "God may delay punishment, but never neglects anything", or "the rope of lying is short".

Under such manipulation, there is not a real sense of suspense and the line of development could easily be predicted. In other words, there are no real shocks or surprises or complexity of situations, and there is usually a sense of finality presented either in marriage, or death, or reformation, or punishment. Rarely do we have an open ended work that is complex enough to puzzle us and make us speculate about what is going to happen next. Moreover, Arab writers are often openly didactic. Their enthusiasm to deliver a message makes their literature direct, without usually being able to dramatize any theme convincingly.

At times the characters appear as puppets, and the resolution is often imposed from above rather than springing from within. There is little or no artistic distance between the writer and his material. Furthermore, the religious culture of the Arabs has made them glorify one form of Arabic, namely, formal, or classical Arabic, which most writers use in all situations,

unlike Western fiction, which employs local dialects extensively. Regardless of any consideration, formal Arabic is not suited to be employed all the time in fiction, especially when writers want to convey the actual wording of what goes inside their character's mind, as in the stream of consciousness technique and more specifically in a dialogue, simply because it is not used in actual life. If the character that is especially ordinary and uneducated uses formal Arabic, this will undoubtedly dwindle its connection to reality. Writers have to choose between formal Arabic, in which case their character's reality is partially sacrificed, and using a local dialect that appears realistic but may not be completely understood in certain parts of the Arab World.

Quite recently, there have been many Arab writers who are beginning to move towards liberalism and respond favorably to globalization. Ghada al-Samman could be cited as an example of a feminist who is influenced by the West and enthusiastically preaches equality among the sexes. Unfortunately, the clutches of didacticism are stifling her art. In *Beirut 75* she could not help creating an authorial mouthpiece who has to be a poet in order to convey her own ideology and sensitivity about various aspects of life and existence.

The novel is dangerously didactic, bordering on direct statements that try to present a case. There is nothing wrong with the feminist ideas presented by Ghada al-Samman; the real problem is the manner which is imposed on the text. The writer tries desperately to show that her heroine is a victim of patriarchy and that men in the East cannot accept women as they are; they themselves practise promiscuity, but deny women any form of pre-marital sex.

> 'But I am not a prostitute! I love you! At the beginning of our relationship you were hinting about marriage!'
> 'Marriage! You're crazy! Do you think that I would marry a woman I slept with before marriage?'
> 'Why not? Didn't you boast that you advised your father before election that he should tackle women equality with men in his election campaign?'
> 'He didn't answer, but started to repeat shockingly, 'I marry a woman I slept with before wedding!' (*Beirut 75*, 45)[2]

The problem with this kind of writing is not the feminist ideology that stands behind it, which is quite fine, but the way it is presented. Here the writer imposes an idea rather than dramatize it convincingly. Instead of concentrating on inner life and internal conflict and showing vividly how such ideas interact together, the writer imposes an obvious case which may be logical as a statement but hardly credible fictionally. The situation is highly artificial and this is made worse by the use of formal Arabic which is not suited either for dialogue or reflection.

[2] Translated by Tarek Mushleh.

One of the main problems that feminists are obsessed with is their objection to treating the female as a sex object without understanding the human side of her potentiality. Again the objection is quite legitimate and may apply to the majority of men particularly in the East. However, the way it is presented is through direct and non-fictional statements distorting the image of men to the point of caricature. Making man admit that he thinks of women only physically through reflective statements helps the writer come to the simplistic conclusion of men's blindness towards any form of spirituality without showing or dramatizing the complexity of the situation.

> Is it possible that I can love? I love a poor girl! She allowed me to sleep with her before marriage! Love, love, love! That's all she keeps talking about or understands!
> Why is this rubbish? I've never thought or wasted my time about women! I just think about them when I am with them. Their body is what attracts me to them. When they are not physically with me I forget about them. Moreover, I have many other things to attend to! (*Beirut 75*, 65)[3]

There are many scenes in the novel which disrupt our usual notion of probability and we have to be extremely tolerant in order to accept the sudden turn of events which are sometimes too shocking to be true.

> She was glad to see her brother. He was angry. She remembered that she did not pay him for weeks the price for his dignified honor! He shouted,
> 'Good you came, I haven't got a penny!'
> 'Nor me,'
> 'How? What about Nimr Bey?'
> 'He'll get married.'
> 'You bloody liar! So you have started business on your own, and now you have more than one lover!'
> He attacked her, took her purse, found nothing, got mad, and started to beat her many times. Then he inquired,
> 'Where is the money, you bitch?'
> Blood was all over her face; unconsciously she started to hit back. He became mad shouting, 'you bitch, hitting me too! I'll slaughter you!'
> She wanted to say, 'I'll pay tomorrow, there is no need to defend your so-called honor!' But her mouth was full of blood. Before uttering a word, he stabbed her chess. She felt utterly shocked!
> After about half an hour, the brother went to the nearest police station carrying a bucket covered with a newspaper. He sat in front of the officer. He took his sister's severed head which was still bleeding and said in a manly manner, 'I've killed my sister in defense of my honor, I want to confess.' The

[3]Translated by Tarek Mushleh

> officer looked at him in an admiring way, but he was frightened and put the severed head back to the bucket and hid it! The brother was confessing, while the officer's assistant was writing with a look of admiration too! (*Beirut 75*. 80-81)[4]

In this kind of passages formal Arabic, which is artificially imposed on the text, the highly melodramatic and most unconvincing successive events, the excessive distortion of the brother, which is shared automatically and inhumanly both by the officer and his assistant, all these add to the unreality of almost everything in the scene which is meant to preach the cause of the victimized female and give us a lesson. There is no doubt that in traditional societies there is what is known as "honour crime" which is inflicted on "permissive" women. Still, a great novelist is usually more involved with the inner psychology and internal conflict than just narrating far-fetched melodramatic events handled clumsily and obtrusively by the narrator. The three male characters, especially the brother who should show at least some regret, are more like puppets than characters with flesh and blood. These highly melodramatic events need much psychological preparation and dramatic conflict. They may satisfy vulgar readers used to similar action films but they hardly satisfy the notion of probability developed in serious fiction.

If we move to Western literature, we realize that the battle against didacticism is not yet over. Some of the great masters like Dostoevsky, Ibsen, Lawrence, Camus, and many others are sometimes quite didactic. In Dostoevsky's masterpiece *Crime and Punishment* the dramatic change of Raskolnikov and his conversion to Christianity, in addition to the concomitant language, may not sound quite convincing and are certainly incommensurate with his previous sense of persistent absurdity. In *Ghosts*, Ibsen sometimes cannot be distinguished from his mouthpiece, Mrs. Alving, or her son. Birkin and Ursula in *Women in Love* appear at times, in the words of John Bailey, as "bloodless ghosts" (*The Characters of Love*, 39) enacting as they do the thesis of Lawrence himself.

In *The Outsider* by Camus we realize that reality, particularly in the second part of the novel, is presented as one sided; presumably society tries the protagonist for his "deviation", but it is actually Mersault who reverses the picture by directly condemning the legal, religious, and social systems and criticizing them openly. However, these works are great and they certainly tempt readers, at least partially, to silence their possible objection to whatever drawbacks they may have. They belong to a democratic culture where everybody is given a chance to express themselves fully. Polyphony, or multiplicity of voices, is well established as an ideal in Western literature, which moves towards (though it may not fully reach it) the condition of pure art as particularly manifested in music. Liberal humanism preaches tolerance

[4] Translated by Tarek Mushleh

and accepts humans as they are, despite their so-called deviation. That is one reason why characters are lively and certainly more realistic and far less idealized than in Arabic literature. In fact, at times the aberration becomes the norm. All sides of man are explored especially inner life and unconsciousness.

At times the reader feels that writers put themselves both into the protagonists as well as into the antagonists, simply because of this sense of doubt which permeates much of the Western culture and literature. Svidrigaylov in *Crime and Punishment*, Gerald and Gudrun in *Women in Love*, the Foxes in *Howards End* and many other antagonists are powerfully dramatized. They follow the tradition established by Shakespeare and given a chance to justify their attitude forcibly. The reader becomes in many cases confused as to the sympathy of the writer. Very often the characters in many works are lost and disillusioned with almost all social values. Writers appear to be free from any restrictions or constraints to explore the inner resources of their characters and the deep recesses of human nature. There is no real commitment to any outside forces except one's own personal experience and belief.

It seems that commitment in the Arab sense reduces the writer's attention, which should be focused on the literariness of literature, that is, on the artistic elements which make literature what it is. Once, the well known poet Hassan Ibn Thabet was asked about the reason of the decline of his poetry. His blatant answer was, "it is Islam". (Al-Asfahani, *Songs*, 243) That is, persistent commitment to a particular ideology may drive writers away from their art or preclude exploring all aspects of human nature.

The same commitment problem can be observed in feminist Arabic fiction. Most feminists are too enthusiastic when they preach the cause of women to the extent that they often ignore the artistic quality of their work. There may be a few voices that try to maintain a balance between ideology and the necessity of dramatizing all the elements of fiction. However, many writers in the Arab world are influenced by the traditional and non-democratic culture where individuality is suppressed. Consequently, their characters can never feel free. One can only hope that Arab feminists will realize that they are first and foremost artists rather than preachers.

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THE POWER STRUCTURES OF EROTIC IMAGINATION IN THE POETRY OF APHRA BEHN AND JOHN WILMOT, EARL OF ROCHESTER

AMELIA PRECUP[1]

ABSTRACT. ***The Power Structures of Erotic Imagination in the Poetry of Aphra Behn and John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester.*** The licentious poems of Aphra Behn and John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester follow the recognisable pattern of the libertine behaviour specific to the period of the English Restoration. The ways in which they use various hypostases of the sexual body present themselves as strategies of examining (either reinforcing, or disrupting) the patriarchal domination over the sphere of physical intimacy. Therefore, this paper undertakes the task of looking into the balance of power and the dynamics of gender relations in their poetry, by analysing the representations of erotic imagination in poems which explore similar sexual hypostases, from two different, gender-specific perspectives.

Keywords: *Restoration poetry, sexuality, libertinism, the dynamics of power, Aphra Behn, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, socio-sexual relationships, virtue and honour.*

REZUMAT. ***Structurile de putere ale imaginarului erotic în opera Aphrei Behn şi a lui John Wilmot, Conte de Rochester.*** Poeziile licenţioase de Aphra Behn şi John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, reflectă modelul uşor recognoscibil al comportamentului libertin specific perioadei Restauraţiei engleze. Modul în care aceşti autori aleg să valorifice diferite ipostaze ale eroticului se prezintă ca strategii de examinare a dominaţiei patriarhale asupra spaţiului intimităţii fizice. Prin urmare, lucrarea de faţă îşi asumă sarcina de a analiza jocul de putere şi dinamica relaţiilor de gen în poezia acestor doi autori, prin analiza reprezentărilor imaginarului erotic în poeme care explorează ipostaze sexuale similare, din două perspective diferite, definite de gen.

Cuvinte cheie: *poezia din perioada Restauraţiei, sexualitate, libertinism, dinamica puterii, Aphra Behn, John Wilmot, Conte de Rochester, relaţii socio-sexuale, virtute şi onoare.*

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Besides its political and religious implications, the return of King Charles II in 1660 to the throne of England brought along substantial changes to the cultural atmosphere of the realm. These changes severely challenged the moral stricture of the Puritan attitude dominating the Interregnum period. The theatres reopened, moral sanctions on behaviour were removed, wit and libertinism made way into the restored Court of the Merry Monarch. John Dryden, poet laureate and historiographer royal under King Charles II, immortalised the libertine atmosphere at Court in "Absalom and Achitophel,"[2] where he writes about a period "When Nature prompted, and no Law deni'd/ Promiscuous use of concubine and bride; / Then, Israel's monarch, after Heaven's own heart, / His vigorous warmth did variously impart /To wives and slaves …" (37). Dryden's taunting remarks about the King's lifestyle are far outweighed by the Earl of Rochester's direct and vitriolic attack against the debauched rule of Charles II. Even though Rochester himself indulged in the hedonistic libertinism of the age, in "Satyr," he attacks the King's amorous eccentricity, which seemed to have become the essence of his philosophy of life and to have taken over his ability to rule the kingdom:

> The easiest King and best bred Man alive
> Him no Ambition mov'd to get Renowne
> Like a French Foole still wandring up and downe,
> Starving his People, hazarding his Crowne,
> Peace was his Aime, his gentleness was such
> And Love, he lov'd, For he lov'd Fucking much,
> Nor was his high desire above his Strength;
> His Scepter and his Prick were of a length,
> And she may Sway the one who plays with t'other. (86)

Naturally, the creative chaos and irreverent obscenity which ruled at Court encouraged licentiousness and wantonness in the literary productions of the Court Wits and of those poets who supported the monarchy and its standards of manners and morals (or lack thereof). Amorality set the tone and poetry attuned to the licentious accents and the sexual looseness of Restoration literature. Therefore, irreverent, bawdy, even pornographic language made its way into the poetry of the day and no subject matter was actually dismissed as unpoetic. If some poets used the moral laxness of the age just to celebrate erotic pleasure, others showed a particular kind of awareness in their exploitation of the hypostases of the sexual body as a reflection of the disturbances of the society to which they belonged. Both Aphra Behn and the Earl of Rochester fall into the latter category because most of their libertine poems open the

[2] "Absalom and Achitophel" is a political satire in which Dryden used the biblical revolt of Absalom against his father King David to discuss the political effervescence of his own times.

possibility for subversive reading. Both of them were attracted to the satiric mode and they both used the poetic portrayal of sexual doings to incorporate commentaries on political and socio-sexual relationships. Their poetry explores the ideological function of seduction in an almost dialogical way. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate the power structures and the dynamics of gender roles underlying the representations of their erotic imagination, from a comparative perspective.

Aphra Behn and John Wilmot, the 2nd Earl of Rochester, were two Restoration poets and playwrights, known both for their allegiance to the monarchy and for their licentious writing. The Earl of Rochester was the most talented of the Court Wits.[3] Described by Alexander Pope as "[t]he mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease" (376), they wrote for their own amusement, not as professional writers. Rochester stands out among the Court Wits because of "the vigour of his colloquial wit" (S. Johnson 194). His numerous amorous escapades, his frequent involvement in duels, his claim of having been continuously drunk for five years, his lampooning the King in "Satyr,"[4] his being exiled several times and then recalled to Court, and his death of venereal disease[5] constitute enough testimony for his strong personality and expertise in self-destruction. Rochester's life has been recorded by his contemporaries, in diaries and letters, and chronicled by several biographers. Although his alleged deathbed repentance was often used as a positive religious example, his reputation was strongly imprinted by his rakish lifestyle, a life of "drunken gaiety and gross sensuality, with intervals of study perhaps yet more criminal, with an avowed contempt of all decency and order, a total disregard to every moral, and a resolute denial of every religious obligation" (195). Nevertheless, his talent was appreciated even by one of the most severe critics of the eighteenth century, Dr. Johnson, who claimed that "his poetry still retains some splendour beyond that which genius has bestowed" (195).

On the other hand, the biographical details regarding Aphra Behn are full of sentences built around 'might,' 'presumably,' and other uncertainty markers. Nevertheless, she is acknowledged as the first truly professional writer in English literature: author of "Oroonoko," an exotic novella about and African prince, and *The Rover*, her most successful play, a rewriting of Thomas Killigrew's *Thomaso*. Moreover, her incomplete biography includes a series of exciting references to her trip to Surinam, her spy missions for the Crown in

[3] The Court Wits were a group of aristocratic poets and playwrights attached to the restored Court of Charles II, including George Villiers, the 2nd Duke of Buckingham, and Charles Sackville, the 6th Earl of Dorset, Sir George Savile, Earl of Halifax, and well-known playwrights Sir George Etherege and William Wycherley.

[4] Also Known as "In the Isle of Brittain."

[5] See Johnson, James William, *A Profane Wit. The Life of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester.*

the Flanders, her fate as a woman who had to earn her living after the death of her husband. All these details can easily stimulate the imagination and challenge the twenty-first century reader to fill biographical gaps in the most intriguing ways. Although we know little of her life, we are able to enjoy her literary legacy. We also know that she nested great admiration for Rochester as she expressed it in her verses "On the Death of the late Earl of Rochester," where she praised his talent and wit: "His name's a Genius that wou'd Wit dispense/ And give the Theme a Soul, the Words a Sense" (80). The similarity of the style and tone of their poetry, together with their being drawn to similar subjects led to the publication of three of Aphra Behn's poems[6] in Rochester's posthumous volume *Poems on Several Occasions*, without proper attribution. The editor of Rochester's volume might have mistaken her poems for his.

Both Aphra Behn and the Earl of Rochester remove the laws of decency and the taboo from sexuality and sexual desire. They foreground sexual intrigues, strategies of seduction, rituals of foreplay, and sexual pleasure in order to undermine the idealism of courtly love which has been cultivated in the poetry of the Cavalier poets and to expose the dynamics of gender domination within the space of human intimacy. While their choice of erotic subjects and sexual scenarios bears some degree of similitude, their intentions and their treatment of these subjects differ. Rochester's poems, which show him glorying in his sexual looseness and his manipulation of obscene language, are deeply rooted in a strong sense of nihilism and testify for his disenchantment with the world. His poetry shows him assuming a variety of (often contradictory) stances, ranging from misogyny to accepting female sexual freedom, from extreme aversion to female sexuality to acknowledging women's right to sexual gratification, from bragging about potency to cursing penile dysfunctions, from unchecked hedonism to attacking the moral laxness of society. On the other hand, Behn's manipulation of sexuality is meant to challenge the idea of expected sexual roles, to undermine the sexual double standard, and to empower female sexuality by confronting the traditional passive role of women with active female sexual desire, while simultaneously exposing male sexual and emotional dysfunctions.

Most of Aphra Behn's poems deal with love and eroticism. She examines a multitude of hypostases ranging from emotional and sexual disappointments to the exploration and the gratification of female sexual desire. Emotional disappointments are, in Behn's poetry, caused by the double standards which emphasise gender differences and enchain women in a set of rules and prejudices concerning the relationship between seduction, sexuality, honour, and social worth, while men are left untouched by any restrictions. In "To Alexis in Answer to his Poem against Fruition. Ode" she exposes the

[6] The three poems were "The Disappointment", "On a Juniper Tree", and "On the Death of Mr Greenhill". See Paul Salzman, *Reading Early Modern Writers*, 204-206.

vainness of women's attempt to keep men. The fleeting character of man's desire renders all female graces futile. Aphra Behn writes:

> Since Man with that inconstancy was born,
> To love the absent, and the present scorn,
> Why do we deck, why do we dress
> For such a short-liv'd happiness? (5045-5047).

In this poem, the speaker assumes a cautionary stance, "acting as female advocate" and places "particular emphasis on male strategies of domination" (Chernaik, 142). Man's innate inconstancy is empowered by the organisation of socio-sexual relations on a hierarchical basis which accepts male desire as normal and allows libertine behaviour in men, while a woman's damaged reputation immediately turns her into damaged goods. Still, Aphra Behn's poetry goes beyond interrogating the balance of power as sanctioned by social norms and moves towards the investigation of gender dynamics against the myth of everlasting love. Of course, faith in eternal and truthful love is continuously undermined by man's impossibility to commit to his mistress. Her poem "An Ode to Love" is relevant in this respect. The poem begins with a curse which draws on the classical image of Cupid guiding the rituals of seduction with his bow and arrows: "Dull Love no more thy Senceless Arrows prize, / Damn thy Gay Quiver, break thy Bow;" (2977). It continues with a portrayal of romantic love as a battle in which the male lover's strategies of seduction and his wounding powers drains the female of her vitality and youth. Aphra Behn writes:

> The Sweetness from thy Eyes he took,
> The Charming Dimples from thy Mouth,
> That wonderous Softness when you spoke;
> And all thy Everlasting Youth. (2988-2989).

If Aphra Behn blames male inconstancy for women's mishaps and for the impossibility of everlasting love, Rochester explores the provisional nature of romantic relationships from a variety of perspectives ranging from casting the blame on the mistress' weakness to deep philosophical meditations on the ephemeral character of human life, and in a variety of tones ranging from irreverent language to colloquial undertones to philosophical accents. In one of his Songs, he writes:

> My dear Mistress hath an heart,
> Kind as those soft looks she gave me;
> When with her resistless Art,
> And her Eyes she did inslave me.
> But her Constancy's so weak,
> She's so wild and apt to wander,
> That my jealous heart will break,
> If we live one day asunder. (46)

The awareness of female desire and her being "apt to wander" pose a serious threat to the privileges of domination, inherent in his being a man. The idea of cuckoldry, which manifests as jealousy in the poem, awakens his repressed fears and anxieties and jeopardizes his power position. If the woman assumes the role of the unscrupulous, opportunistic seducer, she threatens male domination over the sphere of human intimacy. The same notion of not being able to keep his mistress is also to be found in "Upon his leaving his Mistress." Here his tone is "elegantly poised between admiration and contempt for a female libertine who, putting the doctrine of sexual equality into practice, dispenses her bounty like a goddess" (Chernaik 7). Although he hints at her ease in dispensing her favours, Rochester's attitude is much gentler as he understands the difficulty of confining her to his sole domination:

> Tis not that I am weary grown
> Of being yours and yours alone,
> But with what face can I design,
> To make you ever only mine?
>
> And shall my Cælia bee Confin'd?
> No, live up to thy mighty mind,
> And be the mistress of Mankind. (42-3)

On the other hand, his poem "Love to a Woman" opens with an arresting revelation of his utter disregard for women and constancy in love. He allows irreverent language to percolate into his verses in order to strengthen his absolute dismissal of romantic commitment and to stress out his complete disregard for any belief in the redemptory power of love. Rochester writes:

> Love a Woman! Th'rt an Ass—
> Tis a most insipid passion
> To Chuse out for thy Happiness
> The dullest part of Gods Creation. (37)

Nevertheless, the cultivated insouciance of "Love to a Woman" does not show the speaker rejoicing over his hedonistic lifestyle, but exposes a disenchanted attitude over his libertinism and over the laxness allowed and encouraged by society in general.

A stronger meditative strain is to be found in "Song. Love and Life" The poem shows Rochester assuming a tone and a stance completely different from those mentioned above. The poem is designed as a deep meditation on the transitory nature of human life, on incertitude, on man's imprisonment in the present moment. After an impressively poetic reflection on the passage of time and on the brevity of human life, he elaborates on the Horatian idea of seizing the day and embracing the present moment. He uses this idea to curtail

the mythical dimension of love vows and transforms it into the ultimate philosophical justification for man's impossibility to commit:

> Then talk not of Inconstancy,
> False hearts, and broken vows,
> If I by miracle can be
> This livelong minute true to thee
> Tis all that heaven allows. (28)

Both Behn and Rochester are interested in the implications of social constructs on private behaviour. Aphra Behn's poetry often translates into monitory discourse as it interrogates seduction narratives as illustrative for gender subordination and sexual relations. Social decorum imposes a set of conventional virtues, even if they sometimes contravene natural instinct. Although honour and fidelity should conventionally govern romantic relationships, men can get away with indiscretion, since their innate infidelity and inconstancy is considered pardonable. On the other hand, women are coerced to curb their sexual impulses and are denied the gratification of their sexual desire. Behn is trying to resolve the tension between resistance and yielding to seduction by constructing the image of a pre-lapsarian world in poems such as "The Golden Age." Even though she relies on the conventions of the pastoral, the celebration of nature is not the central intention of the poem. Behn uses the pastoral mode to present "the operations of desire as identical in men and women" (Chernaik, 176). Behn writes:

> The Lovers thus, thus uncontroul'd did meet,
> Thus all their Joyes and Vows of Love repeat:
> Joyes which were everlasting, ever new
> And every Vow inviolably true:
> Not kept in fear of Gods, no fond Religious cause,
> Nor in obedience to the duller Laws. (1997-1999)

The untrammelled consummation of sexual passion is seen as a fundamental component of idyllic life. Sexual desire in both men and women is acknowledged and acted on, not repressed. Although nature is not in the foreground, it still plays an important role in emphasising the notion that freedom of love and unrestrained displays of desire represent an inherent part of human nature and should therefore be permitted to both sexes. Behn exploits the conventions of the pastoral, centred on the idea of an innocent state of mankind, to legitimise illicit, uncontrolled, spontaneous, and natural love. Her reinvented Edenic space becomes a universe of unlimited hedonistic opportunity which destabilises gender categories. She uses the possibilities of the pastoral "to arrive at a mythology that allows for variation and experimentation, specifically to explore the interconnectedness of desire, nature, and the social

order" (Laudien 46). The lapse, in Behn's reinvented mythology of eroticism, is triggered by the imposition of restrictions on sexual freedom, which taints the innocence of the uninhibited manifestations of passion and desire. These restrictions are represented in Behn's poem by honour and operate mainly as rules of submissiveness as they seem to apply exclusively to women: "Oh cursed Honour! thou who first didst damn, / A Woman to the Sin of shame" (2003-2004). The social and moral restrictions epitomised here by honour do more than impose sanctions on female behaviour – they corrode the dream of everlasting romantic happiness by empowering the domination of the public over the private affairs, of reputation over natural impulses and drives. The celebration of love is turned into a sin and the loss of reputation is seen as having dramatic consequences on the individual's life. Like Pandora's box, "Miser Honour" seems to have released all evils in the world (awe, cruelty, "broken sighs," "complaints and pains"):

> Honour! who first taught lovely Eyes the art,
> To wound, and not to cure the heart:
> With Love to invite, but to forbid with Awe,
> And to themselves prescribe a Cruel Law;
> To Veil 'em from the Lookers on, (2005-2007).

Honour, virtue, modesty, and wisdom are exposed as social artefacts used for the organisation of socio-sexual relations, as the core of the machinery of repression and oppression. Their value is further undermined in "On Desire. A Pindarick." In this poem, virtue is "but a cheat," honour is the "tyrant" and "a false disguise," modesty is dismissed as "necessary bait," while wisdom is associated with "dull repute" (5209).

Rochester's views on honour and virtue are, to a certain degree, convergent with Behn's. He also sees them as pointless artificial and tyrannical impediments against following natural impulses. In "To Corinna" he writes:

> Poor feeble Tyrant who in vaine
> Woud proudly take upon her
> Against kind nature to maintain
> Affected Rules of honour. (35)

If Behn understands honour as a social artefact used to entrap women and to build the socio-sexual double standard, Rochester exposes it as a sign of hypocrisy in women. In "*Womans Honour Song"* he writes:

> This Huffing honour domineers
> In breasts where he alone has place;
> But if true Generous love appears
> The Hector dares not shew his face. (35)

Moreover, the misogynistic accents of his treatment of honour become more visible when he moves towards distinguishing between the notion of 'male honour' as 'real honour' and 'female honour' as falseness and pretence. In his patriarchal understanding of the world, 'real' virtue and honour are inherently incompatible with women. Therefore, the male speaker feels entitled to assume a patronising attitude and completely dismiss female virtue:

> Consider reall Honour then,
> you'll find hers cannot be the same.
> Tis noble confidence in men,
> In Women mean mistrustfull shame. (35)

Rochester appears to enjoy more liberty than Aphra Behn, even when it comes to writing. He does not need to remove the image of untrammelled enjoyment of the pleasures of the flesh from his immediate reality. He does not have to resort to the pastoral mode and to imagine a golden age in order to speak about sexual freedom as he can easily place it in the heart of London and he does so in "A Ramble in Saint James's Parke", where he writes:

> Each imitative branch does twine
> In some lov'd fold of *Aretine*,
> And nightly now beneath their shade
> Are Buggeries, Rapes, and Incests made:
> Unto this all-sin-sheltring Grove
> Whores of the Bulk, and the Alcove,
> Great Ladies, Chamber Mayds, and Drudges,
> The Ragg picker, and Heiress Trudges
> Carrmen, Divines, Great Lords, and Taylors,
> Prentices, Poets, Pimps, and Gaolers,
> Footmen, Fine Fopps, doe here arrive,
> And here promiscuously they sw—ve. (82)

Drunkenness, fornication, adultery, and orgiastic practices represent common affairs of quotidian life. In a way, Rochester's disenchanted attitude and his disgust with carnality look forward to Swift. His portrayal of a world centred on hedonism is a far cry from the glow of Behn's celebration of the golden age of sexual freedom. The liberating potential of Behn's invented golden age is replaced by an acute sense of moral meltdown and her celebration of sexual freedom as natural and empowering for women is substituted by Rochester's disenchanted attitude towards the society he satirises and by his severe critique of the Corinna's sluttish conduct. Rochester's use of offensive, even pornographic language has the role of devaluating human passions and desires. The irreverent vocabulary, the power of the obscene visual images, the rapid march of the lines, and the velocity of pace create and

entertain the image of the promiscuous doom of a society capable of nothing else but orgiastic fornication. Aphra Behn also explores eroticism directly, but her language is much softer, much more sensual than Rochester's aggressive bawdiness and pornographic vocabulary. The image of sexual freedom as escapist bliss in Aphra Behn's poem discussed above is here replaced with promiscuous nightmarish fantasies. As Warren Chernaik noted, "the poem can be seen as a Hobbesian nightmare" (37). The speaker in Rochester's poem assumes the role of the involved observer when attacking the Town's moral decay. However, his tone is not moralising, only disgusted. He becomes even more vitriolic in addressing Corinna's libertine drives. His attitude towards her emphasises the idea that libertinism is a masculine ideology. As Warren Chernaik noted,"[l]ibertinism … has its territorial side, and resistance to female encroachment is a recurrent motif in libertine writings of the Restoration period" (7). Chernaik interprets this resistance as a symptom of the anxiety caused in men by rivalling gender positions. The assertion and the gratification of female sexual desires is therefore seen as threatening to the comfort of domination, traditionally enjoyed by men and protected by concepts such as honour and virtue, applied exclusively to women.

Female sexuality has always been perceived as threatening and nefarious to men, as a source of extreme uneasiness regarding the patriarchal structures of gender hierarchy. Aphra Behn chooses to challenge the double standard by acknowledging female sexuality and exploring it in her poems. Therefore, women are no longer the unwilling victims of the seducer, not mere objects for male pleasure, and the power position of the male is replaced with the role of the one who has to meet her physical needs. Women's free enjoyment of sexual pleasure receives a politicised dimension. It hosts subversive potential which is brought up and examined as a means to contest the double standard.

This exploration of female sexuality is performed through continuous vacillation between concealment and exposure. She preserves the awareness of the "sharply different consequences of libertinism for women" (Staves 21). In "The Willing Mistress," Behn addresses female desire by resorting, again, to the pastoral mode in order to create a private retreat for the lovers. Aware of the consequences of the public display of untrammelled desire, she sets the erotic scene "away from indiscrete eyes," in a grove, with only the sun to protect their secret. She uses the trope of inexpressibility to preserve the rhetoric of concealment but also to manipulate erotic energy. Behn writes:

> A many kisses he did give:
> And I return'd the same
> Which made me willing to receive
> That which I dare not name. (2305-2307).

She strengthens the idea of the inexpressible through the innuendo which concludes the poem: “And lay'd me gently on the Ground; / Ah who can guess the rest?” (2309). On one hand, the trope of inexpressibility follows the rhetoric of concealment but, on the other hand, it also enhances the eroticism of the scene by stimulating imagination to fill the gaps. The emphasis on the gratification of female desire changes the traditional seduction narratives which attribute the role of the seducer to the male and typically see women as victims of male pleasure. It destabilises conventional gender categories and empowers female sexuality.

In other poems she becomes more direct in her treatment of female sexuality. The trope of inexpressibility is replaced by more explicit descriptions. The awareness of the potential damaging effect of giving in to desire seems to diminish as she challenges the rhetoric of concealment and preservation of reputation and surpasses the non-confessable nature of female desire and sexual drives. Behn’s poem “On Desire” speaks about “female desire for desire, and willingness, once it is found, to risk all for it” (Munns 219). The poem begins with the evocation of a period when the speaker longed for passion and moves towards the acknowledgement of passion, that “enchanting thing” which had awakened and conquered the speaker’s heart and is ceaselessly fighting “fame and honour.” The description of sexual passion in oxymoronic terms (the “charming disturber,” the “welcome plague sent from above,” “errors which my soul do please and vex”) stresses out the contradiction between natural inner drives and socio-sexual orthodoxy. Female sexual desire is acknowledged and yielded to without regard for the traditional and predictable consequences of giving in to desire because “there is also strength in the speaker’s willingness to experience her desires to the full” (Munns 218). Desire mingles erotic excitement with “a new understanding of the world” (219). The exploration of the complexity of female sexuality it is seen as integral part of romantic love, as continuously nourishing it. The woman is actively involved in the ritual of seduction: she is the one touching ‘the swain’ and enjoying the pleasure of the touch. Behn writes:

> I faint, I dye with pleasing pain,
> My words intruding sighing break
> When e're I touch the charming swain
> When e're I gaze, when e're I speak.
> Thy conscious fire is mingl'd with my love ... (5196-5198).

The exploration of sexual desire through the other is set against the disapproval of the frozen society. The private, intimate space of sexuality provides a locus of self-acknowledgement, of insulation from the authority of sexually inhibiting dominant discourses:

Deceive the foolish World—deceive it on,
And veil your passions in your pride;
But now I've found your feebles by my own,
From me the needful fraud you cannot hide. (5210-5211).

The assertion of female sexuality is perceived as threatening for a male-dominated society, even in a libertine and hedonistic environment. As Susan Staves notes, "[w]hile libertinism authorized women's free enjoyment of sexual pleasure, a serious problem for Behn was that libertinism was a masculine ideology" (21). If Behn's poetry sees female sexuality as having an empowering effect, Rochester is bent on stigmatizing it. Since sexual prowess is traditionally understood as synonymous with male domination and sexual libertinism as the appanage of men, female sexuality stirs a sort of Freudian castration anxiety. Therefore, in Rochester's poetry, female desire is undermined. It is either ridiculed or "associated with 'Menstruous blood', as though the menses were both the cause of woman's desire and a badge of shame, a sign of the body's impurity, associating sexuality with dirt, stains, bad smells" (Chernaik 74). In "On Mrs. W–llis" he uses the image of a prostitute to undermine female sexuality by rendering it repugnant. Rochester writes:

Bawdy in thoughts, precise in Words,
Ill natur'd though a Wh—re,
Her Belly is a Bagg of T—ds,
And her C—t a Common shore[7]. (44)

The poem represents a perversion of the classical treatment of the muse. The speaker points to her functioning as a source of inspiration through the reproductive potential of her menstrual blood: "I'le write upon a double Clowt /and dipp my Pen in Flow—s"[8] (43). The female body is used for poetic inspiration, but her portrayal is irreverent and unflattering, at best. The female body as the sexual body is repugnant. The offensive language and the oxymoronic associations in depicting Mistress Willis is a cynical reduction of the muse to a creature of abhorrence:

Her looks demurely Impudent
Ungainly Beautifull,
Her modesty is insolent
Her witt both pert and dull. (43)

The male gaze ends here in extreme disgust and contempt. Moreover, only the male speaker has the power to create, while her reproductive powers

[7] Here 'sewer'. See the editor's notes in Earl of Rochester. *The Poems and Lucina's Rape.* Ed. Keith Walker and Nicholas Fisher. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

[8] As editors Walker and Fisher explain, double Clowt. Flow[er]s: 'He will write on a cloth folded to serve as a sanitary napkin, using menstrual blood for ink' (43).

have been cancelled by reducing her belly to 'a bag of turds'. The promiscuous muse functions only as inspiration: she inspired the poem by stimulating the strong feeling of repugnance towards female sexuality which runs through the text. By rendering female sexuality and female creative potential infamous, the superiority of the male is restored, both in the intimate sphere of sexuality and in the public sphere of authorship.

Authorship is further denied to women in "The Earl of Rochester's Answer, to a Paper of Verses, sent him by L. B. Felton." Rochester's misogynistic impulse surfaces in his transforming women in mere objects for men's pursuit of pleasure:

> Were it not better for your Arms t'employ,
> Grasping a Lover in pursuit of Joy,
> Than handling Sword, and Pen, Weapons unfit:
> Your Sex gains Conquest, by their Charms and Wit.
> Of Writers slain I could with pleasure hear,
> Approve of Fights, o'er-joy'd to cause a Tear;
> So slain, I mean, that she should soon revive,
> Pleas'd in my Arms to find her self Alive. (135)

Masculinity's position on the domineering pedestal is thus consolidated, both in the public and in the intimate sphere. Man's sexual performance is further praised in "Answer," where its function is to reassure male domination against the threat of female sexuality. Although this poem reveals a sense of envy and scorn blended with admiration for female sexual capacity, the speaker quickly builds the image of the male as a hero of sexual potency. While Phillis can "swive/ With forty lovers more," the speaker brags about his "well stuck standing P—k" (128), the sceptre of his omnipotence. Still, the more boastfully the male speaker asserts his potency, the more prone it is to founder. The myth of man as a champion of potency suddenly collapses in "The Imperfect Enjoyment," a poem about premature ejaculation and impotence, which follows the tradition of poems about unsuccessful sexual encounters due to male erectile dysfunctions and their inability to satisfy their mistress, dating back to Ovid's *Amores*. The poem begins with a poetic image of the lovers' intimate embracing, kindling their passion:

> *Naked* she lay clasp'd in my longing Armes
> I fill'd with Love and she all over Charmes
> Both equally inspir'd with eager fire
> Melting through kindness flameing in desire. (8)

The pentameter couplet used for the celebration of love... not exactly Rochester's style. As expected, the poetic language changes and, beginning with the fifth line, it makes room for the explicit vocabulary of eroticism and

pornography to accomplish the graphic portrayal of sexual doings. The foreplay is vividly described but it quickly reaches a premature climax. Rochester manipulates the entire situation with great poetic skill. He has a much greater command over the march of his lines and the balance of his rhyme than the speaker over his sexual performance. The emotional shift is manoeuvred carefully in a movement from surprise to shock to the invocation of past gentlemanly point scoring to confusion and despair to the poetic verbal outrage reminiscent of the classical curse. The speaker's emotional energy is unleashed in a sort of wry amusement which percolates the entire poem through the use of defensive comic strategies. The strategy of exaggeration is used as a futile attempt to reconstruct the image of the sexual champion he used to be:

> This Dart of Love whose peircing point oft Try'de
> With Virgin blood Ten Thowsand Mayds have dy'de
> Which Nature still Directed with such Art
> That it through every C—t reach't every heart (9)

Given that every attempt to amount to the past glory of sexual prowess is doomed to failure, the speaker's tone changes as he begins to scold his antagonising penis: "Thou Treacherous base Deserter of my Flame,/ False to my passion fatall to my Fame" (9). The comic effect builds on imaginative and amusing appellatives, atop the personification of the penis: "the Rakehell villain," "Base recreant" (10) and culminates with the unleashing of a mock-epic curse:

> Mayest thou to Ravenous Shankers be a prey
> Or in Consumeing weepings wast away
> May strangury and stone thy daies attend
> Mayest thou nere piss who didst Refuse to spend (10)

Rochester uses the high rhetoric of the epic mode, but he applies it to immortalise the grandiose failure of his once hero of potency, in the mock-epic tradition. Although the poem shifts the reader's attention to the 'epic failure,' it also hides connotations relevant for gender politics. It is noteworthy that gender dynamics operates from a position of equality. The two lovers are "equally inspir'd with eager fire" (8). Moreover, female sexual desire is acknowledged: "is there then no more? / She cries;" (9) and the male speaker assumes the responsibility of satisfying it: "To doe the wrong'd *Corinna* Right for Thee" (10). Rochester's treatment of the subject also reveals a certain amount of self-confidence. There is no wining, no genuine rage, no blame bestowed upon the female partner, but only an amusing display of exasperation mixed with a sense of responsibility towards the mistress.

Although "The Imperfect Enjoyment" reconsiders gender categories and challenges expected sexual roles by valuing the female sexual partner as

equal, the failure to perform is not presented as a metaphor incorporating questions regarding the destabilization of the phallocentric society. The major concern is focused on much more personal issues and allows the fathoming of human nature in terms of expectation and vulnerability. As Warren Chernaik points out, the subject of the poem is focused on the dialectics between desire and fulfilment. In Chernaik's words, "[t]he poem evokes an ideal of a perfect love, an expression of spiritual union through the sexual act, betrayed by a body which can never be trusted and by an imagination which inevitably deceives" (16).

A more politicised treatment of the same subject is Aphra Behn's "The Disappointment," a translation and rewriting of Jean Benech de Cantenac's "L'Occasion perdue recouverte," presumably adapted by Behn as a response to Rochester's "The Imperfect Enjoyment." While the setting of Rochester's poem is undefined, Behn resorts to the pastoral environment to set the sexual intrigue. She relies on blending sexuality, elements of classical mythology, and the atmosphere of Edenic nature to transform the story of a failed sexual encounter into a subversive device. By assuming a first person speaker, Rochester's poem is more personal, while Behn's third person account allows the speaker to keep a critical distance. If Rochester's poem has a divergent structure, Behn relies on the progress of narrative, guided by chronology and causality, to shape the structure of the poem. "The Disappointment" begins with 'Amorous Lysander' forcing himself on 'fair Cloris.' Cloris does resist the rape, but her resistance is rooted in social conventions rather than in her own inner drives. Although she cries out about him tainting her honour, she makes gestures which reveal her sexual impulses: "Her Hands his Bosom softly meet,/ But not to put him back design'd,/ Rather to draw 'em on inclin'd" (2523-2524). Therefore, female sexual drives curtail and subvert the dimension of rape as a metaphor for male domination. The poem progresses with a graphical description of the foreplay, during which Cloris faints only to awaken driven by willingness to sacrifice her virginity to Lysander. However, the "Ravish'd Shepherd" finds himself unable to "perform the sacrifice." After touching Lysander's intimate parts and finding a snake in the grass, Cloris flees, overwhelmed by 'Shame' and 'Disdain,' leaving the shepherd fainting. Of course, Lysander, tormented by grief and fury, blames Cloris' charms as he is certain that she "Had Damn'd him to the Hell of Impotence" (2582-2583). The poem embeds a skilfully constructed narrative. The actions of Cloris and Lysander are designed to correspond, thus forming what Livingston calls the poem's "ring composition."[9]

Similar to Rochester's "The Imperfect Enjoyment," Behn's poem has a humorous strain and visible mock-heroic nuances. Her comic strategies rely on her comic rhyme, on the appellations used to refer to the penis, the use of

[9] See M. Livingston, "Aphra Behn's THE DISAPPOINTMENT as Ring Composition."

pagan mythology for petty affairs, the juxtaposition of high rhetoric over trivial matters, and on the use of circumlocution as part of the mock-heroic decorum. Again, the difference between the vocabulary employed by the two poets presents authorship as a gender-defined notion. If Rochester indulges in the bawdy fervour of his irreverent language, Behn's use of euphemisms, innuendos, metaphors to detract from the naked truth of her erotic scenes is a far cry from Rochester's incandescent obscenity. Therefore, the feminine discourse defines itself as vacillating between transparency and concealment, just like female sexuality. On the other hand, the male author's bawdiness does not need any kind of camouflage in the deployment of erotic tropes. The masculine discourse enjoys a much higher degree of permissiveness.

Like Rochester in "The Imperfect Enjoyment," Behn implies that sexual drives render men and women equals, but she also uses female sexuality to undermine male domination by rape. Cloris' pretended initial resistance as well as her feelings of shame at the end emerge from the social norms applicable to female sexual behaviour, not from her inner drives. Unlike Rochester's male speaker, Behn's Lysander does not have any sense of responsibility towards the satisfaction of female desire. His failure gains metaphoric valences and amplifies to encompass all the discourses empowering men by blaming women for male failure.

As mentioned above, Behn's interest in the treatment of the unsuccessful sexual encountered is more political than Rochester's. The story of male failure allows her "to utilize the weight of patriarchal authority against itself to underscore a theory of human sexuality that reveals gender binaries as arbitrary and political constructs rather than inherent and natural outgrowths" (Livingston 192). Zeitz and Thoms also argue that she uses the poem to interrogate "the notion of power as a definer of male identity" and to question "conventional gender roles and the structures of oppression they support" (501). Moreover, Livingston demonstrates that, besides the potential of the material handled in the poem to undermine double standards and expected socio-sexual roles, the very structure of the poem, its 'ring composition,' is used subversively. In Livingstone's words, "[i]ronically, through a structural device handed down to her from patriarchal antiquity, Behn deftly responds to her literary forebears by recasting and revising the very social expectations upon which their meanings inevitably rely" (194).

In the poems by Aphra Behn and by the Earl of Rochester, the acceptance of the fleeting nature of male desire, the exploration of female sexuality against the background of social gender codes and natural human drives, the interrogation of patriarchal domination through potency tests and narratives of failed sexual encounters, and the examination of male and female erotic fantasies reflect the power structures of socio-sexual organisation. They

use the various hypostases of the sexual body and approach intimate relationships from different perspectives which challenge the double standard and the expected socio-sexual roles and assault notions such as honour and reputation. Rochester's poems encompass a series of contradictory attitudes, ranging from the assertion of male domination and the expression of contempt for female libertinism to acknowledging female sexuality and the equality between sexes in the very intimate space of sexual relationships. In his poetry, the phallus often assumes the metaphorical value of the centre of the world. When erect and functioning, it is meant to reduce the threat of female sexuality. When limp and powerless, it offers insights into human nature. Behn is more focused on examining female sexuality and the impact it has on the predefined gender categories. The acknowledgement of female sexual desire has an empowering effect upon women, just as erectile dysfunctions destroy the idea of male omnipotence, thus weakening male domination. Both Rochester and Behn use their ebullient sexual imagination as a means of interrogating and examining the balance of power and gender dynamics.

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(RECOMMENDED CITATION)

FROM IBSEN TO BECKETT: ASPECTS OF HUMAN CONDITION

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ABSTRACT. ***From Ibsen to Becket: Aspects of Human Condition.*** My paper brings Ibsen and Beckett closer than they have been placed before, my main focus being their contribution to the new definition of an individual, a concept that takes account of both man and *woman.* I also try to redefine their place in society and how to express the most common things that people experience on the inside, and how these are reflected on the outside by their actions, how their vocabulary is a problem in modern society.

Keywords*: human being, love, relationships, dream, choices, consciousness, female condition, mind.*

REZUMAT. ***De la Ibsen la Becket: aspecte ale condiției umane.*** Această lucrare îi aduce pe Ibsen şi Beckett mai aproape decât au fost vreodată plasaţi, preocuparea mea este contribuția acestora la redefinirea individului, concept care îl înglobează atât pe bărbat, cât şi pe femeie. Încerc, de asemenea, să redefinesc locul acestora în societate, exprimarea celor mai comune lucruri pe care oamenii le experimentează pe dinăuntru şi modul în care acestea sunt reflectate pe dinafară în acţiunile lor şi modul în care vocabularul este o problemă în societatea modernă.

Cuvinte cheie*: fiinţa umană, iubire, relaţii, vis, alegeri, conştiinţă, condiția femeii, cuget.*

The human condition is a common theme for both Henrik Ibsen and Samuel Beckett, which leads to new views on life and on the values in life. What is it that people are living for? I think that what Ibsen and Beckett show in the two plays I chose to write about is the shallowness of perceiving life and other people through the senses. One of the challenges will be to highlight the different ways these two authors point to the self-cancellation of human identity and personality and the seeking of the self.

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When I first decided on the subject of my paper, my intention was to highlight the smooth shift from the modern Ibsenian way to reach the self (the key being the soul, and the way to become human being through language, thereby becoming aware of one's own existence) to the modern and postmodern Beckettian way to reach the self, to identify oneself also by language (which means that one must overcome one's body). I think that what makes both writers so important is that they do not see communication and language as a way to socialize, or as or as a way to form connections within society, but rather as a way to become human by revealing the mind and soul. This is the direct affirmation of how difficult it is to be human and this is why we have to take care of the "ideas". Language is what made humankind become aware of itself and offered it the possibility of moving forward to attain the constant "new modernity".

If in Ibsen there was a bodily presence, but a soul absence, in Beckett there can be a bodily presence and absence, while the soul is absent, the "word" giving access to the mind of a character. There are plays in Ibsen which are considered to be more psychological than social or absurd or idealistic, but I think that with Ibsen, the technique for reaching the human, hidden and dark side of the mind makes him so different, because it tackles the soul, that ghostly presence which makes people human, but in a different way than how the mind makes people human.

When Ibsen first brought his dark and absurd plays on stage, people around the world were outraged. Ibsen passed from the positive idealistic view of the world to the negative, but still idealistic, as I would see it, view of everyday life. He de-idealized the typical understanding of idealism in an aesthetic way and moved to a more materialized and hard idealism. To make this affirmation clearer, I must add that he brought the idea of "idealism", not the romantic sense of it, but the realistic and everlasting concept present in every century, as a leading presence at the level of our mind and without which people would devolve.

Both in Ibsen and in Beckett every act affects the mind, the punishment being the loss of the soul, the incapability to react to the burden and, thus, to the death of the body. This topic is treated differently by the two authors. Death is a common subject of interest for both of them, as much as the functioning of the mind; these being the reasons for the struggle. Even so, one must recognize Beckett's incredible step forward in reducing all to the mind, leaving everything else behind and saying that the rest is not important. If one wants to understand man, one must access its mind. This is what makes Beckett so postmodern and so hard to grasp and to understand.

> Instead of focusing on the world of ideas, apprehensible through logic and rational means, Beckett now focused on what could not be known, and on what could only be vaguely sensed and felt. He began to write using the

> experiences of the body, from the inside out. 'Impotence' and 'ignorance' – the words Beckett employed to explain this new authorial position – (Shenker 1979, 148) replaced logic and rationality. (Oppenham 147)

Even though already with Ibsen we experience a different approach to theatre, irrationality of actions and of the presentation of the world, Beckett drove everything much deeper into the abyss of the unknown.

Without further theoretical explanations, I will begin by analyzing the two plays *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen and *Happy days* by Samuel Beckett, plays that tackle the subject of death, broken relationships between men and women, extra-conjugal relationships, and everything that affects us psychologically, and physically, too.

Every action that man takes is an action that defines his life and that of other people, too, because on the other hand, we are not a part of the world, we are the world and we come closer and closer to each other, not through the body, but by rediscovering ourselves in each other. Man is still an individual, whether man or woman, but at the same time he or she is the world. And that is why the body and its movement are not what are important, but rather what happens in the narrow space between people. Neither Ibsen's characters, nor Beckett's, move very far, there is usually only one place where everything happens.

Before going on with the similitude between the two plays, I shall start with Ibsen the revolutionary and the modern, tackling the concept of sacrifice, which means female sacrifice. The concept is present in most of his plays at different levels: for example in *The Wild Duck*, *A Doll's House*, then in *Hedda Gabler* and *When We Dead Awaken.* While discussing this topic, one must mention that as Ibsen challenged his contemporaries and the entire mentality of that period by speaking up against the limits and the wrong doings towards human beings, towards women especially, he himself becomes a protector of the disempowered.

> This was undoubtedly a fantastic victory for artistic freedom. With the death of idealism, political, religious, and ethical interference in the autonomy of art could no longer find aesthetical justification. Women, in particular, have had everything to gain from the death of the outlandish idealist requirements for the representation of women, sexuality, and love. These gains remain enduring legacies of the victory of modernism over idealism, and it is desperately ungrateful of us to forget how much they owe to Ibsen" (Moi 103).

The requirements that Toril Moi refers to are the idealistic approach and the image that women had, that self-respect and respect from the others (men) obtained by "bodily chastity" (Moi 81). Nora is a good example in this respect.

> The result is that in a curios reversal of the hierarchy between body and spirit, a woman's honour comes to reside entirely in her sexuality. A doll's House provides a caustic one-line dismissal of this whole tradition of thought:

> 'HELMER. I would gladly work night and day for you, Nora, bear sorrow and deprivation for your sake. But nobody sacrifices his *honour* for the one he loves.
> NORA. A hundred thousand women have done precisely that.' (Moi 81)

This is not the only achievement. For women, talking was merely a natural thing, but talking and having a meaning, making sense and being important in the world, was seen as impossible for women, because they were seen merely as beautiful and satisfactory dolls for men. This is where the difference between a mere feminist/social drama and a deeper and humanistic orientated drama lies. By this I mean that it all leads to the idea of what life is.

Even in Beckett's *Happy Days*, Winnie is a woman who speaks all the time, but who seems to be unsatisfied, going back to the memories of the old days when she was of interest to her husband, Now the latter doesn't even listen to her making us understand that she is just rambling, disturbing him, and that he is now an impotent man, from all points of view. Here we encounter another image of what living for all the wrong reasons means.

One of the reasons I have chosen *A Doll's House* and *Happy Days*, was that we meet a sort of positive/ encouraging attitude towards life combined with a superficial feeling that something better may occur: the presence of a soul which fights to break out to the surface and feel the breath of life trying its best to hang on to things that may make the situation more bearable. If in *A Doll's House* we have Nora who enumerates the word "wonderful", "the wonderful", "the most wonderful", in *Happy Days*, we have Winnie with:

> her courageous enumeration of "great", "tender", "many" or "abounded mercies" (Beckett's manuscripts reveal that he considered the titles *Great Mercies*, *Tender Mercies*, *Many Mercies*). (Cohn 266)

There is this distance that Beckett lets us feel, this incapability of the two to come back closer to each other, so that towards the end we find Winnie buried up to her neck, unable to do anything else, not even the womanly things she does at the beginning. She can only talk. She seems to be the only one left to rationalize and think, most probably because she cares, she has an interest in living, unlike her husband, who doesn't.

In *A Doll's House*, Helmer doesn't understand what she means by the "vidunderlig" (wonderful), doesn't understand any of her subtleties, not to mention her actions and her final decision. It is quite impressive how this is the revolutionary word that paved the way for the modernists, late modernists, and postmodernists to explore the human being. The challenge was to be able to go deeper into the mind of the human being broadening the area of research and consequently, display the amazing complexity and reality of the human being.

Subjects such as communication, marriage, sexuality, and men and women begin to take a different shape and gain accessibility. Both Ibsen and Beckett use the theatre to shock the public and not to entertain them and this

is a whole new perspective on the idea and role of theatre. Ibsen provokes his audiences to think and to revolt, for by revolting man takes a new road towards the unknown. But this leads inevitably to change, a statement which I think is justified when looking at both authors' achievements in literature and thinking.

Ibsen succeeds in overcoming the literary current he was born and formed in, by giving birth to a new one which cut across the old clichés such as the woman sacrificing herself for love and for her family. Ibsen opened the way towards the real humanity and offered one of the first set of values to modern society. There have been debates whether this is a feminist or a humanist play. My position is that it is first and foremost a humanist play although secondarily it undoubtedly has feminist features, which are not of interest to me, but whose importance I don't underestimate either.

A very important aspect that I will be discussing is the concept of "dream", which stands as the primordial factor in any action that people take during their life. We can identify this concept most positively in Ibsen, while in Beckett this takes the shape of the "Will". Even with Winnie, her hope in reliving the "old days" ("happy days"), lies in her will to experience herself out there in the world rather than being buried by societal images.

A very clear distinction between the two points of view represented by *A Doll's House* and *Happy Days* is that in both plays the human condition is on trial. In Beckett's play the protagonist cannot change his situation, while in Ibsen's drama he can change his situation if only he could have the power to wish for it, to dream of it, even though contemporary society asks him to present a different reality and accuses him of immorality.

What was not understood by the common people nor by the critics was that when Ibsen made Nora slam the door, this was not a message to all women to do the same thing. This stood as an example of a way of thinking and an attitude. This was probably one of the plays that stirred the most controversy after it had been played, "The Doll's House forrige sesong utløste en storm av diskusjon. Få dramatikeres verker har skapt lignende" (Gibson 109)[2], and in many places it was forbidden or strongly criticized, and Ibsen banned as a playwright. It didn't stand a chance on the Irish stage either, if we think of that society as well as with reference to Beckett.

Beckett comes to shock as well, and presents the public with life the simplest and hardest way one can grasp. He targeted his audience in the hope of eliciting a response, an awakening, even though he did not believe people in a postmodern society were really strong enough to achieve this. A very important aspect of any discussion of the postmodern society is consumerism. Man prefers to be the slave of his comfort zone, with everything becoming a matter of survival.

[2] "Last season *The Doll's House* triggered a storm of discussions. Just a few works of the playwright succeeded in bestirring something similar." (Translated by Anamaria Ciobanu)

If with Ibsen women find their way to freedom, with Beckett we learn that now both men and women are on their way towards slavery and isolation. If in Ibsen, the lack of communication was a matter of position and ideology, in Beckett, who lived in the new world, it's a matter of choice resulting, however, in the same thing, namely, isolation. So as one can see, the world has changed in a way, but is heading, nonetheless, towards the same thing because of the human attitude towards true/ real values.

Even so, one cannot deny the positivism that comes from Winnie's side, the same positivism that one finds in Nora, namely their refusal to accept their situation and to believe that there are things, wonderful ("vidunderlig") things that can make life adventurous and wonderful. Winnie, like Nora, lives a life of routine, everyday doing and representing the same thing. In Nora there is this idea that day by day she becomes more and more powerful, while with Winnie there is this daily belief that she will find out something new and wonderful, thus making life bearable and worth living.

Amazingly enough, what Winnie waits and hopes for is the HAPPY DAY, which will make everything meaningful and wonderful, just like Nora who has waited for the "vidunderligste" (the most wonderful) all her life and realized that it was not going to happen. So there is a spark of hope and positivism in Beckett's play.

Like *A Doll's House*, *Happy Days* is a play that outrages at first, but when going deeper, it turns out to be only a play that illustrates the monotony and the routine that fills one's life; the solution comes from the inside, from the mind, the secret lying in the dream. I think that Beckett's play is a message encoding the idea of freedom. The Irish writer thinks of the freedom from man's earthly condition which means trying to find something that gives it intensity and makes it worth receiving as a gift from God.

The old Latin saying "carpe diem", I would say, just encompasses the idea above. Therefore, as it already becomes clearer and clearer, the two writers, though separated by time and space, reveal themselves to be ever closer. Now going back to Ibsen, *A Doll's House* is a play that outraged the public and the elites because it threatened the comfort zone they were used to, especially the zone of power and control.

Both plays have the same impulse towards dreaming, i.e. wishing for something different, something that makes one feel fulfilled. It all comes down to relationships, communication, love at different levels, motivation, a true valuing of oneself, reaching for the better, if not the best. This impulse is also in opposition to shallowness.

The idea of routine is present in *A Doll's House* beginning with the title, where Nora is compared to a doll. She used to be controlled by her father and now is controlled by her husband, her life being a routine in the real sense of

the word, and ruled by the material. She can have everything – besides the satisfaction of her soul, of her inner person, as if these did not exist. Just like a puppet, she exists only for the satisfaction of the ones who own her.

It was a straightforward and cruel image that Ibsen chose to present to his public, thus urging them to react and take action, for this was against any human values. Indeed, these values were inhuman. It is Torvald who seeks for the perfect happy environment which is a clear routine that would give him the stability and stillness he needs. This is exactly the opposite of how Nora perceives happiness. Torvald recognizes freedom, seen as foolishness, but he enjoys making the others feel tied to him.

A very important suggestion is made here: the choices. Just as in Beckett where it is Winnie's choice to believe in something wonderful to come, in a happy day, in *A Doll's House*, choices build and destroy a life, even though it may seem too harsh to say so. More importantly, in this case it is a choice that reshaped the tradition and the understanding of freedom and of humanity. One has to be aware of the fact that people are the same; society is the same, therefore only if the human evolves, and society evolves, too.

The reason I chose to study the two authors and especially these plays, is because I believe that in life, the things that matter are the ones that mark us and that reach that deep side of any human being. They reach the human side of us and give that hint of what we should do next. The relevance of any book or any drama is to offer that moment of questioning and thinking, after which there is a feeling of standing up and being ready to go to "war" with oneself and with everything that hedges, encloses, one's freedom of thinking. This is what I mean by living.

Thus, amazingly enough such a play is still relevant in the twenty-first century for there is no need to remind anyone that there are still marriages that still suffer from the same problems that Nora and Helmer dealt with in the nineteenth century: marriage for all the wrong reasons, routine, superficiality in expression, feelings and communication, spouses living separate lives, women who don't have the courage to leave their marriage for various reasons, wives who acknowledge when something doesn't work and wish for more etc.

I don't want my choice of words to sound feminist, because they are not, on the contrary, I'm referring to the courage of any human being to think their life through and to take action according to their best interest, in order to better their life and achieve inner fulfilment, gaining satisfaction and pleasure in living. Nora was a beautiful woman, with a great appetite for life, always there for her husband's entertainment, a woman who made her husband have fantasies with her, but who was never accepted and acknowledged as anything other than her outer side. This is not a play to be only interpreted as feminist, even though I do realize the great good it did for the movement and for modern society in this sense.

Consequently, this is a play about human beings, about seeing that we are human beings first and foremost, for not even Torvald understands what it means to be human. It is Torvald who treats others superficially and understands relationships superficially, i.e. strictly utilitarian. Torvald's relation with the world around him is materialistic and idealistic, if I can call it that.

This play also shows the limitations of man, how little we know and care and how superficial we are in relation to others. Or this is very important especially when talking about a marriage. This theme of marriage is present both in Ibsen and Beckett. It relies on the simplest idea of a relationship between two persons and what that means for life and the world itself. When Nora slammed the door, a new episode in the history of mankind began.

One very important feature that characterizes relationships between people -be the relationships between men or between men and women - is economy, money. This is what governs positions, attitudes, and actions. Nevertheless, Ibsen moved step by step from a realistic point of view regarding life and his dramas at a more psychological level, up to the subconscious.

Helmer himself lives his life influenced by a materialistic point of view, without thinking about the people around him whom he expects to act in his interest and participate in his effort for a stable, rich, peaceful and full of respect life. Ibsen showed the selfishness of man regarding his own good and comfort. In addition to this, another idea behind this very subtle image is that no one owes anything to anyone, but only to himself.

In *Happy Days* I would say that we have the future of Helmer's family, if Nora were not gone. The problem is that that the future doesn't look so "vidunderlig" because man is weak and the key doesn't lie in the feminist perception, but in the existentialist one. This is where it all gets more complicated because now it's not only women who ask for their rights as human beings, but men, too.

Thus, the question is how do we become individuals? How do we come back to life? These two questions are valid both for the modern and the postmodern age, because they are characterized by this insufficiency of humanity regarding relationships between and among people and the relationship with the self. Needless to say, this search for inner happiness is an ancient habit of man, a well travelled path. I mentioned earlier in my paper the concept of "choices" and probably "choice" is what gives these plays timelessness, because "choice" is what defines us as human beings and our history. The life that Beckett exposes in his *Happy Days* results from choices and conformity to situations and society. Throughout the play there is also reference to the values promoted by society and the context given to the people by society.

If we are to analyse the two women, Nora and Winnie, we can see that both of them seem to be wanting more than the regular routine of primping

and posing for the people around them. Even the choice of being in a marriage can be a choice of courage, responsibility, and respect towards the other, but most importantly it should free the human being and not tie him or her down, nor make shallow these women's beauty. This beauty should emanate from the uniqueness that each person displays.

The way one handles a relationship is also a matter of choice; indeed one's perspective on life is also a matter of choice, and most of these choices are made due to the frustrations and joys that a person experiences, so it is the inner health - so to speak - that influences the bodily health. Thus, one of the most mysterious, difficult things to understand, but also the most important, is the human mind.

Both writers explored the human mind with great interest giving us shocking reactions and images of it. In spite of all the evolution in the science of the mind, despite the advances in neuroscience, the mind is still a little known territory. As much as people try to control it and undermine its power, we still find ourselves in the situation where it can take us by surprise and achieve great changes in the demarche of history.

The limitations that society and a person imposes on himself are the reason why man feels like he cannot do more than the obvious, The only steps one has to take to reach happiness are the ones that society dictates and happiness is what the society says it is. Therefore, we can see in these plays how weak people are and how we allow ourselves to be taken in by this process feeding our minds with the idea that there is nothing we can or that we cannot do that will alter things in any way.

All of our choices are based on our emotional status and our emotional strength, so we have the power to control ourselves, but only if we want to. If not, then the mind plays along. Our brains unconsciously collect the information we offer them, every brain has the capacity of collecting and storing the information, but the problem comes when one has to use the information, how does one do that?

The brain has the proclivity to black out or censor the information due to its uncertainty. The idea behind what we read in Ibsen is that we could do more, if only we allowed ourselves to use our capacity to its fullest. Man tends to compromise because he thinks that this is how it should be, but in reality that is only fear and uncertainty which becomes a life choice. As a result, man comes to the idea that this is destiny.

In reality it is not destiny, it is the choice s/he made; this choice transforms into destiny, but before that it was a choice. I think that fear is the greatest enemy of man and if man lets his life be governed by it, then it will be a life of regrets and frustrations,. The fault is entirely his for being weak and not trusting and believing that he could do better. There is a big difference

between predestination and what one determines with one's own hands, meaning that choice and fate run along beside each other (mutually interacting) to produce the outcome we see.

When people let fear win over their whole life, they begin making compromises, doing what is expected, hiding behind the concept of safety and *hiding behind* the daily routine, behind clothes and the standard values of what it means to be a normal person, fully integrated in the society. Life is not our body and our outer experiences, for our body is not that important, it grows old and it will die, therefore, something else has to be important.

This is why I believe that both Nora and Winnie are heroines in their respective contexts. I believe that a person without a goal in life is a lifeless person. Life should be governed by the goal of having something to accomplish, a dream or an idea offering growth and development. I think that the only thing that limits man is fear.

As my father said to me and my sisters not long ago "You'll be some caricatures if you don't continue to be free!" and I think that these are the best words capturing the essence of these four dramas. The secret is to remain free inside and so avoid becoming insecure and doomed to a life with no options (like in *Happy Days*).

These simple ideas govern the great works and not the very sophisticated or hidden ones; these are the ideas that make man's life more difficult and which because they are so simple, are very hard to grasp and apply. It takes a genius to take these simple ideas and put them into something so grand and challenging.

There are several lines in each play that I feel are worth mentioning and talking more about. I will start with Beckett's play which so very much impressed me after the first reading and after seeing the stage-play online. The first shock one gets from this play is the simplicity in its set design, the background where everything "happens" and how easily one enters the atmosphere of the play.

A mixed feeling of calmness and anxiety veils the play right from the beginning. From Winnie's first words the complexity and the depth of the drama is revealed:

> WINNIE (gazing at zenith): Another heavenly day. (Pause. Head back level, eyes front, pause. She clasps hands to breast, closes eyes. Lips move in inaudible prayer, say ten seconds. Lips still. Hands remain clasped. Low.) For Jesus Christ sake Amen. (Eyes open, hands unclasp, return to mound. Pause. She clasps hands to breast again, closes eyes, lips move again in inaudible addendum, say five seconds. Low.) World without end Amen. (Eyes open, hands unclasp, return to mound. Pause.) Begin, Winnie. (Pause.) Begin your day, Winnie. (Pause. She turns to bag, rummages in it without moving it from its place, brings out toothbrush, rummages again, brings out…. (Beckett, *The Complete Dramatic Works* 138)

This first monologue is both the introduction and the summary of how the world and the society are, or rather should be ("Another heavenly day"), but are not. As she says, it's a world without end, that is, a world in which each day is the same as all those which have gone before, struggling with same problems: the routine and the predictability in a man's life, the things that man should be using for his own happiness, the impossibility for him to move in any other direction than the one decreed by society and mentality.

I think that this play speaks about humanity and that it stands in clear disagreement with the excessively gendered image of the century. Everything is now, more than ever, so divided and adversarial, that the so-called freedom of women becomes the very opposite. If one looks closer at the play one realizes that Winnie represents exactly the same position that women used to occupy in society in the past. Even the fact that she cannot move implies the same idea.

Beckett's writings cannot be interpreted as gender orientated, as Linda Ben-Zvi stated in her book *Women in Beckett*:

> But this reading of culture, by now a standard feminist reading of the patriarchal text, does not work with Beckett's text, despite the superficial play of the details-mirror, question, the non presence of the patriarchal figure-in the Happy Days. In other words, the Beckett play (perhaps any Beckett play) is not a traditional patriarchal script: it does not belong to the genre. Winnie does not consult her mirror for reassurance of the place in the signifying chance or for patriarchal approval. Initially, she uses the mirror to inspect the state of the teeth and gums, in a gesture that suggests the clinical rather than the narcissistic. The series of questions she posses of the mirror suggests a need for understanding the mystery of her condition. (Ben-Zvi 176)

This is what I find so challenging with Beckett, the fact that he does not deny the presence and importance of women. On the contrary, he presents their position as important as man's and even if they are still entrapped in a man's history and world, their silent influence is very clear and they should want more. From an ontological point of view and not from a feminist point of view, the everlasting problem we are confronted with, the dehumanization of the world, happiness is rooted in materialistic desires and not in the satisfaction of the soul, is still present even today. *Happy days* is a play in which the fact that the world hasn't changed is powerfully stated. It is obvious that the world has changed in many ways, such as science and technology, but not in relation to man himself; his inner state and evolution, the evolution of his inner state seems to be going nowhere, despite the opposite appearing to be the case.

In this play, Winnie is the one who begins questioning. This is the first sign of the confirmation of one's existence, as Descartes stated. Therefore, language and becoming aware of our thoughts by speaking them out, makes us realize that we exist, and that we can actually experience the life we have been

given. People are so immersed in the values of modern life, that they don't see the problems anymore.

This may seem a bit overstated, but if we look at everyday life, we realize that what Beckett was writing about was not strange situations or unusual people; he just artistically paraphrased the depth of our humanity, everyday life, things that we *imbibe* and refuse to become aware of. There is no doubt that by saying this we go back in time to Ibsen and realize that our problems as human haven't changed, **they've just reshaped themselves in time and space**.

At the beginning of the world, we are told that we were created with a partner so that we wouldn't be alone; so relationships and the need for someone else is something innate. People define themselves in relation to others. This leads us to the same problem of choices; how does one choose the people in one's life? For this is what mostly determines one's life.

The need to become aware of one's identity and existence is not only an imperative for the women in Beckett's work, but for the men as well - and most of his characters are men. Therefore, the question remains the same: what does *happy*, or *Happy Days*? How should one live life in order to be able to claim that one had a happy day? How do we mark a happy day? And again it all comes down to the choices people make.

To a certain extent, one can say that man creates his own destiny, but there is also something else behind this freedom of choosing, something that guides our understanding and the choices that we make on the basis of it. As Winnie suggests, it is important to remain a dreamer, to-retain creativity which, in turn, means maintaining freedom and behaving like a child, always wondering and being amazed at any insignificant thing we come across. One should always keep a small amount of freedom to oneself and not let the world take that away.

It is like one needs to know that there is something more to see and discover about the world one lives in, that there isn't a limitation and that there is something more to it, to life; if not, then what is the point of it? What does man mean?

> And you, she says, what's the idea of you, she says, what are you meant to mean? ... what good is she to him like that? – What good is he to her like that? - and so on – usual tosh – good! She says, have a heart for God's sake – dig her out, he says, dig her out, no sense in her like that - Dig her out with what? She says - I'd dig her out with my bare hands, he says - must have been man and – wife. (Beckett, *The Complete Dramatic Works* 157)

I find this statement very philosophical and deep where Winnie really analyzes and tries to makes sense of the reason and meaning of her existence. This is the question "why man and wife?" Why does one need someone else to think and care about? It probably comes from the nature of man, the need to

know that he is not alone, the need for something positive in his life, something that could give him another way of perceiving life and the world. One needs the other in order to confirm one's own existence and the existence of the other, who is a human like oneself. This is what Winnie needs to know and asks Willie for confirmation:

> WINNIE: …I beseech you, Willie, just yes or no, can you hear me, just yes or nothing. [Pause]
> WILLIE: Yes.
> WINNIE: [Turning front, same voice.] And now?
> WILLIE: [Irritated.] Yes.
> WINNIE: [Less loud] And now?
> WILLIE: [More irritated.] Yes.
> WINNIE: [Still less loud] And now? [A little louder] And now?
> WILLIE: [Violently.] Yes! (Beckett, *The Complete Dramatic Works* 148)

She basically affirms and confirms herself as an individual capable of handling herself, but then she realizes that she needs him in order to make sense of herself and in order to make sense of whatever happens in her life. She needs to feel that she exists, for there is someone confirming that and helping her to materialize and "hear" her existence. She needs this constant confirmation that she is not alone and that she is not just a nobody forgotten somewhere in the middle of nowhere. There is always a reason for everything.

However, she is aware of the fact that everything has an end and that he will not be there for her forever. Although he is not close to her now and they do not have a real relationship, still his mere presence means something. Life is limited and if you do not try to make something of it, it seems useless, you become something that crawls (just like Willie) through life without being able to taste the air from higher up, see the view or the perspective, and feel gravity dragging you downwards when you want to go upwards.

The fight for something, for a revelation, for an understanding, for that something "wonderful", to get out of the comfort zone one finds oneself in and to have the courage to dream and hope that there is something better out there! The moment when Winnie says that it will always be the bag, the bag which is what gives Winnie the chance to discover something new or to be amazed and question what happens in her life. I see the bag as something very earthly and something that comes to fill the emptiness of her life; the material.

> …there is of course the bag. [Looking at bag] the bag. [Back front] Could I enumerate its contents? [Pause] No. [Pause] Could I if some kind person were to come along and ask, What all? have you got in that big black bag, Winnie? Give an exhaustive answer? [Pause] No. [Pause] the depths in particular, who knows what treasures. [Pause] What comforts. [Turns to look at bag] Yes, there is the bag. [Back front.] But something tells me, Do not overdo the bag Winnie, make use of it

> of course, let it help you… along, when stuck by all means, but cast your mind forward, something tells me, cast your mind forward Winnie, to the same time when words must fail– [She closes eyes, pause, opens eyes] – and do not overdo the bag. (Beckett, *The Complete Dramatic Work*s 151)

Due to the lack of depth in her life, the black bag is exactly what offers her the depth and the uncertainty - what she'll take out next time - but she knows that she shouldn't overdo the bag, she should make use of it for that is what it was made for. The bag is tempting to her because who knows what treasures she may find there and what comforts. The bag seems to bring a sort of satisfaction and comfort to her life, a situation which is not that unknown to the society we are living in.

Now this leads us again to the idea of choices, why one chooses one thing, and on what grounds. What does man need? Clearly enough this passage, but also the whole play, is an image of the relationship between man and woman, between man and wife and how this is reflected in one's life and person. Unfortunately, the distance between the members of the couple presented by Beckett is a reality, moreover, a reality sustained by facts and statistics regarding the high rate of divorce, civil partnerships, and the loneliness of people, in general.

So if in the past this distance was represented by the big difference in status between man and woman, to be more precise, it was reduced to hierarchy, now the relationship is built on the wrong principles and values. The values settled by society are based on superficiality, the presumed needs and basic satisfactions of people; and life is trimmed down to whatever is simple and doesn't really represent a danger. That way the contract between society and the individual would not ideologically or morally be so challenging.

Marriage is a big topic, and Ibsen's Nora paralleled violent discussions in Europe. As with Beckett, if a marriage is not based on love and fellowship than the persons involved would end up exactly like Nora and Helmer or like Winnie and Willie. The harshest result would be spiritual isolation and the inability to appreciate life; therefore the validity of these plays is universal, the target being the individual.

The problem with women and men was that their gender identity was and still is shaped by social rules and constructs. Most of Beckett's works present the point of view of a male character. In Linda Ben-Zvi' s book *Women in Beckett*, she states that only in his last plays do we find women as full characters with their own interpretation of the world, and set in a play which is about them. *Happy Days* is one of those plays. Winnie is everything a woman was allowed and perceived to be, with the exception of thinking, dreaming, and exploring the world. In *Play*, again we have the chance to understand a situation through the mind and experience not of one, but two women. To see on trial the consciousnesses of two women, next to that of one man, it is a big step forward.

> What makes Beckett different from these other male playwrights – and closer to Chekhov and Ibsen, if not in form, at least in scope – is his ability to depict the human condition, male and female, without presenting women as disguised males, something Virginia Woolf early in the century chided even the best of male writers for doing. Winnie, Mouth, and May are not males in disguise – in drag – or male desires of what women should be. They are real women while at the same time portraits of that societal construct labelled "Woman". (Ben-ZVI XI)

This being said, we understand that women tend to fall into the conventional, the consecrated roles which they've been allocated to. We usually meet them in literature in general, not only in Beckett, as mothers or lovers, or something in between, but never as anything more. "Almost never depicted as independent figures, they are drawn in relation to the male protagonists of each work" (Ben-Zvi xiv).

Moreover, if I argued earlier that with Beckett women fulfil their consecrated roles, it is not sufficient, because with Beckett things evolve into something peculiar. As frustrating and terrifying as it may sound, with Beckett, the word "human" includes both male and female, sometimes making it hard for the reader to realise who is who, and where Beckett's opinion stands. Winnie is a totally different and complex character, she basically represents the "human", a woman, but one who is buried by the rules and *the categories imposed by* the society she lives in. This is what makes Beckett so hard to interpret: he portrays the nothingness which is conferred on women by society, whilst including them in his depiction of the human.

To conclude, I would restate the importance of the *will*, the will to revolutionize one's inner self and choose the spiritual over the material, because one has a responsibility for his/er life and for everything that one chooses and builds. As I stated previously, the key lies in the *dream* - hope is not enough - for without it everything ends up falling apart just like in the plays that I discussed.

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BYRON'S *DON JUAN* IN DISGUISE: NEITHER DANDY NOR LIBERTINE

ROXANA CRUCEANU[1]

ABSTRACT. *Byron's* Don Juan *in Disguise: Neither Dandy nor Libertine.* Insisting on the role of transvestitism in the seraglio – the only place where Byron's Don Juan is comically assertive with a woman – this article pleads for the addition of the protagonist to the list of the heroines in the poem because of his post-erotic manoeuvres alluding to a female's resources when not so virtuous and avoiding to be caught. My contention is that the main character is neither dandy nor Don Juan since he lives his exotic experience in a state of panic, indecision and confusion.

Keywords: *seduction, hypocrisy, transvestitism, dandyism, libertinism, androgyne, masquerade, identity.*

REZUMAT. Don Juan-*ul lui Byron, deghizat: nici dandy, nici libertin.* Insistând pe rolul travestiului în harem – singurul loc în care Don Juan-ul lui Byron devine comico – asertiv cu o femeie – acest articol pledează pentru adăugarea protagonistului pe lista eroinelor din poem din cauza manevrelor sale post – erotice care fac aluzie la arsenalul unei doamne, nu prea virtuoase, când evită să fie prinsă în flagrant. Punctul de vedere susţinut aici este că personajul principal nu e nici dandy nici Don Juan din moment ce îşi trăieşte experienţa exotică într-o stare de panică, îndoială şi confuzie.

Cuvinte cheie: *seducţie, ipocrizie, travesti, dandysm, libertinism, androgin, mascaradă, identitate.*

If it is true that the Don Juanesque complex is about the search of the woman within (Sitar-Tăut 142), then Byron's hero is jokingly lucky enough to

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find her properly speaking, avenging the frustrations of a whole cohort of predecessors and turning the name of the libertine into Juanna.

The story of Juan's seraglio adventures begins in Canto IV, with his forced departure from Lambro's island, when "wounded and fettered, 'cabined', 'cribbed', 'confined'" (IV 75), the hero is found at sea again, traveling to Constantinople as a slave. His fellow captives on the ship are some Italian singers sold by their impresario, who, by their carnivalesque presence, anticipate the masquerade in the following canto. Once arrived at the market, Juan is placed next to Englishman Johnson, captured by the Turks while fighting for Suvorov. The two are bought by Baba, a eunuch in Gulbeyaz's service, sent by his mistress to purchase Juan, after she had caught a glimpse of him and considered him suited as her new erotic toy. Johnson and the Spaniard are taken to the palace, where the former is costumed as a Turk and the latter as a maid, so as not to arise suspicion in the eyes of the servants or the Sultan. The encounter between Don Juan and Gulbeyaz follows, a moment which is interrupted by the arrival of the Sultan who unexpectedly spoils his wife's plans by choosing exactly her from among the other odalisques to keep him company for the night. Obliged to obey, Gulbeyaz must abandon Juan, who, taken for a Christian girl by everybody, is left with the other damsels and taken to their chambers. He shares the bed with one of the maids, secretly has sex with her, which Gulbeyaz deduces the following morning and decides to drown Juan and Dùdu, the boy's one night stand. Fortunately for the two, the siege of Ismail saves them from horrendous death and throws Juan into new experiences.

That is in short the scenario conceived by Byron for his protagonist throughout the Oriental world. Our interest is to analyze the way in which he understood and valorized his disguise, a stratagem frequently used by both the dandy and the rake in their games with life.

Mention should be made that cross-dressing proper is announced by prior events, when Juan enters contact with women's clothes, being covered by them, or is womanized by something stronger than his traits. Wolfson remarks "the loss of male attire and the quasi-transvestitism that ensues in Juan's romances with Julia and Haidée" (600), the gender transcendence that occurs in these situations, along with the dissolution of male power. Indeed, Juan "half-smothered" (I 165), hidden under his mistress and bare in Julia's bedding, is indirectly wrapped in his lover's apparel and perfume. Or, when cast on Haidée's island, "being naked" (II 129) again, he is initially given a woman's "petticoat apiece" (II 133) to put on his body, while Haidée "stripped her sables off to make / His couch" (ibid.). After such allusions that prepare Juan's change into Juanna, another incident comes to complete the hero's feminization. On the way to Constantinople, on the slave ship, the Spaniard and a bacchante are linked together, "an odd male and odd female" (IV 92), enchained, fused and thus

reduced to a sole entity. As Alan Richardson observes, they "form a temporary androgyne … and Byron interestingly insists on Juan's impotence in this situation" (79). Truly, despite the charms of the Romagnole, who had "eyes that looked into the very soul" and a "great wish to please" (IV 94), Juan turns her down and Byron explains ironically that "his recent wounds might help a little" (IV 95). Forming with the girl a being that reminds Plato's spherical androgyne, Juan probably does not perceive her as a separate person, but as part of himself; hence his indifference towards her sex-appeal. It is from now on that "the hero's androgyny … will be challenged not from an excess of his masculine, but from his feminine side" (Dakou 7), which becomes more prominent once he enters the harem.

Juan's transvestitism starts like a masquerade, most likely inspired by the masked balls presided by Byron at Newstead in 1808-1809, one of which was built around the Oriental theme. Again, the autobiographical component interferes, with Juan experiencing in 1820, when Canto V was written, what the lord had experienced as a young man. In connection with this, Paul Elledge comments:

> Byron does not so much reconstitute the 1809 houseparty in dressing Juan and Johnson as perhaps adopt a strategy implicit in it – possibly unrecognized as such, then or during composition – to represent fictively a circumstance emotionally paralleling it if not replicating separative events, conditions and anxieties by which he felt beset in 1809 as again eleven years later (336).

For the second time, after he had been dressed like a Turkish dandy at the carnival-like feast organized by Haidée', the hero finds himself involved in another event of the kind, with the significant difference that, this time, we deal with a Juan in deny "as not being in a masquerading mood" (V 73). If at Haidée's party he adored his attire, enjoying the atmosphere, here his disposition is at the opposite end. His 'not being in a masquerading mood', is a most clearly stated indicator that Johnny's travesty will proceed neither in the dandy nor in the Don Juanesque manner, since, with the two, there is always a good time for disguise. That is why, in order to have a term of comparison or, to be more accurate, of contrast, we should see what the hiding of the true personality under a fake one means for the libertine and the fashionable before continuing our analysis of Juan's conduct in his present situation.

A Don Juan who does not change his identity regularly is not a Don Juan at all. His name is in fact associated, synonymous with the idea of mask. The very 'profession' of wicked seducer obliges him to operate 'under cover' in most of his amorous escapades. It is the artifice that helps him deceit his victims, who often accept his advances only because they believe themselves in the company of their beloved. Thus, the beginning of Tirso de Molina's *Burlador* presents a Don Juan with a covered face, after having dishonoured Duchess Isabela who had mistaken the rake for her fiancé, Duke Octavio. Whether the piece of cloth on the visage makes him convincing or not in the role of the official lover, matters less here. The

important thing is that the scene is made possible and the goal attained, only due to the disguise that will serve Don Juan Tenorio's purposes once again in the course of action, this time under the form of a cape taken from Dona Ana's suitor. This first play that contours the Don Juanesque 'brand'[2] also establishes the indispensability of the mask, portraying the libertine as the person who "manipulates cognitive processes to his own advantage, now suppressing his own identity, now assuming that of another, now appearing as himself" (Ter Horst 260). Therefore, this type of masquerade will continue in all the next variants. In Molière's *Don Juan or the Stone Feast*, the rake switches clothes with his valet in order to escape the fury of his pursuers. In Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, the libretto opens with Don Juan wrapped in a large mantle and masked, trying to flee Dona Anna's house. Later, the ritual of changing roles and vestments with his servant will give him the opportunity of seducing Dona Elvira's confidante and of sleeping with Leporello's wife.

The mask, the valet's clothes or the mantle of the fiancé, are the constant sources of Don Juan's disguise, irrespective of author or version. Cross-dressing is not a very inspiring area for the libertine, although we find out from Moyra Haslett – who mentions Louvet's *Chevalier de Faublas* (1787-1790) in this sense – that the feminine dress is not entirely absent from the rake's arsenal (233). Without going into psychoanalytical digressions about the utilization of the Don Juanesque masquerade as sign of weakness and lack of self-confidence, we will mention the natural liking for disguise, the joy felt at its climax when playing and deceiving in this way.

As for the dandy, transvestitism is permanence in his life, because, as Émilien Carassus summarizes the phenomenon, the fashionable usurps a way of being which belongs to the other sex (149). The mask he uses has a name that normally sends to a woman's preoccupations: make-up. The rice powder, the contour around the eye, the dyed and coiffed hair, the fake beauty spots, the transparent nail polish are meant to contribute to the harmony of the traits, to eliminate the inconveniences of nature, but also to hide the true self. Baudelaire's *In praise of Cosmetics* teaches the whole art of face-painting and, though no direct reference is made to men in his essay, it is understood that this eccentric, who shocked with the blue-greenish colour of his hair, addresses his advice to women as well as to his fellow dandies. Jewellery, – especially rings – umbrellas and delicate gloves complete the feminization of the coxcombs. They deliberately cultivate an androgynous appearance, which reflects the ambivalence of their soul, the ambiguity of their gender identity

[2] The paternity of *El Burlador de Sevilla y Convivado de Piedra (The Seville Libertine and the Stone Guest)* is still sometimes questioned, although it is almost unanimously accepted that it was written by monk Fray Gabriel Tellez, under the pseudonym of Tirso de Molina. The date when Don Juan got his birth certificate is believed to be before 1621.

and many times of their sexuality[3]. This partial effeminacy which accompanies the dandy day by day is doubled on occasions by a more evident one: cross-dressing. The beaux find a real pleasure in the travesty, which seems to have been invented for them, with their womanized beauty and homoerotic sexual inclinations. For their feminine alter ego, some even take a pseudonym which becomes as notorious as their real name and enjoy speaking about themselves in the feminine[4]. It is obvious hence, that, in a form or another, the dandy and the libertine are men of the disguise, which is carefully prepared and played with grand art.

Returning to our Juan, whom we left confused and 'not in a masquerading mood', we shall see how he takes advantage of his cross-dressing which is carried out in the most obvious anti-dandy / anti-libertine way: by force. The Don Juanesque disguise is hilariously reversed from the outset: whereas the rake borrows his costumes to plot against women's virtue, a lady's will metamorphoses now the supposed seducer into an odalisque – with the intention of smuggling him into the harem for her caprices – reducing the Don Juanesque initiative to zero. Not only is the hero made a female's property, but he is also deprived of social power with the loss of the male attire. Juan's firm refusal – "'Old gentleman, I'm not a lady'" (V 73) – is the result of a violation of his learnt significance of gender in a patriarchal world, where the princess' array given to him can represent but a debasement of masculinity. More than anything else, he is worried about his reputation if "it e'er be told / That I unsexed my dress" (V 75) in a society where the response to such queerness is intolerance and marginalization. The sudden manifestation of virility, so uncharacteristic of Juan: "my soul loathes / The effeminate garb" (V 76), "they shall feel the weight of this my arm, / Which is not quite so light as you may deem … / If any take me for that which I seem" (V 82), is, in Paul Elledge's words, "a cover for fear" (337). Surely, Don Juan has many reasons to be afraid, of which only some are uttered aloud.

The simple idea of women's clothes on his body triggers verbal violence. The unconscious dread of his interior femininity that may come out with the wearing of the dress is thus expressed. The theme of the travesty is the most palpable testimony of a bisexual instance. 'That which I seem' may easily become 'that which I am', even if provisory. And, after a process of complicated adjustments, we are told that "he looked in almost all respects a maid" (V 80). For that, Baba took care of all the arrangements: the white chemise, the petticoat, the

[3] It is known that a great part of the representative dandies are homosexual or bisexual. Adriana Babeţi makes a list, from which we will select only a few celebrities: Brummell, Byron, André Gide, Proust, Oscar Wilde (230).

[4] Such an example is François Timéleon de Choisy, who sometimes wishes to be called Countess de Barres and employs formulas like 'have I been coquette?' (Carassus 149) about himself. Many other cases follow approximately the same pattern.

gown, the "false long tresses" (V 79) bound with gems in the fashion of the Orient to repair the 'handicap' of the short hair, oil on the head and other details where "small aid from scissors, paint and tweezers" (V 80) was needed. 'Linguistic transvestitism' is finally completed by this "social cross-dressing" (Wolfson 591). Rediscovering himself as a phallic odalisque, Juan warns: "I trust for everybody's sake / That this disguise will lead to no mistake" (V 82). We opine that the remark, uttered for Baba's ears, is in actual fact also uttered for his own, 'everybody', including the protagonist of the revolt. The Spaniard is afraid that he may betray himself and wants mental assurance. His suddenly remembered affiliation to a people of machos makes him resort to verbal machismo, an attitude he had most certainly only heard of, and which looks ridiculous in association with Johnson's English tact and uncompromising manhood.

Johnson's very presentation at the slave market defines him as a stereotype of masculinity. He stood there "with resolution in his dark grey eye" (V 10), "with such sang-froid that greater / Could scarce be shown even by a mere spectator" (V 11). Next to him, Juan is "a mere lad" (V 12) dominated by naiveté and impulses. In all his hasty enterprises – to kill Baba on the way to the palace, to protest too vehemently to circumcision: "'strike me dead / But they as soon shall circumcise my head'" (V 71) – the Englishman tempers him with the wisdom of a man who had experienced too much to be easily scared. Because extremely virile, he can afford the detachment of the strong, cumulated with that capacity of adaptability that beaux only possess. To Juan's feminine-like agitation and Baba's offer of circumcision, he responds like a fashionable, with calm politeness and irony: "as soon as I have supt, / I shall perpend if your proposal may / Be such as I can properly accept, / Provided always your great goodness still / Remits the matter to our own free will" (V 72). Unlike Don Juan, Johnson accepts his disguise tacitly and we discover him in the posture of "Turkish dandy" (V 68), for, Gulbeyaz's servant had brought "the suit he thought most suitable to each" (ibid.).

Interestingly, we have a new androgynous couple: Juan – the maid and Johnson – the dandy, united by feelings of affection, apparently sprung from solidarity. Still, at a closer look, there may be more to this friendship. Without actual manifestations of eroticism between the two, homosexuality hovers over their encounter. What other reasons could Byron have had for the particular selection of these costumes if not to suggest a pair of dandy lovers? A taboo subject like this was difficult to approach at the time[5], and it must have been impossible even for Byron to speak directly about it in front of a reading public already outraged at the immorality of the previous cantos. But if *Don Juan* is sarcastically autobiographic, the homoerotic component had to be at least dimly alluded at. And we have every reason to believe that it is exactly what the poet did when putting together the two friends masked in

[5] In Regency England homosexuality was punished as a capital crime. Therefore, for the homosexual writers of the time, female transvestitism constituted "homoerotic material in disguise" (Wolfson 592).

this way[6]. Juan – young Byron would be the effeminate fashionable wearing dresses and make-up; Johnson would stand for the other dandy model, which is portrayed by Carassus as the owner of some prominently virile qualities, like for instance the absorption without measure of alcoholic drinks (150).

That Juan is suspect of what George Bălan calls larval homosexuality, namely when the feminine principle within a man has started to awake without being yet crystallized (221 – 22), is supported by the hero's anger at his feminization, a hypostasis that willy-nilly hints to pederasty. The same George Bălan shows that those men who ignore the latent impulse towards their own sex regard such phenomena as pathologic or strange. Juan, who disapproves of his eccentric travesty, behaves much in the way mentioned by Bălan. Bernard Beatty perceives the hero's reluctance to feminine disguise as "Achillean rejection" (103), a comparison that, although employed by the critic for the moment of heroism and dignity shown by Juan in front of the Sultana, is very inspired also for the homosexual valences that it implicitly brings to mind. The stubborn refusal, the 'cover for fear' acquires new significances and we understand better Juan's concern about the fact that his travesty may lead to confusion. It is not just the fear of castration or of the unknown. His feminine side, more extended now, may have been aroused by Johnson's rough masculinity, with whom he forms a very decorative dandy homosexual couple. In a potential intimate relation between the two, the Oriental maid stands for the passive element, while the Turkish dandy would be the active partner.

Johnson himself perceives his companion as the feminine counterpart in this tandem, by comparing him with Eve. "Keep your good name, though Eve herself once fell" (V 84), advices the Englishman when they bid good-bye, obviously doubting maintenance of the reputation wished for the Spaniard and predicting both the temptations which will corrupt Juan and his fall analogous with that of the first woman on Earth. Juan, in turn, finally gets involved in his role before the separation from Johnson. He does it jokingly, yet clearly relishes it: "'Nay', quoth the maid, 'the Sultan's self shan't carry me, /Unless His Highness promises to marry me'" (V 84). The simple fact of speaking from a maid's perspective demonstrates a shadow of acceptance. He is jesting to ease the tension, but, since every raillery contains a grain of truth, his joke can very well be the result of a genuine curiosity about man to man intimacy. It is however a curiosity that he will not have the time to consider thoroughly because Johnson, the object of Juan's potential homosexual love, is temporarily taken out of the picture after this half humorous - half sad exchange of replies[7].

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[6] Transvestitism as homoeroticism is not a premiere in Byron's poetry if we relay on Louis Crompton who, in *Byron and Greek Love: Homophobia in 19th century England*, reads *Lara* in these terms.

[7] Juan and Johnson will meet again at Ismail, but the friendly complicity is broken. On the battle field, Johnson becomes the ruthless mercenary again, deprived of the charm and wit proven in the seraglio. Byron himself takes his distance from this character he had most certainly liked, once the Englishman begins to display his mentality of paid soldier, a category the poet detested because a symbol of the mercantilism of war.

Paul Elledge considers that "separation stress in this instance … springs not from long or amorous attachment but from the intensity furnished association by the peril under which it developed and from the singularity conferred by the partners' status as "gentlemen" among the slave contingent" (337). Undoubtedly, these are the main and most transparent motivations. Nevertheless, we must not overlook the subliminal messages transmitted by the two costumes, by Johnson's declaration of having run away from his third wife (V 20) without confessing why and by the tender care of the prisoners for each other. After all, their valediction words, which are parables filled with sexual connotations, reflect that carnal desire – be it heterosexual or homosexual – is not absent from their thoughts even in this situation full of dangers. Juan tells Johnson "'Farewell' … 'should we meet no more / I wish you a good appetite'" (V 84), while Johnson replies: "'though it grieves me sore. / When we next meet, we'll have a tale to tell" (ibid.). The 'appetite' Juan refers to is both culinary and erotic, an invitation for the Englishman to enjoy the harem experience, despite the unfortunate fate. Johnson, who is apt to "take things coolly" (V 21), – as Juan notices at the slave market, when the soldier laments very little over his ended marriages or over his captivity – utters his grief at the loss of his fellow sufferer, hoping affectionately to see him again and share tales about their discovery of exoticism.

The introduction of Juan's Oriental adventures ends with Juan – "femininely all arrayed" (V 80) – and Johnson parting by separate doors with their true selves camouflaged. Nothing is clearly contoured yet; still Don Juan has managed to give the first evidence of his anti-dandyism / anti-Don Juanism. And it is not simply the earlier mentioned motif of the imposed travesty that points to this, but a whole range of attitudes that dominate the Juan-Johnson-Baba encounter. We have specified above that the Spaniard and the Englishman form an amorous dandy pair, which would normally mean that each member of the union is a fashionable. Not in this particular case. There is circumstantial dandyism in the episode, due to the roles the two men are made to interpret: the potent Turkish dandy – Johnson – and the effeminate boy in a woman's skirts – Juan. But dandyism belongs to Byron here, for the staging of such a scenario, a rather personal obsession. As for his hero, he does not read the script in the author's terms. When the eunuch orders: "'Be so good / As dress yourself'" (V 73), Juan does not comprehend what he must do and why. He can decipher neither Baba's innuendoes, nor the significance of his suit.

For a true dandy, the feminine clothes would not have been a shock and he would have most probably received them with naturalness, looming a good opportunity for fun. Juan, "standing mute" (ibid.) with surprise at the sight of a maid's array, relapses for a second into a pre-linguistic stage, as he often does in the middle of a crisis, being infantile and extremely un-dandy. That this sort of charade is not customary with him is comprised in the labelling of his guise as "odd travesty" (V 74) the cause of which he asks permission to inquire

about, once he regains speech. Further on, when dressed, arranged and jocularly at ease with his condition, Juan may feel the appropriateness of the skirt and make-up to his personality as well as a certain erotic compatibility between him and Johnson; hence the panic in front of a reality that could have changed the course of his life, the refusal of introspection and the maintenance of disgust. George Bălan informs that when the homosexual component lies in the depth of the human being, the mere contemplation of masculine beauty is not enough to activate it and can produce at the most a phantasm which traverses the spirit fugitively, without catching roots (224). Our contention is that Juan can be enclosed in this category without exaggeration. The phantasm of homoeroticism that crosses his mind is accompanied by a phantasm of dandyism, a concept that he meets now under the form of cross-dressing, but which will remain unknown to him until his English period.

Don Juanism is not closer to his intensions than dandyism, because of the same lack of understanding. Any traditional Don Juan placed in a harem would have immediately imagined a list – as long as that of his conquests – of opportunities. Our Don Juan does not see the possibilities than much later, when he is gifted with a night in the chambers of the odalisques. Moreover, he starts his seraglio journey with a failure, by refusing Gulbeyaz, which a libertine would never have done.

Juan's 'no' to Gulbeyaz's advances is justified by the hero himself for two reasons, which he alone finds solid. The most powerful factor appears to be the pain of being apart from his Greek beloved. Having "his mind o'erflowing / With Haidée's isle and soft Ionian face" (V 117), Juan confesses with pathos: "How much I have loved"! (V 127). The next declared obstacle is his imprisonment, an injustice because of which "he begins to take some absurd initiative in rebellion and becomes the shrill champion of natural freedom – of choice" (Steffan 101). Both these motivations are however thin pretexts, which dissolved even before the Dudù incident, at the sight of Gulbeyaz's tears. As if waking from sexual lethargy "he wondered why he had refused, / and then if matters could be made up now, / And next his savage virtue he accused" (V 142). This switch from preferring to die "rather than sin" (V 141) to the new eagerness of taking back his words and satisfying the Sultana's desires speaks for itself. The truth is that Juan was impotent with Gulbeyaz until she wept and looked like a woman. As long as she was the man in their love game, Juan reacted unfavourably because humiliated in Juanna's shoes. A lady's crying re-establishes the order. Haidée is still far and he continues to be a slave, but everything changes due to the hero's regained confidence in his masculinity which had been severely threatened by the feminine disguise and several other things.

Among them, we do not exclude the embryonic attraction for Johnson, which may have troubled his subconscious seriously and challenged his heterosexuality. Puzzled after the recent good-bye to the Turkish dandy who

had sympathized with him, Juan is hostile to this merciless odalisque who is far from showing Johnson's care. Gulbayez's tears come in due time to prevent him from digging into his emotions. Social conventionalism, where the man must comfort the weak weeping lady, is sufficiently deeply rooted in Juan's education so as his mind to respond to its rules and be a dutiful gentleman at the orders of a lady again.

Then, the climate of sexual abnormalities and the presence of sexless people had their contribution. Monstrosity under the form of "misshapen pygmies deaf and dumb" (V 88), "bowstrung" (V 147) brothers and sons, eunuchs like Baba, a "neutral personage / Of the third sex" (V 26), can but maintain impotency. Alan Richardson remarks that "the accumulation of figures of ambiguous gender and gender reversal … suggests that Juan's cross-dressing is not simply a temporary exchange of sex roles, but a more profound questioning of the grounds of sexual difference" (180). In this strange world, where phallocentricity revolves around a single man, the Sultan, Juan penetrates as an emblem of masculinity, for the mere advantage of not being marked by lack. Being a rare specimen of the kind, he is threatened with the harem 'uniform': castration. Baba is the one who familiarizes Juan with this menace, initially by suggesting that he should "condescend to circumcision" (V 69), – which in psychoanalytic terms is a form of symbolic emasculation – then very bluntly: "'Incense me and I call / Those who will leave you of no sex at all" (V 75). Gulbayez reminds him the Oriental custom: "Her first thought was to cut off Juan's head; / Her second, to cut only his – acquaintance" (V 139). Juan's options are thus reduced to two: either he is virile at her command or is deprived of his manhood for which she finds no use whether he persists in preferring abstinence. With this pressure on his mind and body and with the travesty disturbing him, there is no wonder that Juan finds himself in the impossibility of performing erotically until being given the chance to feel a man again. Hadn't the Sultan interrupted Don Juan and Gulbeyaz with his impromptu arrival, Juan would have perhaps got rid of all his sexual anxieties earlier and would have gained a Sultana as a mistress instead of an ordinary maid.

The Sultan's culturally insulting observation about Juan – "'I see you've bought another girl; 'tis pity / That a mere Christian should be half so pretty" (V 155) – hides a great dose of lust for the new damsel, which makes Juan an object of desire for both Gulbeyaz and her husband. The recently reinstituted male-female equilibrium is theatrically undone in the manner of conventional farce by this Oriental ruler who approaches, salutes and turns away. The short intrusion suffices to spoil Gulbeyaz's plans and shatter Juan's self-confidence one more time. Perceived as a girl by a man and catalogued as nice, Juan reacts femininely: "The compliment which drew all eyes upon / The new-brought virgin, made her blush and shake" (V 156). In this new state of mind, he is left with the maids and dragged inside the harem.

Again, Juan's reality alters inside this exotic space of limitless sexual possibilities, where free entrance is denied to men who are neither sultans nor castrated servants. Little by little, he realizes the advantages of his cross-dressing, and, surrounded by maids at every step, "he could not at times keep … / From ogling at their charms from breasts to backs" (VI 29). The travesty he had so much condemned brings the paradise to Juan, who discovers the benefits of masquerade and the beatitude of being a phallic woman. The loyalty to Haidée is cast away for the second time in a very short interval and the focus of his thoughts moves towards the act he has to perform: "he forgot not his disguise" (VI 30). Although a little too late, he gives some signs of dandyism / Don Juanism through this new found joy of playing, which however is still far from the standards of dandy or Don Juanesque art. For the moment, Juan, the explorer, limits his strategy to looking and recovering his wounded masculinity. The complex of his transvestitism is still unsolved, since Byron announces "I say her / Because the gender still was epicene, at least / In outward show, which is a saving clause" (VI 58). Juan too, whose gender is indeterminate for the time being, falls into the category of the third sex, where fops, eunuchs and epicenes are placed by the narrator. In order not to remain there, a grotesque creature like the staff of the palace, he needs to regain the appurtenance to his gender. And what is more relevant in this sense than an affair with a woman?

It is not very difficult for Don Juan to get close to the odalisques, who receive the new comer, "a damsel fair / And fresh and 'beautiful exceedingly'" (VI 36), with great admiration. These compliments, the competition among the girls to share the bed with the Christian and the constant kissing, which "between females means no more than this: / That they have nothing better, near or newer" (VI 59), is a display of "a lively crypto-lesbian sexual interest" (Dakou 8), a sign of normality in an abnormal organisation like the seraglio, where the erotic alternatives miss. Don Juan is the centre of attention and though, as Alan Richardson correctly observes, "there is a critical difference between being desired as a man in a woman's dress, as Juan is by the Sultana, and being a man desired as a woman, as "Juanna" is by Lolah, Katinka and Dudù" (182), our hero is far from the revolt he had felt at the thought of being wanted by a man or at the idea of being used as sex slave by Gulbeyaz. On the contrary; he is more at ease with himself, receiving with naturalness all the affection of these women fascinated with Juanna and "wishing her their sister" (VI 39). The name with which he introduces himself – Juanna – keeps the essence of the boy's name, indicating that he is on the verge of becoming fully androgynous now, namely in both form and state.

Androgynous in form, he was from the outset of his experience as transvestite. Despite the feminine traits, Juan keeps a male's walk, which makes Baba advice him to "contrive … to stint / That somewhat manly majesty of stride" (V 91). Then, at the meeting between Juanna and the maids, "some

thought her dress did not so much become her … / Some thought her rather masculine in height" (VI 53), which shows that, externally, Juan had met the requirements of 'both…and' all along. What he refused until 'lost' in the middle of this erotic universe without men was an androgyny of the spirit. The moment he chooses to select Juanna from among all the names, he makes a step towards mental androgyny and starts behaving in accordance with it. It is due to this fullness that he manages for the one time in his life to have sexual initiative.

Speaking about the cultural perception of the androgyne, Pia Brînzeu explains: "the tendency is to see the androgynous character as a positive variant, in which maleness and femaleness, well shaped, are complimentary, conferring a total body and a strong mind" (213). Indeed, since Antiquity, the androgyne has represented not the cumulus of anatomic organs, which is the curse of the hermaphrodite, but the totality of the magic and religious powers held by the two sexes, a ritual belief that verifies in the case of Juan-Juanna. In theory, our hero should detain absolute erotic capacities as simply Juan, without the intervention of Juanna, as in Spanish, the euphemism 'Little Juan' or 'Juanito' designates phallic symbols. In practice, it is only the addition of the feminine suffix which endows him with supplementary sexual strength and courage, two attributes he had not possessed as long as he was merely Juan. Keeping the proportions of the satire, he acquires the wisdom of the shaman, who, we are told, by wearing a caftan adorned with feminine symbols, reunites within himself the two polar principles (Eliade 109).

Put at bed with Dudù, who had won the dispute over 'Juanna', Don Juan will borrow Julia's style during his night with the odalisque, having to hide, to be hypocritical and mime innocence to attain his goals. In fact, from a behavioural point of view, Juan could be attached to the Julia – Adeline mental typology characterized by cant (a word explained by Susan J. Wolfson and Peter J. Manning in the *Introduction* of the poem as "a contemporary term (less in use now) for complacent, shallow sentiment tinged with hypocrisy") (Viii), cynicism, cunning. The only difference is that, while Adeline or Julia resort to slyness in order to be sexually free and keep their reputation at the same time, Juan does so to recuperate his virility. For women, this type of dissimulation may be a proof of feminine Don Juanism. For our protagonist, who uses the three c's not in accordance with the norms established by the male libertines, but in their feminine variant, the manoeuvre of Dudù's seduction has nothing to do with the devilish deceitfulness of a Don Juan.

Fate luckily places him next to a partner, who, in her passivity, is closer to Juan's innate disposition than Gulbeyaz could ever be. A "sleepy Venus" (VI 42), "cut / From marble, like Pygmalion's statue waking, / The mortal and the marble still at strife, / And timidly expanding into life" (VI 43), Dudù's only function is to exist and perform sexual services, since she was gifted with a body: "adapted to be put to bed / Being somewhat large and languishing and

lazy, / Yet of a beauty that would drive you crazy" (VI 41). She is the image in the mirror of Juan's naiveté, as unable as the Spaniard to understand herself, her environment and her needs. Juan will therefore feel attracted to her because she is in his proximity, the easiest target to get, and also because, as Jung assures us, men choose as erotic pair the woman who corresponds best to the particular character of their unconscious femininity, who is the projection of their soul (71). Juan is as adapted as Dudù to be put to bed and dominated, except that he is allowed to wander, whereas she is locked up. Because of the place in which she lives as depersonalized object of imperial pleasure, her sense of identity is even weaker than that of Juan.

If we are to consider the etymology of seraglio, a word "directly derived from the Italian serralio, 'a cage for wild animals'" (Zonana 600), it is understandable why these girls think and feel so little. Seeing in Dudù a desirable girl without a brain, one of the many maids "beating for love as caged birds for air" (VI 26), Juan suddenly gains the erotic assertiveness of his mistresses and "discovers he is not so much an unsexed man as a newly powerful woman" (Wolfson 606). Mircea Eliade states that the main function of the ritual of transvestitism is to escape one's self, to transcend one's particular situation, to adopt a conduct which is the exact opposite of one's normal behaviour (106). Juan, who abandons his not yet formed, infantile individuality and assumes that of Juanna, is an active person, capable to solve a bothering problem.

By possessing Dudù in her sleep, he finds out that he is not impotent, but he still has to cope with an unexpected scandal. The maid awakes screaming, "flushed and frightened" (VI 72) because of a nightmare she believes to have had. An investigation is started by the other odalisques and the usually silent Dudù, who "never thought about herself at all" (VI 54), must recount her dream, a perfect illustration of her repressed erotic desires. The story of the bee flying out of the golden apple she is about to bite while walking in an obscure wood and stinging her to the heart is a brilliant psychoanalytic Byronic stratagem to inform elegantly that sexual intercourse did take place. The bee is no other than phallic Juan, Eros with his darts, or the serpent inside this earthly erotic Eden. The girl's dream is the unique testimony of the act, but it is so obvious that it does not need complicated decoding or further explanations. It is funny though that the maids who had "heard stories of a cock and bull" (VI 80), do not understand anything, reprimanding Dudù for "the false alarm" (VI 79). Dudù, on the other hand, either realizes or intuits that Juanna is a man; the new semi-consciousness of her attractiveness to her bed mate, expressed rather primitively, cannot be explained otherwise: "Dudù turned round / And hid her face within Juanna's breast; / Her neck alone was seen, but that was found / The colour of a budding rose's crest" (VI 85). Hence, her insistence to be allowed to continue sleeping with Juanna and the very full of meanings promise that "her future dreams should all be kept in hand" (VI 82).

As far as Juan's reactions along the episode are concerned, there are plenty of things to be discussed. Alone with Dudù, he witnessed how "one by one her articles of dress / Were laid aside" (VI 61) and the plan, if not already conceived, must have seeded in his mind. The "deep silence in the chamber" (VI 64) and the dim lights facilitated its fulfillment. However, the most interesting for our analysis is his reaction subsequent to the event:

> Juanna lay
> As fast as ever husband by his mate
> In holly matrimony snores away.
> Not all the clamour broke her happy state
> Of slumber, ere they shook her – so they say
> At least, and then she too unclosed her eyes
> And yawned a good deal with discreet surprise (VI 73).

It is this particular reaction that triggers Juan – Juanna's addition to the list of women whose motto in life is cant, cynicism and cunning. Dudù, who wishes to spend the rest of the night with Juan, despite the incident, is more than a willing partner, which would have transformed Juan's smallest gesture of allurement into an unquestionable success, without many Don Juanesque efforts. But, despite his permanent effeminacy, Johnny is such a poor connoisseur of women's mind, that he does not guess what is obvious and resorts to the safest method, so as to avoid another Alfonso or Lambro type of confrontation with the masculinised Mother of the Maids, the matron in charge with the correction of the odalisques "when they blundered" (VI 31). That Juan is erotically contented is apparent in the comparison with a satisfied husband snoring at his wife's side. He is convinced of his virility now, but his rudimentary manoeuvre disgraces the fame of his name and throws him in the group of dishonest women who avoid being caught when not so virtuous.

Juanna, sleepy, yawning and surprised is another Julia who pretends to have been disturbed from her sleep by Alfonso's unjustified fury: "poor Donna Julia, starting as from sleep … / Began at once to scream and yawn and weep" (I 140). It is a type of act that Byron ascribes to female characters in *Don Juan*. Let us not forget that after Julia and Juanna, it will come back slightly modified, at the end of Canto XVI, when the identity of the mysterious ghost haunting Norman Abbey is discovered in the person of the Duchess, who, disguised as the Black Friar, can walk towards Juan's room without being recognized and accused of dissipation by Adeline.

In other words, Juan's feminine approach of the matter has its plus and minus. The plus resides in the fact that he can overcome his inhibition and preserve his heterosexuality. As Christina Dakou puts it, "womanizing the womanizer, actually works in the advantage of Juan's sexuality, for it allows him to elude the male castration complex" (3). The minus is brought by the way in

which he does it. If he is a libertine and seducer, where is the spectacular escape or the famous duel following the deceit? How can Juan's sleeping and snoring trick equal the sensational turn of events offered by any rake? For that, we do not share Haslett's opinion on the question, namely that "the narrator's telling of the affair that night implies that Juan is a conventional, skilfully duplicitous libertine" (98). Our argument is that not any kind of duplicity is rakish. We must not make confusion between the comical solution found by our fellow, which can at the most be applauded for its inventiveness, and the devilish, malefic plots of a Don Juan. Byron's hero does not premeditate his seduction like the libertines; he operates on the spot, considerably pushed by hazard and juncture, when put to bed with a temptation difficult to resist. The denouement is thus inevitable. Equally relevant in this sense is his objection to sexual involvement with Gulbeyaz, when treated as Juan, – in spite of the feminine array – followed by willingness, when perceived as Juanna. Consequently, we shall not consider that he conquers, but rather that he 'falls', the fall of Eve anticipated by Johnson. If the maids felt "a soft kind of concatenation / Like magnetism or devilism or what / You please" (VI 38) when they saw cross-dressed Juan, the sensation was not dictated by the hero's savoir-faire with women, which comes only after long practiced exercises of Don Juanism. It is sooner the result of his masculine reminiscences at the level of physical appearance, producing in them the shiver of an almost forgotten heterosexuality: they "wished they had a brother just like her" (VI 39).

Supposing that Johnny's feminine strategy with Dudù was not a sufficient proof against his Don Juanism, estimated as conventional by Haslett, there follows another elucidating moment that 'incriminates' him beyond doubt. Juanna is invited to sleep with another odalisque for the rest of the night. Lesbian "Lolah's eyes sparkled at the proposition" (VI 82), full of eagerness to teach the Christian girl the harem games. Lolah's reaction is not very important though. What matters is that Juan's eyes did not sparkle back. Quite the opposite, he advocates Dudù's case, convincing his auditorium that no measures should be taken to separate him from his bed mate:

> And here Juanna kindly interposed
> And said she felt herself extremely well
> Where then she was, as her sound sleep disclosed
> When all around rang like a tocsin bell.
> She did not find herself the least disposed
> To quit her gentle partner and to dwell
> Apart from one who had no sin to show
> Save that of dreaming once malapropos (VI 84).

With regards to this attitude, Haslett has only that to comment: "this Don Juan, it must be admitted, is not quite so promiscuous" (99). He couldn't

be: he is not a Don Juan at all. No traditional Don Juan sticks with one partner after having achieved his mission. One woman conquered, a new target is envisaged immediately. Irrespective of the degree of promiscuity, had Juan been a real libertine, he would have abandoned Dudù and jumped in Lolah's bed. But our man does not want further complications, not even for adventure's sake. As usually in his life, he is very modest in his ambitions, accepting what is at hand and not asking for more. Dudù confirmed that he hadn't become one of the castrates, reintroducing him in "the labyrinth of females" (VI 57), and he must have felt grateful to her. Keeping in the realm of womanly tactics, he avoids expanding too much, not needing more affairs at a time. We do not exclude Beatty's hypothesis about the primacy of desire which, however, is not automatic and "allows within the smallest possible compass, 'a sentimental passion' to 'glow' between them" (100). If this is the case, he is doubly an anti Don Juan, for a libertine does not permit such considerations as sentiment, shallow as it may be, to narrow his horizons.

Having established Juan's lack of Don Juanism within the chambers of the maids, we move into the consideration of the other aspect that concerns us: dandyism, which fits Juan only up to the point where his effeminate traits facilitate cross-dressing. A dandy, like a Don Juan, disguises because he loves mischief-making. And he does it also because he lives so as to transgress norms with virtuosity and refinement. It is precisely the presence of these two notions, acutely printed in the consciousness of the fashionable, which is omitted from the performance of Juan's farce. A snoring beau is something unimaginable, a gross violation of the quintessence of the dandy doctrine. If we add the hit-and-hide technique, so antithetical to a fashionable's pleasure of showing off his immorality, we have said everything. As for the penchant for play, it has its serious limitations.

Nicole Frey Bűchel finds that "Juan's disguises show that theatricality and playacting are inherent to his personality. He instinctively seems to adorn masks, assume different roles and thus perform himself. As a consequence, performance can be regarded as a defining characteristic of Juan" (156). Truly, Juan plays roles quite often. Nevertheless, we should not lose sight of the fact that he is always made to do so. He is often a success, not because he elaborates his act, but because, like any child, he finds it easy to copy attitudes around him or to behave as he is expected to, without being aware that he is an actor on a scene. In the seraglio, indeed, he knows his role and is eager to enjoy his prank. The simple idea of saying that his name was Juanna, "may as metaphor encode an invitation … to penetrate masks, … to discover the rake in the abbot's cowl" (Elledge 322). On the other hand, there are many flaws in his act. When Dudù offers to help Juanna undress, Juan, with "excess / Of modesty declined the assistance proffered" (VI 61). Of course, there is hypocrisy in his

refusal; still there is lack of imagination too. A dandy would have certainly accepted the aid – only to get amused at the girl's surprise – and then would have turned her into his slave with a few charming, dazzling words that dandies utter when their caprice is to twist a lady's head. Or, he would have adored to be transferred with Lolah, not so much for a libertine's reasons, but for the pleasure of inventing a novel scenario of deception.

In this general context, finally, Juan undoes the danger of his sexual neutrality, sacrificing with a single stroke what his creator would have never renounced: dandyism and Don Juanism. Alan Richardson interprets that: "his night of unlimited opportunity … becomes one of frustration, and his experience as object of Sapphic desire seems calculated to further problematize rather than reinforce his sense of phallic dominance" (182). He is right. For Juan's immediate anguish, this night is beneficial. For his long term development, it is catastrophic, along with all the other experiences that complete his figurative emasculation at both a personal and social level. The re-initiation into eroticism, like any initiation, is a mutilating test, inviting the presence, or at least the threat of death. Gulbeyaz, who finds out about Juan's hours with Dudù, intends to chain and drown them together, in a fatal re-enactment of the ineffectual odd pair of Juan and the bacchante on the slave ship. The Spaniard is saved from the Sultana's revenge by the intervention of the Russians upon Ismail, but is 'mutilated' and 'killed' in Catherine's bed.

It is acknowledged that, in Antiquity, there was a ritual in which pubertal boys and girls exchanged vestments, as a last androgynous sign of confusion before adulthood and the irretrievable split between sexes (Libis 104). Juan is also at the crossroads between adolescence and mature age at the time of his travesty. From now on, his physical possession of the phallus will never be called into question again. What will be permanently doubted is the resolution and dignity that should come with the arrival of manhood, but which will be forever late with Juan, despite the protagonist's strenuous endeavours of gaining manly distinction in the years to follow.

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(RECOMMENDED CITATION)

LA TRASGRESSIONE DELLE LEGGI DELL'OSPITALITÀ NELL'*ODISSEA* OMERICA

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ABSTRACT. ***Transgressing the Laws Of Hospitality in Homer's*** **Odyssey**. Our study proposes a detailed analysis of the violation of conviviality laws (for instance, the suitors', cyclops Polyphemos', the Laestrygonians', and witch Circe's feasts). The starting point is the idea that *anti-hospitality* reflects the tendency *of usurping the prerogatives of the warrior elite in the absence of the military's head chief*. We conclude that *anti-hospitality* leads to reifying the partner present in the respective transaction.

Keywords*: anti-hospitality, conviviality, transaction, Polyphemos, Laestrygonians, Circe, Homer, Odyssey.*

REZUMAT. ***Încălcarea legilor ospitalității în Odiseea homerică*****.** Studiul nostru propune o analiză minuțioasă a cazurilor de încălcare a normelor convivialității (spre exemplu, ospățul peţitorilor, cel al ciclopului Polyphemos, ospățul lestrigonilor, ospățul oferit de vrăjitoarea Circe etc.). Am pornit de la ideea generală după care *antiospeţia* reflectă tendinţa de *uzurpare a prerogativelor elitei războinice în absența căpeteniei militare*. În final am concluzionat că *antiospeţia* prilejuieşte un proces de **reificare** a partenerului de tranzacţie.

Cuvinte cheie*: antiospeție, ospăț, tranzacție, Polyphem, Lestrigoni, Circe, Homer,* Odiseea.

Il mondo omerico si rivela a noi come un edificio sociale segnato dalle *leggi dell'anti-ospitalità*. Tutto si sviluppa intorno al convito destinato tanto a

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autoidentificare i membri di un gruppo ristretto di *guerrieri*, quanto ad *assicurarne la coesione* e di *formarne* la così-chiamata "*élite aristocratica*". D'altronde, così come osservava anche Oswin Murray[2], c'era un forte legame fra il *banchetto* (creatore delle élite guerriere) e *l'attività militare* vera e propria (in cui gli eroi dimostravano, a livello macro-sociale, le virtù che avevano già provato nell'ambito dei giochi-gare e delle feste comuni).

In questa sede ci proponiamo di analizzare quello che noi abbiamo chiamato *l'anti-convito* nell'*Odissea* omerica.

L'Odissea stessa si presenta a noi come un'epopea del convito, strutturata in due pattern antitetici di convivialità: quello del rispetto delle consuetudini e delle norme imposte dalle leggi tradizionali dell'ospitalità (rappresentato dal convito dei feaci, da quello avvenuto in casa del porcaio Eumeo o dai conviti a cui prende parte Telemaco durante il suo viaggio per mare (conviti presso le corti di Nestore e Menelao) e quello della trasgressione di queste norme (per esempio il convito degli spasimanti, quello del ciclope Polifemo, il convito dei Lestrigoni, il convito offerto da Circe ecc.).

Più avanti si prenderanno in esame solo gli esempi che illustrano la trasgressione delle norme della convivialità o della cosìddetta anti-ospitalità. Pensiamo che il principio su cui si basa l'anti-ospitalità venga rappresentato dalla tendenza di *usurpare i privilegi dell'élite guerriera in assenza del capo militare*. Quindi, il modello da cui si parte nello svolgimento dei vari episodi dell'*anti-ospitalità* è costituito dalla *convivialità abusiva* degli spasimanti che svelano un certo processo di *degradazione dei valori sociali*, in cui la *reciprocità e la competizione* non esistono più.

A nostro avviso, l'anti-ospitalità o la trasgressione delle leggi dell'ospitalità accade prevalentemente in due situazioni maggiori:1) **l'abuso di statuto** (per esempio, *l'ignoranza totale delle leggi dell'ospitalità* da parte di una della parti contraenti - anfitrione/ospite – e le azioni che ne risultano); 2) **la mancanza di lucidità o di vigilanza** (per esempio, *l'ignoranza del significato del dono di ospitalità*, l'intervento della dea *Ate* o del dio *Ipno* verso quelli tra cui si stabiliscono legami di ospitalità oppure l'ignorare da parte di una delle parti contrattanti dello statuto della parte opposta).

L'abuso di statuto

Nell'*Odiseea* ci sono due circostanze che descrivono l'abuso di statuto all'interno del rapporto di ospitalità: ci riferiamo alla *convivialità abusiva degli*

[2] "Omul şi formele socializării", in *Omul grec* (*L'Uomo Greco*, Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1991), volume coordinato da Jean-Pierre Vernant, traduzione romena di Doina Jela, Editura Polirom, Iaşi, 2001, p. 206.

spasimanti, che si cibano dei beni dell'anfitrione (Penelope e Telemaco)[3] e la convivialità violentemente abusiva dei Lestrigoni[4], che si cibano degli ospiti (Odisseo e i suoi compagni).

La differenza tra i due casi consiste nel fatto che *gli spasimanti* abusano della loro qualità di *ospiti*, sterminando tutte le provviste vitali dell'anfitrione, anzi tentando perfino di ucciderlo (Telemaco) finché i lestrigoni abusano della loro qualità di *anfitrioni*, divorando gli ospiti, pertanto riducendoli allo stato di *oggetti del proprio convito*.

Sia gli uni che gli altri trattano i partner da *vittime* e non da uguali, trasgredendo così alle leggi dell'ospitalità basata sulla *reciprocità* e sull'*uguaglianza*.

Se nel caso dei lestrigoni è ovvio che l'ospite viene ridotto allo stato di oggetto del convito, non così radicale si dimostra l'atteggiamento degli spasimanti verso Penelope e verso Telemaco in assenza del padrone di casa. Sugli spasimanti sappiamo solo che "sperperavano" i beni di Telemaco e che, al limite, si erano coalizzati per ammazzarlo. Apparentemente niente dell'antropofagia dei lestrigoni. Però il nutrirsi selvaggio dei beni dell'anfitrione non fa altro che anticipare il nutrirsi dell'ospite, che lo si incontra tanto nel canto IX (il pascersi dei compagni di Odisseo da parte del ciclope Polifemo) quanto nel canto XII (il nutrirsi dei buoi del Sole da parte dei compagni di Odisseo). L'anfitrione *diventa tutt'uno con i propri beni* giacché tutto quello che gli appartiene viene denominato *philos*: *phila dora*, *phila domata*, *phila ker*, *phila etor* ecc., l'anfitrione stesso essendo considerato *philos* nei confronti del suo ospite così come l'estraneo-ospite entrato nel rapporto di ospitalità diventa *philos* nei confronti del suo anfitrione.

La mancanza di lucidità

Sono quattro gli episodi che descrivono gli scacchi dell'eroe Odisseo e/o dei suoi compagni nel loro tentativo di mettersi in contatto con il volto mostruoso del Sacro:

1. L'intrusione di Odisseo e dei suoi compagni nella caverna del ciclope Polifemo e il cibarsi avidamente dei "formaggi" del mostro (canto IX)

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[3] "(...) *alegynete daitas*
Hyma ktemat'edontes ameibomenoi kata oikous.
ei d'hymin dokeei tode loiteron kai ameinon
emmenai, andros henos bioton nepoinon olesthai,
keret'. ("*...preparatevi altri banchetti,/ mangiando le vostre sostanze, d'una casa passando in un'altra /Se poi vi sembra più facile /e meglio, consumare la roba di un solo senza compenso/ ebbene mangiate...*" (*Od*.I, vv. 374-378)

[4]" *ichtos d'hos peirontes aterpea daita pheronto*" ("*infilzandosi quasi fossero pesci, li portavano come laido pasto*") (*Od*., X, v. 124).

2. Lo sventato assopimento di Odisseo in barca sulla via del ritorno dall'isola di Eolo, venendo meno alla sorveglianza dell'otre che fermava i venti avversi (canto X)
3. L'atteggiamento imprudente o privo di cautela da parte dei compagni di Odisseo quando entrano in casa di Circe (canto X)
4. Il vietato cibarsi dei buoi sacri di Elio da parte dei compagni di Odisseo (canto XII)

In tutte queste circostanze, la divinità tende una trappola a Odisseo e ai suoi compagni *facendo perdere loro il senno* o *mettendo alla prova il loro potere di concentrazione*. I mezzi che rendono possibile l'azione ingannevole del Sacro sono, a nostro avviso: "il sonno perfido", il canto fatato, le erbe magiche e perfino l'assenza strategica della divinità-anfitrione dal circolo degli ospiti.

L'episodio della *convivialità ciclopica* parla in essenza dell'ignoranza del volto mostruoso del Sacro ma allo stesso tempo anche dell'incapacità umana di rapportarsi adeguatamente al Sacro stesso, che si accanisce a ridurlo al pantheon già noto e artificialmente creato. Del resto, il testo medesimo presenta i due ciclopi e soprattutto Polifemo come personaggi che impersonano una *crisi delle differenze*, uno stato di assoluta non-differenziazione**,** proprio della natura intrinseca del Sacro puro, perché il Sacro si manifesta in eccesso in ambedue i sensi (positivo e negativo)[5] e non conosce la norma, la regola, quindi la differenza imposta dal *nomos* (caratteristica della specie umana) il cui equivalente è, nell'ordine universale, *themis*. Consideriamo che i ciclopi (e in specie Polifemo) impersonino il Sacro caoticamente scatenato, la sua mostruosità violenta e spaventevole, che l'uomo intuisce e che deve evitare a tutti i costi attraverso *il gioco della manipolazione reciproca*.

Polifemo impersona l'essenza stessa della natura sacra, tutto quello che possa esistere di più emarginato (tramite l'isolamento) e di più violento nella sua mostruosità [6].

Però Odisseo e i suoi compagni si rapportano quasi inadeguatamente a questo Sacro violentemente scatenato (Polifemo); loro si insinuano piuttosto impreparati in questa zona sacra e approfittano delle sue benevolenze (mangiano sventatamente i formaggi), senza concludere prima una transazione con il Sacro [7]. Il fatto che loro offrano dei sacrifici agli dei conosciuti (giacché per Odisseo, Polifemo rappresentava il grande e orribile ignoto) non significa che

[5] *hyperphialos*, "eccessivo, esagerato (*Od*., IX, vv. 106-107).
[6] "*aner* (…) *pelorios, hos rha ta mela*
hoios poimaineskenapoprosthen (…)
(…) *all'apaneuthen eon athemistia ede* ", "*uomo immenso che pasceva/ da solo le greggi lontano; non stava/ con gli altri ma viveva in disparte, da empio*" (*Od*., IX, vv. 187-189).
[7] "*karpalimos d'antron aphikometh', oude min endon*
Heuromen, all'enomeue nomion katapionia mela", "*Rapidamente arrivammo alla grotta e non lo trovammo/ dentro: pasceva le pingui greggi al pascolo*" (*Od*., IX, vv. 216-217)

concludono una transazione con il Sacro destinato a proteggere in qualche modo il piano dell'umano dalla sua azione violenta; loro non fanno che rimanere nell'ordine delle forme pre-differenziate, nell'ordine culturale già noto, favorendo lo sviluppo di queste forme, di questo pantheon artificialmente creato senza insospettirsi del vero volto del Sacro, della sua natura mostruosa che non ha niente dell'ordine e della differenziazione dell'umano, che l'uomo deve temere e a cui ci si deve avvicinare con i piedi di piombo tramite una *vittima*. È questa la ragione per cui Odisseo e i suoi pagheranno cara questa *hybris* commessa per ignoranza di aver tentato di avvicinarsi inadeguatamente a questa mostruosità temibile senza entrare in gioco. La minaccia si riscontra nelle parole di Polifemo stesso: "*oud'an ego Dios ecthos aleuamenos pephidoimen/ oute seu outh'hetaron, ei me thymos me keleuoi*": "*per schivare l'ira di Zeus non risparmierei/ né te né i compagni, se l'animo non me lo ordina*" (*Od*., IX, vv. 277-278).

Quindi il Sacro non può essere costretto ad agire in favore dell'uomo, però può essere determinato a collaborarci insieme a patto che l'uomo capisca di entrare nel gioco della manipolazione, dell'ignoranza reciproca a cui lo sfida il Sacro. È quello che succede nell'istante successivo, quando Polifemo prova a tendere una trappola ad Odisseo e costui, capendo l'allusione, entra nel gioco del tradimento, tradendo anche lui, a sua volta, il ciclope [8].

Il Ciclope (il Sacro) sancisce la mancanza di vigilanza o di acutezza mentale degli ospiti attraverso la loro trasformazione in oggetti del proprio convito, riducendoli a vittime espiatorie dell'ignoranza. Lo stratagema a cui ricorre Polifemo consiste nell'assentarsi dalla cerchia degli ospiti destinata a disorientare e allettare i visitatori affinché compiano atti innovatori o, anzi, automatici, scriteriati. Ovviamente, sulle prime Odisseo e i suoi compagni ricorrono alla seconda modalità molto più facile però fino ad un certo punto, perniciosa.

Lo stesso scaltro atteggiamento del Sacro, incline a sfidare il partner della transazione lo si incontra anche nell'episodio che presenta *il cibarsi dei buoi sacri di Elio da parte dei compagni di Odisseo* (canto XII). Elio, il dio mago viene più volte definito come un dio incantevole [9]. Il qualificativo trova la sua completezza più tardi nell'epiteto *deinos* "temibile", "terribile"(*deinou*...*theou* "terribile dio", *Od*., XII, v. 322).

Odisseo medesimo intuisce quasi il volto allettante del mostruoso sacro che lo spinge alla perdizione (*eis aten*: Od., IX, v. 372) quando dice: *kaka medeto daimon,* "un dio meditava sventure" (*Od*., XII, v. 295). Ne viene fuori che la divinità stessa (Elio o altro dio) aveva preparato loro una tale trappola. Quindi, ci troviamo di fronte ad un episodio simmetrico a quello del ciclope

[8] "*Hos phato peirazon* (…) *alla min apsoron prosephen* ***doliois epeesin***" , "*Disse così per provarmi (...)/ E di nuovo gli dissi con* ***parole ingannevoli***" (*Od*., IX, vv. 281-281)

[9] "*terpsimbrotou Eelioio"* (*Od*., IX, v. 269; cf. v. 274)

Polifemo descritto nel canto IX. Si riscontra lo stesso Sacro mostruoso, questa volta percepito attraverso le sue manifestazioni mai incontrate prima: *il cuoio strisciante dei buoi*, *la carne che muggisce*, *le minacce scoraggianti del dio* ecc. Inoltre, ci confrontiamo con la stessa assenza significativa e strategica del Sacro (Elio) dalla cerchia degli ospiti. Come nel caso del ciclope, Odisseo e i suoi compagni offrono di nuovo dei sacrifici al panteon noto e artificialmente creato, che non ha niente a che fare con l'essenza mostruosa del Sacro che tendono a eludere oppure a ignorare. Anche in questo caso il Sacro manifesta la sua tendenza verso *il tradimento*: lo stesso "sonno perfido" appesantisce le palpebre di Odisseo, privandolo della forza di vigilare. Odisseo stesso è abbastanza confuso quando colpevolizza la divinità del "dolce sonno" (*glykyn hypnon*, *Od*., XII., v. 338), riferendovisi attraverso un plurale impersonale (hoi d'..."essi però", ibid.), il che fa trapelare una qualsiasi intuizione della natura caotica del Sacro. La sfida da parte del Sacro rivolta a Odisseo rimane ora senza risposta. L'eroe si lascia andare al sonno senza che possa entrare nel gioco della manipolazione reciproca. Così Odisseo commette una violazione per via della sua mancata vigilanza, riaprendo l'elenco degli scacchi che impediscono la socializzazione (perché il rispettare e l'effettivo partecipare al rito dell'ospitalità si iscrive nella serie dei grandi riti di socializzazione). Alla fine, Odisseo in veste di vittima esce da questo terribile confronto, venendo punito: perde tutti i compagni durante una burrasca mentre lui stesso viene quasi "inghiottito" dall'isola della ninfa Calipso (*kalypten*, "coprire, velare, nascondere") dove si fermerà come morto, a scontare le sue colpe per ben sette anni.

Però la mancata vigilanza determina il tramutarsi di Odisseo stesso in un *ospite indesiderato*, quindi in un *nemico dell'anfitrione* quando l'eroe torna alla corte di Eolo, spinto dai venti avversi che non aveva saputo custodire perbene dalla curiosità dei suoi compagni. Di nuovo compare il sintagma "sonno perfido" (*hypnos schetlios*) [10]. D'altro canto, il testo presenta Eolo stesso come un *dio ingannevole* (come viene denominata anche Circe d'altronde). Eolo offre ad Odisseo un dono di ospitalità (un otre dalla catena d'argento), in cui aveva imprigionato tutti i venti avversi. Correva voce che Eolo avesse il potere (datogli da Zeus) di legare e slegare i forti venti.

A nostro parere, la *funzione del legare* viene associata all'azione magica dell'incantare, dell'alterare le funzioni mentali dell'individuo. In una certa maniera, Eolo somiglia a Ipno, il quale aveva addormentato Odisseo durante il viaggio per mare, al suo ritorno dall'isola del dio. Possiamo supporre che Ipno non sia altro in questo caso che un'altra faccia dell'*Eolo ingannevole*, risoluto a compiere il piano e a mettere alla prova le virtù eroiche di Odisseo.

[10] "*aasan m-hetairoi te kakoi pros toisi te hypnos/ schetlios*", " *mi rovinarono i vili compagni e con essi un perfido sonno*"(*Od*., X, v. 69)

Ci potremmo chiedere se Eolo (l'anfitrione) non lanciasse già una sfida a Odisseo proprio attraverso il *dono dell'ospitalità*. Pensiamo che in questo caso il *dono dell'ospitalità* si converta in una vera trappola o in un temibile pericolo per l'ospite. Ne deduciamo che il *dono dell'ospitalità* costituisce un oggetto dotato di un significato maggiore, che non bisognava solo conservare e custodire molto attentamente da parte del possessore, ma allo stesso tempo anche adoperare prudentemente perché la sua efficacia fosse massima. Possiamo dire che il dono dell'ospitalità funziona come un amuleto o come un altro oggetto magico che, usato con prudenza, era destinato a proteggere il possessore o, anzi, essendone ignorato il significato, poteva perfino distruggerlo. Da questa prospettiva siamo del parere che il *dono dell'ospitalità* rientra nelle modalità del leggitimare tanto dell'ospite quanto dell'anfitrione, al fine di provare fino in fondo le virtù dei due partner.

Quindi, l'espisodio parla del ruolo sfidante e minaccioso dell'anfitrione, che fino a questo punto ci siamo abituati a decodificare solo nel caso dell'ospite-offerente [11].

In tal modo, pensiamo che non solamente la *domanda di ospitalità*, ma anche l'accettazione "in ospitalità" supponga una sfida raddoppiata da una minaccia. "Chiedere l'ospitalità altrui" e "accettare l'ospitalità altrui" rappresentano difatti le due direzioni semantiche del gesto sfidante. Ne deduciamo che la sfida deve sopravvenire da ambedue le parti (destinatario/ anfitrione – offerente/ ospite), dal momento che il rapporto di ospitalità si svolge tra uguali.

Una divinità ingannatrice è pure Circe: lei incanta i compagni di Odisseo attraverso il suo canto *bello* [12], così come attraverso i suoi *funesti farmaci* (*pharmata lygra*, Od., X, v. 236) dell'oblìo della patria, così come la dea-strega trascorre il suo tempo lavorando "ordito grande, immortale" [13] alla maniera delle moire tessitrici del destino. Sempre lei dice che aveva abituato Odisseo a fare nodo con arte (canto VIII).

Ci sembra interessante che nell'episodio dell'ospitalità in casa di Circe manchi il momento dell'abluzione degli ospiti. Si passa direttamente al secondo momento dell'accoglienza: la cena offerta ai nuovi arrivati, insistendosi sulla pozione magica preparata da Circe al fine di far dimenticare completamente la patria ai compagni di Odisseo [14]. Possiamo dire che l'isola di Circe è qiundi una dimora dell'oblio di sé stessi giacché Circe altera non la memoria, ma lo *stato sociale* degli ospiti (assicurato dalla capacità *anamnestica*), ritenuto

[11] Si veda Maria-Luiza Dumitru, "Les lois de l'hospitalite dans le mond gréco-romain", în *Diversité et Identité Culturelle en Europe / Diversitate şi Identitate Culturală în Europa*, vol. IV,coord. Gheorghe Bârlea, Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române, Bucureşti, 2007, pp. 68-75.

[12] "(…) *aeidou ses opi kale*", "*con voce bella cantava*" (*Od*., X, v. 221)

[13] "*histon epoichomenes megan ambroton*" (*Od*., X, v. 236)

[14] "(…) *hina pancy lathoiato patridos aies*", "*perché obliassero del tutto la patria*" (*Od*., X, v. 236)

estremamente importante dai greci. Era come se quelli che mancavano di statuto sociale (*nonymnos*, "senza nome, senza fama") fossero morti. Però, dimenticando della terra natia che conferiva agli ospiti un'identità, uno stato sociale, questi rischiavano di *perdere l'individualità*, scendendo fino alla soglia più bassa della realtà: la *non-esistenza*.

Segue il gesto rilevante di Circe che sferza gli ospiti con la verghetta magica (equivalente alla bacchetta magica), gesto in seguito a cui gli ospiti si ritrovano tramutati in maiali. Consideriamo che quest'ultimo rappresenta un atto aggressivo che trasgredisce il patto di ospitalità attraverso *il ricorso alla violenza*. D'altra parte, la tramutazione degli ospiti in maiali descrive difatti il loro ridursi allo stato di *non-esseri umani* [15]. Più avanti il testo menziona Circe che butta loro da mangiare il cibo tipico dei maiali: ghianda e corniola. Quindi, la dea-strega altera lei stessa il significato dell'onorare gli ospiti, trasformando la cena in un *triviale nutrimento di bestie*. Così Circe arriva a *ironizzare*, attraverso *la mistificazione*, il pattern epico tradizionale dell'istituzione dell'ospitalità, convertendosi lei stessa in un'*anti-anfitrione* e palesando in questo modo il suo lato *mostruoso*.

Eppure Circe rimane uno *strumento* o un *rappresentante* del Sacro. Ma il Sacro è quello che impone sempre all'uomo il rispetto puntuale delle leggi dell'ospitalità attraverso la *mimesi*. In questo contesto, però, come si potrebbe spiegare l'atteggiamento di Circe? Riteniamo che, in tal caso, si tratta sempre di un *gesto di tradimento* da parte del Sacro, al fine di spingere l'individuo a perfezionare le sue abilità tramite le quali lui capisce di entrare in contatto con esso.

Il gioco del tradimento che il Sacro propone all'uomo come *modello di interrelazione* spunta come risposta al gesto dell'uomo di chiedere ospitalità. In conclusione, alla *richiesta* (*sfida*) ferma (chiamare Circe per nome) corrisponde un *gesto di scaltrezza* da parte del Sacro (Circe)[16], cioè un altro tipo di richiesta (sfida) cammuffata, attraverso cui si rivela all'uomo che è importante ormai *un altro tipo di favore* diverso da quello dell'ospitalità. Più precisamente, ora è importante non la richiesta di ospitalità vera e propria, ma la *maniera di farla,* di *entrare in contatto* con la divinità. Quest'ultima indica all'uomo il fatto che il suo atteggiamento cauto verso il Sacro è prioritario (così come avevano agito Euriloco e Odisseo). Il Sacro cerca di destare agli incosci compagni di Odisseo proprio questa prudenza che mancava loro[17] nel momento in cui stavano per entrare in casa di Circe.

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[15] Il processo della trasformazione si compie gradualmente, a cominciare dall'indurre uno stato di oblìo e culminando con la metamorfosi fisica degli ospiti in animali che, al limite, simboleggia il primitivismo.

[16] "*kaka phroneus'eni thymo*", *"...meditando sventure nell'animo*" (*Od*., X, v. 317)

[17] "(…) *aidreiesin heipnoto*", "...la seguirono tutti senza sospetto" (*Od*., X, v. 231), contrariamente all'atteggiamento prudente e riflessivo di Odisseo, che affronta lo spazio sacro "col cuore angosciato": *akachemenos etor*" (*Od*., X, v. 313).

Di lì a poco, Ermes suggerisce a Odisseo che non sarà l'erba magica a salvarlo dagli incantesimi di Circe, ma *il suo atteggiamento aggressivo e sorprendente* (*astuto*) rivolto verso il Sacro, a sua volta *provocatorio e scaltro*, che intendeva assumere verso il suo ospite un comportamento simile, *aggressivo e improvviso*.

In conclusione, Circe non può passare per una vittima di Odisseo. La dea viene *riportata* dall'eroe-ospite in modo assolutamente *inaspettato* allo *stato di anfitrione*. Però, non è Odisseo a baciare le ginocchia del suo anfitrione, implorandone l'ospitalità (così come si doveva), ma è la dea che commette due gesti tipici *tanto dell'anfitrione quanto dell'ospite*: 1) *cinge le ginocchia* di Odisseo per implorare il risparmio della vita (quale *ospite*); 2) *fa domande sulla legittimazione* (quale *anfitrione*), gesti in seguito ai quali Circe propone ad Odisseo *un nuovo baratto*: di inguainare la sciabola (richiesta corrispondente all'annullamento dell'aggressività) e di condividere il letto coniugale (*equivalente all'ingerenza uguagliatrice dei contrari*).

Però può Circe essere allo stesso tempo tanto anfitrione quanto ospite? Riteniamo che ciò diventi possibile proprio per l'intento di *scartare lo stato di confusione* in cui né alla dea viene riconosciuta la qualità di anfitrione, né a Odisseo quella di ospite. D'altra parte, il gesto di Circe è alquanto speculare perché così come Odisseo la sorprende con il suo gesto violento e improvviso di sguainare la sciabola, sempre così Circe lo sorprende mettendogli davanti lo stato di anfitrione assieme allo stato di ospite, rammentandogli in questo modo il suo proprio stato (di *ospite)* che aveva assunto nel momento della sua entrata in casa della dea.

In questo momento della nostra discussione fa capolino una domanda nuova: non era forse normale che la **funzione anamnestica** definisse l'ospite e non l'anfitrione, così come succede nella maggior parte dei casi?

Il baratto che Circe propone a Odisseo mette in primo piano una situazione di normalità spuntata in seno al rapporto anfitrione-ospite, nel senso che questo tipo di interrelazione deve fondarsi su *un'alternanza uguale di ruoli*: tanto l'anfitrione quanto l'ospite possono compiere nella stessa misura il ruolo sia del destinatario sia dell'offerente dal momento che si lanciano sfide a vicenda.

A sua volta, Odisseo risponde a Circe con una nuova sfida obbligandola a giurare sul fatto che non gli tenderà più trappole. È il momento in cui l'eroe pone fine alla serie interminabile di sfide da parte del Sacro. Inoltre, l'atteggiamento di Odisseo può essere interpretato come una manifestazione di *prudenza* che annulli le violenze successive e i possibili stati conflittuali.

Possiamo dire che, nella maggior parte dei casi presi in esame, l'anti-ospitalità soppraviene come effetto dell'*incapacità dell'uomo di contattare il Sacro in modo adeguato.* Così, da ospite dell'anfitrione l'uomo diventa *l'oggetto del convito*, *vittima* o perfino *nemico dell'anfitrione*.

I tipi di provocazione che il sacro lancia all'individuo (la prova dell'acutezza mentale, il tradimento, l'astuzia – il dono-trappola, l'atteggiamento mistificatorio – l'ironia, l'assenza strategica dalla cerchia dei suoi ospiti, il gioco della manipolazione ecc.) parlano in essenza, nell'ambito del rapporto d'ospitalità, dell'importanza del *gioco d'azzardo* e della *manipolazione reciproca* basato alla fin fine sull'alternanza reciproca dei ruoli (destintario-offerente).

In conclusione, possiamo affermare che *l'anti-ospitalità* offre l'occasione per un processo di reificazione del partner della transazione attraverso la sua trasformazione in *vittima*, quindi in *oggetto del convito* o in *oggetto di trasferimento*, su cui si sposta tutta la violenza e la *tensione* distruttiva sorta all'interno del rapporto di ospitalità.

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NOTES TOWARD A SUPREME DESIRE: WALLACE STEVENS, POETRY AND THE WORLD AS MALHEUR

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ABSTRACT. ***Notes Toward a Supreme Desire: Wallace Stevens, Poetry and the World as Malheur*.** This paper provides an overview of Wallace Stevens's treatment of the interplay of perception, desire and poetic expression by focusing on a number of relevant passages which can corroborate the assumption that "absence," "lack" and "void" can be regarded as taglines of the poet's peculiar worldview.

Keywords: *Stevens, Modernism, poetry, perception, desire, metaphor***,** *absence, void, unalignment*

REZUMAT. ***Note asupra unei dorințe supreme: poezia și lumea ca nefericire în opera lui Wallace Stevens.*** Lucrarea încearcă să ofere o privire de ansamblu asupra modului în care Wallace Stevens a abordat interacțiunea dintre percepție, dorință și expresie poetică, focalizându-se asupra unor fragmente relevante care susțin ipoteza că "absența", "lipsa" și "vidul" reprezintă descriptori de bază ai viziunii asupra lumii caracteristice poetului.

Cuvinte cheie*: Stevens, modernism, poezie, percepție, dorință, metaforă, absență, vid, nealiniere*

> The whole race is a poet that writes down
> The eccentric propositions of its fate.
> Wallace Stevens, *Man Made Out of Words*

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1. Rationale: the poem as a response to "severance" and "lack"

In his late extended poetic examination of creative imagination, "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction," the poet Wallace Stevens identifies one of the central sources of human discontent*:* our severance from the world we inhabit, the fact "that we live in a place / That is not our own and, much more, not ourselves" (CP 383). What he does here in fact, as Helen Vendler has aptly pointed out, is to ascribe the making of art (and of poetry in particular) to the subject's "foreignness in the world, and to our desire for a compensatory native world made by poetry" (109). It appears that for Stevens, poetry and desire are inseparable. For, as he noted earlier in the programmatic "Of Modern Poetry," the poem "[...] must / Be the finding of a satisfaction" (CP 240), and as such, inevitably, "an act of the mind" (ibid.).

Indeed, the relentless (and, at times, obstinate) interplay of reason, imagination, and poetic expression is one of the key-notes of Stevens's entire creative path. As Randall Jarrell has explained, with Stevens the creative impulse can frequently be attributed to an acute sense of lack—of "delicacy, awe, order, natural magnificence and piety"—encompassing, in principle, two major dimensions. On the one hand, the critic argues, some poems try to supply these lacks "from other times and places, from the underlying order of things, from the imagination" (134). This is what we may regard as Stevens's assertion of a belief in the potential of poetry, or his celebration of the compensatory strength of the imagination. By contrast, the *nadir* of the Stevensian search is mirrored in the poems that either treat "with mockery and despair" the times and places which are either unable or reluctant to provide solutions to the lack, or reason about the loss, its causes and the unlikely recuperation of things distant or absent:

> His poetry is obsessed with lack, a lack at last almost taken for granted, that he automatically supplies; if sometimes he has restored by imagination or abstraction or recreation, at other times he has restored by collection […]. The felling of being leisured, cultivated, and sympathetic tourist […] is essential to much of his work; most of his contact with values is at the distance of knowledge and regret—an aesthetician's or an archaeologist's contact with painting, not of a painter's. (135)

One could take issue with Jarrell whether Stevens was indeed so preoccupied with the question of "lack" that in its absence he felt compelled to induce it himself. In effect, what is more valuable in the critic's argument is the observation that in his creative efforts Stevens is never entirely able to approach the world exclusively in the capacity of a "poet," which may account for a certain dissociation from his own "materia poetica" and his assertion that the "poet's search" should be paralleled by that of the "philosopher" (CP 481).

In the light of such remarks, this paper will examine some of the causes of the frequent unalignment between poetry, world and perception in Wallace Stevens's oeuvre. To this end, it is necessary to focus first on the latter point formulated in the above excerpt from "Notes…"—that the poem issues from the sense of alienation that circumvents the subject's existence, i.e. "that we live in a place, / That is […] not *ourselves*." Here, Stevens admits that the divide between subject and object is in a significant measure derived from the subject's inability to adjust to himself—at least, if we are to believe the poet's later claim that "the world is what you make of it" (CP 513-15). Such an unadjustment means utter estrangement, which is much more tormenting than living "[…] in a place / That is not *our own*," since the latter, despite the isolation that it may engender, has the potential to lead at least to solipsistic complacencies. Instead, being severed from the self under the pressure of reality precludes any chance of gratification.

Regardless of the resolute tone of such lines, we should not assume that the Stevensian feeling of alienation is solely (or even primarily) an ontological condition, nor that it is a state that characterises the poet as an individual. In fact, to a large extent its roots are perceptual and cognitive and, as such, also typically Modernist. For, as Rosalind Krauss has explained (283-98, *passim*), within the Modernist epistemological frame "sight" acquires a central role, losing its purely sensorial function and becoming inseparable from desire (the "desire-in-seeing," as the critic has called it). With Stevens, this translates into "The point of vision and desire [being] the same" (CP 466). In light of this, we can argue that the "finding of a satisfaction" is largely connected to *apperception*—a process of substitution that takes place in the mind, whereby the subject continuously relates his present understanding of the object to a preconceived or anticipated image of it. Thus, both the present understanding and the anticipated image of the object become part of an endless chain of connections inside the mind, in which a vital role is played by desire. This forms a system of two-way relationships whose origins are almost impossible to retrace: on the one hand, the anticipation of the object engenders the matrix of desire, on the other, the subject's desire for an absent object relentlessly creates new anticipations of it. The space between them is exposed to both the centripetal force of the analytical mind attempting to make sense of the apprehended reality and to the equally important centrifugal effect of the imagination that creates transfigurations of the acquired image. Within this scheme reinforced by desire, the role of the poem is that of verbalising experience, knowledge, sensations, etc. through imaginative processes of metaphoric correspondences.

With a view to corroborating this observation, the following section will provide an overview of the peculiar way in which "desire" interposes itself between subject and object in Stevens's poetry.

2. On how to be "natives of poverty": the interplay of desire, perception and experience in Stevens's poetry

If one is to agree with Helen Vendler, an examination of the Stevensian interplay of perception, desire and poetic expression may be, at times, a rather difficult enterprise, since the poet was mostly reticent to express such a personal issue as "desire" in his own voice. Rather, he would aim at a poetry that could be "de-Stevensised," preferring to hide behind various masks and personae, or otherwise efface himself through theorising.

Thus, as his 1918 piece "Le Monocle de Mon Oncle" illustrates, in his earlier poems love and desire are regularly treated with irony and (self-) mockery:

> And so I mocked her in magnificent measure.
> Or was it that I mocked myself alone?
> I wish that I might be a thinking stone. (CP 13)

The tone is equivocal: Stevens appears to be unclear about the object of his desire—an attitude that will become typical for most of his poetry. In a manner that echoes Prufrock's musings, he appears to be preoccupied with something beyond the contemplated thing. Thus, desire is soon refrained by thought:

> Shall I uncrumple this much-crumpled thing?
> I am a man of fortune greeting heirs;
> For it has come that thus I greetp; spring.
> These choirs of welcome choir for me farewell (ibid.)

Stevens opposes raw passion and instincts to analysis and rational discrimination: "If sex were all, then every trembling hand / Could make us squeak, like dolls, the wished-for words […]." Yet, despite the analytical impulse, there still remains a lingering feeling of loss, of urgency that comes from having procrastinated for too long in speaking of such issues, which prompts the poet to search for a way to end the argument before it is developed completely:

> […] Every day, I found
> Man proved a gobbet in my mincing world.
> Like a rose rabi, later, I pursued,
> And *still* pursue, the origin and course
> Of love, but until now I never knew
> That fluttering things have so distinct a shade. (CP 17, italics added)

A similar attitude is displayed in "The Apostrophe to Vincentine," except that here the imagination replaces analytical thinking, and the conflict

is now between a subjectively made-up image of the object of desire and the object given form by reality. The anticipated image of the thing is gradually replaced by a new, realistic perception of it. In the end, the discordant picture that has violated the original expectation is looked upon with irony, as representation shifts from "I figured you as nude […]" through "I saw you then, as warm as flesh […] " to the final "Then you came walking / In a group […]" (CP 52-53). The embodied image leads to a new representation of hyperbolic proportions, consequent on the failure of reality to fulfil the subject's expectations: "Monotonous earth I saw become / Illimitable spheres of you […]" (CP 53). This final state elicits even stronger irony and self-mockery, but also self-admonishment—the subject's revolt against his own blindness occasioned by the intrusion of the imagination into the real.

Such a conflict may be given various expressions, but in Stevens it most often amounts to a conflict between anticipation and desire, on one hand, and sensorial perception and rational analysis, on the other. In this sense, a variation of the scenario in "Le Monocle…" appears in "Cy Est Pourtraicte, Madame…," where the encroachment works from instinct and desire toward thought, violating, as before, an established image. The sensuous images of Ursula dressed in "red and gold and brocade" and her offering of "radishes and flowers" are so potent here that they engender a reaction which acquires heavenly proportions:

> The good Lord in His garden sought
> New leaf and shadowy tinct,
> And they were all His thought.
> He heard her low accord,
> Half prayer and half ditty,
> And He felt a subtle quiver,
> That was not heavenly love,
> Or pity. (CP 21–22)

What these lines suggest, not without a touch of irony and irreverence, is that desire is a universal force dormant in both creator and thing created. Thus, our common conceptions, so far obscured by what our beliefs have allowed us to see, feel, and think—ultimately, our interpretation of all we know—will inevitably have to face the pressure of subliminal energies. Such a state may indeed lead to revelation, as the concluding lines acknowledge: "This is not writ / In any book" (CP 22).

Another possible reason for the unalignment of inner and outer things in this matrix of desire is the effect of the preconceived mental image on the perceptual moment, whereby the anticipated image of the object will frequently alter the act to the detriment of direct sensorial contact. In this respect, we can dissociate between two moments in the subject's exposure to

the desired thing. For, although the first acquaintance between subject and object takes place at the level of the senses, the sense data is not processed in an unadulterated form, as the preconceived image—a projection of the subject's desire—imparts with the object some of its essential qualities. It follows then that the activity of the senses is never entirely independent from the image-forming mental mechanisms, and thus apprehension can only be partial. Furthermore, since what we thus extract from the world never entirely coincides with the anticipated image, the desire-forming matrix is bound to be renewed.

The process is exemplified in "Peter Quince at the Clavier," where the anticipatory function of desire prevents the mind from fully seizing the object of contemplation:

> Music is feeling, then, not sound;
> And thus it is that what I feel,
> Here in my room, desiring you.
> Thinking of your blue-shadowed silk
> Is music. It is like the strain
> Waked in the elders by Susanna. (CP 89–90)

Desire changes sound into music according to a forever reactivated scheme, which precludes any successful attempt to discover a sound "free from [n]otion" (CP 268). Similar to the wild incarnational and often lush imagery that otherwise dominates Stevens's early poetry, the story of Susanna serves here as an illustration of the subject's instincts, impulses and needs, as well as for creating an imaginary compensatory world that works upon sensorial perception—a response to the non-actualisation of the object.

Given the portent of desire and the knowledge that subject and object are for this reason inseparable, one of the solutions proposed by the poet is that of rejecting sensorial contact altogether. Concretely, the absence of the thing and the ensuing lack of satisfaction give rise to a self-consuming desire for non-gratification of the subject's needs, counterbalanced by the long-term contemplation of the more convenient imagined appeasement that will come after the object is averted from sight:

> A few things for themselves,
> Florida, venereal soil,
> Disclose to the lover.
> Lasciviously as the wind,
> You came tormenting
> Insatiable,
>
> [...]
>
> *Conceal yourself or disclose*
> *Fewer things to the lover.* (CP 47–48, italics added)

The exuberant outer world is felt here almost as oppressive, precluding the possibility of matching the "lover" with the contemplated reality; the magnanimity of earth is no guarantee that the subject's interiorised passion can be adequately catered for. As he later acknowledges in "Bouquet of Roses in Sunlight," our experience of things demonstrates that beyond the solipsistic projections there lies a vast world that we can understand only in part, no matter if the contact is sensorial or rational:

> […] things that in being real
> Make any imaginings of them lesser things.
> And yet this effect is a consequence of the way
> We feel and, therefore, is not real, except
> In our sense of it [...] (CP 430-431)

According to Vendler, dissatisfaction with a world "too actual" may determine Stevens to develop a "scholarly interest in his own pain," accompanied by a "refusal to feel." As a result, the poem turns into a "lyric examination of the evil most tempting for Stevens—the evil of nostalgia and self-pity, the appetite for sleek ensolacings," and the act of writing becomes an opportunity for self-compassion or for arguing that "such privative exacerbations teach us our own 'essential savour'" (207). Thus, Vendler's point on Stevens's understanding of pleasure and happiness appears to us entirely justified:

> The distinction Stevens makes is between pleasure and happiness, but together they make up the "Paradise unknown" of emotion. It makes no difference that Stevens generally writes about happiness from the point of loss: it still makes a different subject from pain or evil. (210)

A perfect epitome of Stevens's attitude towards desire appears in "Farewell to Florida," a piece signalling the onset of a more austere idiom in his poetry, materialised in a symbolic movement from the South of wild nature, uncontained instincts and unrefrained existence to the North of "the violent mind" and thought, of the compensatory exertions of the imagination:

> Her mind had bound me round. The palms were hot
> As if I lived in ashen ground, as if
> The leaves in which the wind kept up its sound
> From my North of cold whistled in a sepulchral South. (CP 117)

In a truly Modernist fashion, Stevens is intentionally ambivalent in these lines: for, although existence on an absolute level among the objects proves too much, thus making the poet contemplate the possibility of life in a land where the imagination can roam free without having to answer the demands of the senses—despite the dwindling of the self due to excessive actualisation of experience—such a transition is still perceived as the dissolution of a structure,

engendering a sense of nostalgia. Thus, between memories and expectations, the subject is compelled to relentlessly pursue a "something" always out of reach. In consequence, solace will come from the *journey* itself, rather than from the *discoveries* along the path—from the continuous undulation—even if this means being caught up in a cycle of never-to-be-appeased desire:

> How content I shall be in the North to which I sail
> And to feel sure and to forget the bleaching sand…
> […]
> To stand here on the deck in the dark and say
> Farewell and to know that that land is forever gone
> And that she will not follow in any word
> Or look, nor ever again in thought, *except*
> *That I loved her once*… Farewell. Go on, high ship. (CP 117–118, italics added)

In light of the above, we may argue that neither presence nor absence can provide gratification for Stevens's subject. Since the world discloses itself only in the form of incomplete representations ("intimations" or "anticipations") or as things remembered (a series of "re-presentations" of the object) the resulting images will remain fundamentally elusive. Therefore, the Typical Stevensian dualistic strain will materialise itself not only as an epistemological problem, but also as a psychological one, manifest in the subject's undulation between future and past—the expectations of the repose that can come from a successful (but improbable) restoration of the mind within a more forbidding scenery and the longing for a something that "has been there" (such as the skeletal presence conjured up in "As You Leave the Room"). As for the role of the subject's imaginative and rational faculties, it appears that there are only two alternatives in this scheme: either to forget and reject the tantalising images, or to re-actualise the objects by remembering them and incorporating the products into the self. However, as will be illustrated in the following, throughout most of his verse Stevens could not find a proper way to achieve this and successfully transmute physical absence into an interiorised spiritual presence.

3. Forms of "absence" in Stevens's mature poetry

It is the lack and the blank that create…"—this is how Paul Valéry came to define the essence of poetic inspiration (147). Drawing on this statement, Vendler proposes an analysis of Stevens's "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven" as one of the finest examples of the poet's explorations of barrenness, impoverishment, despair and exhaustion (269 ff.). As the argument goes, in this poem Stevens's experience of "absence" is so acute that even the consolations of poetry will only be partial at this point, furnishing as an alternative to the reality he has been seeking thus far only the surrogates of "commonplace."

Besides serving as material for discussing the poet's emerging old-age sense of dilapidation, within the interpretive matrix proposed by Vendler, "An Ordinary Evening…" stands out for yet another reason. At an earlier point of her analysis the critic refers to this poem as indicative of Stevens's complementary "instincts":

> As Stevens was to say in his last extended poem (An Ordinary Evening in New Haven), he had an instinct for earth as well as an instinct for heaven, but in his earlier years he seems to have been mistaken about what parts of the earth he had an instinct for. He felt obliged to pretend an instinct for the fertility of earth, when his true instinct was for its austerities and its dilapidations. (45)

One may take issue with Vendler on the point of Stevens having "feigned" an instinct for the fertility of earth so as to compensate for his true impulse for austerity and dilapidation. Rather, in his early poetry the problem should be seen in terms of a yet-unshaken belief in the vigour of the imagination and the ability of poetry to atone for the non-presence of the desired object, by way of emulating nature's profusion through "representation." In fact, this admittedly more "pretentious" drive can be regarded as being no less an expression of desire than what Vendler calls his "true instinct." In fact, in Stevens's later poems the object remains the same (the *ding-an-sich* or reality), but the way in which it is approached changes. While with the earlier scenario the emphasis is to a great extent on the role of the imagination and its enhancement of perception, the emerging alternative will imply decrying the subject's inability to fully comprehend the world. In its turn, this will entail a desire to go back to the essence of reality, the "tranquil" or the "untouched." Thus, we may argue that this seemingly ambivalent stance is not so much an indication of the presence of several dissimilar instincts as a natural consequence of the dialectical space within which Stevens's poetic quest unfolds. Consequently, the two apparently opposite impulses may be considered equal manifestations of the driving force behind his unique place of undulation. Absence, barrenness and dilapidation are just as much thematic *foci* in many of the poems in *Harmonium* as in his later poetry.

The absence of the object takes on two basic forms with Stevens: *"non-presence"* and "*void."* They both result in dissatisfaction, but the degree in which they circumvent the subject's efforts is different. Absence understood as "non-presence" (apud. Vendler) may sometimes grant happiness, as is the case in "O Florida, Venereal Soil," where severance from an oppressive realm of objects that obstruct the imagination appears as a necessity. Thus, even though this precludes the possibility to unite the inner and the outer worlds, the subject can find ways of contemplating the object from a distance. Consequent on this, the non-presence of the thing and the emptiness the subject is forced to contemplate engender a blissful state, which testifies to the absence of desire:

Is it bad to have come here
And to have found the bed empty?
One might have found tragic hair,
Bitter eyes, hands hostile and cold.
There might have been a light on a book
Lighting a pitiless verse or two. (CP 161)

To the question formulated at the beginning of this excerpt from "Gallant Château" the momentary answer consists in the denial of perception: no "tragic hair," no "bitter eyes," no "hands hostile and cold." The benefit of this would be that in the absence of communication with the object there will be no imaginative or subjective transfiguration, which makes it possible for the greater reality to remain untouched: "It is good. The bed is empty, / The curtains are stiff and prim and still" (ibid.).

Yet, as hesitation takes over again, denial emerges as just another form of self-delusion. Negating the thing is still a way of relating to it—a solution that is unacceptable if one wants to comprehend reality without any mediation. In consequence, the mind is inclined to prolong its argument with the thing. As a result of this, the frustration experienced by the subject is occasionally verbalised in paradoxical statements that decry the inability of language to comprehend the world, as exemplified, again, in "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction":

But the priest desires. The philosopher desires.
And *not to have* is the beginning of desire.
To have what is not is its ancient cycle. (CP 382, italics added)

What Stevens proposes here is a distinction between "not to have anything" (that is, non-presence) and "to have what is not" (a variation of "to have nothing")—a scenario which may ultimately require the annihilation of the subject through the experience of an absolute void. While the former still allows for the possibility of gratification, the latter will entail a lifetime of negation, an austere existence—as such, a "minor key."

Having already known what desire and loss imply, the self demands more. Therefore, the alternative of absence is no palliative here. Reversing the assertion in his early exemplary exercise in nihilistic thought, "The Snow Man," Stevens admits that "nothing" is ultimately a form of denial. As a result, the poetic act itself becomes a rebellious exploit, an agency of destruction, as in "Poetry is a Destructive Force":

That's what misery is,
Nothing to have at heart.
It is to have or nothing.
[…]
He is like a man
In the body of a violent beast. (CP 192)

"Negation was eccentric," Stevens argues elsewhere (CP 319). It involves making choices on a purely subjective basis, resulting in exclusions and inclusions. Yet, as the parts are rejected, the whole is destroyed too, since the *"no"* leads to imposing a limit on the productive imagination:

> The death of Satan was a tragedy
> For the imagination. A capital
> Negation destroyed him in his tenement
> And, with him, many blue phenomena. (CP 319)

Through the imagination we can fathom the *idea* of nothing, but we cannot possibly abide by it, for, as suggested in "Notes…," this requires the annihilation of the subject himself, which is "unimaginable." By exploring the absurdity of having to imagine a state in which imagination itself is absent, Stevens ends up denying the very notion of absence. In fact, as logic would have it, there *can not* be a true form of absence, since an imagined non-presence *is* a state in itself, and thus a "something" conjured up as presence.

However, Stevens cautions against the temptation of such radical intellectual exercises, whereby dualism would somehow be eluded through an extreme kind of reductionism, as in adhering to an otherwise impossible "truth" that we impose on ourselves. To say "yes" implies the alternative of saying "no," as the natural working patterns of the mind require operating with binary oppositions. Hence, affirmation and negation remain equally elusive, and the subject plunges into an unbreakable cycle of causality and necessity:

> […] The mortal no
> Has its emptiness and tragic expirations.
> *The tragedy, however, may have begun,*
> *Again*, in the imagination's new beginning
> In the eyes of the realist spoken because he must
> *Say yes, spoken because every no*
> *Lay a passion for yes that had never be broken.* (CP 320, italics added)

Such a perception of reality consisting of forever renewable dichotomic pairs means certain disenchantment. Yet, what the above lines imply is that it is better to have lost as a result of desiring than not to have felt desire at all. Although "absence" is inherent in all things "present," the subject instinctively—sometimes even absurdly—takes sides with the latter. Thus, there is always at least so much as a "need" or a "feeling" which in their turn can be equated to a "presence"—a condition which, in lieu of a more satisfactory experience of the real, may offer more than temporary relief:

> There was *so much that was real that was not real at all*.
> *He wanted to feel the same way over and over*.
> He wanted the river to go on flowing the same way,
> To keep on flowing. He wanted to walk beside it. (CP 425, italics added)

To see things from such an angle may indicate that the poet has come to terms with the fatal indeterminism of human existence, consequent on which he might be able to adopt a more ordinary stance and seek gratification through what he called earlier the "pleasures of merely circulating" (CP 149-150). Yet, since the mind is an integral part of our physical body, there still remains the possibility that one's desire will never be gratified:

> Pink and white carnations—one desires
> So much more than that
> […]
> Still one would want more, one would need more,
> More than a world of white and snowy scents.
> There would still remain the never-resting mind,
> So that one would want to escape, come back
> To what had been so long composed.
> The imperfect is our paradise. (CP 193–194)

As the above lines illustrate, with Stevens desire is not purely subliminal. Rather, it works at a higher level, through the interplay of the sensorial and the rational, of which both have to satisfied. Thus, even though momentary relief may come through the senses, the mind will encroach and demand its share, and assuagement will be partial, once again. Consequent on this, the object of desire will elude the subject repeatedly ("a world of white and snowy scents"), thereby enhancing the perception of an "imperfect" universe. On the other hand, Stevens seems to suggest, such a condition may become a prime-mover of the world, forever recreating the subject's apprehension of things, regenerating, at the same time, the matrix of desire.

If sensorial apprehension is insufficient, it follows that gratification should be derived from the mind. Still, in its own turn, the mind lacks the resources required for compensating for the imperfect contact between subject and object:

> In this rigid room, an intenser love,
> Not toys, not thing-a-ma-jigs—
> The reason can give nothing at all
> Like the response to desire. (CP 218)

As a result, the object of desire loses in importance and in a moment of self-commiseration the subject's attention is detained by the mechanism of desire itself. Desire is thus aggrandised, developing into a vital force, an "intenser instinct." Because lack of appeasement renews the urge for consolations and want becomes the very cause of being, desire will represent a substitute for life itself:

> Ah! Yes, desire… this leaning on his bed,
> This leaning on his elbows on his bed,

Staring, at midnight, at the pillow that is black
In the catastrophic room… beyond despair,
Like an intenser instinct. What is it he desires?
But this he cannot know, the man that thinks [...] (CP 187–188)

Whenever desire folds back on itself the subject becomes more interested in the possible modes of *revealing* desire. The object may disappear from sight due to the subject's inability to comprehend it, but the more fearful prospect, Stevens suggests, is that desire itself might fade away, in a repression which would prevent any means of disclosing it:

The truth is that there comes a time
When we can mourn no more over music
That is so much motionless sound.
There comes a time when the waltz
Is no longer a mode of desire, a mode
Of revealing desire and is empty of shadows. (CP 121)

The pre-emptive measure Stevens proposes in face of such gruesome effects of total emotional vacuity is to turn to art-making, transforming the poem into a cry of want and despair (in a manner similar to Valéry's approach to desire):

An immense suppression, *freed*,
These voices crying without knowing for what,
Except to be happy, without knowing how,
Imposing forms they cannot describe,
Requiring order beyond their speech.
Too many waltzes have ended. *Yet the shapes*
For which the voices cry, these, too, may be
Modes of desire, modes of revealing desire. (CP 122, italics added)

As we have seen earlier, the mechanism of desire requires making connections with both past and future—it is at once *analeptic* (the object has been perceived before but at present it can only be remembered) and *cataleptic* (the object creates new, anticipated images). Paradoxically, at this stage, desire itself becomes self-sufficient, being its own beginning, evolutionary matrix and end (in a reversal of the strict logic of determinism, whereby a "cause" should entail an "effect"). *Desire-that-leaves-room-for-desire* is often the only source of appeasement, creating an expanse in which the analeptic image and cataleptic representation fuse in a harmonious marriage of opposites—simultaneously the source of desire and its manifestation, as in "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven":

[…] Plain men in plain towns
Are not precise about the appeasement they need.
They only know a savage assuagement cries
With a savage voice; and in that cry they hear

Themselves transposed, muted and comforted
In a savage and subtle and simple harmony,
A matching and making of surprised accords,
A responding to a diviner opposite. (CP 468)

The "double-thing" is at once "savage," "subtle" and "simple." With such an observation, Stevens seems to have reached, if only for a moment, the existence of a "plain" man no longer concerned with reasoning and knowing. At this point what the subject yearns for is "absence of knowledge"—a complete withdrawal from worldly affairs. Ignorance, Stevens suggests in "Esthétique du Mal," is the only expedient to self-fulfilment:

He disposes the world in categories, thus:
The people and the unpeopled. In both, he is
Alone. But in the peopled world, there is,
Besides the people, his knowledge of them. In
The unpeopled, there is his knowledge of himself
[…]
This knowledge
Of them and of himself destroys both worlds,
Except when he escapes from it. To be
Alone is not to know them or himself. (CP 323)

The prospect of the absence of knowledge may grant temporary satisfaction, suggesting a yet-unthought-of alternative through which the divide between subject and object can be bridged. By perceiving the object, the subject will be required to face himself in his own singularity. Yet, this process entails a continual intercourse between perception and self-perception, as a result of which the latter irrevocably impairs the former, since the subject's own perception of himself can never be "objective." In its turn, this will increase subjectivity in a recursive pattern, consequent on which the world will eventually lose its physicality, becoming a mere nexus of representations. Indeed, "projecting" oneself as an object identical to all other material things, Stevens implies, would require the absence of self-representation—another condition which leads to utter isolation:

The greatest poverty is not to live
In a physical world, to feel that one's desire
Is too difficult to tell from despair. (CP 325)

Living in a "physical world" would be an ideal state, as it may terminate desire, but Stevens's speculative stance soon forces him to admit that dissatisfaction seems to be an essential constitutional feature of humans. Therefore an existence as bare objects, outside the boundaries of a mind and impervious to any form of apprehension would verge on absurdity—it is beyond logic, therefore inhuman:

This creates a third world without knowledge,
In which no one peers, in which the will makes no
Demands. It accepts whatever is true,
Including pain, which, otherwise, is false.
In the third world, then, there is no pain. Yes, but
What lover has one in such rocks, what woman,
However known, at the centre of the heart? (CP 323, italics added)

With this, we are back at the consolations of solipsism, a mood characteristic of much of his early poetry, eloquently captured in early pieces, such as "Tea at the Palaz of Hoon":

I was the world in which I walked, and what I saw
Or heard or felt came not but from myself;
And there I found myself more truly and more strange. (CP 65)

It seems that Stevens's argument has gone full circle along his characteristically undulatory space. Of course, there remains the "mind as never satisfied," or at least what it can recuperate, as in "As You Leave the Room," where the long-forgotten thing "becomes / Part of a major reality" (SP 396). Fortunately, the instinct for self-preservation and the boundaries of comprehension prevent Stevens from furthering such speculations. The poet is forced to deal with desire and frustration and for the moment he cannot but accept the doleful realisation that humans are "[n]atives of poverty, children of malheur" and that "the gaiety of language is our own seigneur" (CP 322).

4. A world without malheur: the baring of metaphor in *The Rock*

Indeed, it is only by accepting the limits of the subjective self and of the main (albeit imperfect) mechanism by which humans make sense of the perceived world through representation—*language* (in particular, poetic language), that Stevens manages to find some form of solace in the final phase of his verse. In Stevens's conclusive poetic space, "absence" acquires new connotations, and instead of "poverty", the subject now revels in "barenness". This is indicative of a radical change of strategy. Especially in the poems in his last volume, *The Rock*, there is more *seeing* and less *saying*, an emptying of the world not of subjective perception, but of what the poet called "descriptions without place", that is, the wished-for supreme forms of metaphor which could reflect the essence of reality. In fact, "reflection" itself ceases to be a mirroring or a revelation of the thing, becoming gradually reduced to another of its meanings, *meditation*. There is no yearning to experience the object in its barrenness, but an effort to accept the world of bare objects in their ultimate inscrutability.

In fact, as A. Hollingworth has pointed out, the world of Stevens's late poetry displays a "desolation" of meaning" through which he "is able to synthesize a direct naming of the center" (45). The poet himself admits that this world of rock and earth "is not the landscape full of somnambulations / Of poetry" (CP 502). If nature has previously been seen essentially as something fixed, and the interpretive strength of the mind has represented the primary source of change, along his final years, it is the transformations *in* and *of* nature that become the source of relief, making it possible for the poet to give up "the difficult labor of willed imaginative transformations" (Vendler, 260). There appears to be almost no "will" to create or extract metaphor from the thing itself in the poems included in *The Rock*. The self is in a state of repose and is infused with things that do not appear to have been subjected to the mind's censorship and which, after integration, stand immune to further acts of comprehension. In consequence, Stevens's late sun remains "outside," making it possible for the body to "walk forth naked" in the light it radiates, without even having to express "its boisterous devotion" to it.

Now, reality reminds the poet that his own imaginative metamorphoses are insignificant in comparison to the deeper alterations effected by the sun. "He said that everything possessed / The power to transform itself, or else, // And what meant more, to be transformed" (CP 514). Yet, as the celestial presence confers the first colorations of blue onto the body, giving a new mold to the "master of the spruce, himself," the inadequacy of subjective imaginings shows through: "But his mastery […] // Left only the fragments found in the grass / From his project, as finally magnified" (CP 515). "The Poem That Took the Place of a Mountain," through the wilful recomposition of the "parts of a world," is a memento to the more difficult undertaking of self-discovery, the finding of "the outlook that would be right, / Where he would be complete in an unexplained completion" (CP 512).

Furthermore, as such reminders persist, the harmonies of "Peter Quince at the Clavier" are subdued by more ethereal notes, so that now the poet's sounds might be truly cleared of "notion": "The black fugatos are strumming the blackness of black… / The thick strings stutter the final gutturals" (CP 507).

This new knowledge marks a return to the "original earliness" of words, their inherent latencies and ordinariness. In consequence, the poetry that it begets is a homiletic one—in its turn, "a song of fixed accord" (CP 519). Stevens humbles himself in front the "sun of march," "bubbling" like a dove that "makes this small howling," echoing the thoughts of a man looking for a place "[i]n that which is and is established" (SP 385). The poet finds that purifying the "language of the tribe" requires, above all, expunging all the imaginative slack from his own idiom. Thus, he is forced to rediscover the primal elements of

language and to repeat names with "patient syllables," like Penelope waiting for Ulysses, in a "barbarous effort" by which he could challenge the more insensitive reiterations, the "repetition / In a repetitiousness of men and flies" (CP 502).

As Wimsatt aptly observed in his study of the "verbal icon": "the words which are fused in the poem have their new value not by losing their first or ordinary meanings, but only by retaining these" (130). In his turn, Stevens had to find a way to verify the belief that the force of poetry, words and metaphor lies not "replicating," let alone "altering" reality, but in being vehicles at our disposal "to create fictions which *remind* us of reality" (Litz 257, italics added). Along such an exercise, the "ditty," rather than the "prayer," had to become the poet's primary mode of expression. Once again, as in his early poems, playing the guitar, being "seated at the piano" or "twanging a wiry instrument" became necessary moments—"points of order, chosen, not ordained; […] the evidence of our freedom" (ibid.).

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IDENTITIES IN MIGRATION: ANGLOPHONE WRITERS IN CONTEMPORARY ROMANIA

MIHAELA MUDURE[1]

ABSTRACT. ***Identities in Migration: Anglophone Writers in Contemporary Romania.*** This essay analyzes the work of two Anglophone writers (Richard Procter and Philip Ó Ceallaigh) who chose to live in Romania and write about Romania. Proctor's novel *Heistberg* is a picaresque story whose background is the Romanian transition from communism to capitalism. Ó Ceallaigh's short story collection revisits the *kitchensink realism* of the 1950's in order to catch the ugliness and the sordidness of post-communist realities. Most of Ó Ceallaigh's stories are placed in those dormitory neighbourhoods of Bucharest built by the Ceausescu regime in order to give shelter to the working class.

Keywords*: Richard Proctor, Philip Ó Ceallaigh, post-communism, picaro, irony, humour ugliness, misery, humour, kitchen sink realism*

REZUMAT. ***Identităţi în migraţie: scriitori anglofoni în România contemporană.*** Eseul analizează opera a doi scriitori anglofoni (Richard Procter şi Philip Ó Ceallaigh) care au ales să trăiască în România şi să scrie despre România. *Heistberg*, romanul lui Proctor, este o poveste picarescă al cărei fundal este tranziţia românească de la comunism la capitalism. Culegerea de nuvele a lui Ó Ceallaigh reactualizează acel realism de „chiuvetă" al anilor 50 din secolul trecut pentru a surprinde urâţenia şi aspectul sordid al realităţilor post-comuniste. Majoritatea nuvelelor lui Ó Ceallaigh's sunt localizate în acele cartiere dormitoare din Bucureşti clădite de regimul Ceauşescu pentru a adăposti clasa muncitoare.

Cuvinte cheie*: Richard Proctor, Philip Ó Ceallaigh, post-comunism, picaro, ironie, umor, urâţenie, mizerie, umor, realismul „de chiuvetă"*

Globalization and its accompanying manifestations – intensifying communication, tourism, transportation, the internet and the appearance of

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the global village, as well as Romania's accession to the European Union stimulated demographic movements from and to Romania. With the exception of some canonized personalities such as Eugen Ionescu, Emil Cioran or Norman Manea, Andrei Codrescu, from the younger generation, most of those who write in Romanian beyond the national borders are neglected by most literary critics and historians[2]. At best, their writing will be commented upon in some review. They are much too little represented in the dictionaries of Romanian literature whose unacknowledged but extremely influential frame is the national state, a political structure that is no longer able to respond to the complexity of contemporary world[3]. Or from Anamaria Beligan and Ioana Petrescu in Australia to Domnica Trăistaru, Alta Ifland, Petru Popescu in the United States or Florin Oncescu, Adrian Dumitrescu, and Flavia Cosma in Canada – and I will not keep enumerating names – Romanian literature includes much more writers than those who live between the borders of the Romanian national state. I am convinced that among the Romanian fruit pickers from Italy or Spain, among the workers who toil on building sites in Israel or among the Romanian women who take care of the elderly people from other countries, there must be poets, novelists, short story writers or diarists who write in this very moment thinking of their homeland and who are presently ignored by literary critics and readers.

Globalization has influenced the whole world. Others have left their homeland as well. The number of foreigners who live in Romania has increased spectacularly since 1990. In Romania live and work foreigners who are business men, NATO personnel, representatives of international organizations, teachers in schools of all levels (from kindergartens to universities) etc. From among these foreigners who chose Romania as their second homeland, I have selected two: Richard Proctor and Philip Ó Ceallaigh. They are Anglophone writers who left the United Kingdom in order to settle down on Romanian lands. Neither Proctor nor Ó Ceallaigh write travelogues. There are at least two contemporary Anglophone travellers - Robert Kaplan with *Balkan Ghosts* and Mike Mosby with *Grand Bazaar Romania*– who got interested, for different reasons, however, in Romanian realities and Romanian doings or undoings since 1990. Kaplan's and Mosby's texts are heteroglossic in the sense given by Bakhtin to this term and with the intertextual nuances brought by Foucault. As is known, according to Bakhtin, the heteroglossic perspective is the result of the diversity of the speakers' social settings. Foucault develops this approach by introducing intertextuality in this discussion. The heteroglossic texts are the result of

[2] The writers from the Republic of Moldova or from Ukraine (most precisely, those from Northern Bukovina) are an exception, in this respect.

[3] An important exception from this point of view is Aurel Sasu's *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers from NorthAmerica*.

convergent or divergent realities which produce their own texts which intersect and are regarded both from the social point of view and from the semiotic point of view. Both Kaplan and Mosby look at post-communist Romania as a periphery of both new and old geographies. These geographies are the result of imperial evolutions in this part of Europe. Both from the social and semiotic point of view, Romania is a kind of heteroglossic patchwork where modernity and archaic realities clash, a heterotopia of compensation where the Romanian space becomes the other of Europe. The othering process in this contact zone (according to Marie Louise Pratt's terminology) is the obsession to catch up with the advanced West regardless whether these novelties are beneficial or harmful from the cultural point of view. Kaplan and Mosby look at postcommunist Romania as double degree heterotopias because the country has been othered by communism and by its century-old cultural complexes. Still, Kaplan's and Mosby's perspective is superficial if compared with Proctor's or Ó Ceallaigh's because of their latter couple's empathy with the native Romanians. Proctor and Ó Ceallaigh chose to live in Romania like ordinary Romanian citizens.

Both Proctor and Ó Ceallaigh are at the beginning of their literary career and they came to Romania as lecturers of the British Council at the beginning of the 1990's. Richard Proctor taught at "Babeş-Bolyai" University in Cluj-Napoca, Philip Ó Ceallaigh taught at the University of Bucharest. After their contract with the British Council was over, Proctor and Ó Ceallaigh decided – although Romanian democracy was and still is very young and unstable or maybe exactly because it is like this – to settle down in Romania. And they are not the only ones[4]. For some time Richard Proctor lived in a village near Cluj-Napoca, then he bought a country house in the Mureş County. Ó Ceallaigh settled down in Bucharest. He lives in a small flat in one of the thousands blocks built under the communist regime in Romania's beautiful capital. Both Proctor and Ó Ceallaigh live on writing or on translations and temporary contracts with private or public schools. The books we are going to discuss are Proctor's and Ó Ceallaigh's editorial début.

Proctor's novel, *Heistburg*, is a picaresque narration situated at the meeting point between the East and the West of Europe, at the beginning of the 1990's. It is the author's artistic intention to straddle literary genres. Proctor divides his novel into three acts which describe the preparation of the journey (Act I), the journey itself (Act II), and the consequences of the journey (Act III). At the end the Curtain falls upon this fictional world where the author sees his characters as some actors playing their own role. Proctor's picaros are

[4] According to the British Embassy, in Romania live between 3,000-4,000 British nationals. (Cârcu). More ample information about this phenomenon as well as its existential evaluation can be found in Sandra Pralong's book*Mai români decât românii*[*More Romanian than the Romanians*] which includes the life stories of some foreign nationals who chose to settle down in Romania.

four actors (Smov, Fatman, Estragon, and H), as well as a driver (Stalin), the man of the theatre director, who is the four actors' employer. Stalin also functions as the squad's translator as he is the only member who can speak German. The four actors decide to go to Austria and rob a bank in order to improve their financial situation. The author has jokingly caught the economic reality of the East and the necessity to transfer some of the wealth of the West to Eastern Europe. In order to hide their criminal intentions, the four decided to go to Austria under the pretext of participating in a theatre festival. The driver does not know anything about the actors' real intentions. Stalin is convinced that the actors' only target is the theatre festival from Vienna.

An important character lurks in the background of this picaresque adventure. It is the manager of the theatre where the four actors are hired. His ambiguous personality is typical of the complexity of the muddy Romanian transition. "The Director was a dinosaur, but at least clever enough to know that" (27). The past and the present combine and the result is a typical postmodern atmosphere where everything goes: greed and honesty, naivety and cunningness. People have to adapt and Proctor excels at presenting their complex adaptation mechanisms which all lead to minimum resistance and minimum suffering in adopting the new. "Everyone at the theatre complained about him, of course, but the truth was that without him things would have been neither better nor worse and with him at least the staff had someone to blame" (26).The theatre manager cannot get rid of the past mentalities. For instance, his belief that the industrial work is the most important and the most appreciated human activity relegates to the communist obsession with industry and industrial development. Richard Proctor, an Englishman, proves that he understood very well the essence of the restrictive ideology of state communism. According to the theatre manager, "the theatre was just a factory whose workers were to be viewed with more suspicion than usual and whose products couldn't be stored, stolen, accounted for or otherwise viewed in the traditional Party way" (26).

Richard Proctor deftly uses the humoristic paradox that he inherited from Oscar Wilde or Bernard Shaw. This artistic tool helps him catch the essence of life in Romanian post-communism. Under the circumstances of the early 1990's physical and mental changes require very good adaptation skills. A good example, in this respect, is Smov, a survivor by definition. He "was one of the many who had learnt how to survive and stay relatively sane under a regime which had made both those activities very difficult" (30).

The same authorial and descriptive capacity to catch the essence of the post-communist age is metaphorically presented by the rather broken down bus, the vehicle the four actors want to use in their picaresque Austrian adventure. "[T] there was nothing seriously wrong with the bus, just neglect caused by a lack of cash and no one feeling very responsible for it, like the

whole country really" (57). The Romanian reader will immediately recognize a problem that is the inheritance of the mentality induced by the communist ideology and state property. Nobody feels responsibility for anything, the lack of competition and material stimulation leads to neglect and careless attitude.

Getting the visa and successfully crossing the border are other adventures inside the great picaresque adventure. Again Proctor catches some typical issues for the early 1990's in Romania. After years when the West complained that communist countries did not give their citizens their freedom of circulation which they (the citizens) were entitled to, once communism collapsed at the end of 1989, the same previously liberal West becomes all of a sudden suspicious and uncomfortable with the prospect that many Eastern Europeans will come to the West and look for better paid jobs. The Romanians – as well as other East Europeans – got very frustrated. Proctor describes very empathetically this stage in the picaresque adventures. After queuing up for the visa, the five picaros are ready for the great journey. Sauciness, bribery (under the form of alcohol or foreign cigarettes), mimicked humility, these are the usual resources Romanians use in order to domesticate the authority of the clerk from the foreign consulate which gives the visa or the customs officer. Any (touristic or not) initiative is immediately amended with a comparison pointing to the precarious level of life under communism. For example, once in Vienna, the thieves-to-become are tempted by an advertisement for a tour of the sewage system of the Austrian capital. "Stalin quite liked the idea of a tour of the city sewers, but the others felt life under dictatorship had been punishment enough" (83).

Under Smov's wise leadership[5] the actors prepare for the theft that was to improve their material life standard. Under the pretext that they were short of fuel, they leave Stalin, the man of the theater manager, in a parking place and they go to the nearest city under the pretext of looking for gas. In fact, the actors' plan is to rob the bank from the little town of Heistberg. The omniscient narrator follows the thieves with ironical benevolence. Here is, for instance, the characterization of Smov, the leader of the gang compared with an ideal army general. "[H]ere he was, leading his troops from the front, never dreaming of asking them to do something he wouldn't do himself, and concerned enough about morale to make even the lowliest squauddie feel part of the team" (111). Richard Proctor's English humour does not spare anything, not even the army and its pretended bravery and comradeship.

The thieves have bad luck. The bank is closed because it is a holiday and nobody works. The narrative climax is reached but somehow a little bit too easily, too abruptly deflated.

[5] For a reader from a post-communist country, this phrase has an ironical meaning because officially the Communist Party's leadership was always considered to be a wise one.

Act III is an attempt at a reparatory romantic action which is not very convincing. Humour and irony are Richard Proctor's main gifts. Romance is not exactly his cup of tea. On its way to the Hungarian border, the bus needs some spare parts and the five picaros are the beneficiaries of the munificent hospitality of a Hungarian countess. Stalin, although the most indoctrinated with the old ideology, the man of the institution, makes up his mind to remain on the spot. The proposal of the countess is irresistible. Stalin will get married to the countess.

Richard Proctor's novel impresses the reader by its humour reminding the well read reader of Henry Fielding. Like the great eighteenth-century novelist, Proctor watches his characters with an ironical eye but he is also full of comprehension for human weaknesses. A good example of Fielding's influence is the personification of the vehicle used by the five picaros. The old bus is called Old Farty and the name shows both the picaros' affection for it and its level of technicality. Like a horse from the fairy tales, it is mostly depicted by its nutritional activities: it belches, spits, coughs, vomits, or farts according to the quality of its fuel. As the five picaros travel by this vehicle, they become five brave fartonauts. Richard Proctor shares, with Fielding and Rabelais, the pleasure to talk about the body without false hypocrisy. Like the horse of a Happy Prince, Old Farty has a soul and a body. Significant is, for instance, the moment when it finally gets the spare parts whose absence has been so annoying."Hans grafted it onto Ol' Farty who belched her appreciation, when he fired her up" (141). Upon coming home, when Old Farty has to cross the Austrian-Hungarian border, the boundary separating the East from the West of Europe, "Ol' Farty blew one last raspberry at the gorillas" who guarded this important crossing. The five picaros lost a battle, but still, won the war. "We might have won the war in the end, but we lost that battle" (152), says Smov. The honorarium from the theatre festival and their winnings from the gambling table of the countess will ensure them some material comfort for the future. One of the aims of a picaro narration – getting social respectability and wealth – is achieved.

The books of Richard Proctor and Philip Ó Ceallaigh share the attitude of the Westerner whose lucrative, precise, active consciousness revolts against the post-communist indolence and carelessness. These drawbacks are the result of the post-colonial awareness of the Balkans that everything passes and beyond anything else we have to survive. In Proctor's book, Old Farty did not need much repair, it was mostly neglect. In the neighbourhood described by Ó Ceallaigh there is a huge concrete slab abandoned in front of the block. "A displaced slab and a hole in the ground and a sense that everything was falling apart" ("In the Neighbourhood", 10), this picture is typical of our post-communist neighbourhoods.

Philip Ó Ceallaigh's *Notes from a Turkish Whorehouse* was published in 2006 by the renowned Penguin Books. The title does not function as a real

indicator of the narrative content of this collection. We think that the title is rather an advertising indicator. In the title story of this collection, the narrator loses the manuscript of his first novel somewhere in Northern Turkey, on the Black Sea shore. The writer does not have enough money to pay a prostitute for her services and the latter steals his manuscript in order to punish him although she does not care at all about literature.

The stimulus of Philip Ó Ceallaigh's writing is the same as Richard Proctor's. Having come from a consolidated – even overconfident – world, the two Anglophone writers are interested in the birth of a new world and they take full advantage of the post-1989 opportunities to know directly Romania, Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans. The huge problem is that the post-1990 freedom also fathers monsters. Life is not necessarily better for everybody.

If we are to place Philip Ó Ceallaigh in the wake of a literary tradition, we have to think of realism. But it is not the realist depiction of the background of a picaresque journey, Ó Ceallaigh revisits a sort of realism, namely *kitchen sink* realism. This realism implies a kind of sado-masochistic pleasure to find the typical in dejection, waste, abjection. Like the writers, painters, or cinema artists who practised this kind of realism in Britain in the 1950's and 1960's, Philip Ó Ceallaigh enjoys looking almost exclusively at the ugliness from the Bucharest marginal neighbourhoods where he actually lives. The writer notices the uniformity and the kitsch imposed by the superficial and hasty modernization of Romanian society during the communist period. As in an novel by one of the *angry young men*[6]from the 1950's the writer insists on the visual details that reveal misery and conformity to misery."The next room is stuffed full of old furniture, draped in plastic sheeting. Mostly it is the massive kind with which people cramp their small rooms, with cases and shelves for displaying their things, their coffee cups and saucers and statuettes of Little Bo-Peep. In the kitchen the fridge is plugged in and humming, and I find this strange, that something is actually functioning ("The Retreat from Moscow", 273).

Ó Ceallaigh's characters are common people, the working class glorified during the communist age as the ruling class of society and promised that they would enter the paradise of the new world. The problem is that there was no paradise after World War II, nor after the end of the Cold War in 1989. "The people had their pensions and were sleepy in the afternoon, and were just confused why they knew that much, and as months dragged to years, as they cooked their meals and pulled their toilet chains, clarity was not forthcoming. They theorized, swore at each other, especially in queues in post offices and queuing to pay at the electricity company or at the market, or on buses, but mostly they shrugged and said, 'What can you do?' "("In the Neighbourhood", 33-34).

[6] Trend in the British novel and theatre in the 1950's.

The shallow contemporary life, its lack of spirituality, the sympathy for the poor and the humble are some of the coordinates of the British writer's realism. There is in Ó Ceallaigh's stories revolt, hatred, and disgust at the frustrating new realities. The characters find no meaning in their lives. Not even the erotic can fill their existence because love is most often a contact between two bodies, hormonal chemistry, and very little sentiment and affection. Verbal cruelty is relevant for the callousness of most characters. "You are going to get it now, bitch, say my eyes. Give it to me, dog, say hers. It goes into the hilt, and when I thrust it rocks her whole body, tethered to my bed. She bucks back, healthy creature that she is. I could tell you how good it is. But there are not words" ("Who Let the Dogs Out?" 84).

The writer insists on the misogyny of the new society no longer placated by the egalitarianism of the political discourse, which was the case before 1990. Men make almost no effort to understand their partners, whom they see only from a physiological perspective as a recipient where it is ideal for men to get rid of their sexual, masculine juices. Women characters are always the Other. They are prone to lies, deceit, they are unable to appreciate anything else except the body language in a moment of corporal enjoyment. The taxi driver from the short story "Taxi" sums up this philosophy of the Eros which reveals the aggressive patriarchy of Romanian society: "the difference between a man and a woman is that we're allowed to try whatever we can do. If a woman does it people call her a whore. That's the rule. Not a fair rule. But it's there. It's like driving. There's a few rules or we smash into each other" (3).

Philip Ó Ceallaigh has the gift of the highly significant detail recorded in the short sentences which function like cinematic flashes within the whole narrative discourse. Here is such a sample from the short story "In the Neighbourhood": "Nic put his jacket on and went out. Maria heard a thump from the ceiling. The boy upstairs had dropped something again (6). The lack of intimacy of the flats deprived of good insulation, the leaking pipes, the doors and the windows that would never shut completely, the mean space allotted to stairs or any other space meant for common use, all these are presented by Philip Ó Ceallaigh who functions like a neutral and merciless camera. Not even death gives one the chance of a dignified way out of these cheap sites. The planners of these complexes had only thought of utilitarian corridors that could be used by standing people and not by those lying in coffins. "The turn in the stairs was too tight for the length of the coffin. There was not enough room between the railings and the wall" ("In the Neighbourhood", 27). Death needs manoeuvres, otherwise the coffin cannot be taken to the cemetery. Ó Ceallaigh abhors the gross utilitarianism which was in the mind of those who planned these outskirts with narrow and mean streets. For their spiritual needs, people only have a small church. "The service was in a small church

squeezed between two large blocks, as if inserted as an afterthought. Which it was. First they built all the blocks and moved the workers in. Then the workers decided they had some other needs, when they were not working ("In the Neighbourhood", 43).

Dehumanization, the lack of concern for man go hand in hand with the absurd, meaningless everyday life in contemporary society. Health care, such a fine indicator of society's concern for its citizens, is submitted to an aggressive and hasty privatization process. You have to pay if you want to be taken into account. The former free policlinics still exist but you are treated as a nobody because there is nobody to take any money from you."The clinic looked like a school for training welders and plumbers. Inside were queues and corridors and doors and rooms like classrooms. Only the smell of disinfectant suggested the practice of medicine. In the hallway Alex queued and said what kind of specialist he wanted to see and paid and got a ticket. This was the better kind of hospital. In the free hospitals you sat in a queue all day, looking at the wall ("In the Neighbourhood", 8).

The corporatist world and its workers inspire Philip Ó Ceallaigh images whose comic feature relates to the physiology of nutrition and biological waste. Although the symbol of the winning side in this post-communist world, the office where Alex works is no better than the decaying block of flats built under the communist regime. Laughter is everywhere the only saviour. "Imagine, all those people, tapping away at keyboards in corporate bliss, filling up with gas, like balloons. … Perhaps he thought, that's what this country needs after all. Colonization by a civilization with superior toilet-training. A bit of corporate hygiene. Lectures in Anglo-Saxon potty ethics before you went through the five doors and back to your fart-free work environment. No wonder the employees here felt privileged, being advance corps of deodorized capitalism. It was not just the relatively high pay, it was being on the winning team. Apart and above another world outside that was rapidly decaying" ("In the Neighbourhood", 37).

The only solution offered to this existential simulacrum where the signifier no longer has a signified is television which offers just second-hand images, cheap fantasies and dreams to be never fulfilled. Life becomes "a dream, a sick dream… all these people are working and suffering and drinking and puking and fighting and fighting and lying and exchanging possessions back and forth, never satisfied with what they hold, and living in houses and discussing football games, and eating and shitting and worrying about getting fat and getting old, and reproducing and finally getting sick and dying" ("Who Let the Dogs Out?" 75).

Ó Ceallaigh's characters do not succeed in staying whole, fulfilled, complete, untouched by this coarse time. In "Reporting the Fact" the main character travels from the Republic of Moldova, to Transdnistria, Athens or

Istanbul looking for a moral balance impossible to find. Couples do not endure, relationships are rather momentary couplings. It looks as if love were unreachable. In "As I Sink Down" two people separate because they have no money to raise their child. He will go and work in the mines, she will get hired in a bank and start looking for a man who can support a family. In "An Evening of Love" a man finds out that his wife is cheating on him and he falls apart. "Crime and Punishment is an ambitious *remake* after Dostoievski's novel relocated in one of the neighbourhoods formerly offered to the working class in order to experience the communist paradise.

As in an Italian neorealist movie, Ó Ceallaigh lingers on the hideous and monotonous neighbourhoods of Bucharest, the result of the communist concern for the life of the crowd. Ugliness is becoming so common that people are no longer able to resent it. Finally, the difference between what was before 1990 and what occurred afterwards is no longer that big. Both regimes rely on the gregarious spirit. "The bovine element in man proclaimed most virtuous" ("Philanthropy", 213). Only the mechanisms to tempt the flock are different.

Ó Ceallaigh's view of contemporary Romania also includes: the homeless children, the Roma beggars, the stray dogs, the people's spite and lack of compassion for one's neighbour. Virgil, the main character and the authorial spokesman from "Philanthropy" tries to understand this brave new world: "how people spend their lives obsessed with money and increasing their stock of material comforts and appearance of status, to be a flashier insect among dull insects. The truth is we despise each other. People don't respect people, they respect money" (212).

Like moles, people get out of the metro and try to impress by their appearance and striking incongruities. "He came out of the ground, out of the metro station, and into the light. It was ugly and a little frightening, like looking into the head of a madman. A dictator had razed and rebuilt the area, in an effort to create an impression, and shortly afterwards he had been put up against a wall and shot. They were ugly buildings and ugly cars and most of the people were ugly too. The young and good-looking ones were the ugliest of all, because they tried too hard, like the city had tried, to be something ("Gone Fishing", 265).

The same sad consequences of forced industrialization and modernization are even more obvious in the countryside where abandoned and impoverished villages dominate the landscape. "No running water, the well iced over five months of the year – spring comes and then you can wash every month, whether you need it or not. Your matrimonial prospects the dregs. If you were lucky. Because anyone who had the chance to leave had taken it ("Walking to the Danube", 114).

Like Caragiale, Ó Ceallaigh realizes the effects of heat upon the psyche of the people from Bucharest, the absurd reactions which dilate human

drawbacks to a catastrophic level. The difference is that Caragiale's Mitică used the ecological horse-driven carriage. Ó Ceallaigh's characters travel by polluting cars or buses. The aggressive environment makes people furious. One just wants to get out of this place. But one cannot. The trap becomes existential."Trapped in a taxi in the heat at the lights at Universitatea, heading south to Unirii. Traffic in its midday frenzy. And I'm sick. Poisoned. A rock in my belly and no good way to even breathe. Before the truck in front can move off the taxi driver leans on the horn, the way they do in Bucharest. Car behind us does the same and it goes back along the line. Pointless chain of noise and the hot fumes through the open window. ... He pours his anger into the machine and from the machine to me. I do not want to know him ("As I Sink Down", 173).

There are few stories where the author goes away from post-communist Romania. Still, it is relevant that the alternative, namely developed capitalism, is not better either. Another kind of simulacrum pervades in those lives. In Southern California, for instance, "people lived out their lives in air-conditioned bubbles, getting into air-conditioned cars and driving to shopping centres, where you would scarper like an insect across the searing parking lot for the refuge of the air-conditioned supermarket ("Honey", 96). The ecological disaster takes other forms in this place but it has the same devastating consequences. The Colorado River no longer fertilizes the dry lands of Arizona. Its waters were captured by hydro-power stations which "produced energy for the lights of Las Vegas, to the north, which burned all through the night, and for the air-conditioning unit in the home of Bob and Mary Hamilton, in Scottsdale, Arizona" (("Honey", 97-98).

Ó Ceallaigh also deals with the immigrants from the USA and their problems: the obsession to have the right documents, hunting for a visa that allows legal work, the hypocrisy of the system that needs this cheap labour force but pretends that it rejects immigration. These are the issues from "My Life as an Artist" or "Life&Death&My Last $5". The competition for a job is tough and the rivalry between ethnic groups proves the failure of the multicultural model which ensured only a discoursive equality but did not solve the basic economic problems which would ensure the authentic equality between the members of society."The immigrants had little respect for the poor blacks. Their papers were in order and they spoke English and still they lived in shit ("My Life as an Artist", 137).Secularization, culinary obsession with diet foods, overwork, in fact slavery for a salary, all these have become the new American religions. "Those who work blindly for others and do not realize what they have surrendered are already lost" ("My Life as an Artist", 144). The revolt of the main character from "My Life as an Artist" who refuses to submit to the whims of his boss and finds his freedom in writing signifies dignity and defiance of the mercantile spirit that dominates America.

A very special story is "A Performance" which reminds of the novel *Restoration* by Rose Tremain, a fiction inspired by the realities of England in the seventeenth century. Some kind of intertextual relation is not to be excluded. In Tremain's novel the main character, doctor Robert Merivel, studies, out of scientific curiosity, a human heart beating live. Philip Ó Ceallaigh presents us a much more tragical case but representative for the histrionic spirit of our times. Ó Ceallaigh's character makes a show by opening his own chest so that people should see his heart beat live. The elite individual who is a scientist is replaced by the curious and vulgar mob that is only interested in strong sensations.

Impressive with Philip Ó Ceallaigh is not only his capacity to choose life aspects that have the power of signification but the elegance of his concise style as well. Nice catachreses make his narrative discourse very special. Here are some examples:"The bus moved towards the edge of the city, losing passengers ("In the Neighbourhood", 29); "Gypsy families were combing the hills of refuse for glass and plastic and metal ("In the Neighbourhood", 43); "Alex listened to a couple of dogs debating the bones of the night" ("In the Neighbourhood", 69);"...the tramlines, which ran like a lacing of nerves across the city's concrete skin ("Broken Teeth", 126); "The muezzin gave the daybreak call. It came crackling and wailing over the loudspeakers from the minaret" ("Notes from a Turkish Whorehouse", 203-204); "Moldova, several chaotic years after emerging independent from the ruins of the Soviet Union..."("Reporting the Facts", 223). Ó Ceallaigh's irony is fine and very well targeted. Here is, for instance, an immigrant's view of an icon of American democracy, Abraham Lincoln's statue in Washington D.C. "Abraham sat there on his stone throne, alone, through the small hours, contemplating liberty, and sacrifice, and the other things that make America great" ("My Life as an Artist", 133).The writer's depiction of ugliness is repetitive but also highly eloquent. "A first-floor room. Two beds, one on either side of the big window that faced onto the street. Between the beds and under the window was a table. They were ugly beds and it was an ugly table. It was an ugly room. The pipes from the floor above had leaked and the plaster on the ceiling in the bathroom was coming off in chunks and the walls were discoloured. The broken hot-water tap hissed a stream of scalding water down the drain. There was no toilet seat and the bowl was caked with history" ("Notes from a Turkish Whorehouse", 119).

We can conclude that far from being some foreigners who record the realities of contemporary Romania in a neutral tone, Richard Proctor and Philip Ó Ceallaigh are two writers who prove that they can be here and there at the same time, they can belong by not belonging. Their ubiquity is painfully comprehensive even when they hide behind a peal of laughter or an ironical smile. Proctor's and Ó Ceallaigh's uprootedness is a sign of our times but the difference, in these two cases, is that their migration found an aim and a target. Proctor and Ó Ceallaigh are not coming from nowhere and going nowhere. They turned postcommunist Romania into an opportunity to understand humanity in our times.

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BUILDING STYLES AND HESSIAN BAGS IN PETER CAREY'S *ILLYWHACKER*

CLAUDIA NOVOSIVSCHEI[1]

ABSTRACT. ***Building Styles and Hessian Bags in Peter Carey's*** **Illywhacker.** Peter Carey's novel *Illywhacker* came out in 1985 and was short listed for the Booker Prize of the same year. Seen as metafiction or pertaining to magical realism, the role of history or of coexisting histories was one of the widely discussed topics. Another was the comparison between writing and building, since the metaphor of building texts – be them 'true' or 'fictional/deceptive' is obvious in the novel. This article suggests a new parallel between modern and postmodern approaches to history and architecture as they weave in and between the lines of the novel, like the threads of a hessian bag.

Keywords: *Peter Carey, Illywhacker, new grille, (former) settler colonies, rewriting of history, Le Corbusier, the hessian bag.*

ABSTRACT. ***Stiluri de construire şi saci de iută în romanul Illywhacker de Peter Carey.*** Romanul lui Peter Carey, *Illywhacker* a apărut în 1985 şi a intrat pe lista scurtă a premiilor Booker din acelaşi an. Interpretat ca metaficţiune sau ca roman aparţinând realismului magic, rolul istoriei sau al istoriilor coprezente a fost una dintre temele larg dezbătute. O alta a fost comparaţia dintre scriitură şi construcţie, deoarece metafora construirii textelor – fie ele „adevărate" sau „ficţionale/înşelătoare" este evidentă în roman. Acest articol sugerează o nouă paralelă dintre abordările moderne şi postmoderne ale istoriei şi, respectiv, ale arhitecturii aşa cum se ţes în şi printre rândurile romanului, precum fibrele unui sac de iută.

Cuvinte cheie: *Peter Carey, Illywhacker, grilă nouă, (foste) colonii, rescrierea istoriei, Le Corbusier, sac de iută.*

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Foucault's "New Grille"

Michel Foucault, when speaking of significant metamorphoses in the history of knowledge, gave the example of medicine at the end of the 18th century:

> [...] read twenty medical works, it doesn't matter which, of the years 1770 to 1780, then twenty others from the years 1820 to 1830, and I would say, quite at random, that in forty or fifty years everything had changed; what one talked about, the way one talked about it, not just the remedies, of course, not just the maladies and their classifications, but the outlook itself. Who was responsible for that? Who was the author of it? [...] It's a matter of a collective and complex transformation of medical understanding in its practice and its rules. And this transformation is far from a negative phenomenon: it is the suppression of a negativity, the effacement of an obstacle, the disappearance of prejudices, the abandonment of old myths, the retreat of irrational beliefs, and access finally freed to experience and to reason; *it represents the application of an entirely new grille, with its choices and exclusions* (italics mine); a new play with its own rules, decisions and limitations, with its own inner logic, its parameters and its blind alleys, all of which lead to the modification of the point of origin. (Foucault in Chomsky, Foucault, *Human* Nature, web.).

I contend that something similar, a new grille is applied in historical fiction writing of the former settler colonies (the US and Australia) in the last four decades of the 20th C and in the beginning of the 21st C, writers changed the course of their cultural 'digging', they turned towards personalities, works and artifacts whose roots, and even stalks, were there in their own, new worlds. A new game of distances was designed: it was not that the European heritage ceased to breathe, but that societies in the settler colonies wanted to spare the continuous practice of inhaling the substances of European foundations.

Linda Hutcheon, in her *Poetics of Postmodernism*, names a few American authors who actively "marked up" this game of highlighting the cultural proximity: Toni Morrison, E.L. Doctorow, John Barth, Ishmael Reed, Thomas Pynchon. I would add, in the context of my paper, that of the Australian author, Peter Carey, but should one consider the larger vista of new worlds (including Latin America), the list grows considerably.

"New Grille" in History Writing and Reading

The reasons? There should be (as in any grille) several but one reason has, of course, to do with how history is interpreted. Bill Ashcroft explains:

> We may demonstrate the operation of post-colonial discourse in various ways, but it is in the attitude to history, the 'interpolation' of historiography conducted by literary writers, that some of the most resonant transformations occur. No other discourse has such an investment in a particular kind of future. History, so

> powerful an instrument of Europe's construction of world reality, not only records 'the past' but outlines a trajectory which takes in the future. The teleology of historical method is obvious, but it is nowhere more determining and coercive than in the ideology of imperial history. (Ashcroft, 129)

For example, Peter Carey chooses to turn to Australia's most famous outlaw and empower the legendary 19th C bushranger, giving him the right to speech in *True History of the Kelly Gang (*2000). And thus providing a generative discourse:

> Setting out to write *True History*, I wanted to make something really beautiful, something that had never existed in the world before, with sentences that had grown out of our soil even though they had never been written or even thought before. And, of course, I wanted to look at the past, not to escape, but to illuminate our present. (Carey in Gaile, 4)

However, in 1985, when *Illywhacker* was published, history was not yet in the making under the author's craft, only appeals were launched for its writing.

Nonetheless, nobody can approach history's narrative construction without being confronted with the matter of truths and lies. And then, whose truths? And whose lies? To show that there is no escape from this repetitive, ubiquitous interrogation, Carey – a trickster author – chooses via his deceptive narrator to continuously gnaw at its roots: the novel starts with Herbert Badgery's avowal: "I am a terrible liar and I have always been a liar. I say that early to set things straight. *Caveat emptor*" (Carey, 3). ...and then it goes on showing how all characters, even the ones who want or apparently need to lead their lives in accordance to (high) moral principles, i.e. Leah Goldstein, her father, Sid Goldstein, the Kaletskys, etc. – sometimes even use these moral principles as a justification for lapsing into lying. Or at least this is the case if we are to believe the main liar: Herbert Badgery.

I shall not insist on the many implications this narrative and discursive technique has in the economy of the novel because many (if not all) scholarly articles written so far on *Illywhacker* dealt with it, to a larger or lesser extent, being inescapable in a novel whose very title puts the reader on that track. I shall return to the other dominant topic in the critics' approach: the need for history. And yes, the comparison between the writing/rewriting of history and building has already been made, but I will argue that Carey's plea is also conducted by the introduction of the name and its aura of the modernist architect, Le Corbusier. Or better said, the plea is made in opposition of what Le Corbusier stands for.

Building Styles

In order to make my point, I shall proceed to a reverse reading of the novel, since the first allusion to the Swiss-French architect only comes in

chapter 56 of the 3rd Book of the novel[2]. Hissao – one of Herbert Badgery's grandsons – is a student in architecture. His role in the novel grows gradually: as a child, he is his mother's and grandfather's favorite, his physical appearance is distinct, historically foretold:

> There is no doubt that some unlikely things have happened within the wombs of the women of the family but there is no question that they have been able to affect the shape of their offspring as easily as children idly fooling with some Plasticine. Why, if not because of this, is Hissao himself not only named Hissao, but also snub-nosed and almond-eyed? Why? Because the Japanese were bombing Darwin and Emma was not a stupid woman. (Carey, 406)

He turns into an outspoken, attractive young man, an agreeable presence in conversations and society. These recommend him to be his father's on-the-spot appointed PR agent when *The Time* express their intention to make a feature on the "Best Pet Shop in the World" (534), his father's shop. Hissao's arrival is rendered as follows:

> Hissao checked his reflection in the window. He had worn a conservative suit to make his father feel confident and relaxed, but the bow tie was a secret code addressed only to himself and to those few who might read it - he had stolen it, of course, from Corbusier." (Carey, 531)

Then, Le Corbusier shows up once more, again related to Hissao's looks, i.e. when he meets Leah Goldstein, after his father's death, the latter trying to persuade him into not taking over the management of the pet shop: "She knew nothing about Corbusier and thus missed the significance of the bow tie" (Carey, 551). Short-lived is the naming of the European architect in the novel, but as suggested when I previously used the term 'aura', his influence goes beyond Hissao's manner of dressing.

The real Le Corbusier, was, in the words of Sir David Chipperfield – award-winning British architect - "a megalomaniac", "his pretentions to shape cities – something that no one would ever consider now", he proposed to destroy half of Paris. Flora Samuel, professor of architecture at the University of Sheffield, underlines the way in which Le Corbusier saw his mission, as "the Messiah of architecture". This, because among others, "he thought about his art to be dominated by his idea of harmony. And harmony for him is bringing modern man, who became disconnected with nature, back in line with the rhythms of nature" (Flora Samuel). And for this intrinsic euphony to be achieved, there must be a clean slate, the past wiped clean. Likewise, Hissao wants something completely new, different and in tune with Australia and its people: "He was telling her that there was not yet an Australian architecture, only a colonial one with verandas tacked on"(Carey, 554).

[2] The novel is made up of 3 Books.

Although Le Corbusier's ideas were meant to improve collective housing, the buildings offering the atmosphere of a village, with strong ties among its inhabitants and towards nature shaped into a garden/terrace within, "by the 70s, those poems of beauty that were early modern architecture transformed into faceless social housing blocks or mundane corporate architecture in city centers." (Sid David Chipperfield in *Great Lives*).

Similarly, Hissao's work turns against his preliminary ideals, and becomes in tune with his later hatred, a grotesque museum of living people: " […] ladders and walkways, catwalks, cages in mid-air, in racks on walls, tumbling like waterfalls, in a gallery spanning empty spaces like a stainless Bridge of Sighs" (Carey, 566).

However, there is another type of building, another type of construction work, that of Herbert Badgery. Indeed he steals – not once – the plots of land, and then he steals the materials he uses. Badgery's 'compulsion' with building houses comes from the frustration of constantly lacking one, something already indicated in the 1st Book of the novel, and then turned into a leitmotif:

> I was also a dab hand at a slab hut, a skill that has now died out, but which made a very satisfactory house, one that'd last a hundred years. I made houses from the wooden crates they shipped the T Models in. I made houses from galvanized iron (from rainwater tanks on one occasion). I even spent one summer in the Mallee living in a hole in the ground. It was cool and comfortable in that hot climate (…)
> You could say I was obsessed with houses, but I was not abnormal. My only abnormality was that I did not have one. I had been forced to leave my houses behind me, evicted from them, disappointed in them, fleeing them because of various events. I left them to rot and rust and be shat on by cattle on the land of the so-called legal owners who were called squatters because they'd done exactly what I'd done. (Carey, 24)

Not once Badgery is disapproved by other characters, who point out to his taking someone else's property. Leah even explains that the entire territory was stolen, stolen from the Blacks. However, what can be appreciated in Badgery's attitude is certain humbleness: he does not have the 'grandiose' idea of wiping everything clean, he just wants to blend in, in his country, because nomadic as he is, for him Australia is his home. The attempt to build in whatever material he can find is, of course, dictated by his economic circumstances. But, it is at the same time an identity quest: individual at the beginning and then, the more the time passes, the more he also dives into history, and it becomes collective.

> "You see this brick," I said. "You see the thumb print. You know how that got there? Some poor bugger working at Brickfields a hundred-and-fifty years ago did that. He turned the brick out of the mould and, as he did it, he had to give the wet clay a little shove with his thumbs, see. This one, and this one. They've all got it. So there you are. All around you, in your walls, you've got the thumbprints of convicts. How do you reckon that affects you?"
> We, both of us, looked around. It was a big building. It was a lot of thumb prints to consider. (Carey, 512).

The Hessian Bag

My reading of Carey's comparison between history and building in *Illywhacker* is that of an invitation to stop cleaning (artificially) the slate, because it cannot ever get really clean. The damage perpetrated by the British settlers against the Blacks or against other migrants – of Chinese, Jewish-Russian, German origin etc. cannot ever be undone. It can only be incorporated as the rough fabric of Herbert's symbolically robust hessian bag, with its variety of uses. Herbert insists:

> It is my belief that there are few things in this world more useful than a hessian bag, and no matter what part of my story I wish to reflect on I find that a hessian bag, or the lack of one, assumes some importance. They soften the edge of a hard bench, can be split open to line a wall, can provide a blanket for a cold night, a safe container for a snake, a rabbit, or a duck. (Carey, 39).

At the same time, the very fabric is coarse, and unpleasant to the touch. Likewise with history: its very existence or non-existence is matter of great import. And then, should it exist, it cannot be in the style of Le Corbusier's white villas, which although beautiful, have to be restored every five years because they literally crumble, lacking in adequate foundations. No, the upper stratum has to blend in with the previous layers of construction materials, to be permeated by them, as if interwoven in the fabric of the hessian bag.

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MODEL MINORITY: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OR SUBJECTION?

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ABSTRACT. ***Model Minority: Acknowledgement or Subjection?*** The purpose of this research is to determine whether the label of model minority given to Japanese immigrants to North America represents an acknowledgement of assimilation or a pressure mechanism to keep them in check. I explore this problem in John Okada's *No-No Boy,* Joy Nozomi Kogawa's *Obasan* and *Itsuka*, and Hiromi Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms* and *The Kappa Child*.

Keywords: *model minority, Issei*[2]*, Nisei*[3]*, group identity, saving face, assimilation*

REZUMAT. ***Minoritatea model: recunoaştere sau mecanism de control?*** Scopul acestei cercetări este să determine dacă eticheta de minoritate model ataşată imigranţilor japonezi în America de Nord reprezintă o recunoaştere a asimilării sau un mecanism de control. de minoritate model. Cercetez această prolemă în John Okada *No-No Boy*, Joy Nozomi Kogawa *Obasan* şi *Itsuka* şi Hiromi Goto *Chorus of Mushrooms* şi *The Kappa Child*.

Cuvinte Cheie: *minoritate model, Issei, Nisei, identitate de grup, menţinerea aparenţelor, asimilare*

The first generation of Japanese immigrants to North America sought to achieve financial independence and to return to more economically stable circumstances in Japan. In this respect, their focus was centered not on

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[2] Literally, the First Generation from the contracted form of the Ideogram "ichi" meaning one/first and "sei" meaning "generation". It is used to denominate A Japanese immigrant to North America.

[3] Literally, the Second Generation from the Ideograms "ni" meaning two/second and "sei" meaning "generation". It is used to denominate an American or Canadian whose parents were immigrants from Japan.

acquiring the local language and integrating within the mainstream social framework, and more on diligently achieving economic independence. This however, has attracted a stigma of unassimilability. At the same time, their successful enterprises generated frictions with the white population who could no longer take the jobs for which the Japanese were willing to work longer hours for lower wages. Their effort to become a model minority was perceived as detrimental. The second generation of Japanese Canadians attempted to act as cultural mediators between their aging parents and the mainstream. By reconciling both aspects of their multicultural heritage they could close the gap of perceived difference. However, their apparent denial of traditional family roles and their racially-specific visual markers have made it so that the *Nisei* were placed in a double cone of marginality and consequently faced a double "disidentification effect" (Pecheux112). While they could not blindly follow the prerequisites of the "model minority", they could neither hope to be permitted the freedom of expression their white peers had.

However, the adherence to the principles of *On*[4], *Giri*[5], *Gaman*[6] and *Enryou*[7] have determined in the case of the Japanese the advancement of a specific type of group psychology rooted in non-imposition and acceptance. In light of the Internment and the Japanese population's uneventful cooperation with authority, these specificities were deemed markers of lack of assertiveness and group docility. These were compounded to the label of model minority which hegemonic discourse had previously associated with the Japanese immigrants as a result of their efforts to achieve positive appreciation and assimilation. The Japanese immigrants, desiring an absolution from the denomination of "yellow peril", emulated white society in an attempt to save face and to achieve assimilation. However the term "model minority" had acquired different meanings in the hegemonic and the Japanese discourse. Thus, for the

[4] Translates as the "debt of gratitude" and implies a social obligation to return a favor received from a member of either the *Uchi* or the *Soto* groups.

[5] Translates as the moral "Duty "or "Obligation" one inherently has towards elders, authority, spiritual deities, family, etc.

[6] The concept is derived from the practices of Zen Buddhism. It encompasses behaviors such as endurance, tolerance and self-denial, and refers to facing difficulties with patience and dignity. This term has been used extensively by modern critics to refer to the conduct of Japanese immigrants during the episodes of the Internment and other personal or large-scale tragedies

[7] It is translated as "hesitation" or "reserve". It is the hesitation of speaking in a manner or taking a course of action that would inconvenience the people around you. At the same time it is the "forethought" or "foresight" characteristic to one's social position in a complicated hierarchical system based on age, gender, social class, the *Uchi-Soto* dichotomy, etc., and the awareness of social consequences in case of a failure to act according to one's station. It is quintessential to the Japanese system of thought and offers a manner to avoid conflict by practicing self-restraint.

former it signified docility, latency and passive acceptance which contrasted with the assertiveness characteristic to the mainstream. For the latter it was the result of living one's life with dignity and practicing the principles of *Gaman* and *Enryou*. Cognizance of what their behavior was translated into by the white population meant that "model minority" had the dychotomic value of acknowledgement of integration, but also of *Haji*[8], the shame of knowing that the members of the *Soto*[9]group harbor such negative opinions on their specific cultural personality.

The writings of the Japanese diaspora can be used as an important instrument in delineating the relational conventions between the hegemonic culture and the minority cultural element. According to Enoch Padolsky, they have "useful insights to offer on such questions of culture and power" (25) and underline the existing power relations by transforming texts into "a similar reading of the conjunction between cultural identity and dominant power" (ibid).

The *Issei* preserved their ethnic and cultural institutions. Ethnic visibility was compensated for by instilling strict adherence to principles such as saving face and *Oya Koukou*[10].This has determined a reserved attitude and retractile social tendencies towards the *Soto*, in this case, the white segment of the population. In turn, the latter perceived this as lack of initiative (Furuta 212) and an asocial tendency. However, in the Japanese hierarchical system constructed according to strict rules of interaction between *Uchi*[11]*-Soto* groups, this represented an extension of *Gaman.* Its importance is defined by the consequences of failure to comply. According to Ken Adachi, it:

> meant cutting oneself from the emotional security of identification. (…) Disruptive behaviour was censured, discipline and obedience were mandatory so that self-control, resignation and gratitude were highly desirable. Issei felt that suffering and hard work were necessary ingredients of character-building. Thus the Japanese individual had certain personality traits: fear of power, insecurity, obedience, cliquishness and inability to make forceful, independent decisions. (225)

[8] Translates as shame. In a traditional Japanese community, consequences for individual actions were reflected on the community, and therefore attracting negative attention towards oneself was considered detrimental to the entire group.

[9] The term refers to everyone besides one's closest group. It is translated as "outside" and it comprises all those outside one's inner group.

[10] Filial piety and respect for the parents.

[11] The term refers to one's closest group. Translatable as "home" or "inside", it defines the group whose actions reflects most on the individual, and at the same time, the group whose face the individual is trying to uphold. It is usually comprised of relatives and very close friends, and in some cases, of members of one's institutional affiliation.

The Japanese compliance to the authorities was simply the result of a desire to avoid a confrontational situation which would justify their labeling as enemy aliens. To say that their response was habitual due to an inclination to: "follow lines of least resistance since their cultural norms emphasized duty and obligation as well as the values of conformity and obedience"(Adachi 225) and that "the status of immigrants *Issei* was similar to the roles and positions they had left in Meiji Japan, so that the status their superiors held in Japan was now transferred to the white officialdom and subsequent patterns of deference or humility were matters of course"(ibid.) is in my opinion reducing the principle of *Gaman* to an idiosyncrasy of herd instinct.

An attempt to impose a definition on the Japanese minority from the outside failed as a result of lack of unstereotyped cultural contact. The Japanese aspired to be represented in terms of the face they performed. Diligence and controlled reaction patterns are thus the result of an inclination towards integrating, rather than dissonating with the mainstream. Circumscribed by strict rules of conduct and a traditional hierarchic system which vouched for the individual and whose positive image the latter had to corroborate to translates into strict individual control and inherently, into the ontogenesis of a model minority.

Faced with the contrastive behavioral normatives postulated by both the Japanese and mainstream discourse, the *Nisei* and the *Sansei*[12] faced the challenging task of developing a group identity while rejecting their pre-inscribed "racial formation". According to Omi and Winant this is "the process by which social, economic and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories, and by which they are in turn shaped by racial meanings" (61). The authors also underline that this leads to contextual associations of behavioral patterns to the perceived group membership. The effort of the Japanese immigrants to assimilate is therefore condemned to face the same judgmental process it did when the *Issei* arrived in North America. The *Nisei* could do little to redefine their over inscribed discourse after Pearl Harbor. Before the attack Japanese immigrants were perceived as unassimilable and undesirable, hence the concatenation of legislation passed to limit their immigration and enterprises (See The Naturalization Act of 1906[13], The Informal Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907[14], The Immigration Act or

[12] Literally, the Third Generation from the Ideograms "san" meaning three/third and "sei" meaning "generation". It is used to denominate an American or Canadian whose grandparents were immigrants from Japan.

[13] The Naturalization Act signed on June 29th 1906 imposed knowledge of English as a requirement for becoming naturalized citizens. This made it difficult for populations of Asian descent to obtain citizenship, as they had little to no contact with the English language in their respective countries.

[14] The Informal Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 limited the number of passports issued to Japanese emigrants to North America.

the Asiatic Barred Zone Act of 1917[15], The Immigration Act of 1924[16], The Nationality Act of signed on October 14th 1940[17]). The attackact to confirm the negative racial expectations of anti-Japanese agitators and stereotype overwrote information obtained in light of actual racial contact. It also provided justification for the Internment of the "yellow peril".

The Internment was prefaced by means of regulations which imposed gradual limitation on Japanese property and mobility in the form of confiscation, curfews, limiting access to certain product types, etc. The next step consisted in relocating Japanese males to road and labor camps. This was soon after corroborated with the dispossession and internment of all Japanese aliens. Two years later, following a policy of dispersal, the Japanese are released from internment and relocated beyond the Eastern Coast and included as labor in agriculture and forestry. Throughout the entire period, the Japanese as a group demonstrate resilience and compliance. Their cooperation was the result of *Gaman*, and so was the manner in which the internees chose to present themselves to the public. For example in order to not worry their families back in Japan, they actively contributed to the mediatic campaign at the time which downplayed the living and work conditions they had to cope with. The positive attitude they presented in newspaper pictures was a method of saving face by accepting the *Shikataga Nai*[18].Practicing *Enryou*, restraint in

[15] The Immigration Act or the Asiatic Barred Zone Act of 1917 that prohibited immigration from Asia and imposed mandatory literacy tests upon arrival. It is one of many immigration laws signed in this period in order to control the racial composition of newcomers.

[16] The Immigration Act of May 26th 1924, also known as the Johnson–Reed Act, included the National Origins Act, and the Asian Exclusion Act (Full texts at http://www.legisworks.org/congress/68/publaw-139.pdf). The act was a continuation of the Immigration Restriction Act or Emergency Quota Act of 1921 which restricted the number of immigrants who would be admitted from any country to 3% of the number of people who were already living in the United States. The numbers were calculated based on the 1890 census. Although no microdata from this census survives to this day (records were destroyed by government order by 1935), it can be inferred that the number of Japanese in the United States at the time was small, considering that immigration had only started to trickle in the late 1870's. The 1924 Act reduced the 3% cap set to 2% in an attempt to preserve homogeneity within the American population. While it was aimed at restricting the number of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe as well as Jews, the Act made specific provision to bar the access of Japanese and Chinese immigrants by stating that an alien who would not be eligible for United States citizenship could not immigrate. Because they were non-white, Japanese were ineligible to be naturalized and were denied the right to immigrate.

[17] The Nationality Act of signed on October 14th 1940 made provisions for individuals born or residing in the United States and established which inhabitants were eligible for citizenship. The status of those born or naturalized in the US is revised. They could lose their citizenship in case of desertion in time of war or if they voted in a foreign election. Otherwise, it stated that a person could not be deprived of his/her citizenship without their consent.

[18] The expression is literarily translated as "It cannot be helped" and it signals a renunciation of the self to the whims of Fate which are perceived as beyond the control of the individual.

behavior, was a prerequisite to avoid troubling others with personal matters. However, their restraint was redefined by mainstream discourse as lack of initiative and race-specific docility. Despite witnessing this attitude, in direct contrast with the war-mongering stereotypical image of the Japanese soldier, the policies directed against the Japanese did not account for heterogeneity within the group. The Internment was therefore carried out without discrimination on all the Japanese immigrants. Consequential to the adherence to stereotyped "racial essentialism", it was concluded that the Japanese inherently had a predisposition to become a threat. I am borrowing the term from Michael Omi and Howard Winant to refer to the "human essences", which, unaffected by social and historical context, and perceived by the white majority as constitutive for the social construct of race. These are dispositional attributions to segments of the population which would later act to reinforce justifications of social inequalities. As a result of attributing a militaristic and deceptive attribute to the Japan which launched the attack on Pearl Harbor, this was extended to refer to the Japanese in North America as well. While this was accepted by the *Issei* by virtue of *Shikataga Nai*, the *Nisei*, who were better integrated in their generational segment, found it difficult to cope with the politics of prejudice directed towards them. The latter were, for the most part, children when the Internment took place only later understood that the loss of socio-economic status subsequent to being uprooted meant that they were "reduced to nothing in terms of the concept and values of Canadian [or American] citizenship" (Adachi 20). While the *Issei* could not integrate within the social framework of white North America because of different mentalities and the linguistic barrier, in the case of the *Nisei*, it was being incarcerated that has had detrimental effects to their ability to identify and relate to the dominant culture (Fugita and Fernandez 207). Nobu Miyoshi considers that they: "have been permanently altered in their attitudes, both positively and negatively, in regard to their identification with the values of their bicultural heritage; or they remain confused or even injured by the traumatic experience"(http://www.momomedia.com/CLPEF/sansei/identity.htm). In this respect, it is difficult to ascertain the degree to which the label of model minority - obtained through the effort of and the education instilled by the *Issei* - is indicative as an acknowledgement of assimilation or as an instrument for further limiting undesirable behavior. In the case of the *Issei*it guaranteed their citizenship but it also created a behavioral standard to which they had to conform. Hence, there was increased pressure on the *Nisei* to ply to this construct. Caught between their obligations towards their families and a desire to assimilate within their generational segment, the *Nisei* were forced to adorn a mask of conformity while being actively questioned and rejected by both groups.

Therefore, the attribute of "model minority" was not necessarily sought out by the *Nisei* as a result of intrinsic motivation. Witnessing the consequences

the Internment had on their parents who had themselves tried to integrate within pre-existing social structures with as little friction as possible led many *Nisei*to become distrustful of this construct. However, in order to ensure their assimilation, they had to abide by it. This also guaranteed authorities the suppression of any form of dissent. In the long term this has generated a sense of disempowerment which too, constitutes a reason for which the older Japanese ended up preferring to not tackle the subject of the Internment post-factum. Doing so would generate feelings of anger which were considered highly uncharacteristic for those accepting *Shikataga Nai*. Accepting difficulties and dealing with them while focusing on *Gaman* is an ideal of Japanese behavior, however, it becomes inapplicable in the given social circumstances. This is primarily due to the dominant cultures' tendency to apply behavioral labels without fully understanding the subject of their denomination and it most clear when the Japanese's cooperation with the authorities during the Internment was defined as docility. Cultural specificity, rather than ethnic weakness determined this conciliatory attitude and *Enryou*, as: "The Japanese personality, in short, was dependent as opposed to independent; group co-operative rather than self-reliant; conformist rather that innovative"(Adachi 226).

According to Linda Hutcheon, the apparent reality of any construct or "what any society calls universal 'truth' is really [...] socially, culturally, economically, and historically particular" (12). In light of Pearl Harbor, The Japanese, at home and abroad, had to be vilified to match the discourse dictated for them. When perceived as a threat, they were relegated the position of socio-cultural and behavioral inferiority. Later, when ensuring submission became the primary agenda, the Japanese were reinstated under the umbrella of model minority. Proclivity towards conformity and counteracting *Wagamama*[19], selfish tendencies, for the sake of the group meant that the Japanese accepted to continue performing their model roles. Thus, the image presented in the media, of the happy Japanese individual striving to serve his country in road camps, beet farms, etc., in spite of difficulties, has contributed to the development in the dominant imaginary of a socio-cultural construct of the Japanese as disempowered and obedient. Bound to this definition the Japanese could not but comply to the policy of dispersal lest they would also lose their "model minority" status.

While in *Turning Japanese: Memoirs of a Sansei* and *Where the Body Meets Memory: An Odyssey of Race, Sexuality and Identity,* David Mura openly decries the loss of status experienced by Japanese immigrant men, rendered powerless by the duty to conform to the construct. Other authors portray

[19] Translates as selfishness, egoism or willfulness, when putting one's needs and desires above saving face within and outside one's group.

characters living in the shadow of this status. Joy Nozomi Kogawa's *Obasan* and *Itsuka* portray characters bound to different degrees to this behavioral template. *Issei* Ayako Nakane, a silent marker of the passage of time, ossified in "stone" (1983 198) because of her inability to detach from the stereotype of the Japanese old woman. Her *Nisei* niece Naomi, already passed they prime of her youth is, unsurprisingly, a spinster, unable to find a suitable mate because of unwritten policies directed against racial mixing. Stephen, Naomi's brother, attempts to break ties with his community and shuns his Japanese ancestry as a marker of inferiority. Emily, Ayako Nakane's sister is defined as a "word warrior" attempting to achieve redress for the Japanese Canadians. However, her outspoken manner attracts the criticism of her community who consider her behavior improper for a Japanese woman, and thus, a lessening from the standard of model minority which they had to uphold.

In the beginning of Hiromi Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms* too, *Issei* Naoe chooses to be confined to her chair and refuses to speak anything other than Japanese. She does not wish to challenge the dominant culture's immutable belief that Japanese immigrants are inherently incapable of learning the language of the new country. When she does leave her home to live an adventurous lifestyle divergent from age-specific constructs she does so in a covert manner. She joins the Calgary Bull riding competition as what the announcers perceive to be a man wearing a "purple mask" (216-217). This indicates that although she is actively challenging the label of "model minority", she cannot ignore "the borders into which difference is accepted or 'tolerable'" (Sasano 40).

Keiko, her daughter, is so consumed with the desire to assimilate and to blend with the construct of model minority that she attempts to conform to an artificial construct of ideal white citizen. In order to do so, she adopts set behaviors which she considers representative for the dominant culture and imposes them to her daughter as well. Furthermore, she and her husband institute a complete rupture from their previous cultural construct, going so far as to undergo a process of cultural aphasia, forgetting the Japanese language and discarding all behaviors that would culturally link them with being Japanese. As a consequence of their excessive desire to assimilate within the white culture, Keiko and her husband, and by extension, all those who have adopted this specific behavior, lose their identity together with their cultural affinity. By focusing almost exclusively on achieving the ideal cultural construct of only one side of their identity, and thus indirectly conforming to assimilationist tendencies, they allowed themselves to be overinscribed by the stereotypes of silence and invisibility generated by hegemonic discourse. These have an inherently different meaning in Japanese culture and their subsequent repackaging as "model minority "was seen as derogatory. Although Ken Adachi notes that this behavioral pattern was perceived as an ideal by the middle-class Canadian

(356), the examples of characters above are illustrative for the Japanese lack of empathy towards the limitations imposed on them by the construct of model minority. They nonetheless found it difficult to relinquish as this symbolized their assimilation within the wider structures of the dominant culture. Thus, the status of model minority acts to confirm both their previous exclusion and their current, albeit strained inclusion in the dominant culture. This makes the construct at the same time normative and prescriptive, and inherently limitative, making the Japanese immigrants' ambivalence towards it all the more justifiable. It is not surprising thus, that when John Okada's *No-No Boy* first appeared it was not appreciated by the Japanese in North America, despite the poignancy of the drama it portrayed.

The clear lack of acknowledgement had more to do with the character types portrayed. While it is true that fiction: "provides insights into human action and character that we might not otherwise have" (Potolski 37), the Japanese were not ready to relinquish their label of "model minority" by admitting identification with the situation presented. Although the Japanese were familiar with the full scale of shame, anger and resentment as a result of government decisions and experienced similar crises of identity, the representation of the protagonist Ichiro and his family completely shatters the re-inscribed image on the Japanese ethnic group that the white majority had attached to them. Admitting to the reality of the models presented would indirectly translate into further loss of status. In white collective mentality, the father dominates the family nucleus, a provider and figure of authority rather than a powerless drunk. The mother is a source of wisdom and am example of stoic endurance, not a source of madness. Mrs. Ashida's mien falls in line with propaganda directed against the Japanese during the war. It claimed that Japanese women would instill a sense of fanaticism in their children regarding their ancestral homeland. Mrs. Ashida's actions give credence to this belief. Furthermore, her impulsive nature contradicts the restrained behavior expected of a *Ryousai Kenbou*[20]. Her sons are not the product of *Amae*[21], that is, they do not blindly submit to their mother's wishes in an effort to please. On the contrary, they condemn her inability to socially contextualize the advantages and disadvantages of her blind patriotism. Taro is aggressive and misguided. Ichiro fails the role traditionally passed on to the eldest son through his inability

[20] Translates as "good wife and wise mother" which was the ideal construct Japanese women had to strive to achieve after marriage.

[21] In "The Anatomy of dependence" Takeo Doi defines this as a "peculiarly Japanese behavior" (169) which partly explains "the psychological differences between Japan and Western countries" (310). The child/ young adult tends to act immature and simulate inability to cope with various everyday occurrences, "helplessness and the desire to be loved" (22) in order to gain the sympathy and support of the mother/ older female figure in the family. He defines *Amae* as behaving "self-indulgently, presuming on some special relationship that exists between the two" (29).

to assume the role of the future pillar of the family. Emi is promiscuous and too forward in her manners, unlike the *Yamato Nadeshiko*[22]. Freddie is an angry and hateful young man whose wasteful nature contradicts the frugality and preference towards social invisibility of the Japanese. Bull, a veteran is an aggressive bully who wants to beat Freddie unconscious. When he sees Freddie die in a car accident he breaks down and cries "like a baby in loud, gasping, beseeching howls" (260), shattering the idea that all Japanese place *Gaman* and *Enryou* at the forefront of their action. Unlike the image constructed by David Mura: "the Japanese-Americans were quiet, hard-working people who never made any trouble" (1991 325), the dysfunctionality of the protagonists and their incongruence with normative social constructs has led the Japanese to reject the model it presents: "The Japanese American community was protecting itself from being revealed in such an unflattering light....The Japanese Americans in No-No Boy are not the patient, law-abiding, hard-working, docile model minority"(Kim 1982 156). It resulted that *No-No Boy*, as a testament about the Internment of Japanese Americans, has been mostly ignored until the initiation of the Redress Movement.

There is a tendency among the Japanese to either adhere to the construct of model minority to the letter, or to rebel against it. The former follow prerequisites of a self-construed metonymy of behaviors which they associate with the whiteness. In its propriety and flawlessness, it becomes just as artificial as the stereotypes directed against the Japanese. In Hiromi Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms*" *Nisei* Keiko identifies with: a Nutra-sweet woman and doesn't take any cream. She's an Ivory girl with eyebrows plucked and penciled in darker" (68-69). By adopting specific visual and behavioral markers she attempts to assimilate within white society. Her symbolical aphasia leads not only to an estrangement from her Japanese heritage, but also to generational conflict. Naoe, her mother, considers her the "daughter who has forsaken identity. Forsaken! So biblical, but it suits her, my little convert" (13). In *The Kappa Child* the unnamed narrator is frustrated not so much by the origins of her mysterious pregnancy but by the possible layer of Otherness which would be corroborated to her preexisting cone of marginality. Her upbringing has led her to prefer anonymity, like most of her racial segment (Ima 275).

Although she already is a maladapted racial Other her revolt is subconsciously prompted by the inadequacy her pregnancy would entail. Her desire for anonymity is challenged by the circumstances of her pregnancy, the

[22] The expression combines the words *Yamato* which was one of the names given to Ancient Japan , and *Nadeshiko*, in Latin, Dianthus Superbus, a rare, pink carnation which symbolizes beauty and purity. It refers to the behavior a woman should adopt in any given circumstances, that is, in tone with her heritage, aware of the way in which her actions reflect on her *Uchi* group, but at the same time delicate and submissive.

result of immaculate conception resulting after sumo-wrestling with a *Kappa*[23]. Although it is classified as a hysteric pregnancy by her doctor and there are no visible markers to sustain the narrator's belief, she does not hesitate to express her displeasure. In spite of the behavioural prohibitions traditionally imposed by the *shikataganai* and the *Gaman* principles, her outburst is clearly filled with a deep sense of frustration:

> 'I don't ask for much in this world. I just mostly leave it alone, you know. Keep a safe space between me and my family, try to be a good person without manipulating other people's lives, go to work, practice sanitary masturbation, pay taxes. I don't have any pets. No major vices. Don't buy on credit. Saving money for a trip somewhere warm. What went wrong? Why can't I just have a normal life?'(Goto 2001 155)

She considers that by being a model citizen, controlling her behavior and keeping her aspirations within mediocre parameters she would not stand out. Thus, when the routine of her uneventful but comfortable life is broken she perceives it as unwarranted punishment. Her desire to save face is stronger than considerations regarding the peculiarity of her situation. This is a recurrent theme in Hiromi Goto's novels. Regardless of the type of social interactions they experienced at home, the Japanese tried to save face in public in order to conform to their re-presentation by the dominant communities.

In *Chorus of Mushrooms*, Keiko considers the idea of sending her mother to an asylum because of what she considers to be behavior falling short of the standards of ageist constructs. This goes against the principle of *Oya Koukou*, respect of one's elders and parents. Furthermore, she does not fear estrangement from her own daughter when she agrees to go so far as to dye her hair so she can perform in the school play. Her teacher considers that

[23] The kappa represents the most encountered mythical creature in Japanese mythology. Its multiple instantiations in literature are indicative for the ways in which its perception has changed throughout the centuries. It is represented as a cross between a child of the river, a kawako, a turtle, dansame, and a monkey, an enkō. A kappa is a creature which it gains its power by playing tricks on people. These tricks can be harmless, such as loudly passing wind, tripping travelers and frightening livestock, but they can also be violent. They are often represented as creatures who draw unsuspecting victims to the pond which they inhabit and drown them, in order to take their livers and the shirikodama. An imaginary organ, it has roughly the shape of a ball (tama) and is located in the individual's posterior (shiri). It represents the individual's spirit and its removal signals irrevocable death for the human, but at the same time, the shirikodama lengthens the lifespan of the kappa. The kappa is sometimes depicted as molesting young women and as having a distinct preference for the scatological and the anal erotic.Early depictions of it are made even in Nihon Shoki (720 AD), the second oldest anthology of Japanese literature discovered. During the Edo (1600-1867) and Meiji (1867-1912) periods in Japan, it is often represented as having a very peculiar behavior and even demonic tendencies. In modern representations the *Kappa*is for the most part a harmless creature, with a nomad lifestyle, playing tricks on humans in order to keep its magic alive.

Muriel/Murasaki cannot act her part because of her specific visual markers: "Alice is a story about an English girl, you know. An English girl with lovely blonde hair (…) You simply cannot have an Alice with black hair" (177). When Keiko accepts the idea without flinching, her daughter loses interest in the role. However, the teacher is delighted with her cooperation: "I wish my other mothers were more like you. Why I was just telling Mrs. Rogowski her daughter should lose at least ten pounds before the play, and she just up and left in a tiff. Pulling her daughter after her"(177). The latter situation is representative of individuals who identify coherently and decisively with the assertiveness of the dominant culture. Keiko, fearing rejection, cannot hope to achieve this degree of freedom, hence her eagerness to cooperate. It is in this submitted nature that her emulation of the mainstream fails and proves most artificial. It also indicates the behavioral gap instilled by specific socio-cultural circumstances which Keiko cannot erase.

In *The Kappa Child* the narrator's family is hierarchically-driven, excessively so even according to the standards of a traditional Japanese family. The mother is *Yasashii*[24] and incapable of protecting herself or her children against her aggressive husband. She is yet another embodiment of the stereotypical image on Japanese women. Jane Nakamura, their only neighbor, is defined as *Hinganai*[25], meaning impolite and socially inappropriate due to her liberty of language independence. This labeling is the result of both ethnic and dominant influences. The pressure for her to subject to the socially-accepted construct of the *Yasashii* Japanese woman is not the result of potential diminishment to the community status. As a single mother she does not have an *Uchi* group whose face she must save. However, her behavior is perceived as deviant from the "model minority" construct and thus, condemnable. By comparison, the narrator's family, although dysfunctional, attempts to follow the preset of values of the white majority. For example, the opening episode of the book shows the family preparing for Thanksgivings dinner, a simulacrum aimed at instilling the illusion of white middle-class propriety. As the event progresses the facade of normality crumbles under the relationship strain. The celebration does not carry any cultural significance for the Japanese. For the narrator's family, it translates as reverting to imbalanced and conflict-based relationship patterns.

This illustrates, to a certain degree, the tangential nature of the two cultural systems the Japanese have attempted to ply in the effort to uphold appearances. It also raises the question of why did the Japanese consider the adoption of these behaviors as relevant, considering they already were a "model

[24] Translates as gentle and unimposing, characteristics demanded of a woman raised in a traditional Japanese family.

[25] Translates as inelegant in manners and speech.This was considered highly inappropriate for a Japanese woman.

minority". I believe it to be the result of dissatisfaction with their current degree of assimilation and a desire to move from being tolerated in the community due to their submission and propriety, to being accepted as individuals with behaviors that vary from the mask of anonymity and conformity offered by the "model minority" construct. They want to beat the "the Albertan redneck at his own game" (Sasano 51)without hiding behind a mask, assimilate without undergoing cultural aphasia, be considered normal despite of a pregnancy of questionable origin, and show, their, outbursts of anger and frustration characteristic to human nature without fearing rejection. In this respect, for the protagonists of these novels "model minority" acts as an instrument to deter individualism and enforce submission under the penalty of social ostracism.

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FROM EXPERIENCE TO CONTEMPLATION IN MIRCEA ELIADE'S ESSAYS

MAGDA WÄCHTER[1]

ABSTRACT. ***From Experience to Contemplation in Mircea Eliade's Essays*.** The present study examines the rapport between experience and contemplation in Mircea Eliade's journalistic publications from the period prior to his exile. The relationship established by the writer between the two terms is not one of opposition, but of interdependence, just like action and creation are also not in antithetical relation to contemplation. The Romanian thinker cherishes both action and contemplation, considering them to be conducive to real, concrete and experimental knowledge, superior to other comprehension methods.

Keywords: *contemplation, experience, action, creation, knowledge, deed, philosophy, generation.*

REZUMAT. ***De la experienţă la contemplaţie în eseurile lui Mircea Eliade.*** Studiul de faţă analizează raportul dintre experienţă şi contemplaţie în publicistica lui Mircea Eliade anterioară perioadei exilului. Relaţia stabilită de scriitor între cei doi termeni nu este una de opoziţie, ci de interdependenţă, la fel cum nici acţiunea sau creaţia nu se află într-un raport antitetic cu contemplaţia. Gânditorul român preţuieşte deopotrivă acţiunea şi contemplaţia, considerată o cunoaştere reală, concretă şi experimentală, superioară altor modalităţi de înţelegere.

Cuvinte cheie: *contemplaţie, experienţă, acţiune, creaţie, cunoaştere, faptă, filosofie, generaţie.*

Nothing more foreign, at first sight, to the spirit of Mircea Eliade than the penchant for solitary contemplation or a romantic rejection of the world. As a scientist, he boldly engaged in the quest for a universal spiritual synthesis; as

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a philosopher, he strongly believed in the possibility of knowledge; as a novelist, he was concerned, equally ardently, with comprehension, this time under its "nocturnal" visage, and his essays betrayed the same feverishly passionate spirit, entranced with all the facets of reality. In his journals and memoirs, he confessed to his optimism, his keenness on accomplishing deeds, and his faith in the creative forces of humans.

As Emil Cioran reminisced, "It was only deeds that concerned him, "works," accomplishment in the noblest sense of the word. /.../ He was foreign to any kind of nihilism, be it metaphysical"; "he ignored the seduction of lassitude, of boredom, of the void and of remorse." In a nutshell, he harboured an "indefatigable optimism."[2]

Mircea Eliade's philosophy, copiously illustrated in his journalism and literary works, is an overall plea for fulfillment or, in his words, "salvation" through culture, for creation of any kind, endowed with superlative meanings. Creative hermeneutics was to become, in time, his method of choice.

More than once, the writer explicitly pronounced himself against contemplation, especially in the texts from his youth, where he extolled the 1927-1928 generation, whose mentor he was: he exalted their experience, the values of concreteness they espoused, "virility" in spirit and in deed, and creation in all its forms. He referred to Giovanni Papini, his first model, as "the man who wanted to become God," and he cherished the Italian for his philosophy of action, preferring it instead of its "contemplative, static, impersonal" counterpart.[3] In this brief characterization, Eliade betrayed his own aspirations, more or less overtly avowed. He was actually regarded by some of his contemporaries, during the period of his youth, as a sort of self-proclaimed magus, endowed with an annoying dose of individualism and egocentrism, in his burning and never abandoned desire to transcend the limits of the human. Şerban Cioculescu, an outspoken critic of the "new generation," denounced, for instance, the "impenitent romanticism and exasperating individualism of Mr. Mircea Eliade."[4] G. Călinescu called him "a shrewd and smug gentleman."[5] The "signs of the time" were, for the young Eliade, "Prometheism, Proteanism, enthusiasm," represented by spirits like those of Unamuno, Papini and Gide.[6] For the generation he led, what was at stake was to comply with the signs of a time that no longer belonged to the elderly, to "mummified" values, a time that

[2] E.M.Cioran, "În sfârşit, o existenţă împlinită," in *Caiete critice*, 1988, no. 1-2, pp. 66-67.
[3] Mircea Eliade, "Giovanni Papini," in *Foaia tinerimii*, 1925, no.8, 15 April, pp. 118-120.
[4] Şerban Cioculescu, "Între ortodoxie şi spiritualitate," 17 November 1928, in Mircea Eliade, *Profetism românesc I*, Bucharest, Roza vânturilor, 1990, p. 74.
[5] G. Călinescu, "Chemare la ordine," 1928, in Mircea Eliade, *Virilitate şi asceză. Scrieri de tinereţe, 1928*. Edited, notes and index by Mircea Handoca, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2008, p. 392.
[6] Mircea Eliade, "Fragmente," in *Cuvântul*, IV, 1928, no. 1186, 11 August, p.1.

was not the ally of an "abstract, positivist, evolutionist, atheistic" man,[7] but of the "new man," reborn from the lofty consciousness of his own value. What this "new man" represented is something the writer was to explain, at different levels and in various contexts, throughout his work.

The fact is that his vast, terrible aspiration was and would remain unlimited freedom, absolute spiritual autonomy, and the path he would embark on was the "practical, heroic, and not the contemplative"[8] one: "Freedom means, above all, autonomy, the certainty that you are firmly anchored in reality, in life, and not in the spectres or dogmas; that your experience no longer belongs to the individual within you, to the limits that hold you down, and can therefore become an unfettered instantiation of your entire life, constantly giving you newer shapes and never congealing in any one of them." The entire volume *Oceanografie* [Oceanography], originally published in 1934, is a plea for experience, for living intensely, for a vivid rapport with reality as a whole. So is the book *Solilocvii* [Soliloquies], 1932, or the cycle of texts entitled *Itinerariu spiritual* [Spiritual Itinerary]. "Let us seek experiences, enhance them, discipline them, so that not a drop will be lost" is what the young Eliade fervently urged his contemporaries in as early as 1928.[9]

The contemplation of perfect forms, of whatever nature they may be, is hardly to the liking of the journalist: "I am not interested in arrested perfection: but I am always interested in a series of failures, of babbles, of falls. In perfection, in certainty – the gesture of life is fulfilled: by the very fact that it is "perfect" and "certain," life has died, it is frozen: nothing new can be born out of that. And I prefer to assist and help with the humble and mediocre birth of a transient, imperfect form – rather than endlessly contemplate a magnificent shape, which is nonetheless dead, completed."[10] Thus, not perfections, not certainties, not solemn contemplations, but the simply gesture of living life as chance, as effective, active collaboration with existence, with creation. If so, then is philosophy still possible? What is the point in philosophizing anymore? Of course, the former student of Philosophy also asked himself this question: "Then why are you doing philosophy? I have often wondered whether philosophy is an attitude that must be overcome, whether we have another purpose besides that of harmonizing the things that we mess up in the first place, with our answerless questions and our pointless concerns."[11] The well-known placement of philosophy under the aegis of nothingness, of the useless is, however, far from representing Eliade's last word on this. What must be

[7] Id., "Reabilitarea spiritualităţii," 1935, in Mircea Eliade, *Profetism românesc, II,* ed. cit., p. 67.
[8] Id., "Despre o anumită experienţă," in *Oceanografie*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2013, p.55.
[9] Id., "*Anno Domini*," in *Profetism românesc*, I, ed. cit., p. 126.
[10] Id., "Despre tinereţe şi bătrâneţe," in *Oceanografie*, ed. cit., p. 129.
[11] Id., "De ce faci filosofie?," ibid., pp.167-168.

overcome is only systemic philosophy, the static, "contemplative" type of thinking associated, by the philosophical school Nae Ionescu promoted, with Western thinking and academic reasoning. And this is not meant to create a relativist or nihilistic impasse, but simply to take a step further. In his booklet entitled *Solilocvii* [Soliloquies] (1932), the future historian and philosopher of religions stated that he did not claim to be writing philosophy, for that would involve dishonesty, that he doubted the wisdom of those who write books and inaugurate philosophical currents, that the truth was "one of the most inept terms," and that people who always lived in truthfulness were "monsters or mummies."[12] Instead of the abuse of truths at the expense of life, Eliade proposed a personal integration of the multitude of truths specific to each individual, their harmonization as a "global insight into the world and into existence," in a word, their "cosmicization."[13] What the mentor of the new generation envisages at this point is the possibility of philosophy as mythology, as "fantastic activity," closer to ancient wisdom than its classical forms.[14]

The influence exerted by the lectures of Nae Ionescu, a character who was equally poignant and controversial at the time, is obvious. Philosophy or, rather, philosophizing, as he said, is an act of life, of living, of thinking in perpetual motion, while metaphysics is a sort of lyrical confession.[15] Direct contact with reality, with the concrete, with personal truth, discernible through intuition, in other words, "Trăirism," the Romanian version of existentialism,[16] was the new philosophical formula enthusiastically embraced by the representatives of the new generation. The great promise of this current of thought appears to have been the possibility of utter and complete knowledge. The "Completionism" envisaged by the "White Lily" Group also matched, in part, the aspirations of the Criterionists, who were fervently concerned with truth and authenticity. The former "myopic teenager," who had become the assistant and disciple of Nae Ionescu, believed, from very early on, in man's unlimited possibilities, hoping to be able to solve all mysteries so as to reach the secret fountain of knowledge. We know this from his memoirs. "Experientialism," as Petru Comarnescu referred to it, was but the translation of an inner need "to know as much and as quickly as possible."[17] This desire was never to leave Mircea Eliade, in fact, as he remained, to the end, through his entire spiritual makeup, "a man of experience,"[18]

[12] Id., *Solilocvii*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 1991, pp.11-18.
[13] Id., "Simple presupuneri," in *Oceanografie*, ed. cit., pp.170-174.
[14] Id., *Solilocvii*, ed. cit, pp.11-13.
[15] Nae Ionescu, *Curs de metafizică*. Edited by Marin Diaconu, Bucharest, Humanitas, 1991.
[16] Dumitru Micu, *Gândirea și gândirismul*, Bucharest, Minerva, 1975, p. 51.
[17] Mircea Eliade, *Memorii. Recoltele solstițiului, II (1937-1960).* Edited by Mircea Handoca, Bucharest, Humanitas, 1991, p. 234.
[18] Eugen Simion, *Mircea Eliade. Nodurile și semnele prozei*, Iași, Junimea, 2006, p. 417.

to use Eugen Simion's words. In the works he wrote at maturity, the author of *Solilocvii* [Soliloquies] was not unrecognizable. The concept of "experience" had remained central, not in a narrow sense, but through a plurality of branching meanings.

Even after the publication of *Itinerariu spiritual* [Spiritual Itinerary], his master, Nae Ionescu, reproached him for a certain ambiguity: "For you," he said, "existence means, first of all, a series of spiritual adventures; I believe you're wrong, but that does not matter. What is important is only what you will do, what you will create, before and after you realize that you are wrong..."[19] It would seem that the apologist of "virility" did not understand well the concept of "experience" or that of "adventure," as the Master conceived them, nor could he comprehend them in the absence of Ideas. Even the protagonists of his novels were the object of rebukes, for their theoretical excess, schematism, or deficient living. Albeit ardent advocates of deeds and action, they exhausted themselves in endless discussions on the theme of life, often acting anaemically, on the periphery of great ideas. G. Călinescu, for instance, identified, in Eliade the novelist, "a real, congenital contemplativeness," the absence of a propensity towards understanding the universe empirically, the abstract spirit, capable only of creating a world of ideas, of no aesthetic interest.[20] Assuming the position of an engaged writer, Miron Radu Paraschivescu noted the utter lack of concrete social life in Eliade's books and even his "deep contempt" for the human person. "Mr. Mircea Eliade is a spirit whose sole concern is with matters of the Spirit. But of an "absolute spirit" that floats – as Plato and Hegel taught us – somewhere above all these petty and uninteresting social problems."[21]

Was, then, Eliade a contemplative disguised as a glib adventurer? Was the eulogy of experience just a compensatory mechanism, a necessary counterpart of his intellectual concerns, as intense and varied as they were? Mariana Şora, for instance, believes that "in the case of Mircea Eliade, the value associated with direct experience also served as compensation in relation to the asceticism of erudition and the reaction manner of an intellectualized [individual]."[22] The writer himself openly avowed, repeatedly, his structural ambivalence, the double seduction, of adventure, on one hand, and of the

[19] Mircea Eliade, *Memorii (1907-1960).* Edited and foreword by Mircea Handoca, Bucharest, Humanitas, 1991, p.146.

[20] G. Călinescu, "Solilocvii," in *Adevărul literar şi artistic*, 5 June 1932, reproduced in *Dosarul Mircea Eliade, II (1928-1944). Cu cărţile pe masă*. Foreword, edited by Mircea Handoca, Bucharest, Curtea Veche, 1999, p. 193.

[21] Miron Radu Paraschivescu, "Mircea Eliade– Huliganii," in *Era nouă*, 1936, no. 1, February, pp. 138-142, reproduced in *Dosarul Mircea Eliade*, I (1926-1938). Foreword, edited by Mircea Handoca, Bucharest, Curtea Veche, 1998, p. 112.

[22] Mariana Şora, "Mircea Eliade eseist sau perenitatea clipei," in *Dosarul Mircea Eliade, VIII (1967-1970). Reabilitare provizorie*. Foreword, edited by Mircea Handoca, Bucharest, Curtea Veche, 2003, p. 209.

absolute, on the other. Already in one of his first books, entitled *Şantier* [Building Site], he carefully observed his inclinations, under the same magnifying glass with which he studied the natural sciences, chemistry, Orientalistics, the occult sciences, alchemy, hermeticism, mysticism and philosophy, out of a desire to know, as soon as possible, "everything." "Within me," he said, "ever since I have been around, a battle has been waged between two great and seductive nostalgias: I wish I were another, with each and every hour, I wish I bathed in different waters each and every day, never respecting anything, never remembering anything, never carrying on with anything. But I also wish, at the same time, I could find a fixed point whence no experience and no reasoning could make me budge; a static vision, a direct – without the mediation of experience – and universal contemplation (oh, especially universal!) – an absolute."[23] A Heraclitean with Parmenidean nostalgias or an Eleatic tempted by the teachings of the School of Ephesus. It is from this duality that Eliade later extracted the essence of his entire philosophical and novelistic vision.

At this time, however, it was already clear that when eulogizing doing, living, concreteness, Mircea Eliade, the "shrewd and smug" gentleman, was contemplating other horizons than those of humble immediacy. The generation he led exalted the primacy of spiritual values, of action placed in the service of cultural creation, of deeds subjected to the highest intellectual exigencies. The so-called battle of the generations, as the writer explained, was not a battle between the old and young, as one might think, but a "war between two worlds: on the one hand, the old world, which believed in the womb (the primacy of economics and politics) and, on the other hand, the new world, which dared to believe in the Spirit (the primacy of spirituality)". "The youth movement of 1927 was born with the conscience of this historic mission: to change the soul of Romania, subordinating all values to a single supreme value: the Spirit. A subordination that means, especially during the heroic stage – sacrifice, self-denial, asceticism."[24] It was an action, therefore, oriented toward spirituality, in this case, Christian Orthodox spirituality, at the expense of politics, which had dominated the national scene for entire decades. The new generation was summoned to make history through supra-historical values, to act from the vantage point of aspirations towards the universal and the eternal and not under the sway of the moment. "All our actions on this earth would become petty and vain if it were not for the intuition of eternity to give them a different value and a different strength," Eliade contended.[25]

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[23] Mircea Eliade, *Şantier*. *Roman indirect*. Foreword, edited by Mircea Handoca, Bucharest, Rum-Irina, 1991, p. 142.

[24] Id., "Revoluţie creştină," in *Buna Vestire*, I, 1937, no.100, 27 June, p. 3, reproduced in *Textele „legionare" şi despre românism*. Foreword by Mircea Handoca, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia 2001, p. 50.

[25] Id., "România în eternitate," 13 October 1935, in *Profetism românesc, II,* ed. cit., p. 127.

Life exists for the Spirit to materialize; action of any kind is a quest for the absolute, virility itself is tantamount to consciousness or pure spirit. Existence, the thinker wrote in an article in 1928, could have two meanings, two support points, two sources: the absolute, which rules the lives of saints, of sages, and adventure, characteristic of all others.[26] The former live in truth, anchored in the still point where time fades and space becomes internalized. Most mortals find the meaning of life in adventure, in the real world, that is, in the so-called real. But the nostalgia for adventure always impels one to go beyond, to join the absolute, to make a qualitative leap, in Kierkegaard's terms, toward the values of transcendence. In other words, bathing in different waters every day is also a form of looking for the fixed point, a "direct contemplation," a "universal" pathway towards the absolute. A similar confession can be read in *Jurnalul portughez* [Portuguese Journal]: "I do not want to give up finitude, the resplendent, thrilling fragment. The only thing that can satisfy me is the conquest of finitude /.../. But for me, the fragment may coincide with Everything; remaining in the finite, man can still encompass infinity."[27] In fact, the attempt to relinquish the values of finitude, the "resplendent, thrilling fragment," proves to be doomed to failure on his departure to India. Forced to leave the ashram where he sought to penetrate the secrets of Indian contemplation with a view to enlightenment, he finally decided to pursue his cultural vocation, abandoning the "temptation" of asceticism. He did not manage to become "holy," he felt closer to magic than to mysticism, he was aware of his "Faustian" nostalgias. And this utter incapacity demanded to be offset "by a paradoxical, inhuman experience," oriented towards the same unique purpose of deciphering the "mystery of totality."[28] The term "experience" should thus lend itself to an unlimited extension, so as to encompass what it is ordinarily denied. Experiences include readings, theories, insights, self-disciplining efforts, cultural deeds, ideas, all those "spiritual adventures" whose sole purpose remains the absolute. Their aim "is to fertilize consciousness and make it supple – and not to consume it, to pervert it, to mummify it"; carefully disciplined, they give rise to attitudes, and attitudes to spiritual positions, eventually realizing "organic harmony, the balance of inner forces."[29] Experiences must be subordinated to the spirit; the reality that needs to be understood is not only of an empirical nature; actions, deeds have value only to the extent that they are placed in the service of an ideal. Far from being abstract, intellectuals, Mircea Eliade wrote in an article in 1934,[30] are "the only categories of people who experience life directly, who are

[26] Id., "Aventura," in *Cuvântul*, IV, 1928, no.1271, 4 November, pp.1-2.
[27] Id., *Jurnalul portughez și alte scrieri, I.* Foreword, edited by Sorin Alexandrescu. Introductory studies, notes and translations by Sorin Alexandrescu, Florin Țurcanu, Mihai Zamfir, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2007, pp. 285-286.
[28] Id., *Memorii, I,* ed. cit, pp. 278-279.
[29] Id., "Experienţele," 1927, in *Profetism românesc, I,* ed. cit., pp. 35-39.
[30] Id., "Poimâine," 15 October 1934, in *Profetism românesc, II,* ed. cit., pp. 25-27.

free from the million superstitions of the 'practical man,' and experience 'action' with an *immediatezza* that is unknown to those who imagine they are 'practical' because they practise the mistakes of their predecessors." They are the only "creators of actions," as opposed to the "practical people," mere "repeaters of actions, calligraphers or robots." Only a genuine intellectual "sees beyond the everyday, understands the game of subterranean forces that are preparing the history of 'the day after tomorrow' and knows how to intervene in it." In the journal, the writer confessed to his intention to write, someday, a Eulogy of idealists,[31] while in *Jurnalul portughez* [Portuguese Journal], he expressed his belief that "the earthly paradise or Atlantis will be the exclusive work of the spirit.[32] Eliade was among these idealists from an early time, as he dreamed of restoring metaphysics, of religion and even an Art that would simultaneously be a Metaphysics and a Cosmology. The "new" writer of tomorrow should be, just like the artist of the Middle Ages, a connoisseur of the seven Arts, an initiate in Theology, Music and Grammar, and a guardian of the techniques and secrets of entire human knowledge.[33] The followers of the spirit, philosophers, the dwellers of the "ivory tower" were, in fact, also the makers of historical revolutions, which were first born out of ideas.[34]

The one whose voice is heard here is the same Mircea Eliade who complained, in another text, about the "avalanche of spirituality, authenticity and inner life that has befallen our country," urging a change, but "for God's sake, in a different direction than that of spirituality."[35] The same apologist of the new man condemned "contemplative, static, impersonal" philosophy, but believed, already in the volume *Solilocvii* [Soliloquies], that understanding must be contemplative, static.[36] He advocated knowledge that was "practical, heroic, and not contemplative," but profoundly despises the practical man of action, reduced to a sterile mimicry. He abhorred "arrested perfection," but was irresistibly drawn to the prospect of a static vision, that is, a direct, universal contemplation of the absolute. Not least, he considered that philosophy was an attitude that had to be overcome and that truth was an "inept" term. At the same time, he dreamed of a Platonic Republic led by philosophers and artists and even a terrestrial paradise, as a work of the spirit. Apparently Nae Ionescu was right to believe that existence meant a series of spiritual adventures for Eliade. The "real, congenital contemplativeness" that G. Călinescu detected in him was also not far from reality. Eliade sought adventure, experience, concreteness, but only as possible paths towards the absolute. He enjoyed doing that, indeed, but also because he had been

[31] Id., *Jurnal, I, 1941-1969.* Edited by Mircea Handoca, Bucharest, Humanitas, 1993, p.471.
[32] Id., *Jurnalul portughez, I,* ed. cit., p. 378.
[33] Id., "Scriitorul de mâine," April-May 1937, in *Profetism românesc, II,* ed. cit., p.198.
[34] Id., "Glose pentru omul nou," in *Oceanografie,* ed. cit., p.159.
[35] Id., *Moment nespiritual*, ibid., p.178.
[36] Id., *Solilocvii*, ed. cit, p.70.

aware, ever since his stay in India and even earlier, that one cannot free oneself from existence if one does not know life concretely, through experience.

It was also the Indian experience, as well as the study of archaic ontology that led him to conclude that action is not necessarily opposed to contemplation, just like no creation, as a cultural or artistic action, is in an antinomian relation to it. Already in an article from 1935, where he praised culture as the only way for Romania to assert itself before today's world and tomorrow's history, he suggested a new meaning for the concept of contemplation, as a superior way of creation, specific to the elites. The role of the state, Eliade said, is to help every citizen to create. This does not necessarily have to be the creation of works, but of deeds, the "harmonization of humans with the world and with their souls." "Not every individual is bound to create culture; all are bound, however, to create an inner balance through action. Contemplation is the working tool of the elites; through contemplation, they encompass the world, pour it into their souls, and enrich it through their creation. /.../. For the other people, however, contemplation cannot serve as a working tool, for they would turn contemplation into inaction, reverie, laziness – in a word, arrestment. For the others, action remains their instrument of creation, of reconciliation with themselves."[37] Contemplation is, therefore, an instrument of action, a deed, in the highest sense of the word, and one of the ways of creation. The dichotomy between action and contemplation or between creation and contemplation is merely a point of view specific to common sense, associated with a practical man, and not a reality in itself.

The writer was even more explicit in one of his radio lectures devoted to contemplation itself.[38] Here, he considered it the perfect manner of accessing the "real, concrete, experimental knowledge" of ultimate realities. Experience itself would make sense only to the extent that it might be converted into contemplation, leading to "a concrete understanding of the meaning of life." All the other means of knowledge reveal a fragmented, limited reality, while through contemplation, we "reach our total, indivisible, concrete being." This formula corresponds fully to the writer's structural duality, his inclinations towards the empirical and the absolute alike. Throughout his work, he never ceased to praise the valences of contemplation while preaching action, or to exalt action by virtue of its contemplative latencies. The possibility of a "unifying synthesis" represented, in fact, the stakes of his entire creation.

Translated into English by Carmen-Veronica Borbely

[37] Id., "Cultură sau politică?," 21 February 1935, in *Profetism românesc. România în eternitate, II,* ed. cit., p. 64.

[38] Id., "Contemplaţia," 27 July 1935, in *50 de conferinţe radiofonice, 1932-1938*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2001, pp.137-141.

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COMMONWEALTHS UTOPIQUES ANGLAIS AU XVII[E] SIECLE

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ABSTRACT. ***English Utopian Commonwealths in the 17th Century.*** In 17th-century England, the Parliamentary Revolution and the subsequent political, economic and social changes gave birth to a series of social projects and utopian texts. Contrary to the skepticism with which Thomas More treated his own utopia, these propositions of better commonwealths were seen as feasible and pragmatical. As such, they were not intended as ou-topias, that is, chimerical and delusional social dreams, but as eu-topias, actual "good places" to be realized by utopian communities and radical sects, either in Europe or in the Americas (treated by Jean Meyer as a "true museum of sects"). Although most of them did not reach historical achievement, these utopias remain entrenched within realistic conventions of reading, as they deploy the certification devices of political discourses, law codes, and voyage literature.

Keywords*: English literature; Utopia; 17th century Commonwealths; Gabriel Plattes; Macaria; James Harrington; Oceana; Noland.*

REZUMAT. ***Comunităţi utopice englezeşti în secolul al XVII-lea.*** În secolul al XVII-lea, Revoluţa parlamentară din Anglia, cu toate consecinţele ei politice, economice şi sociale, a dat naştere unei serii de proiecte sociale şi de texte utopice. În contrast faţă de scepticismul cu care Thomas Morus îşi tratase propria sa utopie, aceste proiecte de comunităţi meliorative erau considerate a fi posibile şi fezabile. De aceea, ele nu erau văzute ca nişte ou-topii, adică nişte vise sociale delirante şi himerice, ci ca nişte eu-topii, "locuri bune" uşor de pus în practică de către comunităţi utopice şi secte protestante radicale, fie în Europa, fie în Americi (pe care Jean Meyer o consideră un adevărat "muzeu al sectelor"). Deşi multe dintre ele nu au ajuns la o împlinire istorică, aceste utopii au rămas în cadrul unei convenţii realiste de lectură, care foloseşte mecanismele de certificare al discursului politic, ale codului de legi şi ale relatării de călătorie.

Cuvinte cheie: Literatura engleză; Utopie; "*Commonwealths*"; Gabriel Plattes; *Macaria*; James Harrington; *Oceana*; *Noland*.

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En Angleterre, la révolution parlementaire et les évolutions politiques, économiques et sociales du XVII^e siècle ont fait naître beaucoup de projets sociaux et de rêves mélioratifs, que d'aucuns voyaient comme applicables dans l'immédiat. À côté des « *projecteurs* », inventeurs et chercheurs partis sur la grande voie de la « *restauratio magna* » baconienne, dont Swift se moquera un siècle plus tard dans les voyages de Gulliver en Laputa et Lagado, foisonnent les réformateurs et les révolutionnaires, les agitateurs et les satiristes, les émeutiers et les prophètes. La guerre civile est un creuset où s'affrontent les mouvements parfois browniens des royalistes et des républicains, des anglicans et des puritains, des aristocrates et des bourgeois, des *Levellers*, *Diggers*, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, etc. Ces tendances ont donné naissance à un corpus de textes utopiques significatif, celui des *commonwealths* ou sociétés meilleures.

J. C. Davis observe que « La tradition de la communauté [*commonwealth*] morale parfaite accepte la situation sociale et les institutions politiques existantes[2] », qu'elle se propose d'améliorer par des réformes immédiates. La distance entre réalité sociale et vision réformatrice est parfois si étroite que les textes n'ont plus besoin de la convention utopique pour faire passer leurs plans. Les auteurs pensent ingénument que les nouvelles sociétés peuvent être aisément mises en place, aussi le soupir sceptique de Thomas More (« Je le souhaite, plutôt que je ne l'espère ») fait-il place à un optimisme militant et enthousiaste. Quelques uns des réformateurs, de Gerard Winstanley (1652) à James Harrington (1656), dédicacent leurs textes à Cromwell et au Parlement, avec l'espoir d'être entendus et suivis. Cette « probabilité historique » accrue fait que les projets utopiques quittent parfois le régime du possible chimérique, donc le genre de l'utopie, et rentrent dans la catégorie des codes de lois et traités économiques, projets législatifs, commentaires et pamphlets politiques, etc.

Une petite tradition s'est constituée dans ce sens à partir du texte de Thomas Floyd, *The picture of a perfit Commonwealth* (1600), et a trouvé son essor lors de la révolution parlementaire, avec Gabriel Plattes, *A Description of the Famous Kingdom of Macaria* (1641), l'anonyme *The King of Utopia: His Letter to the Citizens of Cosmopolis, the Metropolitan City of Utopia* (1647), Samuel Gott, *Nova Solyma* (1648), James Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana* (1656), l'anonyme *Chaos: or, A Discourse, Wherein Is presented to the view of the Magistrate, and all others who shall peruse the some, a Frame of Government by way of a Republique* (1659), Richard Baxter, *A Holy Commonwealth, or Political Aphorisms, Opening the true Principles of Government* (1659), John Eliot, *The Christian Commonwealth* (1659), une suite anonyme de *New Atlantis* (1660), John Sadler, *Olbia, the New Island, lately discovered* (1660), et continuant après la restauration

[2] J. C. Davis, *Utopia and the Ideal Society. A Study of English Utopian Writing* 1516-1700, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 31.

avec Joseph Glanvill, *Anti-fanatical Religion and True Philosophy. In a continuation of The New Atlantis* (dans le volume *Essays on Several Important Subjects in Philosophy and Religion*, 1676), Joshua Barnes, *Gerania* (1686) et plusieurs anonymes (et pour cause !) : *Antiquity Reviv'd, or, the Government of a certain Island antiently call'd Astreadea* (1693), *The Free State of Noland* (1696) et *Ophir* (1699).

Juste au début de la révolution, en 1641, une proposition de réforme a été adressée au Parlement sous la forme d'une utopie : *A Description of the Famous Kingdome of Macaria, Shewing its excellent government : Wherein the Inhabitants live in great prosperity, health, and happinesse ; the King obeyed, the Nobles honoured ; and all good men respected, vice punished, and vertue rewarded. An Example to other Nations.* Pendant longtemps, les commentateurs l'ont attribué à Samuel Hartlib qui, à l'époque, chérissait le plan de bâtir une colonie Antilia au Nouveau Monde, probablement en Virginie ; dernièrement, on a établi que l'auteur est Gabriel Plattes, un autre des membres du groupe de ces « *commonwealth men* ».

Conçue toujours sur la structure d'un dialogue, entre un Traveller et un Schollar, *Macaria* s'éloigne du texte de More par sa prétention de véracité et même de praticabilité. Le Schollar adresse à son interlocuteur (et en fait à tous les narrateurs ou rapporteurs d'utopies) la harangue suivante : « *you Travellers must have heed of two things principally in your relations ; first, that you say nothing that is generally deemed impossible. Secondly, that your relation hath no contradiction in it, or else all men will think that you make use of the Travellers priviledge, to wit, to lie by authoriy*[3]. » En accord avec le nouveau pacte de lecture imposé par la philosophie empiriste[4], Plattes sort la narration du régime d'ambiguïté, de scepticisme ou d'impossibilité imposé par More et l'inscrit dans le registre du possible souhaitable, voire du probable historique.

En tant qu'utopie, *Macaria* est une construction plutôt modeste, sans propositions législatives et plans détaillés de réformes organisatrices et administratives (par comparaison avec *Oceana*). L'auteur est convaincu que l'amélioration doit viser principalement le niveau éthique et, au lieu d'imaginer des mesures économiques et politiques, se contente de « sermons » : les juges doivent être corrects, les magistrats éviter la corruption, les gens se comporter moralement, etc. En revanche, il utilise plusieurs stratégies d'argumentation de nature théologique, logique et rhétorique, qui devraient convaincre le public de la supériorité et de la nécessité du modèle. Le Schollar s'empresse de montrer que ceux qui voudraient critiquer son « *honorable design* » seront ennemis de Dieu et de la bonté, de l'État et du *commonwealth*, d'eux mêmes et de leur progéniture ; et au Traveller d'ajouter : ennemis du roi et traîtres à la patrie[5].

[3] [Gabriel Plattes], *A Description of the Famous Kingdome of Macaria*, p. 2-3.

[4] Voir Corin Braga, *Les antiutopies classiques*, Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2012, chap. « Le pacte de vraisemblance ».

[5] [Gabriel Plattes], *A Description of the Famous Kingdome of Macaria*, p. 10.

Le texte le plus représentatif du corpus en est sans doute *The Commonwealth of Oceana* de James Harrington. Il s'agit une proposition concrète de reforme, si directe que la première édition a été bloquée sous presse par ordre d'Oliver Cromwell et n'a pas pu paraître qu'un peu plus tard, après l'intervention de la fille du lord Protecteur. Conçue comme un discours parlementaire, avec des schémas administratif et des esquisses de budget, *Oceana* ne diffère que très peu, en tant que genre littéraire, des discours ou des pamphlets politiques. Le facteur stylistique qui lui permet néanmoins de sortir du genre des traités et textes théoriques et rejoindre le genre utopique est l'utilisation d'un code de lecture allégorique, qui change les noms des pays et des personnes réels avec des noms « à clé ». Ainsi Océana est l'Angleterre, Emporium – Londres, Halcionia – la Tamise, Marpesia – l'Écosse, Panopæa – l'Irlande, les Teutons – les Saxons, les Scandians – les Danois, les Neustrians – les Normands, Turbo – William le Conquéreur, Coraunus – le roi Henri VIII, Parthenia – la reine Elisabeth, Morpheus – le roi James I, Olphaus Megaletor – Oliver Cromwell, Verulamius – Francis Bacon, et lord Archon (jouant en quelque sorte le rôle d'Utopus) – peut-être Harrington lui-même.

Doubler allégoriquement la « réalité historique » (c'est-à-dire le *mundus*) du monde (nominalement alternatif) d'Océana est un dispositif rhétorique qui permet au texte de Harrington de recouper la structure double de toute utopie imposée par Thomas More : une société critiquable sous-jacente (l'Angleterre) dans l'ici et le maintenant et une société meilleure proposée (l'Océana) dans un futur envisageable. La distance qui, dans le schéma utopique, sépare le pôle positif du pôle négatif ne s'étale ni sur la dimension spatiale, impliquant un ailleurs exotique (comme chez Morus ou Bacon), ni même sur la dimension temporelle, qui envisagerait un futur lointain, mais sur une dimension plutôt affective, du désir lucide, puisque la « réalisation » du projet, qui dépend directement des facteurs politiques (le Lord Protecteur et le Parlement), pourrait à la limite se produire dans l'immédiat et l'imminent. Ce manque de distance entre le *mundus* et le projet est spécifique des textes théoriques référentiels, tels les propositions législatives, les discours parlementaires, les pamphlets politiques, etc. C'est en introduisant le dédoublement toponymique, qui créé une image allégorique parallèle de l'Angleterre (si mince soit-elle), que Harrington transforme *Océana* en une utopie.

La république parlementaire envisagée par Harrington est le résultat d'une analyse comparative des systèmes de gouvernement dans l'histoire et de la sélection des meilleures composantes de chacun. Ces principes seront par la suite extrapolés et mis en pratique dans le *commonwealth* idéal imaginé par l'utopiste. Le panorama historique se veut compréhensif, il part du « *commonwealth* » d'Israël, mis en place par la volonté de Dieu, continue avec les gouvernements païens d'Athènes, Lacédémone, Carthage, Rome, pour finir

avec Venise et la Suisse[6]. L'histoire de l'Angleterre est passée en revue aussi, à travers la domination successive des Romains, Saxons, Danois, Normands et des dynasties d'avant Cromwell, sous les noms transparents de Teutons, Scandians, Neustrians, etc.

Empruntant les catégories utilisées par les « anciens » (Aristote, Cicéro, etc.) et par les contemporains (Machiavel, Hobbes, etc.), Harrington définit trois modes possibles de gouvernement, en fonction du détenteur du pouvoir : monarchie, aristocratie et démocratie (« *the government of One Man, or of the Better Sort, or of the whole People* »). Il identifie aussi les formes corrompues qui correspondent à chacun des trois : la tyrannie, l'oligarchie et l'anarchie. Bien que l'énumération soit tenue par certains auteurs comme logiquement complète, Harrington cite aussi la possibilité d'une « *mixture of them all, which is only good*[7] ». Océana est en fait un tel « *mixtum compositum* », une république parlementaire qui favorise la méritocratie.

La constitution idéale prévue pour la république d'Océana part de l'idée que la richesse et le pouvoir dépendent l'un de l'autre. Pour résoudre l'inégalité, Gerrard Winstanley avait proposé dans son pamphlet politique de 1652, *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*, un communisme de type chrétien primitif, où la propriété, l'argent et les salaires sont abolis. Harrington, qui n'apprécie pas le « nivellement » radical envisagé par les « True Levellers » ou « Diggers », propose une réforme agraire qui n'exproprie pas les nobles, mais limite les possessions aux domaines qui ne dépassent pas un revenu de 2000 livres annuels, de manière qu'aucun homme n'arrive à accumuler une richesse illimitée.

Sur ces bases, l'État ne saurait être contrôlé par le roi et les lords, tout le peuple serait impliqué dans le gouvernement. L'exercice du pouvoir suppose la séparation entre trois ordres : le Sénat, qui conçoit et débat les lois, le peuple qui décide de leur promulgation par le vote (« *So the Parlament of Oceana consists of the Senat proposing, and the People resolving*[8] ») et les magistrats qui sont censés les appliquer. Pour que « *the Power can never swerve out of the hands of the Many*[9] », Harrington propose que les membres du Sénat soient électifs, par vote secret (« *the suffrage of the people given by the ballot* »), et que les postes des magistrats soient rotatifs. À partir de ces principes, il développe un système très minutieux d'organisation de toute Océana.

Le mécanisme de ces « expériences de pensée » politique peut être mis à nu, dans toute sa simplicité, dans *The Free State of Noland* (1696). (E)utopie parlementaire et puritaine à l'époque de la Restauration, il est évident pourquoi *Noland* est restée anonyme. Comme les autres utopies classiques, elle

[6] *The Oceana of James Harrington and his Other Works*, p. 49-51.
[7] *Ibidem*, p. 38.
[8] *Ibidem*, p. 206.
[9] *Ibidem*, p. 204.

situe le *commonwealth* imaginaire dans l'ailleurs géographique le plus fascinant de la période, le Continent du Sud, la *Terra Australis Incognita*. Mais l'auteur n'exploite pas l'exotisme, au contraire, il souligne que Noland est un pays qui ressemble en tous points à l'Angleterre : sol et climat, langage anglo-saxon et religion chrétienne, lois et mœurs[10], etc. Dans ce sens, Jean-Michel Racault dit de la *Nouvelle Atlantide* de Joseph Glanvill, de l'*Astreada* et du *Free State of Noland* : « Ces trois utopies anglaises sont pratiquement dépourvues de toute mise en forme romanesque, la vague affabulation qui en tient lieu, sommairement dépêchée en quelques lignes, cédant aussitôt la place au discours didactique à la troisième personne. Dépourvues de localisation géographique précise, elles ne sont rien d'autre qu'une image en miroir de la réalité socio-politique existante plus ou moins transformée[11] ».

Cette identité en miroir devrait permettre une comparaison strictement focalisée de la différence prise comme point de repère, à savoir le gouvernement. À la différence de l'Angleterre, en Noland la ligne dynastique s'est éteinte, ce qui a fait du pays des antipodes un « *free state* », un État libre. C'est dans ce cadre politique que l'auteur se prend à imaginer (ou plutôt à calculer) une organisation administrative utopique-pragmatique, basée sur le nombre de citoyens qui payent des taxes et ont le droit de vote. Les unités territoriales sont, en ordre ascendant, *Parish* (dirigés par un *Council* constitué sur la base du principe « un homme pour chaque 50 livres à l'an ») ; *Hundred*, ou *Precint* ou *Barony* (corporation ou petite république composée de 10-20 *Parishes*) ; *County* (composé de 10 *Hundreds* et gouverné par un *Lord-Steward*) ; le *Grand Council* ; et le *Grand Senate* ou Parlement[12]. Mis à part le grand dessein sous-jacent de remplacement de la monarchie par le parlement, le projet d'amélioration est un jeu mathématique de distribution logique du pouvoir en fonction des revenus locaux et nationaux.

Par rapport à la société historique contemporaine, les « *commonwealths* » anglais du XVII[e] siècle sont des eutopies, des « lieux meilleurs ». Nourris par l'atmosphère réformiste et révolutionnaire de l'interrègne, ces modèles de sociétés améliorées sont conçus comme des projets législatifs praticables, que le parlement pourrait adopter ou que des communautés et des sectes pourraient appliquer en Angleterre ou aux Amériques, que Jean Meyer a pu qualifier de « véritable musée de sectes[13] ». Bien qu'elles n'aient pas dépassé le

[10] *The Free State of Noland,* p. 1.

[11] Jean-Michel Racault, *Nulle part et ses environs. Voyages aux confins de l'utopie littéraire classique (1657-1802)*, Paris, Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2003, p. 129.

[12] *The Free State of Noland*, p. 2 sqq.

[13] Jean Meyer, *Les Européens et les Autres, de Cortés à Washington*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1976, p. 267. Voir aussi Christopher Hill, *Le Monde à l'envers. Les idées radicales au cours de la Révolution anglaise*, Traduit de l'anglais par S. Chambon et R. Ertel, Paris, Payot, 1977.

seuil de la probabilité historique, elles restent néanmoins dans un régime réaliste de lecture. Comme dispositif de construction, elles partent d'une analyse de la société existante (le *mundus*), dont les auteurs identifient les maux et les manques et qu'ils remplacent par une série de traits positifs correctifs.

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NOUVEAU REGARD SUR UN DEBAT QUI A MARQUE LA LINGUISTIQUE EN FRANCE AU MILIEU DU XXE SIECLE (*LE FRANÇAIS MODERNE,* 1950-1960)

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ABSTRACT. ***A New Look at a Debate That Influenced French Linguistics in the Middle of the Twentieth Century (Le français moderne, 1950-1960).*** The present article is a reanalysis of some of the discussion points raised by a significant number of linguists 55 years ago. The discussion went through a period of ten years during the last century and led to 18 articles in Le français moderne. This new study is based on time representation in French and the methodology one should adopt while investigating it. Even though one of the linguists was a foreigner, the discussion was centered only on the French language back then. My purpose here is to show that a comparison between French and other Romance languages such as Italian and Romanian could have avoided the confusions that occurred but only after the correction of some of the perspectives.

Key words: *time representation, indicative, psychomechanics, psychosystematic, future, past simple, subjunctive, imperfect*.

REZUMAT. ***O nouă privire asupra unei dezbateri care a marcat lingvistica în Franţa la mijlocul secolului al-XX-lea (Le français moderne, 1950-1960)***. Articolul propune o revenire, după 55 de ani, asupra câtorva puncte dintr-o dezbatere care a implicat un număr însemnat de lingvişti, s-a desfăşurat într-o perioadă de vreo zece ani în mijlocul secolului trecut şi a condus la 18 articole în *Le français moderne*. Această revenire oferă ocazia unei reflecţii asupra reprezentării timpului în limba franceză, dar şi asupra metodologiei de adoptat în abordarea acestei probleme. Chiar dacă unul dintre lingvişti era străin, polemica a rămas în mod exclusiv centrată asupra limbii franceze. Articolul îşi propune să arate că o comparare a francezei cu alte limbi romanice precum italiana sau româna, desigur, cu corecţia unor intuiţii, ar fi putut evita neînţelegerea.

Cuvinte cheie : *reprezentare a timpului, indicativ, psihomecanica, psihosistematica, viitor, perfect simplu, condiţional, imperfect.*

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La proximité des langues qui composent la famille des langues romanes est telle que la description de l'une ou de l'autre d'entre elles peut permettre d'apprécier la description des autres ou d'avoir un regard critique sur elles. Nous voudrions en donner un exemple en examinant l'organisation des temps du mode indicatif de la langue française telle que l'a proposée Gustave Guillaume, et cela, en nous attachant à analyser le système verbal des langues italienne et roumaine. Comme on le verra, ce détour par ces deux langues nous ramènera en France, au cœur d'un débat qui a eu pour cadre une des revues les plus prestigieuses de la linguistique, *le français moderne,* entre les années 1951 et 1960. On trouvera, dans notre bibliographie, les références des 10 linguistes qui se sont impliqués dans cette polémique. Nous ne prétendons aucunement résumer en quelques pages un ensemble de 18 articles s'étalant sur dix années et occupant plus de 180 pages. Ce n'est pas notre propos. Laissant de côté l'aspect polémique du débat ainsi que les discussions sur des conceptions désormais acquises (comme l'opposition entre le conditionnel mode et le conditionnel temps), nous voudrions seulement jeter un regard neuf, plus de 55 années après, sur quelques points des discussions. Plus précisément, nous nous proposons de regarder ces quelques points – qui concernent essentiellement la langue française – à partir de la comparaison avec les systèmes verbaux des autres langues romanes. Cela pourrait nous permettre de juger des progrès accomplis dans la description des langues, en particulier dans la prise en compte des mécanismes non visibles du langage, à un moment où les progrès techniques font entrevoir la possibilité de visualiser, si ce n'est de comprendre, ce qui se passe dans le cerveau des sujets parlants. Mais cela pourrait aussi nous conduire à remettre en question certaines des affirmations des uns et des autres — et de Gustave Guillaume lui-même — touchant la représentation des temps de l'indicatif dans la langue française.

Tout commence en 1951 lorsque Gustave Guillaume publie, dans *le français moderne,* deux articles intitulés *La représentation du temps dans la langue française (I - II)*, le premier de 9 pages (janvier 1951), l'autre de 15 pages (avril 1951). La représentation qu'il propose – et qui fait l'objet de la polémique – est brièvement résumée par Gérard Moignet dans son article *Pitié pour l'indicatif ou nomenclature grammaticale et linguistique structurale* (1957). Nous lui empruntons ces quelques lignes (p. 164) :

> "M. G. Guillaume (...) a démontré à maintes reprises qu'en français les passés et les futurs se font pendant de façon parfaite par rapport au présent unique : le mode indicatif, en effet, est une construction à cinq postes :
>
> passé simple futur
> présent
> imparfait conditionnel"

Comme Gustave Guillaume fonde son explication sur la morphologie et, en particulier sur l'identité des terminaisons morphologiques de l'imparfait et du conditionnel (*-ais, -ais, -ait, -ions, -iez, -aient*) et sur celles des personnes simples du futur et du passé simple des verbes du premier groupe (*-ai, -as, -a*), les critiques vont pleuvoir sur ce dernier parallélisme qui, effectivement, est loin d'être total : *nous chanterons ≠ nous chantâmes*, *vous chanterez ≠ vous chantâtes*, *ils chanteront ≠ ils chantèrent*, mais aussi, dans les autres groupes verbaux : *je paraîtrai ≠ je parus..., je boirai ≠ je bus..., je finirai ≠ je finis*...

Gustave Guillaume aura beau expliquer que "la loi régnante en psycho-systématique est celle, rigoureuse, de la cohérence" tandis que la loi régnante en psycho-sémiologie est "celle, non rigoureuse, extrêmement souple de la simple convenance expressive : de là en psycho-sémiologie la permission d'incohérences interdites en psycho-systématique", il ne réussira pas à convaincre ses interlocuteurs et la polémique continuera pendant une dizaine d'années, jusqu'à sa mort le 3 février 1960.

Pourtant, sur ce point, nous ne pouvons que partager la conviction de Gustave Guillaume : la langue est en effet composée de mécanismes qui ont été perfectionnés pendant des millénaires au point qu'on peut les comparer à ceux d'une horloge, d'un réveil ou d'une montre ; l'apparence extérieure (= sa "sémiologie") peut varier beaucoup – l'affichage peut être numérique, le cadran peut prendre la forme d'un cercle, d'un carré, d'un rectangle, etc – mais les rouages intérieurs doivent garder une cohérence rigoureuse et leur fonctionnement exclure toute fantaisie. Il convient donc de bien distinguer la cohérence de la psycho-systématique de la tolérance propre à la psycho-sémiologie.

Reste néanmoins à comprendre pourquoi, dans la langue, le niveau du passé simple et du futur ne présente pas une sémiologie aussi révélatrice que celle de l'imparfait et du conditionnel. C'est que le passé simple est antérieur de très loin au futur et qu'il n'a pas été restructuré comme l'ont été, l'un sur l'autre, les deux temps de l'autre niveau que sont l'imparfait et le conditionnel. En recourant à une autre comparaison, on pourrait dire que lorsqu'on fait une maison neuve, elle peut correspondre exactement à ce que l'on veut, tandis que lorsqu'on achète une maison ancienne et qu'on ne peut pas l'abattre parce qu'on a besoin d'un toit tout de suite, on est obligé de s'accommoder de la réalité existante, même si elle ne correspondant pas exactement à ce que l'on veut. Or la langue maternelle est la seule maison que l'on ne peut pas abattre puisqu'on en a pratiquement besoin tous les jours de sa vie : si on peut modifier une pièce d'une maison pendant qu'on se sert des autres pièces, il est impossible, dans le cas de la langue, d'afficher un panneau : **Mécanisme interdit pour cause de travaux !* Comme dans le cas de la montre, les rouages doivent être toujours en parfait état de fonctionnement. La différence entre le pur mécanisme de la montre et celui du langage humain vivant, c'est que le

langage peut instituer un mécanisme de remplacement qui, peu à peu, se substitue au précédent jusqu'à l'éliminer complètement. Il en a d'ailleurs été ainsi pour le passé simple puisqu'il a pratiquement disparu du français oral, remplacé par le passé composé. Or celui-ci est justement construit, comme l'a été le futur, à partir de l'auxiliaire *avoir* au présent : le parallélisme sémiologique est donc désormais aussi évident que celui de l'imparfait et du conditionnel (futur *-ai, -as, -a, -ons, -ez, -ont* / passé composé *ai, as, a, -ons, -ez, ont*) et on ne peut plus invoquer des différences de groupes verbaux : *je paraîtrai / j'ai paru, je boirai / j'ai bu, je finirai / j'ai fini...* Cette réfection d'un temps du passé, aujourd'hui pratiquement achevée, montre que la proposition de Gustave Guillaume de placer le passé simple au niveau du futur en français est tout à fait pertinente.

Il n'en reste pas moins que l'examen comparé des différents systèmes verbaux des langues romanes peut se révéler plus efficace, pour la découverte de la représentation du temps, que l'intuition d'un sujet natif, quand bien même il serait... linguiste ! C'est ce que nous voudrions montrer maintenant.

Si nous comparons le système verbal italien et le système verbal français en ce qui concerne la composition des temps de l'indicatif, nous observons bien des points communs : deux temps pour l'expression du passé (l'imparfait et le passé simple, complétés, dans les deux langues, par un passé composé qui tend, dans les deux langues aussi, à se substituer au passé simple), deux temps pour le futur (le futur simple et le conditionnel), une forme pour le présent. Un autre point commun est constitué par l'opposition de formes simples et de formes composées. On notera cependant qu'il n'y a pas de formes surcomposées en italien pour la voix active. Une différence mérite d'être soulignée dans ce qui vient d'être dit : le passé composé italien entre bien en concurrence avec le passé simple, mais la situation est différente selon les régions italiennes : dans l'Italie du nord, on a une situation pratiquement comparable à la situation française, avec un passé composé qui a presque complètement remplacé le passé simple dans la langue parlée, tandis que l'Italie du sud présente une situation proche de celle de l'Espagne ; le passé simple s'utilise encore très largement, dès qu'il s'agit d'une action achevée qui n'a plus de rapport évident avec le présent. Entre les deux, la langue parlée de Toscane, respecte la règle des 24 heures comme le faisait le moyen français : en deçà des 24 heures, le passé composé est utilisé ; au-delà des 24 heures, c'est le passé simple qui s'impose. On pourrait résumer la différence en observant que l'évolution diachronique de la langue française (de l'ancien français au français moderne) est représentée en Italie par une répartition géographique allant du sud vers le nord.

Tout semble donc, en définitive, assez semblable d'un côté et de l'autre des Alpes. A y regarder de plus près cependant, on décèle des usages

syntaxiques divergents qui ne laissent pas d'intriguer. Voyons, par exemple, la manière dont on forme l'hypothèse avec la conjonction "se" en it. et "si" en fr.

Dans la langue italienne, dès que l'hypothèse que l'on envisage se réfère au futur ou est susceptible de se produire dans un avenir proche ou éloigné, la conjonction "se" est régulièrement suivie du temps adéquat, le futur. En voici deux exemples :

> "Clinton afferma che i caccia Usa sono pronti ad attaccare **se Belgrado non si piegherà**. A Rambouillet il segretario di Stato Albright eserciterà le ultime pressioni per convincere le parti. **Se verrà firmata l'impresa**, partirà il contingente dell'Alleanza per la missione di controllo della pace." (*La Repubblica*, 20.2.1999)[3]

Dans le premier exemple, il s'agit d'un futur très proche puisque la conséquence de cette hypothèse est donnée, elle, au présent, mais dans un présent qui menace de devenir sous peu une réalité : "i caccia USA sono pronti ad attaccare". Le deuxième exemple est un futur plus éloigné : "se verrà firmata l'intesa...".

Il n'en est pas de même dans la langue française. Les deux exemples ci-dessus ne peuvent se rendre en français par des futurs : on ne peut pas dire "Clinton affirme que les avions de chasse des USA sont prêts à attaquer si Belgrade ne *pliera pas", ni "Si l'accord *sera signé...". La traduction la plus évidente utilise, dans les deux cas, le présent : "si Belgrade ne plie pas" et "si l'accord est signé...".

Pourtant, on trouve des cas où la conjonction de subordination "si" est suivie, en français, du futur de l'indicatif :

> "En marge du plus grand salon dédié à l'univers du mobile, pas moins de vingt-quatre opérateurs ont annoncé leur union pour proposer une alternative à l'App Store d'Apple. (...) **Si cette association aura du mal à rattraper son retard**, elle dispose tout de même d'un atout de taille puisque l'alliance de ces vingt-quatre opérateurs représente au total plus de 3 milliards de consommateurs éparpillés dans le monde" (Revue *iCreate*, n° 57 d'avril 2010, p. 25)

La situation n'est donc pas aussi simple qu'elle peut apparaître au premier abord. Voyons maintenant la manière dont se forme le futur dans le passé :

> *Mi disse che sarebbe venuto se avesse potuto* --> il m'a dit qu'il serait venu s'il avait pu
> *Mi disse che sarebbe venuto --> il m'a dit qu'il viendrait*

[3] 'Clinton affirme que les avions de chasse des USA sont prêts à attaquer si Belgrade ne plie pas. A Rambouillet, le secrétaire d'Etat Albright exercera les dernières pressions pour convaincre les parties. Si l'accord est signé, le contingent de l'Alliance pour la mission de contrôle de la paix est prêt à partir.'

Impossible d'utiliser le conditionnel simple en italien et de dire, avec le conditionnel simple : *Mi disse che *verrebbe*. Et cela, depuis environ les années 1630-1650. Jusque là, la construction parallèle à la structure française était possible.

Que signifient ces deux divergences ? Que révèlent-elles ?

Avant d'aller plus loin, observons d'abord qu'elles concernent toutes deux l'expression du futur, à travers le futur simple dans un cas et le conditionnel dans l'autre.

Si nous remontons l'histoire de ces deux temps, aussi bien en français qu'en italien, nous devons constater que le conditionnel est une construction récente — la plus récente — dans le système verbal des langues romanes. Il n'existait pas en latin. Le futur lui-même n'est pas le futur du latin classique : les formes du futur en *-bo* de celui-ci, de même que certains futurs empruntés au subjonctif, ont été remplacées, on le sait, par l'infinitif pourvu d'une terminaison empruntée aux formes de présent de l'auxiliaire *habere.*

Si nous examinons la construction du conditionnel, nous constatons qu'il est construit différemment en italien et en français. Alors que le conditionnel français est constitué de l'infinitif suivi de l'auxiliaire *avoir* à l'imparfait (*il chanter-ait*), le conditionnel italien est construit à partir de l'infinitif suivi du même auxiliaire *avere*, mais au passé simple. Cette différence de construction serait-elle significative ?

On constate en outre que l'italien ancien possède deux autres formes de conditionnel : l'une est construite sur l'imparfait de *avere* (comme en français et en espagnol) : *vorria* (= *vorrebbe* aujourd'hui), *avria* ou *aria (= avrebbe* aujourd'hui), etc., l'autre est issue du plus-que-parfait de l'indicatif qui a donné aussi la forme de conditionnel et de subjonctif en *-ra* de l'espagnol : *quisiera* (= 'je voudrais'), *tuviera* (= j'aurais, etc.). Ainsi, on trouve en italien ancien, *fora meglio* 'il vaudrait mieux' avec *fora* issu du plus-que-parfait latin *fuerat,* mais sans la valeur de plus-que-parfait : il équivaut au conditionnel *sarebbe* (*fora meglio correspond à* 'sarebbe meglio' dans l'italien d'aujourd'hui).

L'italien a donc présenté, au cours de son histoire, une grande variété de formes de conditionnel : celles que présentent le français et l'espagnol, auxquelles il faut rajouter celles qui lui sont propres et qu'il a fini par préférer.

Une constatation supplémentaire doit être faite : le conditionnel construit sur le parfait de *avere* s'est imposé par rapport à celui construit sur l'imparfait de l'auxiliaire justement à la même époque où le conditionnel composé s'est imposé pour l'expression du futur dans le passé. La coïncidence n'est vraisemblablement pas fortuite. Mais que signifie-t-elle ?

Pour mieux comprendre, il nous faut remonter jusqu'au latin et même un peu au delà. Que nous apprend en effet la linguistique historique de la langue latine ? Dans sa *morphologie historique du latin*, A. Ernout déclare :

> "Le futur est, dans toutes les langues indo-européennes, une création relativement récente : à part le grec, les langues les plus anciennement attestées n'en ont dans les premiers textes que fort peu de traces ; il y a même des langues qui n'en ont jamais eu. C'était le subjonctif qui servait en grande partie à exprimer l'idée d'avenir."

Et il poursuit :

> "Les types *amare* et *monere* n'avaient pas de futur puisqu'il ne disposaient que d'un subjonctif. C'est une forme périphrastique qui y suppléa, composée, comme l'imparfait, d'une sorte de substantif verbal, **ama-*, **mone-* et d'une forme en *-bo*, d'après la forme en *bam* de l'imparfait : *ama-bo, mone-bo*. L'existence du futur *ero* du verbe *sum* en face de l'imparfait *eram* a pu favoriser la création de *amabo, monebo* en face de *amabam, monebam.* L'imparfait en *-bam* et le futur en *-bo* ne sont pas des formations contemporaines. L'imparfait en *-bam* est antérieur et commun à toutes les conjugaisons : le futur en *-bo* est au contraire une création relativement récente".

On voit donc se succéder au cours de l'évolution vers le latin, d'abord la création de l'imparfait, venu, dans le passé, exprimer l'infectum à côté du parfait. Le passé se trouvait donc doté de 2 temps (imparfait/parfait) sur le modèle de ce qui existait déjà pour le présent (*amo*/*amavi*, c'est-à-dire infectum du présent/perfectum du présent). Juste avant la création du futur, c'est-à-dire bien avant la naissance du latin, l'indicatif se trouvait donc avec un gros déséquilibre, puisqu'il possédait 2 formes pour exprimer le présent (*infectum* et *perfectum* du présent), 2 formes pour exprimer le passé (imparfait et parfait), mais recourait toujours au subjonctif pour exprimer l'avenir.

La naissance du futur en –*bo* est une première avancée vers la création d'un temps de l'indicatif propre à exprimer l'époque future. C'est la situation dans laquelle s'est trouvé le latin classique. Mais toutes les langues romanes ont ressenti le besoin de créer, au futur aussi, une double représentation d'infectum et de perfectum : déjà, en latin vulgaire, les futurs en *-bo* ont été remplacés par la forme avec l'infinitif suivi du présent de l'auxiliaire *habere.* Cette réfection a été l'occasion de créer, à côté du futur latin, une forme nouvelle propre à exprimer l'opposition *infectum/perfectum*. Et c'est là que chaque langue a fait son choix : le français, l'espagnol et le portugais ont choisi de faire du nouveau temps un infectum du futur en construisant l'infinitif avec l'imparfait de l'auxiliaire (*je chanterais, tu chanterais, il chanterait*...). L'italien a hésité pendant presque un millénaire, jusque autour des années 1630-1650, entre cette même construction (*cantaria, avria, potria*...) et l'expression d'un perfectum du futur construit à l'aide du parfait de l'auxiliaire : *canterei, canteresti, canterebbe*...

Il ne faut pas se cacher qu'il nous est difficile d'appréhender ce que signifie *un infectum de futur* et, plus encore, *un perfectum de futur.* Cela a déjà dû être le cas pour les langues qui ont créé ces catégories puisqu'elles n'ont

créé cette opposition dans le futur qu'en dernier, après l'avoir installée au présent d'abord, puis au passé.

Comment comprendre que les langues romanes aient *toutes* ajouté un temps exprimant l'hypothèse au "futur" hérité du latin, même lorsqu'elles ont été coupées de leurs consœurs latines, comme ce fut le cas pendant plus d'un millénaire pour la langue roumaine ? Et surtout, comment considérer ce temps et comment le dénommer : les termes de "perfectum" et d' "infectum" sont-ils utilisables ? Gustave Guillaume a parlé de futur "thétique" (= qui pose) et de futur "hypothétique (= qui suppose). Cette dénomination peut convenir pour le français où le conditionnel est effectivement en-dessous (= hypo) du futur, non pas parce que Gustave Guillaume le place en dessous du futur dans son schéma, mais parce qu'il précède le futur, de la même manière que l'hypothèse précède la thèse. Mais en italien, cette dénomination ne conviendrait pas parce que le conditionnel n'exprime pas l'hypothèse en se plaçant avant le futur, mais en étant un perfectum de futur, c'est-à-dire un au-delà du futur. Pour l'italien, un contraste existe entre le passé qui est du réel dépassé et le futur qui est du virtuel, le présent assurant la liaison entre ces deux faces du temps. Donc un perfectum de passé sera un passé entièrement dépassé, tandis qu'un perfectum de futur ne pourra être qu'un futur entièrement futur, c'est-à-dire totalement virtuel. L'hypothèse que rend le conditionnel en italien n'est donc pas construite comme un "hypofutur" - c'est-à-dire que ce n'est pas un futur *hypothétique* -, mais comme un "hyperfutur". Le perfectum qui, dans le passé, produit un effet de réel achevé, devient, une fois appliqué au futur, *un perfectum de virtualité*. Dès lors, le temps "futur" est conduit à exprimer l'infectum de l'époque future, c'est-à-dire une virtualité "imparfaite", en tout cas moins "parfaite" que le conditionnel. On peut donc dire que, dans le système verbal italien, le futur est un temps virtuel qui, par sa visée de réalisation plus ou moins rapprochée, tend à perdre sa virtualité, tandis que le conditionnel, en tant que perfectum de futur, se maintient au-delà de tout seuil de réalisation. Au contraire, en français, le conditionnel, en tant qu'esquisse de futur ("je le ferais si...") a occupé la position d'infectum de futur, renvoyant le temps futur hérité du latin vulgaire dans la position de perfectum de futur. C'est pourquoi , alors que la langue latine pouvait, comme l'italien, employer le futur après "si" pour formuler une hypothèse, le français ne le peut plus. Cela montre qu'en dépit d'une origine commune et d'une forme très proche, les futurs de ces deux langues romanes sont conçus de manière différente.

Observons en effet les emplois de futur après "si" que l'on peut trouver en français. Grévisse remarque que "dès l'ancienne langue, la condition relative à l'avenir s'est exprimée par le présent (ou s'est indiquée par périphrases au moyen de *devoir, pouvoir, vouloir, aller, venir).* — Elle s'exprimait aussi, mais rarement, par le futur (comme en latin) : cet usage se trouve parfois encore au XVIe

siècle : *Si ce mien labeur sera si heureux que de vous tenter, à Dieu en soit la louange* (AMYOT, *Vies,* Epistre aux Lecteurs)." De tels emplois ne sont plus possibles aujourd'hui. Cela signifie que le futur qui existait au moment de la naissance de la langue française n'était pas encore senti comme un perfectum de futur, mais que peu à peu il a pris sa place, et cela sans qu'aucune règle édictée par une autorité dans le domaine de la grammaire n'interfère dans cette lente évolution. Aujourd'hui encore, les grammaires scolaires n'ont pas besoin de préciser qu'on n'emploie pas le futur après "si" hypothétique : c'est la conscience des sujets parlants qui, après l'apprentissage linguistique de l'enfance, leur fait éviter l'emploi du futur après "si". En effet, lorsqu'on l'emploie - car on trouve quand même des exemples, même s'il faut les chercher à la loupe - l'effet produit n'est pas celui d'une hypothèse.

Si nous reprenons en effet l'exemple extrait de la revue iCreate que nous avons cité plus haut :

> "**Si cette association aura du mal à rattraper son retard,** elle dispose tout de même d'un atout de taille puisque l'alliance de ces vingt-quatre opérateurs représente au total plus de 3 milliards de consommateurs éparpillés dans le monde",

l'emploi du futur après la conjonction "si" est possible parce qu'il s'agit d'un fait posé, admis, dans le futur : "cette association aura du mal à rattraper son retard". Il s'agit là d'un véritable futur catégorique affirmant un fait dont on peut éventuellement envisager des atténuations ("elle dispose tout de même d'un atout de taille...") mais qu'on ne peut plus envisager comme une simple hypothèse : c'est le résultat d'une évolution historique qui a fait qu'en français, le futur ne suppose plus des actions dans le futur, mais il les y pose.

Si, maintenant, nous analysons la représentation du temps dans la langue française proposée par G. Guillaume à partir de *Temps et verbe* et réaffirmée dans les deux premiers articles du *français moderne* qui ont lancé la polémique en 1951, nous constatons qu'en faisant du futur et du passé simple des temps générés au niveau de l'incidence, et en plaçant l'imparfait et le conditionnel dans ce qu'il appelle la décadence, Gustave Guillaume aboutit à créer un système où, dans le passé, il n'existe pas un seul temps pour exprimer l'action achevée : c'est un paradoxe car, en principe, le passé est par excellence l'époque qui contient le plus d'actions achevées. On comprend que, dans la polémique qu'il a dû affronter, cette position ait été un élément particulièrement handicapant. L'impossibilité – ou, comme le dit Gerard Moignet "la quasi impossibilité" d'employer l'adverbe "déjà" avec le passé simple (alors qu'il est d'un emploi facile avec l'imparfait) – ne pouvait être un argument pour prouver que le passé simple ne contient pas d'accompli. Tout au plus peut-il prouver que le temps exprimé par le passé simple ne peut pas

se diviser en une partie accomplie et une partie inaccomplie comme c'est le cas avec l'imparfait. Les tentatives de maintenir le parfait dans une position perpétuellement en incidence ne sont donc pas convaincantes.

Dès lors, le problème se pose : pourquoi Gustave Guillaume — dont la rigueur et la pénétration d'analyse ne font pour nous aucun doute — a-t-il maintenu envers et contre tout cette position qui est une des pierres d'achoppement de la polémique ? C'est qu'à notre sens :

1. il avait accordé sa juste valeur à la correspondance du conditionnel français et de l'imparfait, et qu'il voyait une même esquisse de correspondance morphologique entre le futur et le passé simple malgré leur origine historique différente; on a vu que cette correspondance morphologique avec le futur ne sera atteinte qu'avec le nouveau temps qui a remplacé le passé simple : le passé composé.

2. Mais il a été abusé par le futur français et il a été victime de ce "péché de réalité" qu'il a si souvent dénoncé chez les autres. Il a cru en effet que le futur ne pouvait qu'être par nature, en position d'incidence, c'est-à-dire un infectum. Or nous croyons avoir montré, par l'analyse théorique et celle des exemples, qu'en français le futur est bien au niveau du perfectum, mais d'un perfectum que G. Guillaume qualifierait de "décadence" – c'est-à-dire d'un temps qui est entièrement réalisé – et non, comme a tant de fois tenté de le démontrer Gustave Guillaume, perpétuellement en incidence. Du reste, si on analyse de près les passages de *Temps et verbe* dans lesquels il s'efforce de montrer que le passé simple est situé au niveau de l'incidence, on peut observer sa prudence. Par exemple, lorsqu'il déclare : "Les linguistes ont vu généralement dans l'imparfait le signe de l'inaccompli et dans le parfait défini le signe de l'accompli. Cette distinction, à tout le moins en ce qui concerne le français, enferme une part d'illusion". On sent bien que la proposition qu'il fait d'un parfait défini "qui, d'instant en instant, diffère sa réalisation *usque ad finem*, et s'il y a lieu *ad infinitum*" lui paraît en contradiction avec ce que pense la communauté des linguistes. C'est pourquoi, aux atténuations — "cette distinction (...) enferme *une part* d'illusion" — et aux concessions qu'il se sent obligé de faire — "à tout le moins en ce qui concerne le français" —, il ajoute une note très explicite : "1. Elle [cette distinction] tient mieux dans d'autres langues et donne satisfaction lorsqu'on envisage les choses généralement dans les langues indo-européennes". On voit bien que Gustave Guillaume ne s'est résigné à considérer le français comme une exception que parce que le système l'obligeait à placer le parfait défini au niveau du futur — ce qui était une intuition remarquablement juste — et que, pour lui, comme il l'affirme sur la seule base de son intuition de parlant natif de langue française, "le futur est du temps qu'on suppose, qu'on imagine, non pas du temps qu'on a, qu'on

tient."[4] Il ne pouvait donc qu'être situé au niveau de l'incidence. Mais la comparaison avec la langue italienne nous a montré que la simple intuition ne peut remplacer la confrontation avec la réalité des faits : si le futur français exprimait véritablement "un temps qu'on suppose, qu'on imagine", on devrait pouvoir formuler des hypothèses avec ce temps. Or – à la différence des futurs italien et roumain – il ne s'y prête pas ! S'il doit donc être descendu au niveau de la décadence, le passé simple redescend aussi et se retrouve ainsi en accord avec, selon les propres mots de Gustave Guillaume, « ce que pense la communauté des linguistes ».

Venons-en maintenant à ce que peut nous apprendre la langue roumaine sur le système verbal des autres langues romanes. Nous allons voir qu'il s'agit d'une indication *essentielle* : les temps du futur ne fonctionnent pas indépendamment les uns des autres ! En effet, les formes actuelles du conditionnel de la langue roumaine sont issues de la construction pan-romane qui a donné le futur dans les autres langues, la combinaison de l'infinitif suivi de l'auxiliaire *habere* au présent : *aș cânta* 'je chanterais', *ai cânta* 'tu chanterais', *ar cânta* 'il chanterait', *am cânta* 'nous chanterions', *ați cânta* 'vous chanteriez', *ar cânta* 'ils chanteraient' se présentent respectivement en ancien roumain sous les formes – dites à "infinitif long" – *cântare aș, cântare ai, cântare ar, cântare am, cântare ați, cântare ar*, c'est-à-dire les nouvelles formes du futur qui, dans l'ensemble de la Romania, se sont substituées au futur en *-bo* du latin dès le latin vulgaire.

Nous sommes donc amenés à postuler une évolution considérable entre le moment du latin vulgaire où ces formes exprimaient le futur et la situation actuelle où elles servent à exprimer l'hypothèse (aussi bien dans la protase que dans l'apodose), à l'exclusion de toute valeur de futur. Comme l'écrit Romana Timoc-Bardy[5], reprenant une étude de V.P. Titova de 1959 sur l'origine du conditionnel roumain,

> "Au XVIe siècle, ce paradigme présentait déjà les caractéristiques d'un futur modal, et (...) dès cette époque, sa valeur de futur proprement dit allait se restreignant, à mesure que la valeur de futur de modalité devenait prépondérante, pour être exclusive en roumain moderne."

Une fois reconnu le rattachement des formes du conditionnel roumain à la construction originelle qui a donné le futur dans les autres langues romanes, le problème qui se pose est celui des causes qui ont conduit au glissement du futur vers le conditionnel. Il est manifestement impossible de les apprécier si on reste à l'intérieur du phénomène puisque la sémiologie n'a

[4] G. Guillaume, "La représentation du temps dans la langue française" (II), in *Le français moderne,* avril 1951, p. 126-127.

[5] Romana Bardy (2012), p. 74.

pratiquement pas changé (ainsi, la deuxième personne du conditionnel roumain avec l'infinitif long, *cântare ai,* reproduit presque intégralement la deuxième personne du futur italien *canterai.* Or l'un est essentiellement modal, l'autre avant tout temporel.

En revanche, si nous considérons l'ensemble des temps qui se rattachent à l'époque future (au sens large, comme on va le voir !), on ne peut qu'être frappé par le nombre de formes verbales concourant à l'expression du futur : elles ne sont pas moins de quatre ! Elles utilisent les auxiliaires *a vrea* 'vouloir' ou *a voi* 'vouloir' aussi, ou recourent à l'auxiliaire *a avea* 'avoir'. Ainsi, 'je chanterai' peut se dire : *voi cânta, oi cânta, o să cânt* ou *am să* cânt. Or ces formes n'existaient pas à l'époque où s'est créé le futur pan-roman. L'évolution a donc consisté à décharger progressivement ce futur initial (qui exprimait aussi, parallèlement, des valeurs modales, mais pas encore le conditionnel !) de toute expression de futur pour l'attribuer aux nouvelles formes spécialisées dans cette fonction. Ainsi "allégé" des implications temporelles, l'ancien futur pan-roman a pu "alléger" à son tour le subjonctif en se chargeant de l'expression de l'hypothèse et devenir ainsi de plus en plus un vrai conditionnel ou, plus précisément, un pur conditionnel-optatif. Aujourd'hui, le conditionnel roumain n'exprime plus aucune valeur de futur, que ce soit dans le passé (valeur qu'il semble n'avoir jamais eue, contrairement à son homologue français) ou que ce soit dans le futur (les nombreuses formes périphrastiques de futur se chargeant de rendre toutes les nuances liées à l'avenir : futur canonique, futur populaire, futur familier, emplois régionaux, etc.). A son tour, donc, allégé, le subjonctif roumain a pu réduire ses formes bien plus que dans les autres langues romanes : il suffit souvent de faire précéder le présent de l'indicatif de la conjonction *să* marquant le subjonctif pour obtenir le subjonctif présent adéquat ou de placer un participe passé après *să fi* pour obtenir le subjonctif passé attendu. Ainsi, alors que les subjonctifs de la plupart des autres langues romanes présentent un grand nombre de formes spécifiques, le subjonctif roumain n'a plus qu'une seule personne qui lui appartienne en propre : la troisième.

Ce que nous apprend donc la langue roumaine - qu'il faut maintenant appliquer à l'étude des autres langues romanes - c'est que chaque langue est un système global dans lequel toute analyse d'un élément ne peut se faire indépendamment des autres éléments, car ils concourent tous à la cohérence d'ensemble du système. Et nous avons vu aussi, avec les niveaux temporels proposés par Gustave Guillaume pour la langue française, que la comparaison avec une autre langue romane – la langue italienne, en l'occurrence – aurait pu lui permettre de mieux appréhender la valeur du futur (et conséquemment celle du passé simple) qu'il ne l'a fait en se fondant sur sa seule intuition de locuteur natif de langue française.

Nous donnons ci-dessous la liste des 18 articles impliqués dans le débat autour de la représentation du temps dans la langue française (tous parus dans la revue *Le français moderne*, 1951-1960) :

1. G. Guillaume, *La représentation du temps dans la langue française* (I et II), dans *Le français moderne* de janvier 1951, p. 29-41, et d'avril 1951, p. 115-133 (articles reproduits dans G. Guillaume, *Langage et science du langage,* Nizet, 1964, p.184-192 et 193-207)
2. H. Yvon, *Linguistique diachronique, linguistique synchronique et psychologie sublinguistique*, 1952, p. 101-106.
3. G. de Poerck, *La représentation du temps dans la langue française,* 1953, p. 51-58.
4. G. Guillaume, *Psycho-systématique et psycho-sémiologie du langage,* 1953, p. 127-136.
5. H. Yvon, *Indicatif futur antérieur ou supposition probable d'aspect composé,* 1953, p. 169-177.
6. H. Yvon, *Pour une nomenclature grammaticale précise et claire ,* 1956, p. 161-167.
7. G. Moignet, *Pitié pour l'indicatif ou nomenclature grammaticale et linguistique structurale,* 1957, p. 161-169.
8. A. Lanly, *Proposition hypothétique et conditionnel,* 1957, p. 101-120.
9. A. Lanly, *"Nous avons à parler" maintenant du futur,* 1958, p. 16-46.
10. L. Bondy, *En marge des discussions sur les modes et les temps,* 1958, p. 93-100.
11. J. Stefanini, Le système et les faits en linguistique, 1959, p. 26-44.
12. R. Valin, *Qu'est-ce qu'un fait en linguistique ?*, 1959, p.85-93.
13. G. Moignet, *Encore le fait linguistique,* 1959, p. 94-101.
14. L. Bondy, *Principes et méthodes*, 1959, p. 173-198.
15. G. Guillaume, *Protestations,* 1960, p. 43-48.
16. G. Moignet, J. Stefanini, R. Valin , 1960, p. 48 (note)
17. P. Fouché, J. Pignon, 1960, p. 48 (mise au point)
18. P. Fouché, J. Pignon, *Gustave Guillaume,* 1960, p. 81-85 [annonce du décès de Gustave Guillaume]

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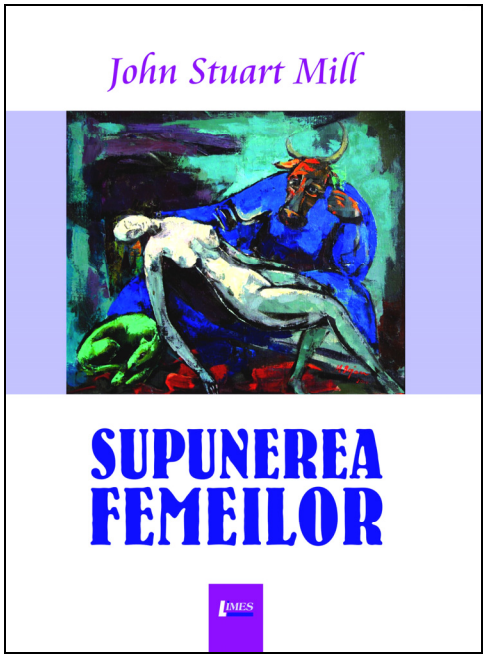
BOOK REVIEWS

JOHN STUART MILL, *Supunerea femeilor* (*The Subjection of Women*), trans. Cristina Dumitru, introductory study by Mihaela Mudure, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Limes, 2013, 155 p.



On 20 September 2014, British actress and UN Women Global Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson delivered a speech at the UN headquarters to mark the launch of the latest feminist campaign, symbolically entitled *HeForShe*. Reaching out through most of today's major communication channels (*twitter*, *YouTube*, *Facebook*), the movement declared its main intention as that of raising awareness to the inequalities still faced by women and girls worldwide at the dawn of the new millennium. As such, it emerged as yet another echo of a tradition of political activism that started to gain impetus in the 1960's. However, what set it apart within this context (at least relative to most of its earlier embodiments) was the call for co-operation and the effort to co-opt and actively engage men for attaining

the proposed goals, thereby aiming at equality through solidarity.

To the uninformed eye, such a move represents a radical change of approach, admittedly one without historical precedent. Indeed, at an earlier stage of the feminist efforts, the emphasis on difference and "apartness" appeared to be the logical choice in face of patriarchal dominance. Given the age-old practice of effacement (and the subsequently encouraged self-effacement) of womanhood in any sense except for the accepted norm, the discovery, recovery and construction of identity was a necessary first step of the recuperatory efforts. Distancing from the other through a compensatory process of gendering the self was its natural corollary.

With all these, one should not forget the earliest calls for the empowerment of women, many of which, by way of necessity, came from the representatives of the very same "other" sex.

In what follows, we will review one of the most memorable and influential of such endeavours, given expression by John Stuart Mill in his 1869 essay *The Subjection of Women.* Specifically, we will take a closer look at the newest Romanian rendering of Mill's text, "Supunerea femeilor", translated by Cristina Dumitru and published by Editura Limes in winter 2013.

Before delving into the latter, we find it necessary to provide an summary of Mill's arguments. Our choice is dictated by the need to highlight the present-day relevance of this quintessential piece of Victorian thought while pinpointing, at the same time, the distinguishing notes of the translated version.

Together with Thomas Carlyle and Matthew Arnold, Mill is customarily viewed as one of major 19th century thinkers whose name is associated, one way or another, with Utilitarianism. However, he is the only figure in this set to support (naturally, with the required re-interpretation and rational critique) Jeremy Bentham's *principle of utility,* according to which the worth of each and every thing is to be sought in the amount of good produced by them. *The Subjection of Women*, in its turn, is guided by this belief. For Mill, the empowerment of women is a matter of public concern, a means of general improvement that will take every layer of society further on the path of progress. Hence, as with nowadays' *HeForShe* campaign, the path to gender equality involves the co-operation of all societal strata (especially men, as they are the chief agents of power).

Indeed, *progress* is the driving force of Mill's proposal, since for him, the condition of Victorian women is a form of bondage, not very much removed from slavery. It is therefore a *status-quo* rooted in a misconception of what is natural that he sets out to combat. Compared to the previous century, Mill argues, the Victorian Age witnessed a surge of irrationality, to the extent of equating "customary" with "natural" without any intellectual scrutiny. Thus, aware of the complexity of a task that involves working, through the power of argument, upon an established mindset, along the four chapters of his essay he attempts to address all the major implications of his subjects. Though they bear no titles, each of these divisions has a clearly identifiable focal point. The first is an examination of the present condition and the causes of the said status-quo, but also an occasion for the thinker to clarify his goals and method. The second focuses on the topic of marriage, and women's attainment of an equal status within this form of social agreement. The third is concerned with the more immediate

utilitarian (and, we may say, typically Victorian) issue of employment and the right of women to occupy public functions on equal grounds with men. In the conclusive chapter Mill takes his argument to a higher level, returning to the question of public good and the ways in which society as whole may benefit from gender equality.

Mill's essay is a classic example of Victorian rhetoric. Despite its flaws, such as overzealous exemplification of certain points and occasional verbosity (otherwise excusable, given the amount of persuasion required for such a massive undertaking), the work impresses not so much through the depth of the author's arguments as through the diversity of aspects tackled. This, in effect, is what sets Mill apart from other Victorian supporters of the cause. He is more than a political thinker and distinguished orator, and at different points along his exercise he assumes a variety of roles. He is the historian examining the root causes of the problem, trying to teach us a lesson for the future. But he is also a psychologist ahead of his time, aware of the complexity of human nature, insisting upon mental subjection as a form of exercising power upon women, as well as on the need to ensure that both sexes are granted their peculiar slots in society so as to make best use of their unique skills and faculties.

For Mill, there is no collective freedom without personal freedom. In *The Subjection of Women* he therefore calls for liberating women from their pre-established roles of wives and bearers of children, giving them the status of individuals on their *own* right, capable of choosing and pursuing their *own* paths, and on their *own* terms. Consequently, equality encompasses, in his opinion, three main aspects: equality in marriage, equality of employment opportunities and equal chances in accessing the political scenes. Despite the radical nature of his proposal at the time of its publication, Mill remains a most lucid and balanced thinker. In face of the said status-quo he proposes reform, never anarchy, a reform that works best when applied from bottom to top, starting with the smallest knot of the fabric of society, the family, and working upwards, into the chambers of the parliament.

The volume under our closer inspection, though not the only translation of Mill's essay into Romanian is, nonetheless, a one-of-the-kind work on the local scene. Its merits are twofold. For one thing, it boasts an accessible style and an updated vocabulary, in line with the current norms of Romanian usage. Those unfamiliar with English (and, consequently, unable to refer to Mill's original text for purposes of comparison and clarification) will find themselves at home with this rendition, thanks not only to the naturally flowing language, but also to the numerous explanatory notes complementing the main text. Still on the same linguistic side, we find especially adequate the translator's choice for the main target of Mill's critique, the very term "subjection", as the Romanian word "supunere", which, compared to some of the former variants ("asuprire" = "oppression", "aservire" = "submission" or "subjugare" = "subdual"), manages to capture the finer nuances of the author's understanding of the issues at stake, without falling victim to ideological bias or sidetracking the reader onto inappropriate interpretive paths.

The second distinctive note of the volume is the aforementioned introductory study itself, written by Professor Mihaela Mudure of the English Department at Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. Entitled "John Stuart Mill, or Feminism in the Hands of Men" (*Rom.:* "John Stuart

Mill sau feminismul in mâna bărbaţilor"), it provides valuable information regarding the background to Mill's political ideas and an overview of some key moments along their reception on the Romanian intellectual scene. Together with the translator's notes, the reader is thus equipped with some important tools to facilitate a contextual understanding of Mill's argumentation. By this, we mean, on the one hand, the historical and personal context that called for his views, including the lineage of earlier male thinkers who had addressed the topic of gender equality (François Poullain de la Barre, Nicolas de Condorcet or James Mill – to name but a few of the figures enumerated in the study), as well as Mill's wife, Harriet Taylor, credited by contemporary scholars with co-authoring *The Subjection of Women*. On the other hand, "context" also includes the legacy of Mill's essay, as it has been appropriated, quoted and incorporated in the works of some representative local names. First, we are informed, of the lesser known ones (Sofia Nădejde and Teodor Păcăţian, Mill's earliest translators into Romanian), afterwards, reminded of some figureheads of the Romanian literary and cultural stage who paid their homage to Mill (Titu Maiorescu and Gala Galaction, and the latter's "lesson on John Stuart Mill" in his novel *La răspântie de veacuri*) and, eventually, we are briefly familiarised with the more recent acknowledgements during the post 1989 era (in the form of scholarly studies and a feminist lexicon).

Given these distinguishing characteristics and its potential to speak to a broad audience, from casual readers to those interested in feminist/feminine topics or scholars of the Victorian Age, the usefulness of this translation for the Romanian public is unquestionable. As summarised in the introductory study, it may indeed be regarded as a cultural act of great significance and an opportunity for men and women of our days to discover both their own selves and one another.

We may complement these remarks by paraphrasing Mill himself, noting that one of the major tasks of the present is to ensure that we are left with no relics of the past which, through custom or oversight, are incompatible with the future. Within this scheme, campaigns like this year's *HeForShe* are nothing but reminders of the lengths we have gone and, more importantly, of the distance and effort that still remain ahead of us until we accomplish the ideals of our predecessors.

In addition, as a possible lesson about the past, we should not forget Mill's task was twice as difficult as ours, for not only was he denied the benefits of the present-day convenient means of mass-communication, he was also faced with a much less receptive public than that of our contemporaries. His achievement is therefore all the more commendable: what he was lacking in technology he counterbalanced through the power of the argument, opposing, at the same time, the reticence of his fellow Victorians through the sheer belief in progress and the individual's perfectibility. The result was one of the most convincing and appealing pieces of political thought, one that has outlived its time and still finds a relevant niche in the progressive movements of our age.

An honest look in the mirror will tell us that Mill's design for attaining gender equality has not yet found a full implementation. The fault lies not with the philosopher's arguments, but, rather, as he himself justly observed, with mankind's questionable understanding of what is "natural" and *man*-kind's equally flawed acceptance and perpetuation of a system still significantly reliant on power-abuse and discrimination.

In light of these, we recommend Mill's text and its latest translation into Romanian not only to staunch supporters of the feminist ideals, or their less vocal, but similarly zealous activist relatives of the *HeForShe* kind, but to everyone interested in a better understanding of the inner workings of society and of human relationships in general.

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SIMONA ELISABETA CATANĂ - *Playing Games with Fiction: The Past in Peter Ackroyd's Work.* Bucureşti: Ars Docendi, 2011. 270 pp.

Peter Ackroyd is a notoriously difficult writer to pin down: his prose is in turn lucid and sinuous, fluid and overblown, cryptic and abundant in obscure detail; his stylistic register moves from a playful preference for intertext and metafiction to the stolid rigour of an archiver of lives and cities. From poetry, fiction and various types of non-fiction, he has tried his hand at various genres (including the production of television programmes), and is fantastically prolific – there is at least one volume appearing every year, and he has admitted in several interviews to working on several projects at the same time. How can any critical study hope to engage such a massive, diverse and chameleonic writer? These are some of the reasons why he has been less beloved of literary critics than, say, a Martin Amis or a Ian McEwan, for no sooner have they settled into a comfortable categorisation for Ackroyd's prose than he immediately produces something which defies the current critical orthodoxy. Hence he is both the quintessential 'postmodernist' (heteroglossic, hybrid, playful), but also the biographer-turned historian, antiquarian both by temperament and vocation.

Given such considerations, any sustained research project looking at Ackroyd's work must perforce carefully delimit one's area of investigation. This Simona Catană's study does successfully, by choosing to look at the ways in which the past is configured and refigured in Ackroyd's works. This is one area in which the diverse facets of Ackroyd's oeuvre come together in, on the one hand, a relentless probing of the archive of the past (literary, biographical, urbanistic), and, on the other, a postmodern jigsaw-like reconstruction of it, which allows the seams of fictionality to take centre-stage. Simona Catană's study carefully traces these seams and deconstructs the methods and approaches that the writer uses with consummate skill. Building on a solid bibliographical apparatus, the author exhibits both breadth and depth in her analysis of a wide range of Ackroydian texts, both fiction and non-fiction, and builds her argumentative scaffolding gradually and persuasively. Examining the various components of Ackroyd's prose, from recurrent chronotopes, myths and symbols to his use of allusion, quotation and pastiche, Catană builds the image of a hybrid, polymorphic writing, in which the past is, by turns, retrieved for parodic use, and re-evaluated as the ground on which literary tradition and national identity can be refashioned and re-

evaluated. It would have been instructive, perhaps, to get a glimpse of how his treatment of the past differs from that of other postmodern practitioners of metafiction, but this would have made the study unwieldy and less coherent than it currently is. While the arguments advanced in the book are not strictly speaking original (Ackroyd's persistent dialogue with and reworking of the past – particularly in the guise of the cultural traditions of Englishness – is a critical orthodoxy in all studies of his work, and so are most of vagaries of contemporary British fiction. the literary tropes and techniques that the author chooses to dwell on), the elegance and scholarly rigour speak for themselves and recommend this study as a remarkable overview of the work of a writer who has often surprised his readers and baffled critics. On the Romanian market, in particular, this book should be of interest to both students of Ackroyd's oeuvre as well as a more general intellectual public interested in the vagaries of contemporary British fiction.

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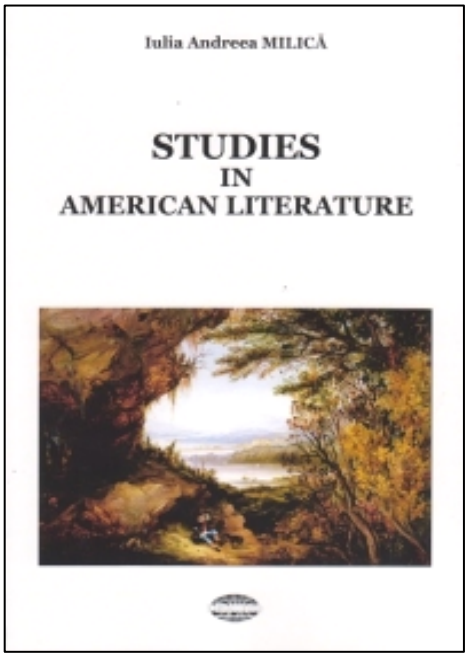
IULIA ANDREEA MILICĂ, *Studies in American Literature,* Iaşi: Demiurg, 2013, 277p.



Studies in American Literature is a volume of essays on American literature which confirms the coherence of Iulia Andreea Milică's academic interests. Iulia Andreea Milică, reader at the English Department of "Al. I. Cuza"

University, has already declared her concern for American literature, particularly for the American South, with the publication of the two previous volumes, *Southern Cultural Dimensions in Flannery O'Connor's Fiction* (2008) and *Literary Representations of the Southern Plantations* (2013). Organised in three main sections, *Studies in American Literature* adds to the author's previous works three sets of essays on the American romance tradition, the Gothic in American literature, and, of course, the American South. The texts discussed in this volume capture an essential part of what we usually mean when we refer to American literature, but they also allow readings meant to subvert the dominant discourses of the society which produced them. As the author explains in the "Introduction", she chose "those texts that undermine the prevalent beliefs of the age in which they were written and challenge traditions, ideals, and rules" (8). Moreover, I could not help notice that the proportion of male and female writers selected for the essays is fairly equal.

The first section of the book is dedicated to the tradition of the romance and its impact on the configuration of American ideals. It begins with the examination of the crucial role of Irving's Rip Van Winkle, Hawthorne's Robin, from "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," and Melville's Bartleby in the shaping of American imagination and the American myth through their refusal of history. Iulia Andreea Milică construes their attitude as "the refusal to give up a state of innocence, or the ideal for which the first colonists have undertaken the adventure across the Atlantic and the idea around which they created their America" (42). The chapter continues with an intriguing analysis of how works by Poe, Melville, Hawthorne, and Flannery O'Connor challenge the ideal of the innocent, Adamic American Man, in his pursuit of freedom and happiness. The last essay of this section offers a very interesting analysis of Melville's short story "The Bell Tower," viewed as a narrative with potential to subvert "the most challenged American ideals: timeless innocence, pride, confidence and optimism..." (71).

The second section of the volume already introduces the American South by discussing Thomas Nelson Page's "No Hide Pawn" against the background of the American gothic and against Page's general tendency to portray the South as a romanticised ideal. The story of the gothic elements imbedded in narratives about racial fears and slavery continues with the analysis of Melville's novella *Benito Cereno*. The series of essays on the gothic in American fiction ends with an interesting analysis of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper." The focus shifts from the questions of race explored in the previous two essays to the relationship between the gothic mode and madness as a means of subverting patriarchal authority. The reading of "The Yellow Wallpaper" through the lens provided by blending madness and the gothic and interpreting the blend as contesting patriarchal control is not innovative per se. However, Milică's approach adds to the existing scholarship by insisting on how the short story supports the gothic tension through the duality embedded in the story and supported by the structure of the narrative.

One can easily tell that the American South is Iulia Andreea Milică's main academic concern by just skimming

through this book. The South has already been introduced in the discussion about the gothic. Moreover, the third section of her book, dedicated to Southern literature, contains four essays, not only three as the previous sections. If the first essays in the book deal with the shaping and the challenging of the image of the 'American Man,' the third section pays much attention to models of womanhood. It begins by tackling Kate Chopin's short fiction as instrumental in subverting "the terms of middle-class models of womanhood" and "dismantling a monolithic image of America and American True Womanhood" (141). The retention of the past through tradition, memory, and personal history as a means of constructing Southern female identity is first examined in short stories by Katherine Anne Porter. The same idea is further explored in the comparative approach of Katherine Anne Porter's *The Journey* and Alice Walker's *Everyday Use* of the subsequent essay. The differences between the stories of the two writers allow a more comprehensive investigation of female identity in terms of racial differences, remembrance, private histories, and tradition. The series of essays dedicated to Southern literature concludes with William Faulkner and Harper Lee and, to mark the end of this entertaining and guided walk on some of the paths of American literature, the focus of the essay is death. Since the American South is under consideration here, the author focuses on lynching. Faulkner's short story "Dry September" and Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mocking Bird* provide the material for interrogating the violent manifestation of the prejudices that characterised racial interaction in the South. In addition, the two episodes of lynching discussed in the final essay offer the appropriate set of circumstances for addressing questions relevant for a deeper understanding of human nature and human psychology which, in turn, creates the proper context to end the book with an final aphoristic sentence, which readers might retain for other purposes, besides the understanding of Harper Lee's novel.

The clarity of the argumentation and the quality of the approach recommend *Studies in American Literature* for students and scholars of American literature alike, but I am also convinced that the richness of information and the rhetoric of storytelling would make it appealing for the wide public as well.

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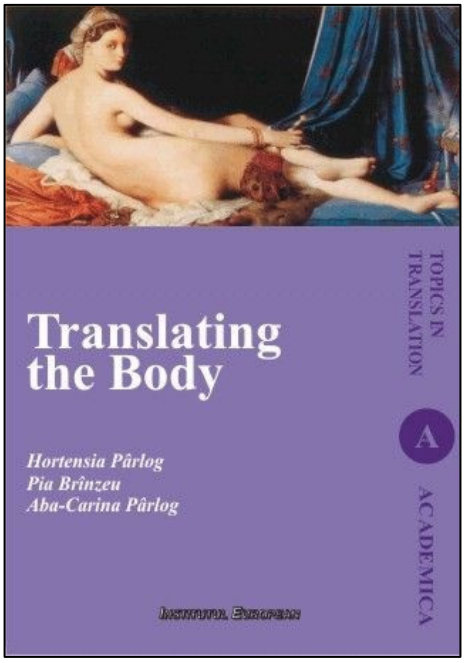
HORTENSIA PÂRLOG, BRÎNZEU, PIA, and PÂRLOG, ABA-CARINA. Translating the Body. Institutul European. Iasi, 2009. 461 pp.



Beautiful, ugly, slim, fat, altered, sublime, grotesque, transcendental or, why not, translated, the body has always fascinated and intrigued people all over the world and has been the object and subject of study, analysis, interpretation, representation, transformation and translation ever since people became aware of its presence. The authors of the book, on whom you will find a few details in the lines below, have also entered the magic created around this powerful and challenging topic and have dedicated it more than four hundred pages.

Hortensia Pârlog is a professor in the Department of English at the University of Timişoara and has published works in the English phonetics, syntax, lexicology, and pragmatics. Pia Brînzeu teaches English literature at the University of Timişoara. She was President of the Romanian Society of English and American Studies and has published studies of literary theory and criticism in prestigious journals abroad. Aba-Carina Pârlog is a lecturer in the Department of English at the University of Timişoara. Her fields of interest are post-modern literature and the practice of specialized translation. She has published numerous papers at home and abroad.

At the basis of this documented approach, published under the name of Translating the Body, stay two axioms that the authors mention in the introduction: the need of good translators because "translation has been hailed as the element which created Western civilization and the key to international understanding"[1] and

[1] Pârlog, Brînzeu, and Pârlog,. *Translating the Body*. Institutul European. Iaşi. 2009. p. 9

"the fact that one of the most fascinating issues today is the human body"[2].

The message of the book, which the authors manage successfully to send to the reader, is that the body, this equally "perfect physiological machinery and challenging symbolic construction"[3], is the "place" where signs are produced and which broadcasts information. It works, therefore, "similarly to a linguistic system, and can be read as a text"[4]. Although the attempt to translate the body seems "extravagant", as the authors themselves call it, the book proves along the beautifully crafted pages, that corporeality can be inscribed, read and translated like any other text.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part, structured in four large chapters, Reading the Body, Describing the Body, Transposing the Body and Translating the Body, offers a theoretical background. The first chapter's aim is to analyse the theories that describe the body as a text, the second chapter offers some commentaries on the fictional bodies used in literature, the third chapter gives a theoretical background for the translation of the body and chapter four is dedicated to two distinct approaches to the problem of collocations. The second part provides the reader with almost three hundred pages of body collocations built around words like hand, eye, heart, or body. It is structured as a dictionary and the words and collocations designating the body are treated alphabetically, followed by their Romanian equivalents. As the power of the example is the most eloquent, the authors provide the reader with short literary excerpts containing different body collocations, followed also by their translations.

The approach is very well balanced, supported by scientific arguments and plenty of examples. If some readers expect to be exposed to a rigid technical and scientific text, they will be surprised by the ease of language which makes the lecture both pleasant and informative. From ancient times to post-modernity, the authors take us into a challenging journey where the road is paved with literary concepts, psychological theories, archetypes and linguistic notions, all gravitating around their constant object of attention, the body. Because the body is, as Robert Louis Stevenson tells us, "a house of many windows", the authors try to make the reader aware that translators meet a lot of difficulties whenever they attempt to translate or transpose it, assertion that is supported by them with the examples they offer: "A small body of electors remained unpolled on the very last day. (…) They went in a body to the poll. (Dickens, PP, 207) // În ultima zi se constată că un număr restrâns de alegători nu votaseră totuşi. (…) Întârziaţii merseră în corpore la scrutin. (vol. I, 217)"[5] Whether an undergraduate or postgraduate student in Humanities or Social Sciences, a teacher of English, a translator, a young writer, or just a reader interested in the multiple and complex facets of corporeality, this book will provide you with a great deal of interesting answers and questions, as well. Most certainly, it will open new doors for further research, investigation, reading, interpretation, translation. "Are we to conclude that ultimately the text itself represents the body, and the body the text?" (Peter Brooks: Body Work, 1993)[6] There is only one way to find out: read Translating the Body!

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[2] ibid.
[3] ibid, p. 10
[4] ibid.
[5] ibid, p. 187
[6] ibid, p. 14