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Contents

Tables des matieres

Issue's Topic: **The Stranger in Literature and Culture**
Thématique du numéro: **L'étranger en Littérature et Culture**

INTRO

An Essay on Hooliganism by LILI TRUȚĂ 5

LITERARY-ISMS: ÉTUDES LITTÉRAIRE

- Alger dans le texte de l'Autre : Vers une reconfiguration du stéréotype spatial Bachira Allaoua et Aini Betouche 11
- Multiple Selves and Otherness: Gothic Identity in Margaret Atwood's *The Robber Bride* Adina Bandici 26
- Tragic Love and Alienation in *Another Country* by James Baldwin Corina Burduhos 41
- Le devenir du sujet migrant dans *Les Echelles du Levant* d'Amin Maalouf Hammaz Farida et Betouche Aini 49
- The Stranger in *The Late Mattia Pascal* Luncan Camelia Diana 58
- Visages de l'exil dans *D'amour et d'exil* d'Eduardo Manet Florica Mateoc 68
- The Stranger in Ileana Mălăncioiu's Poetry Iulia Nedea 87
- An Insight into the Inhumanity of Humanity with Thomas Keneally Melisa-Ginela Porge 93
- James Joyce's *A Painful Case*. A Modern Tristan Stranger to Himself Dana Sala 103

CULTURAL-ISMS / ÉTUDES CULTURELLES

Is God *the* Postmodern Stranger? Forms of the divine in Transgressive fiction Ioana Beteg 115

Urban Threats: Institutional Others of Cities	Magda Danciu & Claudia Judea Pustea	130
“Identité, Altérité et Stéréotype du migrant dans les caricatures de Dilem	Zohra Ibri, Aini Betouche	135
A Theoretical Overview on Migration Literature	Anca Tomoioagă	148
 DIVERSITY-ISMS		
Notes on Liberal Humanism in E. M. Forster’s Fiction	Teodor Mateoc	159
 BOOK REVIEWS/ COMPTES RENDUS DE LIVRES		
To Be or Not To Be ... Homo Sapiens	Anemona Alb	169
On Mirror-Women and More	Ioana Cistelecan	171
Christian Moraru, <i>Rewriting. Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning</i>	Magda Danciu	173
Alex Michaelides: The Game of Concepts in <i>The Silent Patient</i>	Heredea Ioana - Daniela	175
Yamen Manai : <i>L’amas ardent</i>	Florica Mateoc	178
Tara Westover: <i>Educated: A Memoir</i>	Mădălina Pantea	183
The Blurring of the Public/Private Boundary in Anna Burns’s <i>Milkman</i>	Éva Székely	185
David Bentley Hart, <i>Atheist Delusions. The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies</i>	Florin Toader Tomoioagă	189
AUTHORS/ AUTEURS		192
NEXT ISSUE’S TOPIC		193
2021 ISSUE’S TOPIC		194

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Intro:

Liliana Truță¹

AN ESSAY ON HOOLIGANISM

Let's be totally honest: we all fear change! The demon of change spawns fear, reaction, opposition, even warfare chants, despair and ...and let me stop here, as we shall see there are plenty more. The list might continue with a plethora of further emotions, most of them dark ones, some of them slightly diminished, others slightly more vehement, but forever proportionatewith the contesting voice of the one who sets out to change the *status quo* or with the degree of radicalism ...of the proposed change.

Change brings about something quite different from what we well know, a novel reality, riddled by unknown gusts, it makes us think differently, react differently, act differently, and we don't really want that. Humanity at large has been constantly fighting for its right to reject change, any kind of change, protecting at all costs its comfort in thinking and acting in a familiar way, indeed in a well-established manner. Humanity has engendered dominant narratives and has subsequently protected them as a nation-state protects its borders. In fact, that was the very issue: it was all about borders. However, freedom is never built on and is never tried out on borders. Evolution is not possible in the absence of change, and today's truth can easily become a kind of truth that is quite the opposite of yesterday's. Having said that, we still do not genuinely want change. The violence that

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change faces, and especially the one that proposes and imposes change faces is more often than not accounted for by fear, the fear of otherness, of difference, of **The Other**. Therefore, from the perspective of the Establishment, any individual that promotes change is an alien splinter that should be attacked by all the anti-bodies the system can muster, be it a social, cultural, political or religious organism.

The correlation between being an alien, i.e. an outsider of a system and change dates back to mythical origins; biblical narratives have indeed familiarised us with this: the figure of Moses is, perhaps, relevant in this respect. He is a stranger both among the Egyptians in whose midst he grows up, and also considered an alien when he returns to his own people. Precisely because he comes from the outside, that he straddles both worlds, he becomes the civilising hero, the one to impose The Divine Law to his people, thus being the catalyst of a leap in terms of the latter being and defining itself as a people and as regards the sacred as well.

However, one can be a stranger not solely racially or ethnically, but also socially, by inadequacy to pre-established rules and conventions, through divergence. The rebel, the misfit are thus equally valid stances of divergence; they are promoters of change, the ones who plant the germs of the revolution, therefore of change. This is **The Revolutionary Hooligan**, the one who stands out, the one who breaks the compact mass of easily-manipulated obedience. Thus, the 'hooligan' is always defined in his relationship with Power, with Authority, with the Centre, with the Law, in other words, he challenges a paradigm made up of dominant myths and narratives. The hooligan opposes power, pre-established order, prescriptiveness, a hypothetically stable reality. He is the one who demonstrates that the hypothesis is but a fiction and undermines stability, solidity with the weapons of fluidity. It is where the Centre establishes axioms, where the hooligan places the seed of doubt, it is there that the full-stop is put subsequent to the laying out of the axiom; he sows ...the dispersing interrogation, there where Uniqueness reigns supreme, he throws in diversity, plurality and the virtual in the stead of stable reality.

Gandhi is an original hooligan, and so is Martin Luther King, as they transform hooliganism into a form of art, they impose change, even in the midst of the age-long revolutionary tradition. Mahatma

Gandhi's way of protesting, by imposing non-violence is a super-human model, not a violently sub-human one, a kind of barbarism that humanity had already gotten used to. This event that can be assigned to hooliganism might have engendered change in the history of hooliganism, but it rather failed to do so ...

All this ripples out onto the arts. We shall call this **artistic hooliganism**. What else is avant-garde, with its radical versions if not the proclamation of anarchy in the arts, the obliteration of 'isms' of any kind with a view to imposing total freedom? What else is the avant-garde if not the loftiest and apparently egocentric dream of an artist that he, and only he exists, the unique one, not belonging to any paradigm whatsoever? The hooligan-artist wishes to be the prophet who cries out his truth and refuses any convention that is extraneous to him.

Yet another instance of hooliganism in the arts or in literature is the artist of subversion and dissent. Here too, the hooligan-artist asserts his divergence, inadequacy, placing the gladiator of the arts down there, in the arena with the wrestler of totalitarian Power. Eastern Europe, under the yoke of totalitarian communist ideology imposed such instances of hooliganism: in communist dictatorship, the artist that proposes plurality by attacking the centrality of the unique system; he is as well the absolute hooligan, as is the political insurgent. This battleground phenomenon resembles the biblical fight between David and Goliath, the monster attacked with a sling, but, as in the biblical narrative, miraculous victories have been fathomable.

The twentieth century yields ample example pertaining to all categories, as it has been particularly creative in terms of hooliganism in all fields, due to the ideological delirium that has driven everybody mad. But this, in a literal sense: Nazism, the far-right with its anti-Semitism was as well a reaction of rejection of all things alien, indeed with the racial profiling of the hooligan-stranger; this was an uncanny phenomenon, riddled with extreme violence, turned to account into the disgrace of The Holocaust.

The concept of hooliganism has been widely-vehiculated in the Romanian realities of the post-revolutionary era; ergo, even those who had participated in the revolution as such, were subsequently labelled hooligans. These so-called hooligan-informed riots ended up in the

Miners' Riots, and thus the hooligan-informed phenomenon and the Miners' Riot become episodes in a dismal epic narrative, upon which the tragic curtain of the twentieth century falls, subsequent to the Fall of the Iron Curtain, a lame symbol of the collapse of human thought. As regards the realities of our present historical and political times, should you wish to get a hooligan's certificate, all you have to do is show up at a rally in Victoria Square...

And thus we have reached another type of hooliganism: the one who opposes the authoritarian religious 'Law', the Pharisees, apparently infallible mentalities, at times legitimized with the seal of 'the sacred'. 'The Sacred', so vehemently protected, is, in fact, the equivalent of power ...Hence the heretic, the blasphemy-monger thus becomes a stance of **The Metaphysical Hooligan**. The latter is the perpetrator of a 'sacred' order of things, a rebel with an outrageous voice. But not against the welkin, as it were, but against the very institutions that have monopolized the skies, thinking that they have the right of use. Galileo Galilei became a hooligan because he thought up a universal truth, several saints throughout history have been suspected of heresy (see Ignatius of Loyola), John the Baptist's head was chopped off for the truths revealed to the world about The Power that felt under threat as a result of his hooliganism ...

And thus we have reached the most beautiful stance of the hooligan, obviously Jesus Christ, living proof that God, if needed, can become a hooligan that can be hunted down, all this for Man. Christianity was born out of a grand gesture of hooliganism, with an end that did not occur alongside the sacred burial. The Resurrection is redolent of a message that we have failed to understand until today, or that we reluctantly ignore: you cannot do away with hooliganism by killing the hooligans, that hooliganism is the catalyst of human evolution; indeed, it is the catalyst of progress of any kind, it is the certificate of freedom, it is our chance of becoming human beings, not mere caricatures.

This message of The Resurrection of the most magnificent hooligan of humanity was relinquished as soon as the new Pharisees of the new religion based on his gesture of hooliganism started hunting down the heretic, the new hooligan of the Christian era. And here we go again ...

The history of hooliganism *per se* thus becomes telling about what Man is and what Man can become. The extreme violence that we, as humans are capable of before the innocent hooligans, that cemeteries are brimming with, is but our blind, devastating, terrible fear of change. Is it now, I wonder, high time we changed and accepted change? I wonder.

The Stranger

Literary-Isms

L'Étranger

Études littéraires

Alger dans le texte de l'Autre : Vers une reconfiguration du stéréotype spatial

Bachira Allaoua¹ et Aini Betouche²

Résumé

Cet article se penche sur la dichotomie qui s'exprime dans et par les textes littéraires sur la ville d'Alger, dichotomie devenue stéréotype inhérent à la représentation de cet espace urbain. À cet effet et à travers une approche diachronique, nous interrogeons des textes qui, en plus de s'exprimer dans une langue autre, sont l'expression du rapport de l'autre à l'autochtone. Aussi, à l'aune de l'imagologie et de la géocritique, nous tentons de saisir le regard géocentré, véhiculé par les premiers écrits francophones sur la capitale algérienne. Nous abordons également le processus de révision amorcé par l'avènement de textes algériens ainsi que l'hétérogénéité qu'ils introduisent. Ce regard multifocal nous amène, en dernière instance, à appréhender le destin de cette stéréotypie face à une ville désormais plus lisible que visible.

Mots-clés : Alger, géocritique, stéréotype, espace, reconfiguration

Introduction

Peut-on représenter un lieu tel qu'Alger ?

C'est sans doute en vain que l'on s'efforcerait de décrire cette ville. On pourrait parler du style architectural dominant, mentionner les venelles qui vont et viennent au sein de sa Casbah, évoquer la blancheur légendaire de ses murs. On pourrait encore aborder ses monuments, son front de mer, ses jardins ainsi que plusieurs autres de ses aspects visibles. Pourtant, ce serait ne rien dire. « Ce n'est pas de cela qu'est faite la ville, mais des relations entre les mesures de son espace et les événements de son

¹Université Mouloud Mammeri, Tizi-Ouzou, Algérie.

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passé ». ³La forme de la baie conjugée à la pléthore d'étrangers qui s'y sont succédé⁴, la hauteur à laquelle culmine la prison de Serquadj et celle de la guillotine qui, en ce même lieu, à longtemp s'événue, les terrasses de la Casbah et les glorieux chapitres de la bataille d'Alger qui s'y sont déroulés.

De par ces relations tissées, le plus souvent dans la douleur et le sang, *El Djazair* a appris à composer avec l'Autre. En effet, si l'on se limite à la dernière présence étrangère dans la ville, c'est plus d'un siècle que l'on dénombre, un siècle durant lequel Alger s'est transfiguré : dépossession, démolition, transformation du réseau viaire, annexion des Habous⁵ ont joué un rôle majeur dans la métamorphose de la ville. Mais c'est surtout à la faveur d'une référencialité nouvelle propre à l'Autre qui a réussi, tantôt à s'imposer, tantôt à se greffer sur celle de l'autochtone, que la ville s'est renouvelée. Le regard porté par de nombreux captifs (dont le plus célèbre est Cervantès), missionnaires, voyageurs, journalistes, conquérants et conquis, a, au fil des siècles, contribué à composer une fresque lumineuse où la blanche cité se plaît à se mirer. Ceci dit, ce regard d'abord posé sur l'Autre dans une tentative de le ramener au Même, a ensuite œuvré à inféoder un espace urbain culturellement prestigieux, faisant ombrage aux nouveaux maîtres. Dès lors, à cette image relayée par des textes composés dans une langue forgée ailleurs pour un ailleurs, s'est juxtaposée une représentation manichéenne devenue, et c'est là notre hypothèse, stéréotype inhérent à la reproduction artistique⁶ d'un espace qui continue d'alimenter l'imaginaire. Aussi, notre analyse portera-t-elle sur cette part de stéréotypie que nous aborderons dans un premier temps, à travers l'approche imagologique, dans le but d'appréhender la manière par laquelle des auteurs tels que Fromentin, Maupassant ou Bertrand représentent l'espace viatique, étranger et non familier d'Alger.

³CALVINO, I. (1972), *Les villes invisibles*, éd. Seuil, Paris, 2001, p.15.

⁴Cité berbère baptisée *Ikosim* au IV avant J.-C latinisée *Icosieum* trois siècles plus tard, un lieu où se sont succédés Vandales au V siècle, Romains puis byzantins, arabo-musulmans à partir du VIII, Zirides ensuite corsaires dès le XVI siècle, turcs de 1529 à 1830 et enfin, français de 1830 à 1962

⁵Terme de droit musulman. Le *habous* est une constitution de biens de mainmorte admise en droit musulman, afin de permettre, sous forme de donation pieuse, de laisser la jouissance à des dévolutaires. Le Littré. Paris : BNF. <https://www.littre.org/>, consulté le 15.09.2019.

⁶FROMENTIN est également auteur de plusieurs peintures.

Les apports de la géocritique développée par Bertrand Westphal nous permettront ensuite de renverser la perspective en allant de l'écrivain vers le lieu et ce, à la faveur d'une démarche géocentrée qui offre la possibilité d'interroger les mécanismes qui subvertissent et déplacent cette stéréotypie dans et par les textes d'auteurs contemporains étrangers à la ville.

1. Un étranger dans la ville : Alger, ville spectacle

Il y a dans l'esprit original et profond de Fromentin une réelle volonté de dire l'Algérie, même si l'entreprise est loin de s'inscrire dans un contre discours colonial. Voici ce qu'il rapporte, lorsqu'en 1859 il publie *Une année dans le Sahel*⁷, volume dans lequel il relate les souvenirs de ses voyages à Alger :

« [...] Alger demeure toujours la capitale et la vraie reine des Maghrébins. Elle a toujours sa Casbah pour couronne, avec un cyprès, dernier vestige apparent des jardins intérieurs du Dey Hussein ; un maigre cyprès, pointant dans le ciel comme un fil sombre, mais qui, de loin, ressemble à une aigrette sur un turban. Quoi qu'on fasse, elle est encore, et pour longtemps, j'espère, Al-Bahdja, c'est-à-dire la plus blanche ville peut-être de tout l'Orient».⁸

Ces quelques lignes sont, et à plus d'un égard, l'illustration de la fascination de l'artiste face à la ville. Par l'évocation de la reine et de sa couronne, du *Dey*, de *l'aigrette* sur le *turban*, l'auteur se constitue un greffon qu'il prend dans un univers fantasque proche des *Mille et une nuits*. Greffon qui, par la suite, va participer à la mise en perspective de l'espace saisi dans une « hétéro-image » parce que « perçu par les yeux d'un tiers »⁹. Le tiers étant en l'occurrence, de nombreux récits de voyage, comptes rendus de militaires et de missionnaires : des textes exotiques massivement diffusés en ce début de conquête coloniale. On entend exotique dans le sens d'extérieur et par là même, enclin selon Westphal à la stéréotypie. Or, la fascination exprimée ici relève surtout « d'une prise de conscience, si minime soit-elle d'un «Je» par rapport à un Autre, d'un Ici par rapport à un Ailleurs ».¹⁰ Et si

⁷FROMENTIN, E, *Une année dans le Sahel*, Paris, Ed. Plon, 1887.

⁸*Ibid.*, p.199.

⁹WESTPHAL, B, *La géocritique : réel, fiction, espace*, Paris, Ed. Minit, 2007, p. 184.

¹⁰PAGEAUX, D, *La littérature générale et comparée*, Paris, Ed. A. Colin, coll. « Cursus », 1994, Paris, p. 60.

l'extrait fait vraisemblablement l'apologie de la ville, il atteste aussi d'un regard porté du dedans qui tend à se familiariser avec l'originalité des lieux, ce que confirme l'emploi du toponyme arabe AL- BAHDJA, ou encore la connaissance des jardins intérieurs du Dey Hussein. Cette manière de considérer l'espace nouvellement perçu, comme une variation d'autres déjà connus, est d'après Edward Saïd « une méthode pour avoir prise sur ce qui apparaît comme une menace pour une certaine conception traditionnelle du monde »,¹¹ conception hégémonique pourrait-on surenchérir.

De manière générale, l'auteur introduit l'idée d'un dispositif qui fonctionne sur la reconnaissance d'un espace Autre, tout autant appréciable par sa beauté que les espaces des métropoles occidentales. Il est également question de le désigner par des termes et expressions qui tendent à le fixer en acquérant « une certaine réalité, ou, tout simplement, la réalité ».¹² Ce concept de « fixité » dans la construction idéologique de l'altérité est l'un des attributs du discours colonial, dont le versant actif est le stéréotype. Celui-ci « produit cet effet de vérité probabiliste et de prévisibilité [...] toujours en excès de ce qui peut être empiriquement démontré ou logiquement construit ».¹³ On discutera en ce sens, brièvement, les processus par lesquels il s'est exprimé dans le discours colonial sur l'espace de la ville d'Alger.

C'est presque vingt ans après Fromentin, en 1881, que Guy de Maupassant, mandaté par *Le Gaulois*, quotidien monarchiste et mondain très en vogue, effectue son premier voyage en Algérie dans le contexte insurrectionnel, faisant suite à la promulgation des Décrets Crémieux¹⁴. Il évoque alors la capitale en ces termes :

« Féerie inespérée et qui ravit l'esprit ! Alger a passé mes attentes. Qu'elle est jolie la ville de neige sous l'éblouissante lumière ! Une immense terrasse longe le port, soutenue par des arcades élégantes. Au-dessus, s'élèvent de grands hôtels européens et le quartier français, au-dessus encore s'échelonne la ville arabe, amoncellement de petites maisons blanches,

¹¹BHABHA, H, *Les Lieux de la culture. Une théorie postcoloniale*, Paris, Ed. Payot, 2007, p.131.

¹²*Ibid.*, p.128.

¹³*Ibid.*, p.122.

¹⁴Le premier décret en qui assimile l'administration algérienne à l'administration française, confie les pleins pouvoirs un gouverneur civil le second accorde aux Israélites la citoyenneté française suscitant la colère des musulmans qui se sentent méprisés.

bizarres, enchevêtrées les unes dans les autres, séparées par des rues qui ressemblent à des souterrains clairs. L'étage supérieur est supporté par des suites de bâtons peints en blanc ; les toits se touchent. Il y a des escaliers mystérieux vers des demeures qui semblent des terriers pleins de grouillantes familles arabes ».¹⁵

Notons, pour commencer, que l'Alger de Maupassant est d'abord « une ville que l'on pense et que l'on édifie au gré des lectures sans l'avoir nécessairement parcourue ».¹⁶ Lui qui la perçoit pour la première fois en cette année de 1881, il l'avait déjà saisie à travers le prisme des textes de ses prédécesseurs, si nombreux, que Balzac maugréait : « Il pleut aujourd'hui des ouvrages sur Alger ; à voir le catalogue de tout ce qui se publie sur cette ville, on ne sera plus tenté de dire que les Français ne voyagent point ».¹⁷

Mais de toute évidence, ce qui est permanent dans les textes de ces auteurs est une volonté consciente ou inconsciente, de construire un espace diminué, dégénéré, hétérogène et insaisissable, à tel point que la France coloniale se devait de le domestiquer, de l'uniformiser et de l'homogénéiser, ce qui lui permettait de mener à bien sa mission « civilisatrice ». On peut observer ces changements sur un plan architectural avec l'apparition de la terrasse du port, des arcades, des grands hôtels européens, ce qui ne manque pas de reléguer la Casbah au second plan. Notons tout de même que l'édification de la métropole coloniale sur le modèle archétypal occidental s'est souvent accomplie au détriment du patrimoine culturel.

À l'examen du vocabulaire employé par l'auteur, on est frappé par la modalité appréciative, avec laquelle les espaces sont évalués en termes de bon ou mauvais. Le bon étant l'apanage de la ville européenne « immense, élégante, grande » et le mauvais celui de la ville arabe « bizarre, enchevêtrée, terriers, trous ». On peut s'interroger sur le sens de cette modalité. On est tenté de dire que Maupassant instaure insidieusement une opposition entre le versant occidental et oriental de la ville, le premier rassurant par sa familiarité et le second dérangent, voir menaçant par son « inquiétante étrangeté ». Cette opposition n'aura de cesse d'altérer la dynamique des relations entre ces deux espaces et

¹⁵MAUPASSANT, Le journal *Le Gaulois*, du 3 décembre, 1888, in http://alger-roi.fr/Alger/litterature/textes/01_maupassant.htm, consulté le 15.08.2019.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p.242.

¹⁷Vocabulaire franco-algérien à l'usage du corps expéditionnaire, in *Le feuilleton*, n°8, 21 avril 1830.

finira même par les isoler et les transformer en fragments étanches, en deux lieux antithétiques au sein d'une même ville, deux entités qui s'excluent réciproquement, d'abord celle en « dur, toute de pierre et de fer. [...]illuminée, asphaltée. [...] (s)es rues sont nettes, lisses, sans trous, sans cailloux.[...]une ville de blancs, d'étrangers ».18Ensuite l'autre celle des Autres, « un lieu mal famé, [...] un monde sans intervalles, les hommes y sont les uns sur les autres. [...] une ville affamée [...], une ville accroupie, une ville à genoux, une ville vautrée, [...] une ville de nègres, une ville de bicots ».19

Toutefois, c'est de par la fixité qu'installent ces auteurs dans la représentation de l'espace de la ville que le stéréotype prend racine et gêne l'articulation d'autres expressions. Cela se vérifie dans les textes de Louis Bertrand qui, lorsque qu'il débarque de sa Lorraine natale, découvre une ville en pleine mutation sociale, architecturale et cadastrale :« On bâtissait l'Alger moderne, écrivait-il dans *Le sang des races* »20« [...] On édifiait les voûtes du port et le boulevard de l'Impératrice, les rues d'Isly et de Constantine s'ébauchaient, entraînant comme deux grands canaux le flot montant des populations neuves vers les plages et les ravins fleuris de Mustapha»21.

Si l'apport de Bertrand réside en ceci qu'il éclaire certaines phases importantes de la réédification de la métropole, c'est surtout son point de vue allogène propre, selon Westphal, à ceux et à celles qui se sont fixés dans un endroit sans que celui-ci leur soit encore familier, sans non plus qu'il demeure pour eux exotique, que ses écrits méritent que l'on s'y intéresse. Néanmoins, on estime rappeler que les récits de l'auteur reflètent une théorie berbériste22 dont il se réclame.

« Lors d'un récent séjour à Alger, je roulais ces pensées mélancoliques, en flânant sur ce paisible boulevard de

18FANON Frantz, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, Paris, Ed. Seuil, 1952, p.12.

19*Ibid.*, p.12.

20BERTRAND, L (1899), *Le sang des races*, Paris, Ed. L'Harmattan, 1978.

21*Ibid.*, p.15.

22Le mythe berbère est une interprétation idéologique de ce fait par les auteurs coloniaux qui ont distingué et opposé les populations berbérophones et arabophones (considérées comme des "races" différentes), en valorisant les premières par rapport aux secondes. Cette valorisation des Berbères se faisait en les rapprochant de l'Occident européen, par l'affirmation d'une communauté d'origine et de "race", garante de vertus héréditaires communes à des peuples également sédentaires, travailleurs, économes et démocrate

l'Amirauté. [...] À mes pieds, face lunaire et doucement miroitante, s'arrondissait le vieux port des pirates barbaresques. Et, tout à coup je me souvins de l'émotion qui me saisit lorsque je me trouvais pour la première fois devant ce spectacle : il y'a de cela tant d'années que je n'ose les compter... je me souvins surtout du tumulte d'images extravagantes que ce trouble fit naître dans mon esprit tirillé par les réminiscences littéraires ».²³

On remarque ici que l'image de l'Orient fantasmé, fortement présente dans les précédentes descriptions, reste le propre de la littérature de l'époque. Elle semble néanmoins s'estomper au profit d'une autre. Celle qui s'emploie à amorcer l'avènement d'un nouvel espace urbain avec ses boulevards aux voies larges bordées d'allées piétonnières, contrastant avec l'architecture de l'ancienne cité aux ruelles étroites et escarpées, ramenée dans l'extrait au « vieux port de pirates barbaresques » qui s'arrondit en signe de soumission aux nouveaux maîtres des lieux. L'image « se ferme, figée dans le statut colonial, pris dans le carcan de l'oppression ».²⁴

Cette représentation bipolaire est manifestement née « d'un aller simple coïncidant avec un regard porté d'un point sur un autre, sans que la réciproque soit véritablement envisagée ».²⁵ En effet, en ces heures avancées de l'âge de la conquête coloniale, la production autochtone francophone est quasi inexistante, ce qui n'offre aucun contre-point au seul regard hégémonique exprimé dans une langue encore très peu accessible à la population « indigène » de l'époque. La configuration où « un sujet, toujours le même, observe un objet toujours l'autre ; une culture regardante se focalise sur une culture regardée dont le statut de « culture » est toujours minoré »²⁶ n'a été ébranlée qu'au sortir de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, non pas seulement comme conséquence des mouvements de décolonisation et du bouleversement « hiérarchies du regard »²⁷ mais aussi par la relativisation des rapports entre un centre historique et sa périphérie. Dès lors, l'émergence d'un point de vue Autre que celui ethnocentré jusque là dominant, a contribué à « entamer un

²³BERTRAND Louis, *Nuits d'Alger*, http://alger-roi.fr/Alger/litterature/nuits_alger/textes/1_chapitres_1_tirremes_hamilcar.htm, consulté le 15.08.2019.

²⁴BHABHA, *Op. cit.*, p.138.

²⁵WESTPHAL, *Op. cit.*, p.187.

²⁶WESTPHAL, *Op. cit.*, p.184.

²⁷*Ibidem.* p.189.

processus de ré-vision ».²⁸

2. Processus de ré-vision

Si les premiers récits algériens calqués sur un modèle réaliste hexagonal ont contribué à redéfinir l'espace national, d'autres en ont bien avant esquissé le contour. Tel est le cas des œuvres d'Albert Camus qui constituent, en outre, l'hypotexte de nombreux autres. La particularité de l'auteur de *L'Étranger* est qu'il incarne la bipolarité exprimée dans ses textes : fils du pays²⁹ et issu de la colonisation, il est le Même et l'Autre, L'Envers et L'Endroit. Ses œuvres réfléchissent l'ombre et la lumière qu'il promène des villages de Kabylie jusqu'à l'Oranais en passant par Tipasa. Alger, quant à elle, ville de l'insouciante enfance et adolescence a habité toute son œuvre. Un lieu raconté par Jacques, héros du *Premier homme*³⁰, au fil de ses réminiscences :

« [...] ils filaient vers la plage. Il fallait, pour cela traverser la route dite Moutonnaire parce qu'en effet des troupeaux de moutons la parcouraient souvent en provenance ou en direction du marché de Maison-Carrée à l'est d'Alger. C'était en réalité une rocade qui séparait de la mer l'arc de cercle que faisait la ville installée sur ses collines en amphithéâtre. Entre la route et la mer, des fabriques des briqueteries et une usine à gaz étaient séparées par des étendues de sable recouvert de plaques d'argile ou de poussière de chaux où blanchissaient des débris de bois et de fer. Traversée cette lande ingrate, on débouchait sur la plage des Sablettes ».³¹

Semblable à une didascalie initiale, travaillée par le refus du sens unifié et réducteur cher à Camus, ainsi que par un style maintenant l'écriture à son degré zéro, l'extrait œuvre à une mise en spectacle de la ville par le biais de la déconstruction de l'image utopique trop souvent véhiculée par la littérature coloniale. L'industrialisation nouvelle investit l'ancienne cité berbère, « la domine, la bouleverse, menace son cœur et la fait éclater vers ses périphéries ».³²

²⁸WESTPHAL, *Op. cit.* p.202.

²⁹CAMUS Albert naît à Mondovi (Algérie) le 7 Novembre 1913. Après la mort de son père, sa mère s'installe avec lui dans un des quartiers pauvres d'Alger, Belcourt où elle réside jusqu'à sa mort.

³⁰CAMUS, A, (1994), *Premier homme*, Paris, Ed. Folio, 2000.

³¹*Ibid.*, p.162.

³²LEFEBVRE, H, *La Révolution urbaine*, Paris, Ed. Gallimard, 1970, p.123.

Nonobstant, le processus de ré-vision se situe, *a fortiori*, dans les textes d'Algériens autochtones ; les pionniers commencent dès les années cinquante à poser le territoire de la nation à venir, en ouvrant l'espace traditionnel longtemps circonscrit par la tradition orale ainsi que par « le déni de l'Autre[qui]exacerbe toujours le tranchant de l'identification, révèle cet endroit dangereux où l'identité et l'agressivité sont jumelles ».³³

Les espaces posés par les pionniers ont été ensuite modifiés par la production de « représentations libres, orgiques et non organique^s ». ³⁴Mais aussi par la surimpression d'abondantes images inscrites dans les multiples représentations contemporaines qui relèvent, non pas seulement du *Je* cherchant ses repères au sein de la ville, mais d'une volonté de réappropriation de lieux longtemps investis par une subjectivité Autre. « L'état d'urgence [étant] toujours aussi état d'émergence », ³⁵c'est au sein même de la confusion culturelle enfantée par la guerre de libération et celle fratricide de la décennie quatre-vingt-dix, que s'est forgée la possibilité de subvertir et de déplacer la logique binaire longtemps inscrite dans les textes comme juxtaposition de l'opposition dominant/dominé. On observe, en effet, dans la littérature étrangère francophone contemporaine, révélant l'espace de la capitale, l'émergence d'écrits s'apparentant, à priori, à des récits de voyage, qui, loin de la décrire, la mettent en scène tout en ébranlant le schéma collectif figé qu'est le stéréotype dominant/dominé. « L'image type élaborée par une parole hégémonique, monofocale, monochrome » ³⁶subit en fin de compte, d'une part la démultiplication des regards, d'autre part la diversification des points de vue. Elle se trouve en ce sens altérée. Aussi s'agit-il de jauger les procédés permettant cette affection. À cette fin, on exploitera *L'Interdite d'Alger*³⁷, texte de Christian Lecomte, romancier et journaliste à Genève. Le titre fait écho au contexte insurrectionnel faisant suite à la rupture du processus électoral dans les années quatre-vingt-dix, pendant lequel, à l'instar de tout le pays, Alger emprisonné, a vécu *intramuros*. Tout a commencé lorsque l'héroïne, Mina, jeune femme

³³BHABHA, *Op. cit.* pp.115-116.

³⁴WESTPHAL, *Op. cit.*, p.202

³⁵BHABHA, *Op. cit.*, p. 87.

³⁶WESTPHAL, *Op. cit.*, p.202

³⁷LECOMTE, C, *L'Interdite d'Alger*, Genève, Ed. Zoe, 2010.

bosniaque, musulmane, mariée à un diplomate occidental en poste à Alger, décide de partir à la rencontre de la ville et de la côtoyer sans le prisme des écrans de contrôle, de leurs images en noir et blanc, sans celui des chaînes étrangères, des journaux, de l'exagération des Algérois, de l'image fictionnalisée par les romans qu'elle consommait en nombre, loin des souvenirs de Sarajevo, sa ville natale martyrisée elle aussi, la voir en somme sans le prisme du corps diplomatique. Elle se lie d'amitié avec sa femme de ménage, Khalida, grâce à qui elle découvre une autre vie, un autre espace qui l'attire, la saisit par son aspect mystérieux et paradoxalement apaisant. Ces escapades la conduisent à la redécouverte des lieux mythiques de la métropole.

La plage de Padovani d'abord, celle que Camus, plus d'un demi-siècle auparavant, décrivait en ces termes : « À la plage Padovani, le dancing est ouvert tous les jours. Et dans cette immense boîte rectangulaire ouverte sur la mer dans toute sa longueur, la jeunesse pauvre du quartier danse jusqu'au soir ». ³⁸Devenue *El-Kettani*, la plage s'est, semble-t-il, assagie. Les danseurs endiablés ont fait place à

« [...]des hommes engoncés dans leurs rêves défaits[qui.] regardent l'écume de mer chargée de salissures. Une cigarette Rym coincée entre les lèvres, ils envoient des volutes de fumée au loin, vers le bleu azur de l'espace Schengen. Hommes seuls et figés. Qui soudain arpentent en procession le dédale des rues bancales ». ³⁹

Le ciel est désormais bleu ailleurs, loin de la baie où jadis amarrait le fleuron des navires, où la joie de vivre résonnait jusqu'à l'ailleurs. À présent, les détritiques obstruent l'horizon, seul filtre la fumée des cigarettes *made in ici*. L'espace se fixe dans une autre image aux antipodes de celle jusqu'ici représentée. Le stéréotype mue. La dichotomie est ailleurs. Elle met dos à dos l'ici et l'ailleurs. Alger rêve d'ailleurs.

Le Jardin d'Essais est un autre lieu emblématique de la capitale évoqué par Lecomte, « jungle de bambous et de roseaux, d'arbres du Guatemala, d'Australie tropicale, de Birmanie et du Sri Lanka [...] Royaume aujourd'hui décrépît, jonché de détritiques, coincé entre un tronçon d'autoroute et une voie rapide ». ⁴⁰Deux

³⁸CAMUS, A, *Noces suivi de L'Été*, Paris, Ed. Gallimard, 1972.

³⁹LECOMTE, *Op. cit.*, p.46.

⁴⁰LECOMTE, *Op. cit.*, p.62.

images antithétiques, celle du passé, intrigante, trépidante par sa diversité, celle du présent, déchue, figée dans l'espace et dans le temps. Un lieu comme vidé de sa charge signifiante, décosmisé et emprisonné dans L'Envers et l'Endroit d'une même représentation.

Plus loin, l'héroïne évoque « des femmes rassemblées place Addis-Abeba face à l'Office des Droits de l'Homme, comme les veuves de Srebrenica à Tuzla, avec leurs habits de paysanne, leur fichu sur la tête, les portraits de leurs maris, fils, frères ou pères disparus qu'elles serrent contre leur poitrine ».⁴¹

Deux espaces se trouvent juxtaposés ici, deux villes ramenées l'une à l'autre, tant les stigmates sont difficilement dissociables. Srebrenica et Alger se disent dans un aller-retour entre la guerre de Bosnie et la guerre civile algérienne, entre passé et présent. L'horreur unit ce que la distance désunit. C'est dans ce climat de tension qu'émerge « une stratégie de subversion, un mode de négation qui ne cherche pas à dévoiler la plénitude de l'espace, mais à manipuler sa représentation »,⁴² en plaçant le référent au centre du débat, en l'arrachant au regard hégémonique, monofocal et monochrome, en réduisant l'écart qui sépare les antipodes fixés par un discours autre dans l'espace et dans le temps. Il s'agit de déterritorialiser la représentation stéréotypée en y inscrivant la multiplicité, en l'amenant à admettre le divers, l'Autre, l'hybride, afin d'aller au devant d'un monde qui « tire le regard hors de soi ».⁴³

3. Le destin du stéréotype⁴⁴

Manifestement, la démythification d'espaces emblématiques contribue à subvertir le stéréotype binaire espace dominant/espace dominé. Or le stéréotype est dans son essence ambivalent, il fixe l'espace dans une image figée tout en s'octroyant la possibilité de se mouvoir car, par définition, il « n'est pas l'installation d'une image fautive qui devient le bouc émissaire de pratiques discriminatoires »⁴⁵ mais plutôt une somme, celle « de projection et d'introjection, de stratégies métaphoriques et métonymiques, de déplacement, de

⁴¹LECOMTE, *Op. cit.*, p.33.

⁴²BHABHA, *Op. cit.*, p.146.

⁴³WESTPHAL, *Op. cit.*, p.237.

⁴⁴WESTPHAL, *Op. cit.*, p.234

⁴⁵BHABHA, *Op. cit.*, p.143.

surdétermination, de culpabilité, d'agressivité [...] ».⁴⁶

Du reste, tirer le regard vers le dehors, vers l'Autre, permet de réduire, voire d'annihiler la part de stéréotypie inhérente à la représentation de tout espace et admet l'altérité qui s'inscrit par la réfraction du regard de l'Autre. Les réverbérations qui en résultent permettent d'évacuer un modèle culturel daté. Elles s'inscrivent dans les textes d'auteurs allogènes aussi bien que dans ceux d'écrivains exogènes à son espace.

C'est ce cas de figure qui nous a interpellé dans *Théorie d'Alger*⁴⁷. Sébastien Lapaque se projette dans la ville, il se cherche plus qu'il ne la cherche, son texte ouvre l'espace aux interactions entre passé et présent, entre petites histoires du quotidien et grands événements révolus. La trame du récit se tisse autours de rencontres au coin d'une rue, à la sortie d'un café, dans les taxis. On y côtoie aussi bien les frères Barberousse que Kamel Daoud, Napoléon III, Che Guevara, Himoud Brahimi (dit Momo, poète de la Casbah), Nasreddine Dinet, Germaine Tillion, François Mauriac, Lili Boniche, Camus et sa mère (Catherine Sintès), Bernanos ou encore Jean-Paul Sartre, et petit à petit émerge l'image d'une *ville-monde*.

Toutefois, la métropole ne se donne pas à voir facilement. « Encerclée par la montagne, généreusement ouverte sur la mer, elle est à la fois simple et compliquée ».⁴⁸ Elle est un espace qui s'offre aux flâneries improvisées, au vagabondage que pratique l'auteur. Elle attire « par ses qualités mais surtout pour ses défauts, ses bruyantes querelles, sa gouaille, son désordre, ses coupures d'eau et d'électricité ».⁴⁹ Lapaque affectionne les lieux réputés sans intérêt comme ceux qui sont chargés d'histoire car la « ville ne dit pas son passé elle le possède pareil aux lignes de la main, inscrit au coin des rues, dans les grilles des fenêtres, sur les rampes des escaliers[...] ».⁵⁰

Par ailleurs, le regard qu'il pose sur la métropole est intertextuel, « il se construit dans le temps par divers processus de différenciation et d'assimilation et se rive aux nombreux textes à travers lesquels l'esprit et l'imagination ont épousé l'espace ».⁵¹ L'auteur cite Victor Hugo dont le nom,

⁴⁶BHABHA, *Op. cit.*, p.143.

⁴⁷LAPAQUE, S, *Théorie d'Alger*, Alger, Ed. Barzekh, 2016. p.51.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, p.51.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p.51.

⁵⁰CALVINO, *Op. cit.*, p.16.

⁵¹WESTPHAL, *Op. cit.*, p.205.

toponyme colonial d'une rue pourtant débaptisée, résonne encore. Alger est, en outre, la rue de Lyon, le Belcourt du jeune Camus, l'hôtel Aletti devenu Es-Safir, le balcon du gouvernement général d'où Charles de Gaulle a clamé son célèbre « je vous ai compris ». C'est celle d'Assia Djebar dans *Le blanc de l'Algérie*⁵², aussi bien que celle de Lili Boniche,⁵³ qui « aime toutes les villes mais un peu plus Paris, mais rien ne vaut l'Algérie ». Le romancier caresse le vœu « d'honorer ensemble les fantômes du Tontonville, Azzedine Medjoubi et Paule Toulet, l'homme de théâtre algérien assassiné par les barbus et le poète par l'opium ».⁵⁴

Alger possède la « propriété de rester dans la mémoire endroit après endroit, dans la succession de ses rues, et des maisons le long des rues et des portes et fenêtres des maisons le long des rues ».⁵⁵ Elle cesse d'être la métonymie de l'exotisme car elle n'était pas aussi blanche mais « multicolore, [...]. Elle était aussi très bleue, très verte, très rouge et très jaune, à la première heure du soir, quand le soleil passait de l'autre côté de la montagne ».⁵⁶ Alger se farde d'autres couleurs afin d'égailler ses traits blafards longtemps plongés dans la nuit du colonialisme et de l'islamisme. Elle s'émancipe « on ne l'occupe pas, elle nous occupe ».⁵⁷

Conclusion

En fin de compte, qu'est-ce qu'un lieu tel qu'Alger ?

Prenant le pari de répondre par des mots autres que les nôtres, ceux des Autres.

« Longtemps berbère et juive à la fois, phénicienne et byzantine, turque et française, devenue indomptable, libre et belle, Alger était une ville dont les habitants hésitaient sans cesse entre les rires et les larmes ».⁵⁸

« Bâtie sur des îles battues qui furent mille
Ville audacieuse Ville démarrée

⁵²DJEBAR, A, *Le Blanc de l'Algérie*, Paris, Le Livre de Poche 2002.

⁵³Chanteur né en 1922 à Alger et décédé le 6 mars 2008 à Paris. Il est un chanteur algérien juif de musique arabo-andalouse., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfndAriojx8>, consulté le 15.08.2019.

⁵⁴LAPAQUE, *op. cit.*, p.49

⁵⁵CALVINO, *op. cit.*, p.21.

⁵⁶LAPAQUE, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

⁵⁷LAPAQUE, *op. cit.*, p.27.

⁵⁸LAPAQUE, *op. cit.*, p.105.

Ville marine bleu marine saline
Ville au large rapide à l'aventure
On l'appelle El Djezaïr »⁵⁹.

« Son secret est dans la façon dont la vue court dans les figures qui se suivent comme dans une partition musicale ». ⁶⁰Même si le discours colonial, par la production de savoirs de colonisateur et de colonisé, stéréotypés mais évalués sur un mode antithétique⁶¹ »génère une forme arrêtée, fixée de représentation qui, « dénie le jeu de la différence que permet la négation à travers l'Autre ». ⁶²« L'espace humain correspond [ici]à la somme versatile des représentations qui le visent, le construisent et le reconstruisent, abstraction faite du support générique ». ⁶³Et puisque « l'analyse des stéréotypes et des clichés [tend]à démystifier tout ce qui entrave les relations interpersonnelles, la libre appréciation du réel, l'originalité et la novation », ⁶⁴ « derrière l'éventail bleu et blanc de leurs balcons, les Algéroises composent un clair-obscur intime et facétieux tandis qu'en bas des hommes accablés de soleil lâchent des obscénités pour ne pas se mettre à pleurer ». ⁶⁵

« Alger n'est peut-être, au final, qu'un zodiaque de fantasmagories de l'esprit » !⁶⁶

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⁵⁹GREKI, A, *Algérie capitale Alger*, Ed. SNED, Tunis, 1963.

⁶⁰CALVINO, *op. cit.*, p.2.

⁶¹BHABHA, *cit.*, p. 127.

⁶²BHABHA, *op. cit.*, p.134.

⁶³WESTPHAL, *op. cit.*, p.195.

⁶⁴WESTPHAL, *op. cit.*, p.239.

⁶⁵LECOMTE, *op. cit.*, p.56.

⁶⁶CALVINO, *op. cit.*, p.31.

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Multiple Selves and Otherness: Gothic Identity in Margaret Atwood's *The Robber Bride*

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Abstract: *This paper examines how Margaret Atwood's three female protagonists of the novel 'The Robber Bride' (1993) try to overcome the ghosts of their pasts by coping with their troubled childhood and youth and the surprising 'resurrection' of their archenemy, Zenia. The aim of this paper is to illustrate how the three women deal, both individually and together, with the shadows of their past and gain a life-long friendship in the process of piecing together their fragmented self and accepting their complex identity. The main characters deal with issues of identity in the attempt to heal the deep and painful wounds of the past, to become powerful, more independent, and to get over the bad experiences through which their families, partners, and antagonist have put them.*

Key words: *identity, otherness, Gothic, the double, femme fatale*

Introduction

In this study, the focus lies on identifying the different Gothic subgenres reflected in Margaret Atwood's fiction, in general, and in her novel *The Robber Bride* (1993), in particular, based on definitions and critical points of view. The article contains an overview of critical appraisals of the novel *The Robber Bride* as Gothic fiction as well as personal observations and comments on Gothic elements and aspects of Gothic identity in the novel to support the critical opinions and to highlight the distinctive features of Atwood's take on this literary genre.

Margaret Atwood's Gothic

In her works of fiction, Canadian author and 2000 Booker Prize winner Margaret Atwood illustrates victimized women in their quest for identity, their struggle with their status as victims, which they try to

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overcome, and their fight for physical and mental survival. In her work of literary criticism *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972), the Canadian writer deals with survival as the central theme of Canadian literature that is always assuming the victim-position in relation to British, American, or even French literature. Almost all the main female characters in her fiction try (more or less successfully) to transform from victims into survivors.

We can regard Margaret Atwood as a 20th century pioneer in Canadian literature. Katharine Viner (para. 7) believes that “It is impossible to overstate just how famous Margaret Atwood is in Canada. [...] When she started writing, there was no literary tradition”. Roxanne J. Fand (153-154) claims that Margaret Atwood’s idea of self is that of an intersection of events endorsing a dialogic concept of self that includes dimensions that intersect with nature as well as society and that transcend time and space. Margaret Atwood’s attitude is that her life happens to be taking place in a Canadian context, and therefore her events are coloured by that experience, which is itself constantly changing and redefined. At the beginning of an interview with the Canadian author, Katharine Viner (para. 1) explains, “Margaret Atwood would like to clear a few things up from the start. [...] People often think she lives the lives of the characters in her books, she says. But they are not her”.

Rama Gupta (3) asserts that Atwood’s characters “are motivated by intra-psychic and interpersonal conflicts. Her protagonists are obsessed with some kind of fear, which leads them either to hide their identity or to assume double identity so as to escape reality. All of them are self-alienated”. Canadian literary critic and theorist Northrop Frye (i) also alludes to “the famous Canadian problem of identity” that

may seem a rationalized, self-pitying, or made-up problem to those who have never had to meet it, or have never understood that it was there to be met [...] the question of identity is primarily a cultural and imaginative question, and there is always something vegetable about the imagination, something sharply limited in range.

In 1973, in an interview with novelist Graeme Gibson, Canadian author and 2009 Nobel Prize winner Alice Munro states, “the part of the country I come from is absolutely Gothic. You can’t get it all down”. (Gibson 248) By this, Alice Munro refers to the subgenre Southern Ontario Gothic, a term coined the same year by Timothy Findley in an

interview with Graeme Gibson (138) to describe the Canadian counterpart of the Southern American Gothic. Like Alice Munro and Timothy Findley, Margaret Atwood is one of the main writers whose books are included in this subgenre. In a more recent study on Gothic in Canadian literature, Cynthia Sugars and Gerry Turcotte speak about the subgenre “postcolonial Gothic”

which is concerned less with overt scenes of romance and horror than with experiences of spectrality and the uncanny. [...] there is an aura of unresolved and unbroachable ‘guilt’, as though the colonial/historical foundations of the nation have not been thoroughly assimilated. [...] For non-Indigenous subjects, the Canadian postcolonial Gothic arguably charts a largely psychological experience – haunted minds rather than a haunted wilderness (viii-x).

Fiona Tolan (2009: 143) speaks about the “postcolonial other” in Atwood’s novel *The Robber Bride* by arguing: “Atwood’s examination of women’s power is frequently employed as a metaphor for Canada’s experience as a postcolonial nation.” Fiona Tolan (144) also points out the “shifting identity” both of Atwood’s characters and of “Canada itself”: “In both the novel and the nation, the boundary between self and other – between colonizer and colonized – is fluid and uncertain.”

Hugo Ríos-Cordero (Abstract, 79) calls magic realism “one of the most famous progenies” and “the dark heir” of the Gothic. Sharon R. Wilson (28, 35) includes *The Robber Bride* in the genre magic or magical realism, a postmodern form of the Gothic, as she points out the elements that motivate her opinion:

Again embedding fairy tales, myths, legends, historical and biblical stories, and popular literature and songs, Atwood’s *The Robber Bride* presents magically real characters, narration, images and motifs, settings and scenes, plots and events, themes, and particularly the memorable Zenia, the Robber Bride who betrays the friendship of Tony, Charis, and Roz and steals their men. [...] As one of the characteristics of postmodernism, magical realism offers readers fresh perspectives on old stories and the assurance that even the most ordinary event may have its magical side.

Referring to one of Margaret Atwood’s earlier novels, *Lady Oracle* (1976), Susanne Becker (147-148) alludes to “the intensely liberating

effect of the Gothic that celebrates excess” in the form of “a complex twist, as fantasy can also take the shape of popular horror, ‘escape literature’ ” in which “the haunted house of feminine Gothic fiction exceeds into a maze – with multiple centres”. In an interview with Susanne Becker, Margaret Atwood proclaims that “reality becomes gothic” in her dystopian novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985), which leads Susanne Becker to extend this statement to *Lady Oracle* (Becker 187). We can assert that Margaret Atwood’s observation applies to most of her fiction.

Susanne Becker (187) remarks that the “autobiography” of the female protagonist of *Lady Oracle*, Joan Foster, “turns into a Gothic plot with layers of dark insights, of femininity perceived as monstrous and love discarded as threat [...] the relationship of gothicism and realism, of fiction and truth, is addressed here”. Susanne Becker (187) also points out that: “Lady Oracle’s neo-gothicism makes a case for escape from the constraints of a misogynist order while at the same time – through its own excessive maze-like texture – vigorously addressing the violence of these constraints”.

In the same interview with Susanne Becker, Margaret Atwood identifies Gothic as a “specific women’s form”:

I would say the Jane Eyre pattern is more or less how the gothic has evolved, the Female Gothic – and some people who have written about it have mentioned the masochism [...] the heroine gets put through all these terrible things, and then there’s the sell-out in the end because she marries the man. But I don’t think it’s that at all. I think it’s lion-taming. (Becker 190)

In a study on Margaret Atwood’s fiction, Gina Wisker (2012: 99), the author of many important articles and books on Margaret Atwood’s life and work, includes *The Robber Bride* and *Cat’s Eye* (1988) in the category Female Gothic:

In both *Cat’s Eye* and *The Robber Bride*, Atwood’s exploration of female mischievousness and spite, and the use of narratives to shape versions of reality, take her work more deeply into favourite areas of concern. [...] Both novels use female Gothic and reflective storytelling to shape histories and ultimately to own and affirm positive versions of identity.

For Gina Wisker, Margaret Atwood is “a leading practitioner of Canadian Gothic” (2016: 63) and

arguably the leading living Canadian writer, whose work can be recognised (among other things) as Gothic and ecofeminist (though she resists such limiting labels). [...] However, while moving through intense, desolate spaces and constrained relationships, Atwood often also empowers her characters in their challenge to conventional romantic narratives and sometimes offers new freedoms and agency alongside their new self-awareness. (Wisker 2016: 69-70)

Gina Wisker (2016: 73) also remarks that Margaret Atwood “builds on conventional Gothic, using its characteristics of landscape and buildings, human mind-sets, imagination, the haunting of the past in the present”. The critic classifies Margaret Atwood main novels into different categories of Gothic: “wilderness Gothic (*Surfacing*), dystopian sci-fi Gothic (*Oryx and Crake*, *The Handmaid’s Tale*), romantic Gothic (*Lady Oracle*, *The Edible Woman*), historical (*Alias Grace*), [and] new urban Gothic (*The Robber Bride*)” (Wisker 2016: 75).

Coral Ann Howells has coined the term “Atwoodian Gothic” (Howells 62-85) in her 1995 study on the Canadian author and presents it as “both sinister and jokey, rather like the scary game which Atwood describes in *Murder in the Dark*, a game about murderers, victims and detectives played with the lights off”. (Howells 62) Tomasz Sikora states that “Margaret Atwood has employed Gothic modes and conventions from the beginning of her literary career, so much so that the term ‘Atwood (or Atwoodian) Gothic’ has acquired a critical currency in its own right.” (Sikora 204)

Gothic aspects in *The Robber Bride*: split selves and the dark *Other* lurking in the shadows ready to come to light in Margaret Atwood’s novel *The Robber Bride*, an example of Postmodern Gothic, we find traditional Gothic motifs like the dark double, a female vamp(ire) (as a form of *femme fatale*), dreams, and magic mirrors. The three female protagonists of the novel (Tony, Charis, and Roz) aim at eliminating their nemesis, their mysterious and uncanny former friend, Zenia, in order to rediscover their lost *selves*, their identity.

Margaret Atwood is famous for her skilled use of intertextuality. In a study on contemporary English-Canadian fiction, Linda Hutcheon (68) refers to the use of intertextuality as a means of recalling other texts, of reinterpreting old text in new contexts: “authorial authority

rests on a single meaning, fixed in the past". Donna L. Potts (281) lists the "countless intertexts" on which *The Robber Bride* relies and their importance for the main theme of the novel, identity:

it incorporates a soap opera plot – in which an evil, beautiful woman steals her friends' husbands and lovers, dies under mysterious circumstances, and miraculously comes back to life – as well as folk tales, nursery rhymes, vampire and ghost stories, classical myths, comic books, Robert Graves's *The White Goddess*, Euripide's *The Trojan Women*, Bible stories, *The Wizard of Oz*, murder mysteries, and horror movies. [...] Furthermore, Atwood's narrative transgressions ultimately challenge yet another by-product of the Western world view: the traditional concept of the self. Atwood thereby demonstrates her belief in the potential for an empowering "hybrid" self, one that crosses the boundaries between colonizer and colonized, male and female, self and other.

One of the most important examples of intertextuality in Margaret Atwood's novel *The Robber Bride* is the title. As the title suggests, the novel is based on the German fairy tale *The Robber Bridegroom* (1812) by the Brothers Grimm, in which a mysterious, wealthy, and attractive young man begins to lure innocent girls with marriage promises, then brutally kills and eats them. In Margaret Atwood's novel, there is a direct reference to the German folktale. Tony, one of the three protagonists of Margaret Atwood's novel, thinks that changing the title into *The Robber Bride* in reference to Zenia would be appropriate in their case. Her friend Roz suggests reversing the gender to suit Zenia: "The Robber Bride, lurking in her mansion in the dark forest, preying upon the innocent, enticing youths to their doom in her evil cauldron. Like Zenia" (Atwood 1993: 144).

Libora Oates-Indruchová (127) explains that, in Zenia,

the general theme of the mobilising function of the evil female character acquires a concrete shape. She carries a number of the traditional attributes of a witch, an evil stepmother, an evil godmother, or an evil stepsister, with a modern varnish of dark sexual desirability. She appears and disappears as she wishes, including making herself dead and resurrecting, and nobody knows her motives, her story.

According to Sabine Hake (164), “the aestheticizing of seduction and fate, the theatricality of female beauty and sexuality, and the eroticism of violence and death are constitutive elements” of the *femme fatale*. Sabine Hake (164) further remarks that “The continuous appeal of the *femme fatale* [...] must be linked to her ability to conflate two seemingly opposite concepts of femininity, woman as nature and woman as artifice”. In Gothic fiction, the *femme fatale* or *fatal female* is described as “a womanly foil of the frail, lovely, and goodhearted Gothic heroine”, “her fictional, imperious, and darkly counterpart” (Snodgrass 120). Heather Braun believes that the “combination of realism of mysticism made her most attractive to writers of ballads within Gothic novels, which expose the *femme fatale*’s contradictory appeal by locating her alongside her terror-filled foil, the Gothic heroine” (Braun 18). Cynthia G. Kuhn (53) states that Zenia “demonstrates all of the typical characteristics of the *femme fatale*” as established by V.M. Allen (4) in her study on the concept of *femme fatale*: “beautiful, erotic, seductive, destructive, exotic [...] self-determined and independent”.

We can assert that Zenia represents the *femme fatale*, the alluring woman whose charms entrap her lovers who cannot resist the desire that leads them into risky and even fatal situations. Metaphorically, Zenia is “a man-eater” and, according to the title of the novel, a “robber” of other women’s partners. She wants to destroy their happiness by proving that no man can be trusted entirely, because most of them are attracted to such shallow women like Zenia. At some point in the novel, all three leading characters unveil their dark longing to become like Zenia. Cynthia G. Kuhn (50) considers *The Robber Bride* both “a collection of (her)stories that begin to address the mystery of Zenia’s effect on the characters’ lives” and “a fable for our times – a tale about what it means (and requires) to be viewed as a successful woman in contemporary culture during the late twentieth century”. Fiona Tolan (2009: 155) believes:

The splitting of Zenia that occurs throughout the text into beauty and monstrosity, confidante and traitor, good and bad, reflects the split felt within each of the characters; just as each woman recognises a good about themselves within Zenia, so they also recognise previously repressed bad feelings.

In Atwood’s novel, Zenia is the female representation of evil. At first, the three protagonists are credulous victims of Zenia’s manipulation, but gradually they grow closer, confront their fears, and become strong,

both individually and as a team. Each of them keeps someone and/ or something and, in the end, Tony wonders if they resemble Zenia, because everyone has a double nature. The three main characters are attracted to the dark side, embodied by Zenia, and each of them wants at some point to be in her shoes, but ultimately they are not that ruthless.

Mary Ellen Snodgrass (345) analyses vampirism as a central theme in Gothic narratives: “a Slavic belief in the vicious, self-serving acts of a hungering ghoul or predatory reanimated corpse. [...] According to the vampire motif, death traps in a decaying body a suffering soul, the dark twin of the Byronic hero”. Gina Wisker (2002: 20) describes Zenia as “vampiric, both a projection of, and feeder from, other’s fears. Like a vampire she has to be invited in, transforming herself into the shape and problems these women wish to nurture, help, and relate to, undermining them, embodying their weak spots”. Fiona Tolan (2007: 218) notices: “the image of Zenia as vampire or zombie is recurrent within the text, which opens with her returning from the dead.”

According to the *Encyclopedia of Gothic Literature*, “the concept of the doppelgänger² refers to the twin, shadow double, demon double, and split personality” (Snodgrass 83). In Gothic fiction, “the double signifies a desire to be re-united with a lost center of personality” (Jackson 64). Margaret Atwood (2002: 40) affirms: “the double is more than a twin or sibling. He or she is *you*, a you who shares your most essential features – your appearance, your voice, even your name – and, in traditional societies, such doubles were usually bad luck”.

In Corin Braga’s (137) view, the typology of romantic characters (the double, the Medusa-like woman, the monster, the titan, the genius) expresses the return of autonomous complexes of the collective unconscious from the deep. The unprecedented recurrence of the theme of the double suggests a new relationship people develop with their repressed personality. Corin Braga (137) classifies the romantic doubles depending on the degree of the split in relation to the ego of the autonomous alter egos personified in the figure of the double into: ethereal, spiritual doubles (corresponding to a partially maintained control over the cleaved alter ego) and concrete, material doubles (corresponding to the loss of control over the alter ego projected in someone else). The first category includes the motifs of the shadow, the mirror, and the tableau/ portrait, while the second category refers to the motifs of the twins, of the stranger who resembles

² The term derives from the German words “Doppel” (double) and “Gänger” (goer).

us “like a drop of water”, and of the female lover, whose love makes possible the realization of androgyny. According to Corin Braga’s classification, Zenia can be included in both categories. Zenia appears as the dark double, the shadow, and the reflection in the mirror of the three protagonists. Andreea Șerban (183) speaks about “female duality” as a recurring motif in Atwood’s fiction.

Based on his tripartition of the archetypes of the collective unconscious from an empirical point of view into the *shadow*, the *anima*, and the *animus*, Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung (8) believes that the *shadow*, which is a moral problem and has an emotional nature, is the most accessible of them and the easiest to experience: “To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge”. In Carl Gustav Jung’s (3-5) view, the *ego* is included in the *self*; while the *ego* forms “the centre of the field of consciousness”, the *self* represents “the total personality” that includes the consciousness, the unconscious, and the *ego*. Corin Braga (138-139) ascertains that the *shadow* abounds in romanticism and literature influenced by romanticism and the heroes must often confront their dark side epitomized in the *Other*. Relying on Carl Gustav Jung’s concept of the *self*, Carl Alfred Meier (81) believes that the *self* “tends to crystallize slowly in the course of the development of the personality, and then develops more rapidly in response to what happens when the conscious actively comes to terms with the unconscious”. Carl Gustav Jung first presented this phenomenon in his 1935 Eranos lecture, entitled *Dream Symbols of the Individuation Process* (Meier 81). Based on Carl Gustav Jung’s theory, we can observe that individuation means the process of self-awareness. We can affirm that Margaret Atwood’s three protagonists try to reach the stage of individuation by coming to terms with their whole personality. As part of their complex individuation process, we can say that the three protagonists try to accept both the good and the bad aspects of their *selves*.

According to Andreea Șerban (198), *The Robber Bride* deals with several depictions of the *Other*. We can remark that, on one hand, Zenia seems a vampire, who consumes the women’s vital energies, while, on the other hand, she reflects positive facets of each of their personalities. Zenia’s identity is ambiguous. She does not even have a surname and no one really knows if her birth name is actually the one she uses. Zenia repeatedly alters the story of her life and her looks to match her interests. It appears that no one really knows the circumstances of her birth. Her real past remains shrouded in mystery.

Zenia seems to have supernatural powers and even a person, who knows from previous experiences what she is like and how she can destroy a relationship, forgets or represses those unpleasant moments almost instantly and is again ready to believe whatever she wants them to think. As Tony tries to trace the meaning of the name Zenia, she finds contradictory possible explanations that suggest her complex nature:

Xenia, a Russian word for hospitable, a Greek one pertaining to the action of a foreign pollen upon a fruit; Zenaida, meaning daughter of Zeus, and the name of two early Christian martyrs; Zillah, Hebrew, a shadow; Zenobia, the third-century warrior queen of Palmyra in Syria, defeated by the Emperor Aurelian; Xeno, Greek, a stranger, as in xenophobic; Zenana, Hindu, the women's quarters or harem; Zen, a Japanese meditational religion; Zendic, an Eastern practitioner of heretical magic. (Atwood 1993: 226)

Like their rival, Zenia, the three female protagonists present multiple personalities that they must cope with in their quest for a unified self. The leading characters have two or three names or diminutives, including their alter egos: Tony is Antonia Freemont and Tnomerf Ynot, Roz Andrews is Rosalind Agnes Greenwood and Roz Grunwald, and Charis is Karen. It can be noticed that none of them uses her exact birth name anymore because they want to deny their origin and get over their childhood traumas. It seems that the strange Zenia has investigated their childhood knowing that recalling it made them vulnerable. Fiona Tolan (2007: 8) explains that Zenia is both the *Other* to Tony, Roz, and Charis, and their double. Margaret Atwood partially identifies with Zenia because, as the writer herself states in *Writing with Intent: Essays, Reviews, Personal Prose – 1983-2005* (2005), “she’s the professional liar” and “what else do fiction writers do but create lies that other people will believe” (Atwood, apud Irimia 2006: 130). According to Alice M. Palumbo (30),

The Robber Bride can be described as one long act of exorcism, as Tony, Charis, and Roz, the three protagonists, strive to rid themselves of the influence of Zenia, the “robber bride” of the title. In this novel, Atwood uses intertextual allusions and genres as organizing motifs for each character: Tony sees her life, and her interactions with Zenia, using the rhetoric of history, while Charis sees her own relationship with Zenia through New Age prophecy, and Roz through the

language of mystery novels and fairy tales.

Katharine Viner (para. 37) calls Zenia one of Margaret Atwood's "most memorable character", who "finds a way of hurting her closest women friends in horrific, emotionally devastating ways, exploiting their gravest fears, accessing them through their vulnerabilities".

In *The Robber Bride*, Margaret Atwood presents a case of sexual abuse experienced during the formative years of childhood that has a very powerful impact on the victim, Karen, who creates another self and assumes another name, Charis, in her desperate effort to minimize her suffering. Karen adopts the short form for Charity, a name taken from the Bible, so that she can distance herself from the sexual abuse inflicted upon her by her uncle when she was only a little girl. Reaching maturity, she refuses an abortion, and is ready to take responsibility for her daughter even though she has to raise her child alone, because her partner, Billy, rejected her and the baby, and ran away with Zenia. Charis is determined to give her child the affection she was denied during her childhood.

The three protagonists become a team who can defeat their malicious enemy, Zenia, by working together. Roxanne J. Fand (172) points out that each protagonist embodies an aspect of the human mind: "Tony is the intellectual, Charis the spiritual, and Roz the material". The central point of the story is the return of their old rival, who they believed to be dead for five years. Atwood uses flashbacks to make them recall individually their childhood, their youth, their first encounter with Zenia, their relationships with their respective partners, and the destruction their supposed friend brought about by manipulating their weaknesses. As friends and allies, who support and empower each other, they are strengthened in their fight against their "resurrected" rival.

In her 1999 study, Roxanne J. Fand (172) observes that:

Zenia is not just an outer enemy, a robber of their men, money, and power, she is also the incarnation of their own dark impulses, a shadowy alter ego for each of them. In realizing this, they learn to acknowledge and even respect her as a member of their dialogue. In psychological terms, instead of splitting and projecting their evil onto her, they recognize her in themselves. (...) The existence of Zenia creates the need for cooperation and dialogue, helping the weak to become strong.

The same critic (173) concludes that Zenia suffers from “the fear of weakness”:

Her self-image as a superior manipulator is an image she is trapped in; (...) it is not just one mask among others she is free to put on or take off, but compulsory. The protagonists, in contrast, are free to experience tenderness, the price of which may be vulnerability, but their options are greater, because they can learn success too, not as exploiters of others, but for the sake of their own creative or progressive narcissism.

Zenia’s traumatizing presence in the lives of the three protagonists is emphasized by her appearance in at least one of their disturbing dreams. Sleepwalking is another form of sleep disorder depicted in the novel. Charis suffers from this sleep disorder since childhood, when she was still Karen. For little Karen, somnambulism was a means to escape her uncle’s abuse. Tony’s invented backward language makes her feel more confident because she is a petite woman and was constantly bullied because of her height and Roz becomes a successful businesswoman to overcome her complex of inferiority caused by her Jewish origin and weight problems.

By confronting Zenia, Tony, Karen/ Charis, and Roz seem to have found an antidote to her poisonous influence. Zenia loses her power over them and thus becomes harmless. They do not allow her to cast her evil spell on them anymore. By joining forces and supporting each other to overcome the unpleasant experiences (traumatized childhoods, discontent about their physical appearance, abuses, manipulation, sleep disorders, and failed relationships) that darkened their past, the three protagonists prove that, as a team, they are strong and ready to begin new chapters in their lives. Because what has remained of their nemesis, who exploited their weak points and destroyed the relationships with their respective partners, is just a memory, they can move on by regarding Zenia only as a part of their past, who had both a negative and a positive effect on their evolution from innocence to experience and who ultimately brought them together and consolidated their friendship.

Conclusions

The term Atwoodian Gothic, as a combination of different Gothic

subgenres, best describes Margaret Atwood's skilled and playful use of Gothic elements in her fiction through which she explores mainly the inner life of her female protagonists rather than the external space. In the novel *The Robber Bride* we observe how Margaret Atwood's three protagonists deal with the removal of their threatening antagonist, the smart and bewitching Zenia, and also with the ghosts of their past. The final confrontation with Zenia, presented in the novel as a femme fatale, a vampire, and a doppelgänger, a dark *Other* of the protagonists, discloses the weaknesses of the protagonists that marked their early lives. Past instances and experiences in the lives of the leading characters have a significant influence on their evolution from girls to grown-up women and they help us understand their present insecurity and difficulty to establish enduring relationships with their partners and to cope with the haunting shadows of their childhood and youth. All three protagonists of *The Robber Bride* recreate their traumas in various ways that indicate that they cannot find the ultimate cure for all their sorrows. They can only try to accept their complex identity, their *selves*, with their positive and negative sides and look forward to a better future without the part of their dark past embodied by Zenia.

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Tragic Love and Alienation in *Another Country* by James Baldwin

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Abstract: Now, that globalization has blurred the borders between countries, traditions and ways of life, social intelligence plays an important role in gaining success in life. Making a home far away from your native place has become a natural choice for more and more people, encouraged by virtual relationships as well as more accessible travel opportunities. Accordingly, if we want to feel at home anywhere in the world, problems like racial and sexual discrimination have to be corrected by an open, easy-going attitude and unconditional respect. However, one should not undermine the price with which such values have been achieved and the harm that certain ideologies, once implemented in the collective psyche, have created by reducing people to subjects defined in terms of class, gender and sex. The novel suggested for analysis is *Another Country* by James Baldwin, which focuses on tragic destinies of people abused by the society they live in and even by their own family and relations. The world depicted by this novel is gloomy and grey, burdened by remorse, frustrations and compromise. The struggle to survive is often harsh and absurd, and so is the world which generates it.

Key-words: *sexual disorientation, racial inhibitions, torture and abuse.*

In 1962 James Baldwin writes *Another Country*, which narrates the tragic life and impossible loves of a bisexual jazz drummer, Rufus Scott, who, confused by sexual disorientation, and racial inhibitions, tortures and abuses his white beloved, Leona; then, half-mad himself, he commits suicide.

The novel takes place mostly in Greenwich Village of the late 1950s or early 1960s, when jazz music seemed to penetrate the entire City, filling streets, hearts, as well as souls. On the avenues, in clubs, or

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on rooftops, jazz music is associated with sensuality, desire, yearning and pain, rage, violence, provocation, excitement, risk, excess, and fever. At the very beginning of the book, Baldwin's jazz drummer, Rufus, designates the beat as the metaphor of his life; in a chain of associations the beat becomes synonymous with the most beloved and the most hated. The relationship itself develops in confusing circumstances for both protagonists. Rufus's attitude to Leona is profoundly molded by his disoriented attitude towards the white and Leona's failed marriage to an oppressive white man makes her more vulnerable in her attitude to personal relationships. Confronted with his disconcerting way of expressing emotions, she gradually becomes passive and powerless until their relationship reaches a dreadful climax: "they fought each other with their hands and their voices and then with their bodies: and the one storm was like the other." (50). As a result, Leona suffers a mental breakdown after which she is taken back to the South and institutionalized. Rufus can't stand the guilt of being responsible for her state. Yet, suffering has been part of his life to such an extent that he can't imagine life without it. "There is no way not to suffer." (6)

To remember Leona [that] was also--somehow—to remember the eyes of his mother, the rage of his Either, the beauty of his sister. It was to remember the streets of Harlem, the boys on the stoops, the girls behind the stairs and on the roofs, the white policeman who had taught him how to hate, the stickball games in the streets, the women leaning out of windows and the number they played daily, hoping for the hit his Either never made. It was to remember the juke box, the teasing, the dancing, the hard-on, the gang fights and gang bangs his first set of drums—bought him by his father—his first taste of marijuana, his first snort of horse. (56)

In the first lines of the text, the degree of his terrible, lost state can be identified in the unfortunate picture that "he was hungry, his mouth felt filthy, [...] he was broke, [...] he had nowhere to go." (9) Also, he feels devastated at the realisation that he has left in life, feeling emphasized by the line from a blues song, which will turn up once more shortly before Rufus kills himself: "*You took the best, so why not take the rest?*" (9)

To Baldwin the blues means one of the only ways *Blacks* can express their tragic history and present state as outsiders from American society. The blues treats themes like "work, love, death,

floods” which for the black population in the United States can be summarized as “the Facts of Life” they have to cope with everyday. In one of his essays Baldwin directly refers to the blues as having certain uses. Everyday, black artists like the blues singer Bessie Smith, whose melancholic lyrics bring musicality to almost every chapter of the novel and shape their opinion of love, race and society. In a long retrospect (13-40) Rufus remembers his first twenty-four hours with Leona. It illustrates his sexual desire for her as well as his unwillingness to get to know her in a deeper sense, because to him “all stories were trouble”(17) and his intuition tells him “to leave this poor little girl alone”(21), Rufus finally makes love to her. Far away from emotionally tender connotations, this sexual encounter is shaped by violence and hate. Therefore, the description refers to the love act itself as a cursing (24) and to Leona as a “milk-white bitch”(24), an enemy who has to be defeated by a “weapon”(24). It is striking how Rufus releases such an anger which shivers upon Leona. Since there is no motive for the assumption that Leona, apart from being *white* and coming from the South, has directly done something to provoke such an outburst of anger . It appears that Rufus does not perceive Leona as an individual being, but as the embodiment of his object of hate: the whole *white* - dominated society.

According to Baldwin, self-knowledge and self-esteem are necessary to make love possible, but the writer also says that “it is hard to become yourself, born black in a white society,” (7) which can be exemplified by Rufus. He is very sensitive to the world around him in which

“[...] you got to fight with the landlord because the landlord’s *white* ! You got to fight with the elevator boy because the motherfucker’s *white*. Any bum on the Bowery cab shit all over you, because maybe he can’t hear, can’t see, can’t fuck – but he’s *white* !”(62)

In one scene Rufus goes on a Sunday walk in the park with Leona and Vivaldo, the day after Rufus’ and Leona’s met. He tends to see only the hostility “[...] from the eyes of the passing people”(29)and in an almost paranoid way even Leona is aware of the despising glances of the people. Fed with uncertainty Rufus does not only feel alienated by the hostile white world, but enters also in a mental conflict by reflecting what his sister would think about his relationship to Leona:

“You’d never even have looked at that girl, Rufus, if she’d been black.

[...] What's the matter – you ashamed of being black?"(29)

In his state of bewilderment, he believes that he cannot even expect the understanding of his family for his choice to be together with Leona. He is lost, with no roots, stability and support for the love he may have for Leona.

Moreover, Rufus also loses confidence in his best friend Vivaldo. Now, he envies him for being *white* as he realizes that “[...] no one dared to look at Vivaldo, out with any girl whatever, the way they looked at Rufus now; nor would they ever look at the girl they looked at Leona. [...] This was because Vivaldo was white.”(31)

A la Marcel Proust, each love has its special "anthem" a small tune standing in a metonymic relation with the tremendous passion inciting all senses. After Rufus' death, Vivaldo falls in love with Ida. Her beauty and resemblance of Rufus is essentially what attracts Vivaldo to her. Although they now face racial tension from others, Vivaldo willingly ignores the world's view on their relationship. While dancing together at a party Vivaldo comments that Ida's hands are cold. Ida's reply to this is, "That's supposed to mean that I've got a warm heart," then she reveals, "but what it really means is poor circulation." Not submitting to her bitter tone he then states, "I prefer to believe that you've got a warm heart" (Baldwin 159). This exemplifies his eagerness to see only the positive sides to Ida and their relationship, not admitting that she has become bitter from the death of her brother and may not have the warm heart that Vivaldo sees in her. Yet, her blackness and womanhood remains illegible to him. Ultimately the whole novel abounds in impossible loves, "neither with nor without you" passions. Rufus loves but tortures Leona, his liaison with Eric regains a bittersweet memory, and his longing for latent homosexual Vivaldo is never fully appeased. Eric loves Yves but cheats on him with Cass, who is married to and supposedly in love with Richard. Ida and Vivaldo never cease fighting and loving each other: moreover, Ida is the mistress of Richard's manager, and Vivaldo submits himself to the seduction of Eric. In the meantime, all the characters are tormented by the absence of the beloved Rufus. The never-ending quest for something lost and the melancholic memory of the missing beloved become repeated leitmotifs in the novel, written in a language combining yearning and corporeality, poetry and madness and mourning. The final pages of the first book describe the events and, primarily, the feelings last experienced by Rufus before his suicide. Rufus's maddening vertigo, which leads to his tragic death, is incited on a subway platform by a disturbing memory. Something he had not thought of for many years, yet something he had never ceased to

remember, came back to him as he walked behind the crowd.

The subway platform was a dangerous place—so he had always thought, it sloped downward toward the waiting tracks, and when he had been a little boy and stood on the platform beside his mother he had not dared let go her hand. He stood on the platform alone with all these people, who were each of them alone, and waited in acquired calmness, for the train. (66)

As Anna Kérchy puts it, the first stumble in Rufus's stream of thoughts is his traumatic re-recognition of the primary loss, of being alone, separated, and divided. He is both attracted and frightened by the emptiness left behind by the missing beloved. Instead of the mother, it is a mad train that emerges from the blackness of the womb-like tunnel. In Rufus's vision this is a murderous train filled with violence, a train “splashing in blood, with joy—for the first time, joy, joy, after such a long sentence in chains,” a train with

“people screaming at windows and doors and turning on each other’s way discovering secrets, a train that never stops. Rufus would like to “get off here and go home,” yet he knows “that he [is] never going home any more” (398).

This is a train of desire that never stops to write a soothing, substitutive text, aiming to escape from the long sentence of the symbolic sentence through a revolutionary poeticity (like polysemy, repetition, rhythm, word play), bringing an ephemeral joy that can stand in the space left painfully empty by the lost house of semiotic bliss. It is a text combining matricide (murder, blood) with incest (joy, waves), Thanatos with Eros, aggression with longing. An elemental passion is recalled as the train of text, fueled by engendered desire, rushes on the vulva-like “great scar of tracks” with “a phallic abandon into the blackness which opened to receive it, opened, opened, the whole world shook with their coupling”(266) The groaning, lurching, gasping, and moaning, the tearing sound of the (text) train echo the embodied voice of the revolutionary poetic language of desire—which is all the more interesting as the allegorical image of the rushing train is described in the rhythmic, repetitive, rushing text .

The fugitive nature of desire and the impossibility of language are reflected in the rushing of the train and in the fast, dense sentences in Rufus's stream of consciousness, suggesting movement, the passing of time the loss of the pleasures of a childhood when representation was

unnecessary.

A farmhouse, a tree are seen from a train window: coming closer and closer, the details changing every instant as the eye picked them out, then pressing against the window with the urgency of a messenger or a child, then dropping away, diminishing, vanished, gone forever. That fence is falling down, he might have thought as the train rushed toward it, either the house needs paint, or the tree is dead. In an instant, gone instant—it was not his fence, his farmhouse, or his tree. As now, passing, he recognises faces, bodies, postures, and thought. That's Ruth. Or There's Old Lennie. Son of a bitchy is stoned again. It was very silent. (411)

In a final, highly symbolic scene, Rufus—shaking like a *"rag doll"* and cursing God ("Ain't I your baby too?") commits suicide by throwing himself off "the bridge built to honour the father of his country," while car lights on the highway seem to be writing "an endless message, writing with awful speed in a fine, unreadable script.

"The wind takes him, and he flies into the black water below, feeling himself "going over, head down, the wind, the stars, the lights, the water, all rolled together, all Bright . . . thinking . . . all right, you motherfucking Godalmighty bastard, I'm coming to You. (142)

The bridge marked by the Name of the Father is left behind for the feminine entity of the waves, to return to the blissful, homogeneous, Semiotic symbiosis that can only be re-experienced in death. The deathly, mothering waves are black, hence the journey back to the mother is also a return to the other.

Thus, the impossible wish to go home can signify in Rufus's vision a reconciliation with the mother intertwined with a reconciliation with the (racial or sexual) other. Rufus can come to the (m)other Dilly by flying, or resisting gravitation, recalling Cixous's definition of the subversive writing of *écriture féminine*: "stealing words and making them fly" (71)

Traditional African American conviction (which reverberates in Alice Walker's womanism and black womanist theology) imagines God to be supremely personal, just, loving, and caring toward everyone alike, as a mothering black woman. Thus Rufus, associated with a baby, a doll, the icon of a child, attacks with his curse words mother and God

in one, performing the Freudian double bind, hitting instead of caressing the most beloved, who was unable to maintain the primary paradise of omnipotent love. Rufus's question to his God must be: "Mother, Mother why did you love, leave, give birth, death, and language to me?" The endless message and unreadable script of car lights is this very epiphanic vision of the drama of the constitution of the writing subject and the impossibility of desire revealed to Rufus before his death.

Rufus remembering the loss of his beloved mother before his suicide seems to be an episode of central importance in the text, since characters in the remaining three hundred pages of the novel try to reconstruct and analyze this never-seen scene that remains a black hole, a gap, a textual absence that they know nothing about but that keeps haunting them, becoming an obsession, an enigmatic leitmotif governing their lives, longings, and narratives, like an unspeakable loss vibrating every text on desire.

Conclusion

"I know the human and the fish can coexist peacefully". This is what President George W. Bush asserted in a hallucinatory way and the euphemism could probably apply to literature and ideology. In many cases, language itself is bound up with ideological aberrations which ultimately reveal the sheer ignorance of disastrous environmental, foreign and welfare policies- that is to say of a certain view of the world, of a certain ideology. Thus is the ideology that lies behind sexual discrimination, racial abuse and alienation, themes present in James Baldwin's novel, *Another Country*. They are all deeply rooted in the creation of a so-called 'false consciousness', an imagined representation of reality, whose slaves we end up to become. Put it simply, ideology goes to the heart of personal identity, of how we conceive ourselves as subjects in the world and all that it involves. Trying to find his true self devoid of any ideology, the main character, Rufus, gets lost in conspicuous relationships and uncanny experiences which produce an 'alienation effect' and ultimately lead to his death. In the rhythm of jazz and blues the novel explores the relationship between father and (prodigal) son, so much present in the writer's own life experience, as well as the yearning for the lost maternal as engine of all desires and disturbing memories. Mark Dudley describes it as a novel about

alienation, and alienation begins as an interior exercise. Here, individual longing is sublimated, turned carnal; lust trans- poses love. Such loneliness can occur anywhere, whether in a sparsely

populated theater or on a crowded street. (76)

“I think *Another Country* is my best novel so far,” James Baldwin told writer Nat Hentoff. “Not because I achieved everything I wanted to in it—in that respect, I’m only at the beginning of my life as a writer. But *Another Country* was harder and more challenging than anything I’d ever attempted, and I didn’t cheat in it... That book saved my life as a writer—in my own eyes.” (229) Above all, the author challenges to reader to question the value of his own ideologies and principles and thus replicate himself by using interpretation as a function of his own identity.

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Le devenir du sujet migrant dans *Les Echelles du Levant* d'Amin Maalouf

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Résumé

Nous tenterons de mener une analyse sémiotique sur *Les Echelles du Levant* de l'auteur franco-libanais, Amin Maalouf. Nous nous attarderons sur le devenir du sujet migrant à travers lequel l'instance d'origine projette un actant masculin figurativisé en migrant, dénommé *Ossyane*. L'instance narratrice suit *Ossyane* pendant quatre jours dans les rues de Paris en 1976. Etant l'étranger, nous verrons comment cet actant se positionne par rapport à l'Autre.

Mots clé : sujet, migrant, devenir, sémiotique.

Abstract

We will attempt to conduct a semiotic analysis through *Les Echelles du Levant* de. the fate of the migrant subject of the French-Lebanese author Amin Maalouf through which the original authority projects a figurativised male actant migrant, called *Ossyane*. The first narrative instance follows *Ossyane* for four days in the streets of Paris in 1976. The question that challenges us: how did the actant position himself in relation to the Other?

Key words: subject, migrant, becoming, semiotic.

L'œuvre que nous nous proposons d'analyser est *Les Echelles du Levant* d'Amin Maalouf. Ce dernier est un auteur aux multiples identités. Il est homme d'Orient et d'Occident, de la chrétienté et du monde arabo-musulman. Il est considéré en France comme « Monsieur Orient ». Il rêve de jeter un pont entre les univers

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occidental et oriental pour mieux les conjuguer et les concilier. Marqué profondément par les événements qui ont secoué le Liban, il vit un nomadisme viscéral reflété dans la mobilité de ses personnages.

L'exil de Maalouf, quittant le Liban pour la France, est source d'une profonde nostalgie pour son pays natal, pour cette société multiculturelle où « il y a toujours eu toutes sortes de communautés qui ont vécu des moments de coexistence merveilleux mais aussi des moments de tension ».³ Ce sentiment de nostalgie est très perceptible dans l'œuvre, où *Ossyane* exprime les sentiments de l'auteur lui-même. En outre, cette nostalgie se combine plus largement à celle d'un âge d'or de la civilisation arabe – qu'il s'agisse d'Al Andalous, l'ensemble des terres de la péninsule Ibérique et de la Septimanie qui furent sous domination musulmane au Moyen Âge (711-1492), ou de l'Empire ottoman (1299-1922) qui s'étendait au faîte de sa puissance sur trois continents. Modèle de cohabitation de peuples différents, de religions différentes et de langues différentes, ces empires étaient un exemple du multiculturalisme que Maalouf appelle de tous ses vœux, rêvant « d'un Proche-Orient où musulmans, chrétiens et juifs [...] tenter [aient] l'expérience de la vie en commun. ».⁴

Pour pouvoir percevoir le sens du texte, nous recourons aux concepts sémiotiques de Jean-Claude Coquet. Cette méthodologie nous permet de percevoir le statut du sujet migrant, son devenir sémiotique ainsi que les modalités à même de lui permettre l'accomplissement de programmes narratifs dont il est investi.

Amin, Maalouf s'illustre, dans son œuvre, par son vouloir intense de réconcilier les deux rives de la Méditerranée, lui, qui est issu d'une famille où la migration d'une manière générale est une expérience réelle. Son discours littéraire est une passerelle d'échange entre deux mondes radicalement distincts à travers l'histoire des actants réels ou fictifs qui oscillent entre les rives de la Méditerranée. Dans une situation mondiale caractérisée par la montée de plusieurs extrémismes, dans un monde à la fois globalisé et fragmenté où le migrant est perçu en Occident comme

³ Maalouf, Amin. « Identité et appartenances ». Entretien. In: *Mots*, n°50, mars 1997. *Israël - Palestine. Mots d'accord et de désaccord*. pp. 121-133; URL : <https://doi.org/10.3406/mots.1997.2309>https://www.persee.fr/doc/mots_0243-6450_1997_num_50_1_2309, consulté le 15 septembre 2019.

⁴ Albert, Soued « L'islam a – t – il peur de son avenir ? », in site <https://www.nuitdorient.com/n232.htm>; consulté le 18.09.2019.

une menace, l'auteur se veut le chantre des opprimés tel qu'il se veut leur porte-parole.

Ossyane est un migrant libanais, qui attire l'attention de la première instance narratrice. Sans le connaître, elle décide de le suivre et d'entrer en contact avec lui. Ce qui explique son initiative, c'est que le narrateur reconnaît en *Ossyane* l'actant de la photo qui trônait dans son livre d'histoire et qu'il n'a cessé de contempler tout au long de son parcours scolaire. L'image en noir et blanc du manuel représente la scène du retour glorieux au pays d'un groupe de jeunes libanais ayant combattu, pendant la seconde Guerre Mondiale, dans les rangs de la Résistance en France. Au milieu de la foule, on voit : « une tête de jeune homme ébloui. Les cheveux clairs, les traits lisses, un peu enfantins, le cou tendu sur le côté » (E.L. p.10). Cette caractérisation offre un portrait du jeune Ossyane.

L'actant *Ossyane* choisit de s'exiler à cause de son mode de vie et de l'éducation traditionnelle très sévère imposée par son père afin de faire de lui un homme révolutionnaire, capable de changer ce monde habité par l'injustice et l'intolérance, ce qu'il souhaite également. La démarche sera catégoriquement différente de celle de son père. Se déplacer vers l'ailleurs représente pour lui l'espoir d'acquérir de nouveaux savoirs et l'ouverture d'esprit. *Ossyane* est un actant aux multiples appartenances : né au *Liban*, dans un environnement multiculturel, d'un père turc et d'une mère arménienne, il est le petit-fils d'un souverain ottoman déchu. Plus tard, il va s'engager dans les rangs de la France résistante, se mariera avec une Juive autrichienne. Il sera affecté par le conflit arabo-israélien qui bouleverse sa vie.

Ossyane est l'aîné de ses frères, il subit le poids de l'autorité du père qui veut faire de son fils un grand révolutionnaire, pour changer le monde de son temps. Il manifeste un mal-être vis-à-vis de ce désir. Certes, il veut collaborer au changement de ce monde mais avec l'arme du savoir. Pour cela, la migration semble être le meilleur moyen pour échapper à ce pouvoir imposé et pour prendre conscience de soi et de l'Autre. En se déplaçant du Liban vers la France, ce sujet migrant change de statut en fonction des forces exogènes et endogènes qui agissent sur lui et le situent dans un perpétuel devenir.

Le sujet migrant

Le vocable «migrant» renvoie aux personnes qui quittent leur

pays d'origine, pour un autre. Plusieurs raisons sont à l'origine de ce phénomène : soit ces individus sont contraints de quitter leur pays à cause des conditions politiques, religieuses et raciales, ou pour des raisons financières. Dans ce cas, nous parlons de l'exil forcé. Il existe aussi l'exil volontaire où le migrant choisit lui-même de s'éloigner, jugeant sa propre culture hermétique au changement. La migration chez l'actant en question correspond à cette deuxième catégorie. Malgré sa situation (il est entouré de bien et d'honneur), son vouloir était de mener un parcours autonome loin de toute autorité. Au début, *Ossyane* est un actant sujet. Il mène une quête identitaire qui le conduirait vers l'Occident, franchissant toutes les frontières, linguistiques et culturelles. Capable d'assumer son vouloir pour aller suivre des études de médecine à Montpellier en France. Le vouloir d'après J.C. Coquet est une affirmation de l'être et surtout de son jugement. Le sujet du discours ne peut être défini indépendamment de sa relation aux grandes catégories sémantiques modales telles que le vouloir, le pouvoir et le savoir (vps), modalités requises pour définir cet actant autonome.

Au niveau de ce programme, *Ossyane* est un sujet de droit, du fait qu'il a affirmé son vouloir en mettant à l'échec l'éducation traditionnelle de son père. Il a accédé à un nouveau statut, celui du migrant. Sur cette terre occidentale, il est conjoint avec deux objets de valeur, le savoir et la liberté. Pour *Ossyane* aller s'intégrer dans une autre société différente de la sienne, laissant derrière lui tout son héritage familial et les traditions, serait la meilleure solution à son mal de vivre: « Je m'étais dit : le bonheur ! Le bonheur d'être ailleurs ! Le bonheur de n'être plus assis à la table familiale ! » (E.L.p.68). *Ossyane* se posait la question à lui-même à propos de son statut d'étranger « Est-ce que j'ai souffert d'avoir été un étranger ? » (E.L, p.72). Après avoir mené une réflexion, il trouvait que malgré les traits de sa personnalité qui le distinguaient de ses camarades, il n'avait pas le poids d'être perçu comme un étranger, car c'est durant la confrontation avec l'Autre que le sujet migrant découvre son soi.

D'ailleurs, durant les discussions de ses camarades sur la « guerre », il restait en silence, il subit toujours le poids de son éducation traditionnelle, écouter plutôt que commenter une conversation. *Ossyane* est convaincu que celui qui détient la parole sait plus que les autres. Il conserve cette tradition du silence, jusqu'au jour où il décide de prendre part à la discussion avec ses camarades sur la situation régnante en France et ailleurs.

En prenant la parole, *Ossyane* devient un non- sujet dominé par la peur. Quittant la communication, il devient sujet et juge sa prise de parole. Il pense alors qu'il est animé par le souci d'acquisition du savoir. «J'ai eu tort d'oublier que j'étais dans un pays étranger». (E L, p.72).

***Ossyane* sujet hétéronome**

Il s'avère que le premier discours sur la Guerre permet à *Ossyane* un changement de statut. Il était sujet autonome animé par le vouloir, le pouvoir et le savoir. Il change de statut et devient sujet hétéronome. L'actant hétéronome se définit par quatre modalités : le vouloir, le pouvoir, le savoir et le devoir. Autrement dit, au programme d'acquisition du savoir, il lui sera adjoint un autre programme, animant le sujet à s'engager dans la Révolution. Notons que ce changement de statut s'est fait sous l'impulsion d'un destinateur, Bertrand, un militant dans le réseau de la Résistance. Ce dernier, lui avait proposé d'assumer la fonction d'un distributeur de courrier.

Après un temps de réflexion, *Ossyane* sentait le devoir de participer à la Seconde Guerre au même titre que les Français. A travers cet engagement, il pense, qu'au-delà de servir la France, il sert l'humanité dans sa grande diversité. Son engagement lui est dicté par l'univers qui l'a vu naître et évoluer.

«Je viens d'une région du monde où il n'a y eu tout au long de l'histoire, que des occupations successives, et mes propres ancêtres ont occupé une bonne moitié du bassin méditerranéen. J'ai détesté le Nazisme, non pas le jour où il a envahi la France mais le jour où il a envahi l'Allemagne. S'il avait éclos en France, ou en Russie, ou dans mon propre pays, je l'aurais détesté tout autant» (E.L.p.79)

Le tiers-actant transcendant (participer au programme de révolution) agit négativement sur *Ossyane*, il n'a pas pu réaliser son propre vouloir de devenir médecin. Il connaît donc l'échec de son programme épistémique : la réalisation du premier programme (savoir) rend impossible la réalisation du second (être médecin).

Juste après la fin de la Seconde Guerre, *Ossyane* se conjoint avec un autre espace, le Liban et avec Clara. Avec cette dernière, il parvient à aller au-delà du conçu, au-delà des clivages religieux. Il se marie avec Clara, la Juive autrichienne qui s'est engagée dans le même réseau de Résistance, et s'installe à Haïfa. Par ce mariage avec Clara, *Ossyane* devient sujet conflictuel, il

cherche à trouver la solution qui mettra fin à cette folie humaine.

Mais, par le déclenchement des évènements meurtriers entre Arabes et Juifs en 1946, les deux conjoints sont devenus deux sujets antagonistes : ils se trouvent, malgré eux, au centre de ce conflit. Contrairement à ce qui est conventionnel, Ossyane, le musulman libanais s'aligne du côté des Juifs et Clara la juive autrichienne, pour sa part, s'aligne du côté des Arabes. Les actants ne seront jamais, malgré le contexte, des sujets polémiques.

«Je dirais même que les choses se passaient toujours, toujours sans exception, à l'inverse de ce qu'on a coutume d'attendre. Lorsque Clara me contredisait c'était pour aller plus loin dans le sens des Arabes, pour me dire que je devais les comprendre ; et moi, quand je la reprenais, c'est pour lui dire qu'elle se montrait trop sévère avec ses coreligionnaires. La discussion n'a jamais eu lieu autrement. Et ce n'était pas par un arrangement quelconque, par quelque convention de bon voisinage, c'était spontané, sincère. Chacun se mettait à la place de l'autre». (E.L.p.169)

Force est donc de constater que l'identité des deux actants est un phénomène complexe dont le soi est lié à autrui. Les deux sujets sont des êtres de raison et se manifestent par l'acceptation de l'Autre plutôt que de le combattre.

Toutefois, Ossyane ne parvient pas à maintenir son statut de sujet doté de raison. Il perd en effet la confiance en ses capacités d'assimilation et de mémorisation, lui qui était autrefois très fier de sa mémoire, ayant eu la meilleure moyenne du bac dans son pays. Il est en disjonction avec l'objet « savoir ». La situation conflictuelle qu'il vit le force à perdre totalement l'espoir de mener une vie souhaitée auparavant. Ossyane est devenu sujet de la séparation ; les programmes qu'il mène sont voués à l'échec, tant dans la dimension du pouvoir que dans la dimension du savoir. Il se trouve soudainement séparé de sa femme Clara et sa petite fille Nadia. Si les différences raciale et religieuse n'ont pas eu raison de leur passion et de leur couple, des forces exogènes les sépareront. Il s'agit de la frontière infranchissable entre Beyrouth et Haïfa qui va avoir raison d'eux. L'instance d'origine souligne par elle-même la bêtise humaine qui vient à bout de l'humanité et de l'amour qu'il y a entre les êtres.

D'un autre côté, la disparition inattendue de son père plonge Ossyane dans les doutes et le repli sur soi. Il trouve la solution dans la déraison. Son statut change pour devenir quasi-

sujet puisqu'il prend lui-même l'initiative d'aller « s'exiler » dans un asile psychiatrique à Beyrouth, loin du regard du monde extérieur. La folie semble pour lui un moyen pour échapper à la pression du milieu social et à toute réalité effrayante. C'est sous le pouvoir des sédatifs qu'il devient un non-sujet.

Selon Benveniste, la folie est une force immanente qui investit le corps propre et dépouille le sujet de son jugement, c'est le glissement vers le régime de l'involontaire. Le statut du non-sujet est explicite par l'évocation de l'asile. Il est non-sujet au niveau de l'être, du méta-vouloir et de l'apparaître.

En travaillant sur l'œuvre de Claudel dans son ouvrage *Le discours et son sujet II*, Jean Claude Coquet, évoque la folie comme signe d'exclusion d'un sujet par les membres de l'actant collectif. L'actant est une forme de non-sujet en raison de son exclusion du système social car il se trouve dans la chute de la modalité du pouvoir, ce que lui reste c'est le pouvoir du corps sensible. Et le corps en sémiotique est celui qui nous met face au monde. Ossyane s'exprime en recourant à son corps puisque sa faculté du langage se trouve altérée. Il restait dans l'Asile pendant plusieurs années, il n'arrive à quitter ce lieu que pendant la guerre civile en 1976, pour se rejoindre enfin à la liberté. « Je me suis levé. J'ai dit à voix haute : « je m'en vais » [...] Je suis allé dans ma chambre, j'ai rassemblé quelques objets [...] Je suis parti » (E.L.242)

A la fin du récit l'instance narratrice laisse au lecteur le choix d'interpréter encore le mouvement de cette identité après la rencontre d'Ossyane avec Clara à Paris. L'instance narratrice préfère de se retirer de la scène pour ne pas savoir ce qu'ils vont décider, malgré l'Histoire injuste à leur égard.

En guise de conclusion, nous pouvons dire qu'Ossyane change de statut tout au long de son parcours qui le mène de l'Orient vers l'Occident, de l'Occident vers l'Orient. Son identité est en perpétuelle devenir, devenir dont les forces agissantes sont responsables. En quittant son pays d'origine et en étant sujet fou, le sujet opère un mouvement à travers lequel il est confronté à des épreuves et des situations qui agissent sur lui. Il est un sujet autonome, sujet hétéronome, non-sujet et quasi sujet. Il se manifeste par des droits à obtenir et des devoirs à accomplir. Son engagement se situe dans la défense d'une humanité. Son appartenance à l'humanité lui ouvre le droit d'être perçu comme une altérité radicale, malgré sa différence. Cette différence doit être un moyen d'intégration, non pas de confrontation. C'est par

la confrontation avec l'Autre qu'il se découvre soi-même.

A travers l'histoire de cette instance énonçante qui s'exile du Levant, terre d'Orient vers la France en quête de savoir et de liberté, Maalouf voudrait incarner l'idée de tolérance et du savoir vivre ensemble, malgré la différence ethnique et religieuse ; ce qui demeure problématique dans le contexte actuel où les différentes communautés s'entredéchirent plutôt que de cohabiter. La reconnaissance de l'Autre dans sa différence demeure la seule voie vers le salut et la seule voix du salut, lequel salut est défendu par les trois religions monothéistes qui servent de prétexte pour justifier la bêtise humaine.

Par les deux *Echelles*, Ossyane et Clara, l'instance phénoménologique, veut symboliser la relation entre l'Orient et l'Occident. Il montre qu'il peut exister un lien entre ces deux mondes totalement distincts : l'un est le berceau des civilisations, l'autre est le lieu du savoir et de liberté. *Les Echelles du Levant* est un appel à l'ouverture à toutes les cultures, à toutes les langues. Dans ce monde à la fois globalisé et fragmenté où le migrant est perçu en Occident comme une menace à cause de sa différence ethnique et religieuse. Ce message de tolérance n'est pas étranger à Amin, Maalouf, passeur reconnu comme ambassadeur des migrants. Cet auteur franco-libanais connu d'abord par son identité dynamique et changeante ; chrétien orthodoxe au Liban, Arabe en France, semble qu'il est minoritaire. Ces composantes qui le situent entre l'Orient et l'Occident, font de lui un prêcheur pour un monde du multiculturalisme et de cohabitation pour toutes les races et les identités. Membre de l'Académie française, il est en perpétuelle quête d'une union universelle des humains, en dépit des différences qui peuvent être une source d'enrichissement, laissant à part les confrontations, au nom de la différence.

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The Stranger in *The Late Mattia Pascal*

Luncan Camelia Diana¹

Abstract: Luigi Pirandello's *The Late Mattia Pascal* (1904) deals with themes of alienation as a consequence of the fight with social determinism and with own prejudices and ideals. Alienation can also be a consequence of searching for freedom, of liberating oneself from the tyranny of others, but, surprisingly, the isolation from others can also trigger isolation from self and, thus, from happiness and the sense of fulfillment. The farther from the other –perceived as the enemy – the farther from fulfillment and the stronger the feeling of alienation. Pirandello's characters are looking for independence because the reality is unbearable, but soon find that there is something more menacing than lack of independence.

Key words: Mattia Pascal, Adriano Meis, Pirandello, humorism, society, constraints, determinism, independence, freedom, identity, isolation, relationship, connection, the other, I

1. The Unusual Pirandello

Luigi Pirandello (1867-1936) was, in turn, a poet, a novelist and a playwright, difficult to categorize (Frunzetti, p. 82) and, sometimes, hard to understand completely since his later works became more and more complex, mature, and – inevitably – sad, pessimistic, even tragic. He chose to write more spontaneously than his forerunners about his own angst, his own difficulty of integration in a society interested in the formal side of its inhabitants' lives, in their complying with the rules and lack of interest towards the inner life and harmony. His favourite themes were connected to the flee from oneself, the masks the characters have to wear or take off during their life, the feeling of alienation within intimate relationships, alienation in a world that proves indifferent to personal torments, the unsuccessful escape from

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constraints, the final resignation in face of the failure to seize freedom and independence.

The Late Mattia Pascal is a novel where all these topics gather and build a complex and struggling character who does not want to renounce hope until his desperate trials fail. One of the most important questions we can raise and meditate on while reading *The Late Mattia Pascal* is that, disregarding the hopes for freedom, the cost is always essential, as man cannot live fully detached from the other, life and fullness are built in relation to another person or within a community (though maybe false), love cannot develop unless in connection and with an assumed identity.

The novel was appreciated at the time of writing and also later because of its important and penetrating themes of self-quest, the need of individual interior freedom and where a person looks for them. Unfortunately Pirandello's work was not and is not as well-known outside Italy as it deserves to be. The U.S.-born author and journalist Jeffrey Tayler notes that this unpopularity may be explained by the fact that Italian was not spoken too largely outside Italy because of its lack of international prestige (contrary to Britain or France) and the author's sympathies for Mussolini's politics, which, after the war, left unpleasant scars (Tayler, 2012).

I was impressed and surprised learning that Pirandello's novel *If Fu Mattia Pascal* was adapted to stage during the 2018 theatrical season by one of Italy's well-known present actors, Danielle Pecci, in a play² with the same name. It had many positive reactions both in the Italian newspapers and magazines and among the individual spectators; they expressed their impressions and the satisfaction that the work of an Italian is revived through theatre plays nowadays because its message is still as relevant today as it was then. This is another confirmation that the theme is still up-to-date to the people, they can still identify themselves with the anxieties, dilemmas, hopes, disillusion of the character. A work is all the more valuable if it continues to be relevant over the years, the decades, the centuries.

Over the years, it was screened a few times by directors of diverse nationalities, which showed the interest and echo it had. The first was *Feu Mathias Pascal*, in 1925 in French, directed by Marcel L'Herbier. Then *L'Homme de nulle part* (The Man from Nowhere), 1937, in French, directed by Pierre Chenal, who directed simultaneously the Italian version, *Il fu Mattia Pascal*. And the Italian

² A part of the play *Il Fu Mattia Mattia Pascal*, uploaded online by Backstage with interview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sdrkKScXLQ>

film *Le due vite di Mattia Pascal*, in 1985, directed by Mario Monicelli. Nowadays, the novel is revived again in Italy, this time on stage, in theatres all over Italy.

2. A Stranger's Interior Fight with the Exterior.

Pirandello described vividly the genesis of his art, what makes him create literature. This is one of the most popular theme he uses and, in the same time, one of the greatest examples of angst of man: taking the mask off and seeing the true self.

When someone lives, he just lives his life, he does not see himself. Well, make him see himself, while living, the prey of his passions, putting a mirror in front of him: he will either be surprised, even amazed by his own looks, he will either turn his eyes so as not to see himself any longer, or he will spit his own image in irritation, or punch it so as to break it in fury; and, if he was crying, he would cry no more; and, if he was laughing, he could laugh no more. In the end, this causes a disaster. And this disaster is my drama. (Balaci, p. 83)

And his drama indeed deals with characters that either avoid seeing themselves or try to face the uncovering of self. Some critics would place him in the aftermath of naturalism – or Italian verism – for his preoccupation with reality and the way society and political situations influence the individual's life. Others, like Ovidiu Drimba, situate him in the aftermath of Dostoevsky's profound analysis and psychological writings, under the influence of Ibsen's drama of ideas and Strindberg's study of the subconscious. Not only does Pirandello admit the placing within novels, or short stories, or sketches, but also leaves a shadow of doubt over the possibility whether it is or not literature what he writes, rather seeming to incorporate with the reflectional works than with those of sensitivity (Balaci, p. 83).

The excerpt mentioned above reveals one of the most important traits of Pirandello's works: seeing oneself from the exterior, with an objective eye (as objective as possible that is). One of Mattia's moments of introspection and analysis, after a terrible general fight in house among the members of the family, "To decide this latter point I went over to the mirror. It was tears! But I had been well clawed up too. And my eye, my famous crooked eye! That unruly member was more than ever bent on looking where it chose. 'Good for you!' I apostrophized; 'you at least are without a boss!'" (Pirandello, p. 78).

Even if the original situation is worrying, menacing, troubling, irritating, while narrating it, he tries to detach himself and add a little comic to the situation, the humorism we will mention below. One of his

artistic beliefs was that life can be paradoxical and contradictory and, thus, should be represented in the work of art, even to absurd lengths, when the mask ripped off can reveal a face that is convulsed by fears, deformed by passions that cannot be confessed (Balaci, p. 25). Hence the hyperbolized actions and character reactions and suffering intensity in his works.

He named himself a `humorist`, but the term does not necessarily bring light on the author and his writings since its vast and diverse interpretations. His interpretation of the term is not a usual one, he accepts and even strongly suggests the vicinity to the tragic in its proper comprehension: a certain kind of tragic: the one that escapes the definition, bringing to it the term `dolore`, which is `pain`. Pirandello writes against the social determinism, writes about what is painful and how society constrains the individual up to suffocating and depersonalizing him in a detached, humoristic way, as to escape the overtly tragic discourse, which could determine a rejection from the part of the readers, creating instead an apparent sentimental detachment that would involve the readers even more.

The humorist, in Pirandello's statements, is more lucid than the comedian, scrutinizing inside the mechanisms and automatisms it decomposes in order to alienate the illusion and delusion. The conventional lie is denounced and the sad mechanism loses its springs; in contrast to the comedian, while denouncing the illusions, the artificial, the humorist is not satisfied with highlighting the ludicrous in order to cause laughter. It has a dominantly humanistic structure and its hawk eye is frequently comprised by compassion tears (Balaci, p. 27).

It is impossible not to wonder whether this bitter species of comic still is comic or not [...] The fact the spectator's reaction is laughing must not deceive us. It does not mean anything regarding this to see the character himself laughing. [...] But Pirandello's laugh – as well as Shaw's for that matter – has a deeper meaning. Sadness is a feeling rising from the sensorial sphere: inconvenient stimulants cause painful sensations." (Balaci, p. 89)

On the whole, this would be what Pirandello understands through humorism and this is what he builds through *The Late Mattia Pascal* as well, not only in his plays. *The Late Mattia Pascal* is a wonderful and terribly sad example of the struggle between reality and appearance, the struggle man has to fight over his life in order to escape prejudices, the conventions and constraints to free himself and find his inner being and, most of all, his peace and happiness, to affirm his

liberty, his autonomy. And for this result, he is capable of creating new lives, a new mythology, that, unfortunately, will not be able to revive him.

Mattia Pascal is a tragic example of hope loss in the midst of escaping the alienation feeling and a change of masks and roles in order to conform to the norms imposed from the exterior and to hide the real wounded self to keep it safe from further wounds: “Mattia is himself an excluded person, an unhappy `reveler` rejected at the great banquet of life, a stranger who does not live, but, rather observes himself living, from the exterior. The individual cannot be anything without the other, outside the social sphere.” (Balaci, 85) And this idea of isolation from social sphere and the way it impacts the individual’s life will be elaborated in the last section of this paper.

3. Dimensions of Alienation. A Stranger to Society.

The Late Mattia Pascal was published before the First World War, in 1904, when the author himself went through hardships of diverse nature economically, romantically and even psychologically. It is worth to be mentioned that, in this time, around the end of 1903 and the beginning of 1904, there were landslides in the south of Sicily, which caused the fall of sulphur mines where his father and his wife, Maria Antoinetta Portulano, had invested all their fortune lately. Their loss, their collapse was not only material, but also psychological, as it caused a serious shake to his wife, a trauma that she could not face well, probably because her material situation was viewed as the only real quality she could possess. She never recovered from this trauma and became obsessed with jealousy and presented aggressiveness towards her husband. All this while trying to raise their three children in poor economic conditions.

The novel can be seen as a reflection of his torment at the time (and many years afterwards as well), as the character Mattia Pascal is caught in a marriage he must accept so that his name is saved and must renounce to his then love, Oliva, since she married another. To society, he is no more than an idler, used to live on his father’s former fortune; his fortune is stolen gradually by their administrator – a sly character trying, behind their back, to ruin them and enrich himself. Neither the administrator, nor other acquaintances see Mattia as he really is. A perfect image is what society perceives, not a unity of thoughts, feelings, words and actions; as long as one is formally accepted, inner peace and personal authenticity do not count too much. The later job as a library custodian lessens the family economical loss, but does not offer Mattia also a satisfactory occupation, since the library is hardly

visited by anyone. Escaping from a paranoid wife and an exasperating mother-in-law seems the only option after the death of his mother and twins.

The dramatic scale of the present has its origin in the past that cannot be put outside the influence it exerts on the character's behaviour, on his new mask. In his tensed quest, Mattia Pascal represents an oneiric protest, an intense nostalgia, a rejection of the conventional, a feeling of the contraries that stimulate him towards gaining a new identity, equivalent to his unsocial freedom. (Balaci, p. 86)

The mask can be perceived as an equivalent to alienation. The more masks one has to wear or sense the urge to wear in order to feel comfortable, the more intense the feeling of alienation and the alienation itself. For, if man is fairly integrated into a community and has a certain sense of belonging, there is no need for masks. The mask is the appearance of a false identity; it is the borrow identity for interacting with foreign societies, foreign values, foreign contexts, foreign people. In fact, Mattia feels a stranger because everything around him (except his mother, his brother and his children) is a stranger to his own values and feelings. He perceives his context as a foreign body in his world but, because the foreign elements are too numerous, he cannot remove them all, so he chooses to remove himself from it.

The death of his dearest people suddenly makes his world unbearable any longer because there are no essential holds he can cling to so that life can still have meaning for him. He is suffocated by the people he was forced to choose in order to comply with the society norms; but not always complying with the norms is what the soul needs.

4. A Stranger to Himself

As he perceives everything around him as foreign and between him and the society there is feeling of alienation formed and builds the mask, he becomes a stranger to his own self as well. Worn too often or in a lot of varieties, the mask steals the real identity and steals the memory of what the true self looks like anymore. The mask has the advantage of hiding the ugly or unaccepted traits from others, but also hides the beautiful ones as the person acts mechanically, unnaturally, always fearing his deeds are not good enough. The mask helps the wearer beware of the community accusations, unhappiness in other words, but the mask helps him beware also of fulfillment; the farther from self, the

unhappier. Devoid of his true colours, Mattia feels the pressure to escape so as not only to free himself, but also to find himself again.

The hope of finding one's true self gives Mattia a vital force with which he rehabilitate himself economically, through a moment of luck. The financial independence makes him imagine liberty is finally accessible and the finding of a corpse in the river of his Miragno, identified as belonging to him, Mattia Pascal, opens possibilities he had not dreamt of before:

"Of course! Freedom! Liberty! Why did you not think of it before? Freedom! Freedom! The chance for a new life!"

Eighty-two thousand lire in my inside pocket, and no obligations to anyone. I was dead! And a dead man has no debt! A dead man has no wife! A dead man has no mother-in-law! What more could a fellow ask for? I was free, free, free! (Pirandello, p. 94-95)

Unfortunately, although Mattia made up a new identity for himself, containing a new name, a new history, a new set of family, the newly appeared Adriano Meis finds no freedom at all. His new identity has no real existence, no papers to demonstrate he is real. The only freedom he has is the freedom of a fugitive, always in alarm that he might be exposed, accused, jailed. Thus, a free man always frightened of losing his apparent freedom. In fact, and this will be realized by Adriano Meis in time, the new realm he entered in search for freedom and true self is another cage, a wealthy and quiet one, but a cage.

He is trapped in a being that cannot rise up against the thief who stole a sum of his money because police might ask him for a non-existent identity card; he cannot take into marriage Adriana, a young, pure and true soul he fell in love with, because no one would officiate a marriage of a non-existent person. As in Dante's *Inferno*, in the conventional inferno, whose walls could not be crashed by Mattia Pascal, the harshest torment or suffering is not fire or frost, but the final ripping off of hope. (Balaci, p. 91)

After an apparent suicide of the named Mattia Pascal, undertaken because of the new possibilities of freedom, the second life escalates to a point where Adriano Meis sees no other option than to simulate another suicide in order to leave this second and false identity. Suicide is seen not as much an end of life, but more as an end of a cycle and an entrance into another (kind of) life, another identity. If his second identity had started with a suicide his wife and mother-in-law confirmed, it also has to end with one: "The path chosen by Mattia Pascal ends pitifully, after a pathetic trial of escape, during which he

had not succeeded even to confess his love to the only authentic being he had met". (Berlogea, p. 190)

To live in the relativity of social chaos is impossible, but outside it there is no life. There is no communication among people. The so-called understanding is mere illusion. No social transformation solves the spiritual void, isolation, the desert in which the human being is condemned to live. Total liberation is given only by the annihilation of social identity. (Berlogea, p. 189)

Mattia Pascal chooses to come back to his real and old self/identity only after he became convinced of the impossibility of escape he had found and after he realizes that the runaway only emphasized his feeling of alienation. One cannot run from his self and still feel himself. Escape is, thus, impossible; life is also impossible, other than the false relations and relative dimensions of a mystified world. Mattia Pascal can only go back and trace his own steps, can only put on, one by one, the humble clothes of his old masquerade, in order to piece together the fragments of his former self, so as to resign to suffer, to meditate in the desert and to sigh lingeringly for the unachievable freedom. (De Castris, p. 219)

Once home, he has two surprises. One of them is that the community, the people he had spent all his life up to two years ago, did not have reactions when seeing him. Neither shock, nor joy. Thus he drew the sad conclusion: if people do not see you, you do not exist anymore. Assuming you were once valuable to them at least in a certain degree. But, anyhow, Mattia – and Pirandello himself – had already lost hope in the value a community puts on one of its habitants, especially a poor one. The other surprise was that his wife quickly chose to marry again with his friend. Another confirmation that life continued undisturbedly (perhaps even more serenely) without him.

He left the village of Miragno with a feeling of alienation and suffocation, he felt even more alienated under a different name and identity and he came back to discover that he was indeed a stranger. He came to his (former) family and found it belonging to someone else. Although he is well aware that, by coming back "to life", he can have his wife back as well, he refuses to make an official statement about his existence. The existence of the child together with his repugnance for joining again with his former wife and mother-in-law under the same roof are enough reasons to continue his life alone.

Mattia is no happier now than before, it is a defeat of all his efforts, but at least he is now aware there is no possibility for him to find any freer tides elsewhere and he is willing to assume his role as

deficient as it is. We could say the feeling of alienation is a little fainter in the end, in spite of the same sadness skillfully ironised while visiting his own grave:

People often watch me from a distance, on such occasions; and sometimes somebody meets me at the gate and, in view of my situation, asks me:

"But say, who are you really, anyway?"

I shrug my shoulders, wink an eye, and answer:

"Why, what can I say?... I guess I'm the late Mattia Pascal!"
(Pirandello, p. 346)

Underlined again, as in other works, the theme of detachment, of decomposing the unity of personality, of analysing the self from the outside with a mockery, with amusement. It is a sign of resignation, of an end to fight, of a peaceful conclusion, but also of sorrow.

5. Buber and Pirandello's Stranger

Following Mattia's sense of chaos within the very freedom he longed for, he realises that real freedom is not running from his reality, from the people he knew, but living it, sharing it with the others. He discovered that the freedom he found is a freedom not only of anger and stress, but also of company, of connection with other people. His wife and mother-in-law were the worst company he could have in his opinion, but still they represented his company, the place he lived in represented his home, his habitual activities represented his reality. Running away from his identity and his choices do not free him at all; it drives him away from himself.

Pirandello himself wanted to run away from himself and his life, trying to commit suicide at one point when his family's financial difficulties overwhelmed them after the Sulphur mine business collapsed (Tayler, 2012). Fortunately, a friend of Pirandello's who was also a publisher commissioned him to write a novel, honouring payments to him even before seeing its plot. Still, devoting himself deeply to his work and writing about his anxieties and misfortunes in his plays and novels alienated him from the world.

Their business loss surely affected permanently his wife, Antoinetta, who never recovered psychically and had to be interned into an asylum in 1919, with great reluctance from the part of Luigi. Her absence created a void in the house and on Luigi's state of mind that probably seemed surprising. This, though, is in deep connection or could be a (contemporary) proof of Martin Buber's book around the

same period, *Ich und Du*, in 1923, a philosophy of dialogue and the impact of this dialogue on our own being.

Buber considered that a person is not a complete person unless in connection, in communion with another person. I is completed through You and any true life implies a meeting with the other (Buber, p. 38). Without the other, "I" is devoid of the perception of the self because, as he wrote, the "I" can access his self through "you", the other he has a relationship with. Only thus "I" can understand who he really is and how he is different from others, by relating to "you" and through "you" relating to "I".

A somewhat similar idea is present in Pirandello's other novel, *Uno nessuno centomila*, where the protagonist gradually finds that his perception regarding his own person is, in fact, very different from the perception of others towards himself. He can be as many people, a hundred thousand for example, as the people judging him. Every relationship changes the interaction and the way "I" responds to the other. Very relationship becomes, thus, different and, if he were to find out all exterior perception of him (as he finds out about his wife's), he would not recognise himself any longer. Again, the connection to the others as a way of knowing oneself, of discovering one's identity.

Of course, we can survive without others and their perception regarding us, but it would not be a complete and true life, a complete identity. It would be a flee from ourselves so that we should not be obliged to look ourselves in the eyes and know our deepest flaws or to see the hurt we sometimes bring to others. Unfortunately, thus, we will neither know the joy and harmony we can bring to them.

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Visages de l'exil dans *D'amour et d'exil* d'Eduardo Manet

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Résumé : Eduardo Manet est un écrivain francophone d'origine cubaine. Il s'avère être une personnalité culturelle complexe qui a choisi l'exil en France où il vit et écrit en français, depuis l'an 1968. Il a transféré les expériences vécues dans son œuvre de fiction. Il faut ajouter aussi que l'exil était une mode à Cuba, vu son Histoire riche et trouble. C'est ainsi qu'on pourrait mieux comprendre la fréquence de ce sujet dans l'œuvre romanesque de Manet, de sorte qu'il devient non seulement son élément structurant mais aussi un leitmotiv permanent. Nous nous proposons d'interroger ce phénomène dans le roman *D'amour et d'exil*, d'identifier ses facettes, de décrire la condition des héros exilés, de configurer leur paradis perdu et d'analyser la relation entre l'amour et l'exil.

Mots clé : exil, amour, malheur, identité, paradis perdu

Introduction

L'exil de l'écrivain

La relation de Manet avec la langue et la culture françaises a commencé dans l'enfance, sous l'influence de sa mère, une grande amoureuse de la France. Cela a continué pendant la jeunesse, lorsqu'il a fait des études de théâtre et de cinéma en Italie et en France. Le coup d'Etat du dictateur Batista l'oblige à prolonger son séjour en France jusqu'en 1960. Mais l'an 1956 devient un repère qui coïncide avec sa décision d'écrire en français, après le succès remporté avec une nouvelle (« Spirale ») qui a été publiée chez Julliard. En outre, le français est devenu langue de l'amour par son mariage avec une Française.

Il a cru dans la Révolution et s'est situé du côté de Castro. Après la Révolution, l'écrivain rentre à Cuba, pour une dizaine d'années, avec l'espoir de s'impliquer dans la vie culturelle. Il écrit des pièces de

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théâtre, des scripts de cinéma en espagnol et des romans en français. Quoique bénéfique et permissive au début, la Révolution s'est radicalisée, introduisant la Censure et coupant la liberté d'expression. Des dizaines d'écrivains ont pris la voie de l'exil. Eduardo Manet en fait partie mais il en représente une figure singulière car il subit un triple exil. Premièrement, il est exclu de toute anthologie de littérature cubaine ou de dictionnaires d'écrivains cubains ; situation pareille dans ceux de littérature latino-américaine. Deuxièmement, il manque dans les discours des écrivains cubains de la diaspora. Troisièmement, il est exclu pour avoir choisi le français comme langue d'écriture ; ce choix a été perçu comme une trahison de la langue et du peuple cubains. Mais d'un autre côté, il a gagné l'admiration et l'intérêt des lecteurs français.

Eduardo Manet a intégré la grande famille des écrivains francophones d'origines très diverses qui ont choisi la France comme pays adoptif : Eugène Ionesco, Emil Cioran, Andreï Makine, Milan Kundera, Samuel Beckett, Jorge Semprun, Hector Bianciotti et la liste pourrait continuer. La France les a attirés par son système démocratique, par la fameuse triade « liberté, égalité, fraternité » et par ses valeurs de culture et de civilisation. Pour lui comme pour les autres exilés en France, ce pays représente la terre de la liberté et des droits de l'homme comme il l'avoue d'ailleurs : « ...j'aime cette langue, j'aime ce pays virtuel qui est la France parce que nous avons une image de la France qui peut-être n'existe pas dans la vérité, c'est l'image de la France, de la liberté, de la réalité, de la fraternité et de la culture. »²

Types d'exil

L'exil est un phénomène universel, connu par toutes les époques depuis le début de l'humanité jusqu'à nos jours. Un bref regard diachronique montre que ce concept a modifié son contenu le long du temps et c'est pourquoi, il faut l'envisager d'une manière dynamique et surtout dans un certain contexte. L'humanité a retenu quelques grandes figures d'exilés qui ont bien reçu une valeur mythique : Ovide à Tomes, chez les Daces, Victor Hugo à Jersey ou à Guernesey, Napoléon à Sainte-Hélène. L'exil n'est pas un fait brut mais la plupart du temps, le résultat d'une action ; exiler quelqu'un suppose un certain pouvoir, un droit.

A l'époque moderne, l'histoire de la littérature connaît beaucoup d'avatars d'Ovide, des hommes de lettres victimes de divers types de Pouvoir. Dans tous les cas, l'exil est associé à une blessure, à un

² Propos d'Eduardo Manet à l'occasion du III-e Salon des Littératures francophones organisé par l'Association Toulouse Ecrivains francophones, « Une langue d'adoption », Balma, 26-28 avril 2002.

handicap, à quelque chose de démoniaque. Il se définit comme un système manichéen où les antipodes seraient : le Paradis / l'Enfer, la lumière / l'ombre, l'endroit / l'envers. Mais cette condition peut être aussi conçue comme une décision de l'exilé lui-même, ce qu'on appelle l'exil volontaire. De tout temps, il y a eu grand nombre d'artistes, d'hommes de science, d'écrivains, d'intellectuels qui ont choisi de quitter leur pays pour fuir les contraintes des régimes totalitaires, pour dénoncer l'oppression et la combattre, pour vivre dans un espace de liberté. En ce cas, l'exil devient une thérapie pour la schizophrénie intérieure à laquelle les avait condamnés les régimes politiques : la rupture entre le moi public, faux, et le moi intérieur, authentique.

Il faut admettre qu'il existe une physique de même qu'une éthique de l'exil. Si le premier concept nous renseigne sur son caractère topologique, visant le changement de lieu, l'éloignement du lieu d'origine, le deuxième fait référence au jugement moral de l'exilé, condamné par l'entourage et accompagné d'une dépréciation de soi-même. Tout cela peut mener à une autre situation, celle où l'exilé se réfugie dans son monde intérieur. La comparaison avec l'antenne de l'escargot qui, au moindre danger se retire dans sa coquille, nous semble très suggestive dans ce contexte. Nous pensons avec Roland Jaccard que l'homme cherche lui aussi un abri protecteur devant un obstacle qu'il redoute.³ Si tout exil est une fuite, un changement de lieu, celui intérieur l'est aussi ; c'est une attitude de repli sur soi, un isolement des événements de son peuple, de l'Histoire de la société matricielle ou de celle du pays adoptif. L'exil intérieur n'implique pas le tragique de la perte identitaire mais le dramatisme d'une existence où l'esprit se sauve en fuyant l'Histoire et en exacerbant la conscience de soi et l'orgueil.

« Mais qui peut oublier les malheurs de l'exil intérieur ? C'est une forme d'exil plus subtil, moins saisissable. Elle atteint les consciences singulières, comme les fractions de communauté : elle pousse à vivre loin des autres, à l'écart de la majorité, mais aussi dans le rêve personnel. Dans cet exemple extrême, la fuite n'est pas un changement de lieu mais un changement d'être : ou, pour parler un langage atroce, une fuite hors de soi. »⁴

Les exilés de Manet

L'exil volontaire

³ R. Jaccard, *L'exil intérieur. Schizoïdie et civilisation*, Paris, PUF, Collection "Perspectives critiques", 1975.

⁴ C. Drevet, "L'exil intérieur" in *L'exil*, Textes réunis par Alain Niderst, Paris, Ed. Klincksieck, 1996, p. 215.

Le lecteur est surpris de rencontrer dans le roman plusieurs figures d'exilés. Ils pourraient s'encadrer dans plusieurs segments temporels qui s'étendent depuis le XIX-e siècle jusqu'à l'âge contemporain. On peut déceler aussi plusieurs types d'exil : l'exil extérieur, proprement-dit mais aussi l'exil intérieur, l'exil forcé et l'exil volontaire. Ce qui nous semble curieux c'est le fait que la terre d'accueil ne soit pas toujours l'Occident comme dans la plupart des livres sur l'exil, mais aussi Cuba, choisi par un habitant du Pays Basque. L'exil se fait dans les deux sens qui se croisent. Des ancêtres des protagonistes contemporains ont quitté le Pays Basque à l'époque de la guerre coloniale entre Cuba qui voulait obtenir son indépendance et l'Empire Espagnol. Ceux du XX-e siècle quittent Cuba pour Le Pays Basque. Mais qui sont ces exilés ?

Il semble que, dans ce roman, l'exil devient un héritage de famille si l'on pense aux ancêtres des protagonistes et à leur destin. La figure centrale du roman est Leonardo Esteban, haut fonctionnaire cubain au Ministère du Commerce Extérieur, un homme d'une cinquantaine d'années, avec un itinéraire de vie très riche. Les appartenances identitaires de Leonardo sont bien identifiées par l'écrivain. Ainsi apprend-on qu'il est né en 1944 à Santiago de Cuba, d'une mère célibataire et d'un père inconnu. Ses arrière-grands-parents maternels étaient des migrants qui s'étaient arrêtés à Cuba dans leur chemin vers l'Argentine. Sa mère provient d'une famille modeste, une mère soumise à un père autoritaire, travaillant comme surveillant sur les propriétés de canne à sucre. Une bonne occasion pour l'écrivain de remonter dans le passé de Cuba d'autrefois, d'en dévoiler la vie et les mentalités. La mère de Leonardo était une fille curieuse, intelligente et sensible, chaleureuse envers les enfants noirs avec lesquels elle se lie d'amitié. Plus tard, cela lui coûtera cher parce qu'elle est chassée de la maison par son père. Après la naissance de Leonardo, elle s'exile de sa ville natale à la capitale pour recommencer une nouvelle vie avec son fils.

A un âge tendre, à 14 ans, Leonardo se remarque par son courage et son enthousiasme dans la lutte clandestine contre le dictateur Batista. Sa vocation de révolutionnaire est évidente aussi dans son travail de messenger entre le vieux Parti socialiste cubain et le Mouvement du 26 juillet de Fidel Castro. C'était l'époque où il avait rencontré Antton, un exilé du Pays Basque, devenu le propriétaire d'une imprimerie à La Havane, un homme singulier qui a marqué sa vie. Il devient un vrai père pour le jeune Leonardo, le guidant dans son parcours éducatif et révolutionnaire. Le travail de volontaire, la garde à la milice après le triomphe de la Révolution de Castro sont autant d'activités remarquables qui s'ajoutent à son profil. Passionné de

lecture, il veut devenir écrivain mais il se décide finalement à faire des études de droit et de sciences économiques qui lui ouvrent une bonne carrière au Ministère du Commerce Extérieur. Sans avoir l'ambition d'accéder à une fonction de premier rang, il obtient un poste clé qui le rend indispensable et lui donne une sorte de pouvoir occulte. Sa mission est de trouver et d'étudier des possibilités de développement avec des entreprises étrangères, de négocier des contrats et de signer des accords. Le roman surprend les activités qu'il entreprend en France du côté de Bayonne et de Bordeaux où il avait déjà accompli des missions. Dans un débat télévisé sur la situation économique et politique de Cuba, Leonardo se remarque parmi les politiciens conformistes et leur langue de bois, par ses opinions sur la réalité des relations entre les « pays frères ». Il dénonce avec courage et dignité le fait que ces pays envoient à Cuba des denrées alimentaires de qualité inférieure ou périmée et des produits industriels défectueux, son pays devenant de la sorte « le dépotoir des Caraïbes ». (*D'amour et d'exil* : 40). Dans les rencontres avec l'entrepreneur français Ambroise D. Gomez Pérez, devenu son ami, Leonardo fait la preuve d'un pouvoir d'analyse profonde et véridique de la situation de son pays et des pays de l'Est après la perestroïka. Il met en évidence la bureaucratie et l'immobilisme qui y règne encore. En même temps, il se rend compte que ces pays se sont lancés aveuglément dans l'économie de marché et dans un capitalisme sauvage sans en connaître très bien les règles et le fonctionnement.

Il faut souligner que son appartenance identitaire familiale a été fragile dès sa naissance. Elevé par sa mère célibataire, sans l'autorité et la protection d'un père, Leonardo nourrit un sentiment intense envers cet être cher qui fait des sacrifices énormes pour son éducation. Après leur exil à La Havane, elle travaille en tant que serveuse dans un bar portuaire mais sa vie de même que celle de son fils changent après la rencontre avec Antton le Basque qui l'appelle « seme » dès le début. Un mot inconnu, une vraie obsession pour Leonardo qui en apprend le sens seulement à l'âge adulte. Ils se rattachent si fort qu'ils arrivent à former une vraie famille, Antton devenant un père spirituel, un parrain pour Leonardo. Sa mère devient elle aussi une révolutionnaire acharnée à côté de lui. Nous pourrions affirmer que Leonardo devient plutôt son fils adoptif comme il le reconnaît plus tard, lorsqu'il dévoile le parcours de sa vie à sa bien-aimée. L'écrivain se plaît à glisser dans le texte des mots basques ou espagnols, comme une preuve évidente de l'amour pour sa langue maternelle. Se proposant d'écrire seulement en français, il ne trouve pas toujours les mots appropriés pour rendre la réalité cubaine ou pour désigner une certaine situation. C'est pourquoi,

il fait appel à son espagnol de Cuba. On rencontre dans le texte pas mal de mots, marqués graphiquement en italiques et expliqués par l'écrivain en bas de page ou dans le texte même à l'aide du syntagme « c'est-à-dire ». Ce sont des mots qui renvoient surtout à l'intimité, à son identité primaire mais aussi à sa condition d'exilé.

« C'est seulement bien plus tard que j'ai fait le rapprochement entre *seme*, le mot basque, et *semen*, le mot espagnol. Dans d'autres langues, en français, en espagnol, en anglais, en italien, que sais-je ? le mot fils, hijo, son, figlio prend un sens spirituel, il évoque le lien sacré du Fils de Dieu. Mais en basque, langue rude et terrienne entre toutes, le fils devient le produit du sperme, seme-semen...En devenant mon parrain, Antton le Basque m'avait adopté dans son cœur, grâce à la magie d'un mot, j'étais son fils pour de bon. Je ne l'ai compris que plus tard. » (*D'amour et d'exil* : 23-24)

Depuis sa rencontre à l'âge de onze ans, Leonardo se réjouit de ses conseils ; il l'encourage de reprendre ses études et s'engage à l'aider aux matières importantes (histoire, géographie, mathématiques, grammaire...) et à l'initier aux techniques de l'imprimerie. En plus, il se propose d'initier Leonardo à la lecture qu'il considère être une expérience essentielle. Sa vie mystérieuse le fascine de sorte qu'il veut accomplir à tout prix le rêve de son parrain : refaire son chemin de Cuba à sa terre natale, le Pays Basque français où Antton a laissé une valise avant sa fuite. C'est son cousin Louis Altuna qui raconte tout cela à Léonardo : « La veille de son départ, il est entré dans ma chambre et a posé son sac sur mon lit. Je vais faire un long voyage m'a-t-il dit. Je pars vers des pays inconnus. Est-ce que tu peux me garder ça ? Un jour je reviendrai le chercher ou j'enverrai quelqu'un » (*D'amour et d'exil* : 174)

Si nous analysons l'histoire de vie de Leonardo, nous pourrions croire qu'il veut quitter Cuba à cause de la situation du pays où le régime de Fidel Castro, dans lequel il a cru tout au début, a instauré le totalitarisme. Selon Tzvetan Todorov⁵ tout régime totalitaire possède trois caractéristiques : l'idéologie dont il se réclame et qui n'est pas du tout à négliger, la terreur pour régler la conduite de la population et le

⁵ Dans la première partie de son livre *L'Homme dépaysé*, partie intitulée "Originaire de Bulgarie", T. Todorov fait une analyse du totalitarisme basée par les expériences vécues et partagées par quelques personnes mais aussi par ses lectures de spécialité. Les trois sous-chapitres: "L'expérience totalitaire", "Les camps" et "La fin du communisme" relèvent non seulement les traits et le fonctionnement de cette société mais aussi ses pensées sur l'administration du passé de même que sur les craintes du futur.

désir illimité de pouvoir. Dans sa conception, le totalitarisme correspond à l'ensemble de ces traits. Quant à l'idéologie, les représentants du Pouvoir parlent de la société parfaite existant sur la terre et d'un avenir lumineux pour faire oublier aux gens le gris du présent ; ils évoquent le pouvoir du peuple pour cacher leur propre convoitise. Malheureusement, ce sont des mots vides, « masque et mensonge » comme les qualifie Todorov, sans la moindre relation avec la vie réelle. Mais ce qui semble être le plus grand mal provoqué par le totalitarisme c'est le règne de la terreur. Cette maladie répandue surtout par des appareils de l'Etat dictatorial arrive à contaminer toute la société de sorte que les moyens de faire souffrir son proche se trouvent à la disposition de tout le monde. Il ne faut que signaler son cas aux institutions habilitées et une suite de punitions vont s'abattre sur lui : la surveillance permanente, la chasse de sa maison, de son lieu de travail, de sa ville ou même l'exil forcé de son pays, l'emprisonnement. « Le mal extrême mis à la disposition de tous, voilà l'innovation du système totalitaire. »⁶

En tant que haut fonctionnaire, Leonardo est surveillé tout le temps, surtout lors de ses missions à l'étranger. Dans l'opinion de l'écrivain, à présent, nous sommes tous surveillés où que l'on vive, même dans les pays démocratiques. A Cuba, cela devient un sport national qu'il décrit avec humour et ironie : « Chacun sait que le sport favori du Cubain, homme ou femme, est de surveiller tout ce qui bouge autour de lui, les gens, les poules, les cochons, les plantes vertes, les membres du Parti...tout le monde est suspecté d'être autre chose que ce qu'il est...Voilà ce qui rend heureux nos compatriotes, ce qui fait leur quotidien. » (*D'amour et d'exil* : 47)

Quoiqu'il soit Cubain, Leonardo est différent ; il ressemble peut-être à son père spirituel, comme le croit Berta. Dans ses yeux il est un homme charmant, un « sphinx », un homme transparent et énigmatique à la fois.

Très discret dans son comportement, Leonardo nourrit le désir de l'exil pour d'autres raisons qui tiennent à son identité, à l'envoûtement de son parrain. Devant son amante qui le surveille, il aime les appeler « raisons personnelles ». C'est de la sorte qu'il essaie de motiver le prolongement d'une mission de deux semaines en France, dans le Pays Basque. C'est en vain qu'un fonctionnaire de l'Ambassade de Cuba se rend à Bayonne pour le rencontrer et lui demander de rentrer au pays. Leonardo lui répond qu'il est à la recherche de son passé, de son identité. Ses conversations téléphoniques de tous les soirs

⁶ T. Todorov, *L'Homme dépaysé*, Paris, Seuil, 1997, p. 37.

avec Berta dévoilent le secret du prolongement de son séjour professionnel à l'étranger : « Tu te souviens de mon parrain, Antonio Altuna, le Basque, dont je t'ai parlé un jour ? Je lui ai promis sur son lit de mort de retrouver, si j'en avais un jour l'occasion, des papiers de famille laissés en Pays basque français. Puisque je suis ici et que je dois attendre...j'ai décidé de m'en occuper. » (*D'amour et d'exil* : 15) Suivant les traces d'Antton, Leonardo est en quête de sa propre identité. Il se lie d'amitié avec l'homme d'affaires Ambroise D. Gomez Perez qu'il avait déjà rencontré lors d'une mission à Paris, après la chute du Mur de Berlin. Il avait une compagnie d'import-export et voulait investir à Cuba. En même temps, il l'aide à découvrir les parages de son père spirituel. C'est ainsi que Leonardo se rend dans le Labourd profond, le pays natal d'Antton.

L'exil forcé

Mais quelle est l'histoire de cet homme mystérieux qui a marqué sa vie ? De son vrai nom Antonio Altuna, alias Anton le Basque, est un exilé qui a abandonné son endroit natal, Le Pays Basque pour Cuba. Dans sa jeunesse, il a suivi plusieurs formations en Espagne. Séminariste d'abord, prêt à devenir prêtre, il y renonce assez tôt pour enchaîner avec des études de droit, de philosophie et de lettres à Madrid. Il voulait devenir professeur ou avocat mais son destin a changé pendant la guerre civile espagnole lorsqu'il est devenu « soldat de la liberté » un antifranquiste acharné. Il a été engagé dans les Brigades internationales à côté des troupes républicaines et puis il s'est réfugié en France.

Il paraît que le déplacement se trouve aussi dans les veines de la famille d'Antton. Son père, importateur de bois précieux et fabricant de meubles destinées à l'export, voyageait à travers le monde. Mais l'histoire qui éveille la curiosité du lecteur est celle de son oncle Mathias Zumarraga qui, à la fin du XIX-e siècle, s'est engagé dans l'armée espagnole pour aller ensuite à Cuba et lutter contre les rebelles. On trouve toutes ces informations dans les lettres envoyées à sa famille que l'écrivain insère dans le texte du roman. D'ailleurs, il y en a plusieurs dans la valise-trésor recherchée par Leonardo. Ce sont des documents inestimables sur une période d'une centaine d'années de l'histoire du pays. Ce sont aussi des témoignages sur la vie des Cubains pendant la guerre d'indépendance, sur la bravoure des rebelles contre les occupants espagnols et sur les épreuves de l'oncle Mathias en tant que soldat. Quoique la famille lui manque, il avoue son intention de revenir dans cette île, la guerre finie. « La seule chose qui me console, c'est l'idée de vous revoir bientôt ! Mais je garde l'espoir de revenir un jour

sur cette île à laquelle je me suis attaché. » (*D'amour et d'exil* : 197). En effet, il revient en Espagne en 1898 mais pour peu de temps car le souvenir de son île le hante, de sorte qu'il y rentre en 1905, pour s'installer définitivement. Ce qui surprend davantage c'est la dernière lettre envoyée l'an d'après, en l'honneur de son neveu Antton qui venait de naître. C'était un cadeau en avance pour son quinzième anniversaire, c'est « le testament spirituel » de Mathias. Il lui promet de l'emmener là-bas pour découvrir les beautés de l'île, dignes de la description d'un poète. Mais c'est surtout la beauté des femmes qu'il dévoile comme trait identitaire national. « ...je te dis que les Cubaines, Antton, ont une beauté particulière et enivrante. C'est cette palette épicée, ce mélange de l'Afrique et de l'Europe, de l'Afrique et de la Chine, ce métissage, ce brassage des races, des cultures et du sang qui leur donne tant d'attraits. Quand tu auras quinze ans, Antton, je te ferai découvrir les saveurs de cette île. » (*D'amour et d'exil* : 200) Son exil volontaire finit tragiquement parce qu'il est assassiné pour une histoire de jalousie. L'écrivain crée une relation entre son destin et celui d'Antton parce que le jour où la famille reçoit la nouvelle de sa mort, elle reçoit aussi la lettre de Mathias, destinée à son neveu.

Nous pensons que nous pouvons parler d'exil dans les deux sens. Antton va à Cuba suivant le destin de son oncle disparu ; un demi-siècle plus tard, Leonardo vient de Cuba au Pays Basque pour découvrir le passé de son parrain et s'y installer. Condamné à mort par les sbires de Franco, Antton a pris la fuite, honteux pour toujours de sa décision. Ses camarades l'ont poussé à s'embarquer sur un bateau qui allait vers les Caraïbes lui disant qu'il pourrait être utile et continuer sa lutte, si besoin est, de l'autre côté de l'Atlantique.

La condition de l'exilé

L'exil est tellement collé au destin Anton qu'il est surnommé Antton l'exilé par Ambroise Perez, un Basque de sa région natale. L'exil est pour lui une blessure qui n'a jamais guéri. Il le montre plusieurs fois lorsqu'il en parle, réussissant à comprimer dans quelques mots la condition et l'amertume de l'exilé. Et l'écrivain les place dans le discours de son personnage dès la première page du roman, renforçant le mot français avec son équivalent espagnol pour mieux rendre l'intensité de son trauma :

« Ne laisse jamais personne te raconter des histoires sur l'exil, me répétait Antton le Basque quand j'étais petit...*Jamas*. Et il insistait sur le mot jamais, en accentuant rageusement le son rude de la jota espagnole. *Inoiz*. ..Exil ! Voilà l'exemple typique d'un mot qu'on banalise pour mieux le vider de son douloureux contenu. Je sais de

quoi je parle, Leonardo. Par sa seule présence, l'exilé provoque un étrange malaise, un pénible vague à l'âme. L'exilé est la fausse note d'une partition qui se voudrait harmonieuse, mais rien n'est plus désagréable qu'une fausse note, elle blesse la sensibilité, elle agresse le cerveau, elle grince à l'oreille la fausse note. » (*D'amour et d'exil* : 7)

Quitter son pays, partir pour vivre ailleurs, c'est changer de monde. On comprend par « monde » un environnement au sens banal mais aussi une façon d'être en relation avec ce qui nous entoure. Cette manière d'être se comprend à partir d'un langage, une langue maternelle, d'un sol, une terre, d'un climat, une qualité du ciel. Voilà ce qui manque à tous les exilés, voilà ce qu'ils pleurent, comme le remarque Lya Tourn.⁷ Il y a encore la famille, les amis et ce sentiment d'appartenir à un groupe, d'être reconnu, accepté, compris. Dès l'arrivée dans l'espace étranger, ils constatent que la terre tellement convoitée ne ressemble pas du tout à leurs attentes. Il y a un grand décalage entre leurs rêves et le « monde » réel devant eux. Ce sont alors le regret d'être parti, les reproches, les pourquoi qui s'emparent d'eux et qui font disloquer leur vie intérieure. Dans tous les cas, l'exil s'avère être une épreuve. Quels sont les sentiments qu'éprouve un homme coupé de ses racines ? Déchirement, incertitude, révolte, renoncement, espoir et désespoir, amour et haine, toutes les contradictions, les tempêtes et les vagues qui agitent le monde tumultueux que tout exilé emporte à la semelle de ses souliers.

« On aimerait, partout dans le monde, que l'exilé couvre sous un voile son regard angoissé. Une manière comme une autre de faire que tout rentre à nouveau dans l'ordre. Un concert de violons bien accordés, un crescendo mélodieux. Combien de fois l'ai-je entendu cette petite musique ? Leonardo, combien de fois ai-je entendu dire, oui, bien sûr, il est exilé mais il s'est si bien adapté ! Personne, jamais, tu m'entends ? Jamais, inoiz INOIZ ! personne sauf un abruti de naissance ne peut se résigner à ce triste état de fait. Car si l'exilé ne se plaint pas, s'il se tait, c'est pour mieux se protéger, mon fils. » (*D'amour et d'exil* : 8)

L'exilé n'est pas seulement la personne arrachée à son milieu nourricier mais aussi une victime d'une conception étroite sur l'identité qui la réduit à une seule appartenance or elle ne peut être conçue que sous la

⁷ Lya Tourn, *Chemins de l'exil. Vers une identité ouverte*, Paris, Ed. Campagne Première, 2003.

forme d'un tout. Partagé entre les deux pays, l'exilé se voit scindé, écartelé, condamné à trahir soit sa patrie d'origine soit sa patrie d'accueil. Il voit sa vie comme un puzzle dont les morceaux sont éparpillés ou même perdus entre les deux pays. Quelles appartenances se perdent ? Peut-il les regagner ou en acquérir d'autres ? Quelle attitude prendre ? S'intégrer, vouloir à tout prix être assimilé et toléré ou rester différent en cultivant son altérité ?

Antton le Basque veut à tout prix être compris et accepté par les Cubains, s'adapter à leur mode de vie et à leur culture. Il veut oublier que les siens ont lutté contre les rebelles cubains quoiqu'il en ressente un brin de culpabilité. Lui, un homme éduqué et intelligent, connu et respecté pour son courage et ses idées, il est prêt à renoncer à son passé pour refaire sa vie et acquérir de nouvelles appartenances identitaires.

« Je ne viens pas ici pour bouffer de votre pain, j'essaierai de me rendre utile, je m'inclinerai sur la tombe de vos héros, je chanterai vos hymnes nationaux, j'embrasserai votre drapeau...je ressentis le besoin de m'excuser des crimes que je n'avais pas commis. J'étais mal dans ma peau, fébrile, avide de connaître les règles du jeu de la société cubaine, les règles qui me permettraient de me transformer en passe-muraille...quelqu'un de bien, un quidam qui respecte les lois. J'attendais ce jour où l'on me dirait : Tu es des nôtres Antton. »
(*D'amour et d'exil* :24)

En première étape, il veut prendre un air cubain. Pour ce faire, il s'achète des vêtements traditionnels : « une guayabera », des pantalons de toile, « un panama » et des souliers bicolores, l'uniforme d'un vrai Cubain des années 30. Pour que son look soit plus véridique, il fume la cigare malgré son dégoût pour le tabac. Comme la langue est un besoin d'existence, Antton se donne de la peine pour oublier son accent espagnol de Basque et pour acquérir celui de Cuba avec d'autres particularités phonétiques. Il s'implique dans tous les événements politiques de son pays adoptif, contestant d'abord le faux général Batista qui arrive au pouvoir en 1940. Après un certain temps, Antton reprend son esprit nationaliste et renonce à l'uniforme cubain pour son costume noir et son béret basque. Comme Eduardo Manet a quitté définitivement son pays natal, il connaît en profondeur les formes de l'abandon du pays en fonction de ses raisons et de ses préalables. En quelles conditions se produit-il et comment se manifeste-t-il tout au début ?

Avant de quitter la terre natale, il s'installe toujours un moment de crise. Il s'agirait, en fait, de l'inadaptation du héros à la réalité extérieure et de l'inacceptation de certaines conditions économiques,

sociales, politiques ou culturelles qui rendent difficile ou impossible la vie dans son propre pays. La pauvreté matérielle, les contraintes de toute sorte, la terreur semée par la dictature, le manque d'horizon et d'espoir dans une vie meilleure, ce sont autant de raisons pour quitter le pays. L'écrivain fait la distinction entre émigration et exil. Dans le premier cas, le seul but est d'aller ailleurs pour gagner mieux, devenir riche et rentrer dans le pays si la situation a tourné vers le bon. Toutes ces idées sont transférées chez son héros Antton qui les fait connaître à Leonardo, se basant sur l'exemple des migrants à Cuba. On rencontre à La Havane des Maures qui sont en fait des Syriens, des Libanais, des Marocains, des Juifs venant de l'Europe centrale et de l'Est et des Espagnols de toutes les provinces que les Cubains se plaisent à appeler « gallegos ». Tous ont quitté leur pays de leur propre volonté. L'exil suppose dans la plupart des cas une expulsion forcée qui s'associe à une blessure difficile ou même impossible à guérir. L'auteur en donne sa propre description : « L'exilé, il est un peu comme les esclaves noirs. Eux aussi ont été transplantés par un impératif brutal. L'esclave enchaîné dans la cale du bateau, on connaît le tableau. L'exilé, lui, est enchaîné à sa nostalgie, à sa rage impuissante. » (*D'amour et d'exil* :27)

Le Paradis perdu

L'abandon du pays natal, que ce soit forcé ou volontaire, qu'il ait lieu pour une période indéfinie ou définitive, provoque chez tout être humain une série d'attitudes subjectives, dont la plupart sont négatives : la mélancolie, la nostalgie, le mal du pays, la solitude, la déréliction, l'aliénation. C'est une perte sous des formes diverses, c'est un travail psychique qui ressemble à ce que Freud a appelé « travail de deuil ».⁸ Cette expérience fait inévitablement part de la problématique de l'exil qui se remarque par sa complexité. A la dimension psychologique s'ajoute cette hantise du passé et du lieu natal, cette déchirure du temps et de l'espace vécus chez l'exilé, ce paradoxe dans lequel se vit l'exil : « être absent à l'ici et au maintenant et intensément présent à l'ailleurs et au passé. »⁹ Même si au début la terre natale est porteuse de danger, de menace ou de destruction, elle devient un point d'appui et commence progressivement à faire figure de paradis perdu dans l'imagination de tous les exilés. Il convient d'accentuer que le souvenir s'accroche d'abord au paysage. Quand il est question de

⁸ S. Freud, "Deuil et mélancolie", cité par Lya Tourn in *Chemins de l'exil. Vers une identité ouverte*, Paris, Ed. Campagne Première, 2003, p. 17.

⁹ Lya Tourn, *Op. cit.* p. 8.

nostalgie, il est toujours question de géographie. Il ne s'agit pas d'un site ordinaire, mais d'un paysage sacré, d'une géographie pathétique.

Nous pouvons déceler deux mondes qui font figure de paradis perdu dans ce roman, deux espaces géographiques très loin l'un de l'autre et très différents. Les deux protagonistes, Antton et Leonardo se croisent dans leur exil ; Antton s'exile dans le pays de Leonardo et celui-ci dans le pays d'Antton. Les descriptions de Cuba et du Pays basque fascinent le lecteur car l'écrivain met l'accent sur leur cachet. Cuba est mise en évidence par son paysage et son climat, par sa végétation luxuriante, son rhum et ses cigares. Ce sont en fait de vrais symboles nationaux auxquels s'ajoutent l'architecture coloniale et l'imagerie révolutionnaire qui lui donnent un air exotique. On ne peut pas oublier la beauté des femmes, le métissage, la liberté sexuelle et la musique qui font de ce pays un vrai paradis. C'est leur absence qu'attriste Leonardo pendant son séjour à l'étranger. Il ne peut pas séparer sa femme aimée de ce pays. Se trouvant à Paris tout seul en mission, il observe le ciel qui lui rappelle La Havane et qui le fait penser à elle. Pour lui Cuba c'est l'amour, c'est le temps heureux passé dans la compagnie de Berta. « Les monuments de pierre blonde se découpaient sur un ciel d'azur. Le ciel m'a fait penser à Cuba, à la Havane, à toi...surtout à toi. » (*D'amour et d'exil* : 120) D'ailleurs, dans l'espace de l'exil, il ne suffit qu'une petite ressemblance au lieu natal pour que sa force évocatrice déclenche l'imagination et lui donne après libre cours. Ce va-et-vient imaginaire entre deux espaces – ici/là-bas et deux temps –avant/maintenant caractérise la vie psychique de tout exilé. « L'entre-deux » s'avère être un catalyseur de nostalgie. A n'importe quel détour du chemin, une perception sensorielle du présent convoque d'un coup une certaine image d'un lieu passé. Il faut d'ailleurs accentuer que la nostalgie est étroitement liée à la « sensorialité ». Comme le remarque Lya Tourn « l'exilé languit après la couleur du ciel de son enfance, après les images du paysage familier gardées au fond des yeux, après les recoins bien-aimés et mille fois parcourus..., après les sons et les musiques, les odeurs et les parfums évocateurs, les goûts propres à la nourriture du pays natal ». ¹⁰

Le grand nostalgique du roman est Antton le Basque. Il ne cesse de décrire à Leonardo, dans les moindres détails, son espace nourricier, son espace saint. Il s'impose de présenter l'espace nostalgique, tel qu'il apparaît dans ses souvenirs pour mettre en évidence ses éléments de référence. C'est le Labourd profond où se trouvent trois villages qui forment « un triangle magique, un endroit béni des dieux » : Ustaritz,

¹⁰ Lya Tourn, *Op. cit.* p. 49.

Hasparren et Cambo-les-Bains. Il se rappelle le paysage formé de tapis de pâturages épais et verts, de brumes et de terrasses d'alluvions. Se trouvant dans la région, à la recherche du monde de son parrain et de son futur pays adoptif, Leonardo traverse la lande pour admirer les étendues fauves, les prairies, les fougères, les bois de chêne. L'Histoire y respire à chaque pas car Napoléon Bonaparte a ouvert la route impériale des cimes pour regagner Bayonne.

Antton se rappelle surtout les maisons dont il met en évidence l'architecture et la couleur : « on dirait qu'elles font corps avec le paysage, trapues et bien assises, j'aime leur toit de tuiles ocre et ces pierres d'angles apparentes sur les murs blanchis à la chaux, les volets et les panneaux de bois, couleur de rouille foncée. » (*D'amour et d'exil* : 94) Un autre détail fait référence à l'orientation de la porte vers le soleil levant, selon une tradition ancestrale. Antton relève aussi l'esprit des gens du lieu qui ont apprécié et respecté la liberté dès le Moyen Age. On apprend qu'à l'époque, les gens organisaient des réunions populaires en plein air, sous un grand orme, pour régler leurs différends.

Il se rappelle aussi Cambo-les-Bains même si ses souvenirs ne sont pas très agréables car c'était l'époque où il était blessé dans la guerre civile et se préparait pour l'embarquement vers Cuba. Mais il a découvert le cimetière de l'endroit qui l'a surpris par sa singularité. Rien de macabre, au contraire, l'orientation des stèles et des disques de pierre, similaire à celle des maisons lui transmet un message de vivacité, de revigoration. « Le cimetière basque a quelque chose d'épique, il entretient avec la mort un rapport de légendes à la fois lointain et familier et ressemble plus à un jardin. » (*D'amour et d'exil* : 95) Le paysage se configure encore à l'aide de la rivière Nive et de ses environs, un vrai joyau des Pyrénées, chargé d'histoire et d'exploits.

La terre nourricière d'Antton comprend aussi un coin paradisiaque situé entre l'Espagne et la France, baigné par le bleu de l'Atlantique. Du haut du mont Igueldo on peut apercevoir l'île Sainte Claire, « une perle dans sa coquille ». Antton souffre intensément de se trouver si loin de ces endroits magnifiques qu'il considère être un don du Créateur. Il explique à Leonardo le sens du mot « Donostia » qui est l'équivalent basque de Saint-Sébastien. A l'époque de son enfance, il croyait que ce mot signifiait « le don de l'hostie » et rêvait d'un temps, à l'âge adulte, où lui, devenu fameux et fort, il pourrait imposer le vrai nom de sa ville, « Donostia ».

Nous devons souligner que l'écrivain réussit à configurer parfaitement le paradis perdu de son héros Antton, en le transformant en terre d'accueil pour l'autre protagoniste, Leonardo. Il découvre de

ses propres yeux cet univers durant sa mission professionnelle prolongée au Pays Basque français. Les descriptions et les impressions de son parrain l'avaient tellement ensorcelé, dans sa jeunesse, qu'il s'est fixé comme but essentiel de choisir cette terre comme espace de sa vie future. D'y vivre à la place de son père spirituel qui a dû l'abandonner à cause des vicissitudes de l'Histoire.

L'amour et l'exil

Ce n'est pas par hasard que l'écrivain a intitulé son roman *D'amour et d'exil*. L'amour y est présent d'un bout à l'autre, c'est le fil rouge de son action. Il paraît que le héros Leonardo a dû souffrir d'amour, dès sa jeunesse, lorsqu'il est tombé amoureux d'une jeune ballerine, Hilda qui provenait d'une famille riche et qui ne l'appréciait ni ne l'aimait profondément. Il l'épouse mais leur coup de foudre ne résiste pas car Hilda le trompe et l'abandonne, s'exilant ensuite aux Etats-Unis. Par contre, son amante Berta, la belle mulâtresse cubaine l'admire pour ses qualités professionnelles et morales. Tout comme lui, elle provient d'une famille simple et travaille comme haut fonctionnaire au Ministère de l'Extérieur de Cuba de même que son frère. Marié à un fonctionnaire d'Etat, elle n'est pas heureuse. L'apparition de Leonardo dans une émission télévisée se transforme dans un véritable coup de foudre de sa part, se proposant de faire à tout prix sa connaissance. « Enfin un type courageux qui détonnait dans l'ambiance de médiocrité et de mensonge général, un type qui se plaçait au-delà de la vanité du monde. Une tête humaine, un homme à qui l'on pouvait faire confiance, un homme à aimer » (*D'amour et d'exil* : 41). En effet, Berta, mère de jumeaux, avec un passé révolutionnaire aussi riche que Leonardo l'aime d'un amour fusionnel. Elle trouve en lui tout ce qu'un époux idéal pourrait offrir et que son mari ne peut pas. Mais c'est un amour clandestin qui dure déjà depuis onze ans. Leurs rencontres ont toujours lieu en différents endroits de la capitale, surtout après les missions étrangères de son amant.

Nous pensons que l'écrivain a transféré aussi ses expériences d'amour à son héros. Il a toujours été un grand amoureux des femmes cubaines, quoiqu'il ait épousé une Française. Il se plaît à décrire la beauté cubaine, lui attribuant le rôle de trait inhérent de ce peuple. Nous retenons le portrait physique de Berta où l'écrivain met en évidence les moindres détails pour rendre sa beauté charmante. A sa première rencontre avec Leonardo, lors d'une réunion avec une délégation bulgare on remarque la différence entre cette femme et celles de la délégation étrangère ! Elle fascine tout le monde par son aspect et

par son comportement. Pour Leonardo, c'est un nouveau coup de foudre, un vrai envoûtement.

« Je t'observai d'un œil critique...Qu'a-t-elle donc de si spécial pour mettre cette assemblée d'hommes en transe... ? Des cheveux noirs bouclés tirés dans une stricte queue de cheval, un petit haut à bretelles qui ressemblait davantage à une pièce de lingerie fine, découvrait des épaules cuivrées et laissait entrevoir la naissance des seins...Ce qui me frappa le plus c'est ton visage, un visage volontaire qui contrastait singulièrement avec ce corps d'hétaïre promis à l'amour. Pommettes hautes, yeux immenses et à peine bridés où brillait une lumière intense, regard concentré, vif, d'une exceptionnelle intelligence »
(*D'amour et d'exil* : 34)

Nous pouvons deviner une sorte de fierté nationale de la part de l'écrivain lorsqu'il rappelle que ce portrait possède quelque chose du métissage entre l'Afrique et l'Asie, réunissant le mystère et l'énergie, une subtilité et une sorte hardiesse, une certaine sensualité.

On pourrait bien condamner Leonardo pour cet amour clandestin, pour manque d'honnêteté et de sérieux mais il a profondément aimé son ex-épouse. Après le divorce, il a subi un terrible trauma se laissant en proie à l'alcool excessif. Il a réussi d'alléger cette blessure par l'amour pour Berta qui l'a sauvé. L'ami de Leonardo, Ambroise, apprécie lui aussi ce « je ne sais quoi » de Berta et il considère que son amour est un « don du ciel ». Dans ses innombrables déclarations d'amour, Berta dit à Leonardo que, malgré son mariage, elle lui offre tout ce qu'il y a de plus vrai et de plus profond dans son être. En effet, le héros le reconnaît vers la fin du roman, que c'est grâce à elle et à leur amour partagé qu'il a pu continuer sa vie. « Je retrouve la Berta que j'aime, souriante et vivante, celle de nos rendez-vous d'amour à La Havane, devenus dans ma mythologie personnelle les moments les plus heureux de ma vie, les seuls où je me suis vraiment senti vivre. »
(*D'amour et d'exil* : 237)

Lorsque Leonardo se trouve dans le Pays Basque avec l'intention de ne plus rentrer, Berta commence à s'inquiéter. Il lui manque mais c'est réciproque, comme le montre une conversation téléphonique en pleine nuit à Cuba, vu l'écart horaire :

« ...je ne cesse de penser à toi...- Aujourd'hui, pendant une réunion de la plus haute importance je me suis évadé et j'ai compté toutes les chambres d'hôtel où nous avons...parlé de la Révolution...-Viens vite. Je te ferai la fête, je saurai te guérir de ce long célibat. Presque deux semaines déjà...quand rentres-tu ? – Je suis coincé ici pour quelques jours encore. – Combien de jours ? Est-ce que je peux les compter sur

les doigts d'une seule main ? » (*D'amour et d'exil* : 107-108)

La suspicion s'éveille dans l'esprit de Berta. Aidé par son frère, elle le rejoint dans le Pays Basque ayant comme mission de le ramener dans le pays. A son tour, Leonardo tente de la convaincre de rester avec lui dans cet exil volontaire pour vivre pleinement leur amour, loin des contraintes de toute sorte de la société cubaine. Les deux amoureux parcourent ensemble la région, jour après jour, mêlant des moments inoubliables d'amour avec la découverte des lieux de mémoire, en signe d'hommage rendu à Antton. Ils se redécouvrent et profitent de la liberté d'être ensemble. En effet, Leonardo reconnaît que c'est grâce à Berta et à leur amour partagé qu'il a pu continuer sa vie. « Je retrouve la Berta que j'aime, souriante et vivante, celle de nos rendez-vous d'amour à La Havane, devenus dans ma mythologie personnelle les moments les plus heureux de ma vie, les seuls où je me suis vraiment senti vivre. » (*D'amour et d'exil* : 237) Ils réussissent à rendre visite à Louis Altuna, ce cousin éloigné qui gardait la fameuse valise, le trésor de la famille. En plus, ils fouillent ensemble des lettres et des documents, bonne occasion d'apprendre des épisodes inconnus de l'histoire de Cuba. C'est le moment où Leonardo a une illumination : il veut finir avec le passé et recommencer une nouvelle vie. « Il avait franchi le pas, désormais, il était un exilé, un exilé volontaire. » (*D'amour et d'exil* : 192)

Leonardo et Berta compriment dans les deux semaines leur passé heureux mais aussi l'anxiété et le déchirement du présent. Leonardo se donne de la peine pour lui annoncer la décision de son exil et pour lui demander de le suivre. Berta, à son tour, se voit scindée entre son amour pour Leonardo, désirant rester avec lui pour tout la vie, et l'amour pour ses enfants demeurés à Cuba. Le coup de fil où son mari la menace avec l'interdiction de revoir ses enfants l'oblige à prendre une décision douloureuse pour tous les deux. Berta rentre à Cuba en cachette, à l'insu de Leonardo qui participait à une rencontre avec Ambroise et des hommes d'affaire. Il avait d'ailleurs accepté de travailler pour lui en tant que gestionnaire de son affaire. En guise d'adieu, Berta laisse pour son amant un enregistrement où elle remonte dans leur passé, lui avoue ses sentiments profonds et les raisons de son retour. Elle est sûre de son amour mais elle lui reproche de n'avoir jamais considéré son autre facette, celle de mère de deux enfants. Ni le désir de former une nouvelle famille où ils soient inclus. « Pendant onze ans, je t'ai prouvé mon amour, tu sais que j'aurais voulu partager ma vie avec toi et te rendre heureux. Mais ces enfants Leonardo...je ne pourrai vivre sans les voir. Je sais que si l'on me coupe d'eux, un jour je te haïrai. J'ai donc décidé de partir. » (*D'amour et d'exil* : 248)

Le roman finit par deux courts chapitres, en guise d'épilogue, qui placent au premier plan chacun des deux amoureux, après la séparation. Pour raison de symétrie, l'écrivain a choisi une dimension temporelle unique, l'hiver de 1999. Le cadre spatial est différent, La Havane pour Berta et Saint Sébastien pour Leonardo. Berta mène une vie terne de fonctionnaire qui traite des dossiers, loin des missions étrangères. Elle nourrit quand même un brin d'espoir pour un possible retour de son amant. Quant à Leonardo, il s'isole et va chaque jour pour se recueillir au sommet du mont Urgull, « au puits des miracles », le casque à ses oreilles pour écouter la voix de Berta. Son comportement, ce repli sur lui-même ressemble à l'exil intérieur qu'il tente d'adoucir. Il va refaire le parcours réalisé avec son amour et ne cessera de répéter à chaque pas qu'il pense à elle.

En guise de conclusion

Le roman d'Eduardo Manet raconte une histoire d'amour déchirante tout comme le déchirement de l'exil. L'amour filial, l'amour comme remède et thérapie, l'amour comme source de bonheur ou de malheur, ce sont quelques facettes que l'écrivain a illustrées par le comportement de ses héros. Nous avons pu déceler et analyser plusieurs visages de l'exil : l'exil forcé et l'exil volontaire, l'exil extérieur et l'exil intérieur. Nous avons montré aussi que, dans certains cas, l'exil est devenu un héritage de famille. Ce doit être aussi un écho de la vie de l'écrivain qui a vécu ses épreuves.

D'amour et d'exil est en même temps une quête nostalgique de l'espace nourricier et de la vie heureuse passée dans son île. L'écrivain réussit à recréer l'univers cubain avec les couleurs, les femmes, les cigares, les parfums de café et de rhum, les mentalités, l'histoire avec le monde de Batista ou de Castro. Il a essayé de refaire son identité perdue, ne fût-ce que dans l'imagination. Par sa force imaginative, Manet crée un autre univers, celui du Pays Basque où il place ses héros et dont il donne un rôle ambivalent, de paradis perdu et de terre d'accueil. Ses exilés se situent dans « l'entre-deux », tout comme l'écrivain : deux langues, deux cultures et deux mondes reliés par un trait d'union, très fragile, comme le dit J. Derrida.¹¹

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The Stranger in Ileana Mălăncioiu's Poetry

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Abstract. This paper examines the manner in which the concept of alienation appears in Ileana Mălăncioiu's poetry. The essay is organized in three parts. In the first part, we examined some of the avatars of the stranger, as they appear in the poet's early poems and, then, in her transitional poems, the final stage of the '60s writer's creation. The second part of our essay describes the mechanisms of alienation. In the final part of this paper, we will also analyze the alternatives that the poet finds to alienation. We must specify that alienation is not a theme of Ileana Mălăncioiu's poetry as much as the search for saving solutions is.

Key words: *alienation, memory, self, salvation*

Ileana Mălăncioiu's poetry always revolves around the concept of distance. When the I assumes it and is aware of it, distance almost always opens up a rapport between the self and the other, and between the self and their own conscience. Which is where the feeling of alienation stems from. The two worlds, always present in Ileana Mălăncioiu's poetry, the world of the living, plenary being, and the world beyond, converge again and again around the feeling of alienation.

If we were to ascribe a definition to the stranger in Ileana Mălăncioiu's poetry, that would be, especially in her earlier poems, the person who cannot adapt to the present, to the current time. The refuge of the self, as well as their true life, resides, in fact, in memory or in the world beyond. Alienation is not the go-to subject of Ileana Mălăncioiu's poems, but rather an effect of the interaction between the self and the world. It is obvious that we are not dealing with a tendency towards existentialist themes here, as the absurd or nothingness are concepts that must be surpassed, and not in the least analyzed or memorized.

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There are three elements to analyze in Ileana Mălăncioiu's poetry in terms the theme of alienation. First, it would be interesting to look into the avatar or **avatars of the stranger** in the poet's creations, which begin with the being who is not at all or almost not at all individualized in her first poems, and end with the being completely aware of itself and its place in the world, or, rather, aware of the need to find a place for its own individuality in the midst of a world that annihilates it.

Another subject that should then be analyzed is **the mechanism of alienation**, as it appears in the early poems which are concerned with the spaces of childhood all the way to Ileana Mălăncioiu's social poems, where space is allegorized, becoming an opportunity to affirm one's estranged identity.

Last but not least, another subject fit for analysis is the manner in which alienation is overcome, and it is well worth it to see here the manner in which Ileana Mălăncioiu builds **avatars of the being that saves itself**, which is, in fact, the essence of the '60s writer's poetry.

The avatars of the stranger

The most relevant poem of Ileana Mălăncioiu's early output is, without a doubt, „Sfârșitul copilăriei” („The End of Childhood”), as it punctuates two instances of the stranger in Ileana Mălăncioiu's poetry. The first is the relationship between the child self and the world of its present time, which they are conscious of to a small extent, but it is this very lack of awareness that the feeling of abandon is born from. The second would be the relationship between the mature self and child self – which leads to an alienation towards both the being's own past, as well as the present self:

„Copilăria marginea de joc
Și-o strânge între amintiri fugare,
Doar luna ca o piatră norocoasă
De sub pământul umezit răsare
În pătrățelele șotronului uitat.

E prea masivă luna pentru joc,
Aș despica-o-n uliță la noi,
Dar mi-a rămas c-o zi rochița mică
Și mi-ar străfulgera genunchii goi.”² (Mălăncioiu, 2007, p. 9)

²„Childhood, its corner of play / It picks up and stuffs between glimpsed memories, / And lone, the moon, like a priceless gem / From under the moistened ground it hurries / Its rise within hopscotch squares forgotten. // The moon is too massive for

We also have here, in this poem, an attempt to plumb the psychological depths of the age of childhood. The end of this stage comes with alienation, but memory, although it proves imperfect, carries within itself the elements that can save the self: the moon, hopscotch, the little dress are elements that memory keeps for their very nature of saving solutions.

However, the objects themselves are perceived as devoid of charm in the absence of the essence that memory grants them, which, in the end, gives them back their charm. There is the matter of the saving memory and of time regained, except that the self is aware of the fact that that which is retrieved, that which is remembered is fictionalized and, from this point on, a rupture occurs, accompanied by a feeling of bitterness: on the one hand, the self consciously fictionalizes, and on the other, the self wishes to reproduce as closely and with as much fidelity as possible that which memory lays before them.

Another poem where the image of the stranger appears is „Vis” („Dream”). The stranger assumes the face of the elements here. The self alienates themselves for the very reason of reintegrating themselves into the essential:

„Cânt pe inimă ca pe-o frunză de fag,
Stau oamenii-n drum să mă audă cum cânt,
Se uită unii la alții tăcuți
Și se-ntreabă ce pasăre sunt.

E prea mult cântec împrejurul nostru,
L-ascult cu ei și nu-l mai înțeleg,
Parcă m-aș fi temut să rup o frunză
Și am cântat dintr-un copac întreg.”³ (Mălăncioiu, 2007, p. 12)

The poem *Vis* draws attention towards the relationship between the self and the world, which aims to be one of identification. Where Ileana Mălăncioiu’s poetry borrows, on the one hand, from Bacovia’s poetry the idea of fear of reification, it does, however, try, on the other

play, / I’d break it in our alley in two, maybe three / But my little dress has run a day small / And its lightning could strike my naked knee.”

³„I play the heart as on a beech leaf, / People stand in the road just to listen, / They stare at each other in silence / Wondering what bird I could be christened. // There’s too much song around us, / There’s too much song around us, / I listen along and no longer understand its rhyme, / Felt like I was rather scared to break off a leaf / And instead played a whole tree this time.”

hand, to annihilate it or propose saving solutions. One of the ways to escape from the terror of inanimate objects is the very identification with the objects. The first verse casts light on the relationship of the self with itself, a self who turns into a collective self the more it identifies with their surrounding elements. In this case, we are dealing with a positive alienation, but this collective self turns up in the final poems of Ileana Mălăncioiu as a grotesque one as well.

The mechanisms of alienation

Alienation, in Ileana Mălăncioiu's poetry, is connected to an essential aspect – namely, whether there is an identification with the world or not. The self only rarely ponders the issue of its own disintegration, but does problematize the way in which its social mask's presence is felt or not. In other words, we are dealing with a self who is always aware of its conventional dimension. In Ileana Mălăncioiu's early poems, the self knows that it cannot fully retrieve the time lost from memory, and, in the final poems, it also knows that it cannot find itself fully in relation to the world. A good example in this sense is the poem „Pastel”:

„A venit toamna care-ntârziase,
Putrezește-n ploaie și ce-a fost în vară,
Simt pe pielea mea cum orice picătură
O să lase urme ca un colț de fiară.

Oricât ți se pare că ai fi departe
Viața nu te lasă să te-nchizi în vise”⁴. (Mălăncioiu, p. 282)

It is interesting how Ileana Mălăncioiu goes from the image of the outer season to that of the inner season. Just how, in her early poems, nature was part of the being, in her late poems, the seasons become a convention, the mask of an alienated self, contributing more and more to its artificialization. The space of childhood ceases to be a privileged space the moment that the self closes in more and more on it in its memory and tries to bring it back into the present, while the world / the city in Mălăncioiu's final poems stops being a welcoming place as long as the feeling of identification is lost.

Where, in her first few books, the identification with the other was positive, in the poems of „Urcarea muntelui” („Climbing the

⁴„And so has come fall, which had been tardy, / Rotting in rain, the remnants of summer still hang, / I sense on my skin how any one drop / Will leave marks on me as from a feral beast's fang. // However much it may feel like you are far / Life doesn't let you seal yourself in dreams.”

Mountain”), the collective self appears as an obsession. The seasons inertly replace each other, while the self remains blocked in its impossibility to escape the collective with which it is forced to identify with:

„A trecut și anul acesta și nu s-a întâmplat nimic,
Poate că-n iarna asta care n-a trecut încă,
Poate că primăvara va fi mai îndurătoare,
Ori poate că vara sau toamna.

Știți la ce mă gândesc; la ce se gândește
Toată lumea. Eu nu sunt o excepție,
Eu m-am născut într-un sat în care nimic nu mai crește
Mai mult decât această speranță.

Eu nu trăiesc în turnul de fildeș; eu trăiesc
Într-un oraș în care toată lumea
De la un timp visează mereu același vis
Din ce în ce mai des.”⁵ (Mălăncioiu, p.303)

Avatars of salvation

The idea of salvation exists in Ileana Mălăncioiu’s poetry, but it is imbued with different connotations from one stage to another. In her earlier poems, salvation is achieved by resorting to myth and mythology. Childhood itself appears as a mythical space. For example, we have the poem “Aștept” (“I Await”). The concept of secrets, of mystery is ever present in Ileana Mălăncioiu’s early poems, but it is an idea that steadily fades away in the end, as the world comes to empty itself of self, of its essence, in the end, and the only possible salvation resides in attempting to communicate or empathize with the other. Where, in her first poems, we are in a mythical, timeless realm unanchored in history, unanchored even in the present, her other poems appear before us as bearers of the fingerprints of a destructive history. It is, however, interesting that this history only has an obsession-inducing present, lacking in any past and any perspective on

⁵“This year’s gone by too and nothing ever happened, / Maybe this winter which hasn’t passed yet, / Maybe spring will be more merciful, / Or maybe summer or maybe fall. // You all know what I’m thinking; It’s what / Everyone’s thinking. I’m not an exception, / I was born in a village where nothing grows anymore / Other than this hope. // I don’t live in the ivory tower; I live / In a city where everyone / Has been dreaming the same dream for a while, again and again / More often and more often.”

the events which may come. We are dealing here with a history whose consequence is oblivion:

„Ea vine până la jumătatea drumului
Și se uită cu sfială în sus,
Ca și cum ar intra într-o taină
A celor care încă nu s-au dus.

Apoi coboară iarăși la locul ei
Și parcă se închide în urma sa o poartă...
Aștept cu frică să-mi spună ceva
Ca de la o moartă la altă moartă”⁶ (Mălăncioiu, p. 98)

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⁶“She arrives halfway / And gingerly looks up to see, / As if having stumbled into some secret / Of those who have yet to leave. // And then it returns down to its station / And it seems as if a gate closes behind, like a shutter... / Fearfully, I wait for her to say something / From one lifeless being to another.

An Insight into the Inhumanity of Humanity with Thomas Keneally

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Abstract: This paper discusses one of the most troubling and abominable subjects in the history of the world – The Holocaust, and its representation in fiction, examining Thomas Keneally’s *Schindler’s Ark*, a novel seen as an artistic response to the atrocities of the genocide, to the inhumanity of humanity. Keneally’s work reflects the origins of this almost unaccountable, unbearable and unimaginable phenomenon, as well as the entire program of severe measures and murderous actions took by the Third Reich against the European Jew, the racially inferior, the Other.

Keywords: Holocaust; racial purification; oppression; extermination, evil

The Holocaust represented one of the greatest tragedies of the world history and one of the most tragic episodes of the twentieth century, defined by historians as the systematic genocide of approximately 6 million Jews by the Nazi Germany during the World War II. The Nazi image of the Jews was that of dangerous criminals, chronic enemies, human beasts or parasites, that of a human plague. For them, the Jews were foreign, racially and ethnically inferior, over and above that, they represented the embodiment of evil, pollution and destruction.

Therefore, the Holocaust was the painful result of European, and especially, German anti-Semitism and racism which were either defined in terms of evil, brutality, oppression, and discrimination or took the shape of immoral and inhuman acts and behavior. The Nazi evil world and system was ruled by individuals to whom violence was a lifestyle, human life was meaningless, just a matter of choice and time. And they always chose death, it was always the right time to pull the trigger.

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The horrible reality of the Holocaust, its ghosts, still haunt the consciousness of today's society, affecting our perceptions of good and humanity. The genocide has indeed had a profound impact on posterity's mind, but also on art and literature.

In literature, in the years that followed the Second World War, writers, both Jews and non-Jews, started and tried to describe in fiction the seemingly indescribable real world of the ghettos and concentration camps, the life full of suffering lived by those once got there. Holocaust literature became a genre which provided a variety of novels and short story collections that are set in the ghettos or camps, or that explore Holocaust-related themes such as individual and collective trauma, deconstruction of both body and memory, alienation of the self, death and plenty of others. This genre of fiction also explored the concept of 'Otherness' since in the eyes of the Nazis, the Jews had been seen as The Other, the foreign, the inferior and the less human.

Thomas Keneally is one of the authors that wrote about the terrors of the Holocaust although he is not a Jewish writer or a survivor of the genocide, nor has connections to the Jewish culture or faith, successfully depicting one of the darkest periods in human history, a period whose gloomy image still holds in today's society. In *Schindler's Ark*, an iconic work of the Holocaust literature, Keneally combined fiction with historical accounts and memoirs of Nazi atrocities in Eastern Europe, more specifically, in Nazi-occupied Poland, a state depicted as anti-Semitic as the German Reich.

The writer highlights in his book the Nazis' bloodless and heartless actions against the Jews in a timeline, from the invasion and occupation of Poland in 1939 to the murderous policies adopted and implemented by the authorities in the following years whose edge was the notorious "Final Solution", until the liberation of the country by the Soviets in 1945.

He focuses to a great extent on factual events, such as the implementation of these policies whose goal was to exterminate the racially inferior i.e. the Jews, a process which was attained in mass and was ideologically motivated. In his novel, Keneally portrays a brutal reality, letting the ineffable, "terrible facts to speak for themselves."²

Like many of his works, *Schindler's Ark* addresses contemporary problems like social injustice, violence, discrimination and racism, and may be labeled as an ambivalent story since it portrays simultaneously a series of antithesis such as historical accuracy and fiction, death and life, extermination and survival, perpetrators and

2 Lenhoff, Alan, "A Triumph of Good over Evil", in *Writing*, January 26, 2003, p. 18

victims, the hunter and the hunted, Jews and non-Jews, loss and hope, immorality and morality, evil and good. All these contradictions lay in both the construction of the diegesis, of the occurrences, and of the characters, making Keneally's novel an artistic response to the inhumanity of humanity. It represents the testament of those who have witnessed, survived and have not forgot both the barbarity of the Nazi massacre of their fellows, and the chaos and madness caused by the war.

Keneally's novel can be placed in the line of those writings that uncover the terrors and the abnormality of Nazism which remained in the historical conscience as a barbaric regime.

The Nazi ideological system portrayed by the Australian writer proves to be either morally disintegrating or pervaded by evil. Keneally's Nazi world is a world of terror, where the macabre is seen as inevitable and where evil prevails, being defined through concepts like cruelty, savagery, violence, self-interest, indifference, corruption, and of course, death.

In Thomas Keneally's masterpiece, the evil penetrated the Polish society together with Nazi perpetrators, as traditionally defined, this term referring to the members of the Nazi party and army, and to any German or European who affiliated to Nazi ideology which propagated racial purification. The implementation of this purification process was realized in successive steps and through severe policies and edicts adopted right after the invasion of Poland and the fall of its capital.

The first anti-Jewish policy adopted by the Nazis since their occupation, as presented by Keneally, was the identification and registration of all Cracowian Jews. One of the first Nazi edicts stipulated that all the Jews had to declare their origin, and besides that, they "had also to carry a distinctive registration card marked by a yellow stripe."³ In this way, it was easier for the authorities to identify or recognize a Jew that was marked with the yellow Star of David, both a symbol of their faith, the Judaism, and of their Jewish identity, symbol which they might have worn proudly because it was theirs : "Someone remarked that the star was their national insignia, the insignia of a state which had been destroyed by the Romans and which existed now only in the minds of Zionists. Perhaps people were proud to wear the star."⁴

As Keneally mentions, the Jews' past experiences made them expect

3 Keneally, Thomas, *Schindler's Ark*, London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, 1982, p.

35

4 *Ibidem*, p. 58

“such a rash of edicts”⁵ ; they were aware of the fact that the edicts would continue to appear, but believed and hoped that their situation would soon change, and that their life will get back to normal as it happened in old times when the numerous population was in danger, but managed to survive by dint of money:

There would be some disruption of life – Jews from the shtetls (villages inhabited almost exclusively by Jews) being brought to town to shovel coal, intellectuals being sent into the countryside to hoe beet. There would also be sporadic slaughters for a time [...]. There would always be such intermittent instances. But the situations would settle, the race would survive by petitioning, by buying off the authorities – it was the old method, it had been working since the Roman Empire, it would work again. In the end, the civil authorities needed Jews, especially in a nation where they were one in every eleven.⁶

But this was only one insignificant edict of those that came after with regard to their life and place in the Polish society during World War II, an era when “life did not have the value of a packet of cigarettes.”⁷ As the writer points out, the Jews had to struggle for their lives for in the weeks that followed there were initiated radical measures concerning the Jewish identity and culture such as the destruction of their cultural instruments, of the ancient Polish synagogues which were burned to the ground. These devastations also implied destruction of human lives since those who opposed to the system’s destructive activities were instantly killed through shooting: “They shot him first, and then shot the rest anyway and set the fire to the place, making a shell of the oldest of all Polish synagogues.”⁸

Schindler’s Ark may be considered one of the proofs that not only were the Jews not allowed to practice their daily habits, rituals or traditions, but they were removed from public social and economic life, being dispossessed from all goods and belongings and submitted to forced labour. Although the Jews’ optimism, the succession of decrees, intrusions and confiscations never suspended, it only became iterative and malevolent – “The Trust Agency had taken his business, he had lost his car, his apartment. His bank account had been frozen. His children’s schools had been closed, or else they had been expelled from them. The family’s jewelry had been seized, and their family radio.”⁹

5 *Ibidem*, p. 35

6 *Ibidem*, pp. 35-36

7 *Ibidem*, p. 39

8 *Ibidem*, p. 53

9 *Ibidem*, pp. 66-67

Another austere edict was the rationalization of Jews, a clear sign of discrimination, of their racial inferiority in the eyes of the Nazi authorities: “Their ration books full of precancelled coupons, entitled them to only two-thirds of the meat and half of the butter allowance that went to Aryan citizens, while all the cocoa and the rice coupons were cancelled.”¹⁰ The plans of the regime were to restrict not only their food supplies, but rather their future. Nothing was limitless, not even life.

The Nazis’ ambition to purify Poland and make Cracow judenfrei, that is free of Jews, led to the next severe policy which presumed the evacuation of Jews from the urban spaces and their additional isolation in the Jewish ghettos. The exclusion of Jews from Cracow elated the non-Jews, from Germans to Poles, both old and young, whose treatment and attitude was definitely anti-Semitic, a trace of their hatred, repression, and is described in the next pages of *Schindler’s Ark*: “Crowds of Poles on Stradom and Starowislna Streets jeered and hurled mud. ‘The Jews are going. The Jews are going. Goodbye Jews’.”¹¹ The Jews lived both the oppression of the authorities and that of their fellow citizens.

Although isolated, the ghetto, the Jews’ world was not a safe or comfortable place for here the inhabitants were not deprived or spared of restrictions. They were forbidden and denied any previous social rights like the free entrance in the big cities, the use of public means of transport and were exploited and forced to work:

He and his family were forbidden entry to the centre of Cracow, denied any travel by train. They could use only segregated trolley cars [...] were subject to intermittent round-ups for snow shoveling or other compulsory labour. You never knew when you were forced into the back of a truck, if the absence would be short or long.¹²

Despite all hope, life did not become feasible again because the Nazis would start to introduce new and harsh procedures in the ghetto, paving the way for the well-known “Final Solution to the Jewish Question” i.e. the mass extermination of Jews. After Nazi Germany invaded Russia, it was clear that the plans of the regime concerning the Jews have changed radically, and that there will be no movements of people to Madagascar or to other annexed territories, as initially planned, but to other places where could and would be performed the

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 42

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 81

¹² *Ibidem*, p.77

“systematic pursuit of a racially impeccable empire.”¹³

The transfer of Jews from ghettos to work camps, and eventually, to extermination camps is depicted in this work as it was: rapid and operative. The evacuation of the ghettos was accomplished through innumerable *Aktions* of the *Sonderkommando* units that were groups specialized in matters of racial purification. These specialized units did not bother to evacuate the Jews that resisted or refused the transportation, or those terminally ill, both physically and mentally, confined in the ghetto hospital or other clinics, but they simply shot them dead –

Against the blank wall at the western end of the square, those who resisted or were found carrying the secret option of Aryan papers in their pockets were shots without any explanation or excuses to the people in the middle. The astounding thunder of rifles fractured conversation and hope. [...] The infectious patients, some trying to rise in their beds, some detached in their own delirium were executed in a range of automatic fire.¹⁴

Before and during their deportation, as *Schindler's Ark* reveals, the Jews heard dangerous rumors regarding their future and fate, the danger that awaited them. The Nazi authorities took advantage of these rumors, believing that “it was always better to let people hear wild rumors, decide they were exaggerated, fall back on hope.”¹⁵ They let their “enemies” hear everything that was necessary to be heard in order to continue to doubt, and implicitly hope, to hope for a brighter future and life, but at the moment when the worst rumor became a fact, and the Jews arrived in the work camps, they lost all their hope, which turned into a well-founded despair and fear that ceaselessly hunted both their thoughts and dreams, their consciousness – “the very taste of fear in their dreams, finding continuity in the fears of the day.”¹⁶

The conditions the Jews lived in and the treatment they endured here was far from humane, surpassing any level of morality. They were forced to never-ending work, “had no time to catch their breath there, no room to dig in, assert their habits or set up family rituals.”¹⁷ The life in such a labour camp was not a holiday; they were treated like prisoners, slaves, living in hostile, almost primitive conditions, in barracks, and suffering from privations, from hunger (the prison

13 *Ibidem*, p. 93

14 *Ibidem*, pp. 124, 169

15 *Ibidem*, p. 129

16 *Ibidem*, p. 119

17 *Ibidem*

rations of food were not enough) to infections and other diseases, some of them deadly.

All the prisoners of the work camp are portrayed in stripe-uniformed and tattooed, being separated from their families and from the outside world by means of electrified fences that would secure the area, preventing any intention of escape. Those who dared to try their luck and flee were instantly killed by electricity. The Nazis remained indifferent to their suffering and deaths, beating and even killing them if they were disobedient or ineffective – “The SS man hit the Jew on the ear and was talking to him, loudly and harshly.”¹⁸ Those who killed or used violence were not solely those in uniform or those who worked in the camp, the SS used Jews to flog Jews, in this way humiliating them.

So, in order to assure their survival, the Jews were obedient, tried to avoid death, did their work and hoped they would survive, but the Nazis’ mass executions of the prisoners “showed that there was no obedience or obeisance a Jew could make to guarantee survival.”¹⁹ As Keneally states, there was nothing in this world of self-interest and evil that could guarantee stability, safety or survival, not even wealth, obedience, efficient work, or hope. The fate was the same for all, death. But until that fate would be decided or maybe twisted, the Jews considered that “life for a day was still life.”²⁰

The conditions and treatment from the work camps were not the sole. The same indifference, lack of shame and of humanity were seen when the Jews were transferred to the extermination camps from Mainhausen, Chelmno, Belzec and Auschwitz. The transport was carried out in cattle wagons where tens and hundreds of Jews were crowded, and experienced both the bitterness of the journey and the fear of the unknown and death: “No matter what your expectation, it was always a terrifying thing to go into the trains. Even in cold weather, there was a sense of suffocation. It was compounded by blackness.”²¹ In the cattle cars, there was darkness all around and death was somehow imminent; many died of cold, disease and hunger while others survived but those who managed to stay alive have changed in a visible way, have become unrecognizable, bony –

It is hard to describe what they saw when the doors were at last open. In each car, a pyramid of frozen corpses, their limbs madly contorted, occupied the centre of the floor. The hundred or more still living stank

18 *Ibidem*, p. 121

19 *Ibidem*, p. 252

20 *Ibidem*

21 *Ibidem*, p. 329

awesomely, were seared black by cold, were skeletal. Not one of them would be found to weigh more than thirty-four kilos.²²

All the expectations of these oppressed people were suppressed at the moment they saw the black smoke from the Auschwitz crematorium, both a powerful and a sad image which would confirm the worst nightmare regarding their life, the inevitability of fate, of death. The Jews perceived the essential nature of the camp and felt the imminent danger of death when they were driven to the “disinfection cellars” and “bathhouse” or the chamber labelled “Bath and Inhalation Room”.

Driving the victims here, the SS men “reassured them all the way, telling them to breathe deeply that it was an excellent means of disinfection.”²³ In fact, this was a gas chamber, a new method of killing by mass gassing, using a cyanide-based pesticide named Zyklon B, whose mode of action affected the respiration because exposed to air, water and heat, it becomes poisonous. This chemical was the preferred killing tool of Nazi Germany because of its efficiency, the victims were immediately mass-gassed. It was used with the authorization and under the surveillance of German physicians and chemistry experts who proved to be indifferent and passive bystanders. The pyramids of corpses from the gas chambers were later burned and the ashes were incinerated or sometimes thrown in the rivers nearby. Once cleared out, the gas chambers were prepared for another groups of prisoners consisting of men, women and children. Death overrode age.

It is said that at the end of the Holocaust, there were approximately one million people killed by means of gassing. This represented the extreme form or manifestation of evil and inhumanity performed by humans against humans.

Keneally’s novel is a story about choices and decisions taken on the behalf of both good and evil, an iconic work of the Holocaust fiction. Schindler’s List, as well as the Holocaust itself is a matter of challenges and choices, of the humanity of humankind or the absence of it. It is about choosing to be passive bystanders to tyranny, to do evil or to fight against it, and choose to remain human.

This historical event remains in the public consciousness as a tragedy whose magnitude is out of the ordinary since its actions presume the fanatical ambition and desire to wipe an entire people off the face of earth, to make its culture, identity and memory disappear forever. As regards the imputations that were brought against them, it is a single one: that they were born Jews. They were doomed not one

²² *Ibidem*, p. 356

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 130

by one, but all at once, from the oldest to the new-born; not only a family or a few, but the whole ethnicity. And there was only one punishment for all of them: death, the difference laying in the methods they used to implement it – starvation, diseases, physical exhaustion, beatings or mass-gassing. It is said that some of them died for they missed the house they no longer had, the life they had and that was prohibited, the family and the relatives they lost.

Both in reality and in Keneally's work, the Jews were all isolated, stigmatized, piled up in long convoys and sent to ghettos, later to cattle wagons, and eventually into the unknown, into a realm of death. Their fate was hopeless, the horizon got darker. They proved to have a heroic behavior towards perpetrators' manifestations although they were not entirely aware of their motives regarding the persecutions. Their heroism resides in their resistance and capacity to live and survive in such inhuman conditions as those undergone in ghettos, cattle cars, and chiefly, in camps. The conditions and the environment they were placed in, the hygiene and alimentation problems, as well as the brutal treatment, the exploitation they had suffered seemed to deprive them even of their humanity and made them question it, since they were not treated like humans. They were constantly degraded and traumatized which made them feel powerless, with no personality, and less than human. Apart from self-preservation, their motivation to live included wanting to help their family members who might have been alive too, as well as dead, take revenge, and, of course, tell the world what had happened to them and to their fellow people, tell the world that human beings had died in barbaric conditions and ways for no reason.

Those who survived have got the driving need to write and tell their story, the Holocaust story, the writing and storytelling representing a sort of means for healing acute wounds, a trauma. The testimonies and memoirs told and written by the survivors of the genocide last as symbols of both disaster's impact on the communities of Jews, on family, on the self, and of hope and survival. Even if they are survivors of the Holocaust, they are still consumed by what they had witnessed and lived, by the pain, by the humiliation endured, by the impossibility to forget the abominable past and the contrived experience they had been through. The memory of this destructive event, the unspeakable trauma of the survivors was transferred to their descendants too, children and grandchildren, as a sort of immaterial legacy, as a testament, shaping the way in which they saw and defined their ethnicity, their Jewish identity and culture.

The mankind will not soon forget the awful story of the bloodthirsty murderers and their powerless victims. Enlightening the

Holocaust facts and clarifying its meanings could be seen as a way to object to all attempts of discrimination, of xenophobic, racist and anti-Semitic impulses, of nationalism, of blind selfishness, of all manifestations of evil that endanger the civilization itself. Because during the Holocaust, not only the Jew was mocked, humiliated, trampled and killed, but also the Man, the human dignity was destroyed.

Schindler's Ark emphasizes the uniqueness of the Holocaust which cannot be questioned, it is not dubitable since the Nazis' slaughter of the Jews and other non-German minority groups remains in the universal history as an act of human barbarism, an injury or a crime against humankind. It changed and dehumanized human beings forever and beyond retrieve.

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James Joyce`s *A Painful Case*. A Modern Tristan Stranger to Himself

Dana Sala¹

Abstract: *A Painful Case*, by James Joyce, published in *Dubliners*, is a story of resonance and dissonance. Music becomes the language of the protagonists. Mr. James Duffy, a bachelor, far from a modern Tristan, yet somehow connected with the medieval hero and poet, chooses music as an episode of his life, an episode when he reaches deeper layers of himself through the encounter with a married woman, Mrs. Emily Sinico. Music turns into complete silence in the last phrase of this short story. Why has the anti-hero made the choice of experiencing the plenitude of harmony if his next step is to create dissonance by retreating too early and too abruptly into his shell? The dissonance he creates impacts the woman, pushing her on the verge of abyss. The new modern Tristan is a stranger to himself; therefore he cannot take the harmonious episode of his life and turn it into a new opening. "A Painful Case" is a story of Eros and Thanatos, told through the mediation of the irony and the grotesque, a love story seen as an implosion, not as a full manifestation of feelings. Tristan cannot heal the stranger in himself. Through harmony with a soul companion, music has granted him the temporary alleviation of this burden.

Key-words: James Joyce, *Dubliners*, music, irony, the grotesque, Tristan and Iseult, alienation, medieval myths in modern interpretation, harmony, dissonance, silence, Chapelizod, psyche, chthonian, music and analepsis, the stranger.

A Painful Case, by James Joyce, published in *Dubliners*, is a story of resonance and dissonance. Music becomes the language of the protagonists. Mr. James Duffy, a bachelor, far from a modern Tristan, yet somehow connected with the medieval hero and poet, chooses music as an episode of his life, an episode when he reaches deeper layers of himself through the encounter with a married woman, Mrs.

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Emily Sinico. Music turns into complete silence in the last phrase of this short story. Why has the anti-hero made the choice of experiencing the plenitude of harmony if his next step is to create dissonance by retreating too early and too abruptly into his shell? The dissonance he creates impacts the woman, pushing her on the verge of abyss. As a very sensitive nature she cannot bear the rupture, and therefore she commits suicide. It is not clear if the suicide occurred at the very moment of the incident or was caused by her new lifestyle, by her habit of drinking. The new modern Tristan is a stranger to himself; therefore he cannot take the harmonious episode of his life and turn it into a new opening. We use here the phrase in the sense coined by Julia Kristeva, in her famous essay translated as "Stranger to Ourselves".²

Mr. James Duffy is seen by the author of *Dubliners* through special lenses. His illuminations are more important than his social environment. Actually, Mr. Duffy is a man who minimizes his social contact with others. Even his relatives are kept at a distance. He has a robotic lifestyle, but the author emphasizes his hidden, mysterious nature, the co-existence of contraries, his lack of empathy for his fellow beings (here in total contrast with the legendary Tristan) and his religious education and preferences, visible on the bookshelf of his apartment. After the harmonious opening towards another being, Emily, the author makes us see two books by Nietzsche on his bookshelf.

Mr. Duffy is one of the most interesting male characters of *Dubliners*. He does not suffer from lethargy. He is far from being a petty clerk with petty dreams. At home he has the tastes of a man of letters and he is also a piano player, for himself, not for a private audience. Every object in his house is the expression of his volition, even if he is not the owner of the apartment. He is supposedly rich but he lives an austere life. No servants accompany or help him in the house. He is far from a decadent character; he has the self-discipline of a military man. In his spare time he is a translator, his work in progress is the translation of *Michael Kramer* by Hauptmann. We can imagine he has a rich inner life although his schedule is very repetitive and does not promote such a life. Joyce was a translator from Hauptmann³.

But this character, Mr. Duffy, has a very interesting relationship with his own *psyche*⁴. The analepsis employed by James Joyce will

2 Julia Kristeva, *Stranger to Ourselves*, translated by Leon S. Roudiez, New York, Columbia University Press, 1991.

3 <http://dublinersbookshelf.org/texts/michael-kramer.html>, consulted 1.07.2019

4 See Bettina Knapp. Joyce's « A Painful Case » : The Train and an Epiphanie Experience. In: *Études irlandaises*, n°13-2, 1988. pp. 45-60,

follow the flashbacks into a moment when his life was totally disrupted from the usual program yet totally in harmony. In that moment he was under the spell of a woman. He clicked with her because he was the only one able to read her, able to read the mystery of her iris scintillation, it took him only a second to notice her hidden, chthonian nature. This woman, Emily Sinico, will represent for him the earth element.

Emily is not an open book, she is surely a person who values sympathy for others more than anything. Her sight was not necessarily inviting. She had the reflex to hide her sensitivity under the aura of good manners, of politeness. She is not the prototype of a spontaneous Circe tempting men with her spontaneous personality. Emily is somebody very immersed in the layers of the unconscious. From that level, she cannot be mistaken, she can empathetically communicate with anyone from the position of truth, rather than that of a social mask.

Emily notices a glimpse of truth in James Duffy's casual conversation. Probably she notices it in gestures, in nonverbal communication rather than in his words. The free indirect speech is an absolute masterpiece technique in this joycean short story.

The eyes were very dark blue and steady. Their gaze began with a defiant note but was confused by what seemed a deliberate swoon of the pupil into the iris, revealing for an instant a temperament of great sensibility. The pupil reasserted itself quickly, this half-disclosed nature fell again under the reign of prudence, and her astrakhan jacket, moulding a bosom of a certain fullness, struck the note of defiance more definitely⁵.

Under his Tristan impulses, the anti-hero of the story reaches in himself the ability to see through the layers of a mere conversation about music at Rotunda Concert Hall. His merit now is to understand the lady, to click with her, to see beyond what she has to say, to notice her hidden nature behind her "half-disclosed" appearance led by prudence. By doing so, by gaining this momentum, he finds an inspirer for new openings in his being. He is no longer in fear of his fellow beings. The hero is now in full possession of the present moment. He even tries to fixate her into his memory, for a future moment.

One thing led to another and the hero reveals deeper shames implanted in his psyche and deeper strata. He is now ashamed, in a

https://www.persee.fr/doc/irlan_0183-973x_1988_num_13_2_2814, consulted 2.07.2019

⁵ James Joyce, *A Painful Case*, in James Joyce, *Dubliners. A Portrait of The Artist as a Young Man. Ulysses*. Reed Consumer Books Limited, 1993, p. 58.

way, for not doing more as a hero, for not doing more for Dublin, although he tried to act through a political party. The woman will heal the wounded hero by showing him that it is acceptable to be a non-hero. She suggests an outlet for his heroic impulses, namely writing about his experiences, about his dreams to change the lives of his fellow beings. But James Duffy is also a very conservative guy. He realizes that the society has betrayed his values and the values of others by trading moral principles for material benefits. Therefore, his enterprise will be of no use.

Anyway, it is Mrs. Emily Sinico who makes him disclose himself so much, no other person had obtained that from Mr. Duffy. This is the climax of their harmony. They both live in the present tense, they are enveloped by music, by discussions, by roaming in parks, by the beauty of night falling. Music creates the atmosphere they both love. Is their story a love story? Little does it matter at this point. They are in a fair exchange of giving and receiving. However, this fair exchange shall be abruptly severed through one gesture. Mrs. Emily Sinico advances her hand in a gesture of affection waiting to be reciprocated. Mr. Duffy retreats too quickly into his shell, fear has seized him and he cuts his ties with Emily. It is the beginning of the end for her. The anticipatory word is *incongruity*, in contrast with the harmonious state the heroes were experiencing.

Meeting her a third time by accident he found courage to make an appointment. She came. This was the first of many meetings; they met always in the evening and chose the most quiet quarters for their walks together. Mr Duffy, however, had a distaste for underhand ways and, finding that they were compelled to meet stealthily, he forced her to ask him to her house. Captain Sinico encouraged his visits, thinking that his daughter's hand was in question. He had dismissed his wife so sincerely from his gallery of pleasures that he did not suspect that anyone else would take an interest in her. As the husband was often away and the daughter out giving music lessons Mr Duffy had many opportunities of enjoying the lady's society. Neither he nor she had had any such adventure before and neither was conscious of any incongruity. Little by little he entangled his thoughts with hers. He lent her books, provided her with ideas, shared his intellectual life with her. She listened to all.

Sometimes in return for his theories she gave out some fact of her own life. With almost maternal solicitude she urged him to let his nature open to the full: she became his confessor.⁶

6 Ibidem, p. 59.

Why is Mr. Duffy so wrapped in fear and unable to sustain the Tristan part of his character, his hero side?

The stranger appears in his place. He becomes a stranger to Emily and a stranger to his own life. His habit of separating mind from feelings is recharged. His father passes away. Just like Meursault in Camus's *L'Étranger*, Duffy is estranged even from this cruel situation, is unable to recognise the pain he feels. The death of Mrs Sinico, four years later, will push him into denial, but it will not bring the spectrum of indifference. The reason a foreigner acts as a foreigner, in this case, as in Camus's famous novel, is the secret wound, mentioned by Kristeva.

A secret wound, often unknown to himself, drives the foreigner to wondering. Poorly loved, however, he does not acknowledge it: with him, the challenge silences the complaint. (...) Riveted to an elsewhere as certain as it is inaccessible, the foreigner is ready to flee. No obstacle stops him, and all suffering, all insults, all rejections are indifferent to him, as he seeks that invisible and promised territory, that country that does not exist, but he bears in his dreams, and that must indeed be called a beyond. (Kristeva, p. 5).

Little is known about Duffy's mother, so Emily Sinico can be a mother substitute. But as a potential lover she stirs Duffy, because she is the carrier of simultaneity and harmony, a synchrony which is typical of lovers, of Tristan and Iseult. Mother is an abolisher of time, therefore the act of being in synchrony with somebody is not necessary with the maternal presence. Only the maternal presence has the power to annul the fear of Chronos. To reign in the presence of Chronos, to be in synchrony, in harmony, is the prerogative of a male lover, he can control the rhythms so as to modulate them in synergy with his beloved feminine presence. Therefore, Emily does take some maternal prerogatives, but they are not the only ones, the female lover prerogatives, although leading to implosion, not to explosion, are more important in this short-lived couple.

The hero of the story, Mr. James Duffy, who lives in Chapelizod, has an epiphany after a powerful conscience crisis provoked by the death of Mrs. Sinico, four years after they had met and shared a friendship with deeper openings, a friendship which could have been love from the very beginning or could have turned into love. The ambiguity of their relationship challenges the reader. It also brings numerous new layers of interpretation to the story. Mrs. Sinico's life has changed after the encounter with Mr. James Duffy. Mr. Duffy finds

out from the evening paper about her possible suicide, in the style of Anna Karenina, by throwing herself in front of a train. It could have been an accident, but it was a sure consequence of a life in unhappiness, since she had started to buy spirits and cross the railway lines for this purpose. The paper gives a detailed account of the forensic report.

In the dark air of the night, Mr. Duffy hears train noise whispering her name. After that he hears the perfect silence. By hearing this silence he realizes he is alone, that his chance to find a unique soul who could understand him is gone. Silence is the state and the territory of perfect solitude. After the turmoil provoked by the news of Mrs. Emily Sinico's death, after doubting her and feeling entitled to have separated from her, after missing her, Mr. James Duffy finds a moment of relief through silence. Yet it is the same perfect silence that comes as a heavy sentence. The sentence to be alone, to be unable to open himself to another soul so much, to feel an outcast from *life's feast*.

In Joyce's *Ulysses*, Emily Sinico's name appears in chapter *Ithaca* in connection with a shilling coin left in Bloom's pocket from her funeral⁷. Sinico's funeral happened in the autumn of 1903. She is also referred to in the chapter *Hades*, under the sentence *Love that kills*⁸. Therefore, the source of the story could have been a real case of suicide.

Joyce's relationship to music has been strongly emphasised by critics. As Robert Haas states about the role of music in Joyce's life,

the early works were—nevertheless, produced by a man who was actively studying music, who was near his peak as a musical performer, and who still at times contemplated making music his life's career.⁹

Mr. Duffy and Mrs. Sinico can reach a deeper place of the layers of their own beings through music.

It is in the isolation that James Duffy can reach music. The first term with musical connotation is Chapelizod, the suburb of Dublin, a place of James Duffy's choice, where he can live in resonance with his soul. Compared to Chapelizod, the other suburbs of Dublin are shallow for the protagonist. Chappell d'Iseult thus becomes a sacred place, where two attitudes of the contrary man, James Duffy, can be at peace.

⁷ See Michael Groden, *Characters of Dubliners Who Appear in Ulysses*

<https://www.michaelgroden.com/notes/charsfromdub.html>

⁸ http://www.online-literature.com/james_joyce/ulysses/6/

⁹R. Haas, *Music in Dubliners*, in Colby Quarterly, Vol. 28, 1992, art. 4,

<https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2903&context=cq>

Silence and music create the setting for a deeper layer of the myth, for a new modern plot and trauma of Tristan and Isolde. Here the myth may step into the territory of the grotesque, since the modern variant of Isolde, a woman with a great sensitivity but with charms dismissed by her husband, acquires the habit of buying spirits. But Mr. Duffy is not perfect either. He is an admirer of Wordsworth, a translator and a piano-player. All these qualities contrast with his impulse to rob his own bank, as a way to push himself beyond the limits of his life which he has fixed very cautiously.

He had neither companions nor friends, church nor creed. He lived his spiritual life without any communion with others, visiting his relatives at Christmas and escorting them to the cemetery when they died. He performed these two social duties for old dignity's sake but conceded nothing further to the conventions which regulate the civic life. He allowed himself to think that in certain circumstances he would rob his bank but, as these circumstances never arose, his life rolled out evenly—an adventureless tale.¹⁰

Yet the encounter between them has marked a visible shift in their life, their encounter is possible under the sign of harmony.

Having reached his soul better than anyone in the world, Emily has produced the shift in him. The voice that separated him from himself is no longer credible. He has reached himself through the encounter with a fellow being, a companion, but also through the hope and promise of love. However, the voice will interfere under a different form, through a fallacy. The voice will tell him that "*We cannot give ourselves, it said: we are our own*". Here Mr. Duffy has forgotten that our fellow being represents infinity. We cannot reduce another human being to the finitude of our judgment.

Sometimes he caught himself listening to the sound of his own voice. He thought that in her eyes he would ascend to an angelical stature; and, as he attached the fervent nature of his companion more and more closely to him, he heard the strange impersonal voice which he recognised as his own, insisting on the soul's incurable loneliness. . The end of these discourses was that one night during which she had shown every sign of unusual excitement, Mrs Sinico caught up his hand passionately and pressed it to her cheek.¹¹

Mr. Duffy dictates the rhythm and he will dictate the brutal ending, due to his retreating into the shell, due to his voice which reinforces his habitual separation mind/body. But his shell is an illusory withdrawal; there is no more powerful figure here, such as a

10 Ibidem, p. 58.

11 Ibidem, p. 59.

maternal figure. In his shell he has to confront his demons and his fears.

He will resort to not confronting them by denial and non involvement. It is true that every person has a personal choice, but that is another question. That does not deprive him of fear.

In the light of Lévinas` s book, *Totality and Infinity*, Mr. Duffy commits a mistake towards another human being, by not acknowledging his need for the other one. He tries to impose the rules of fair exchange, as if the experiencing of opening to another person were commodities and as if they were finite things. He violates the exchange between giving and receiving. He does not assist Mrs. Emily into understanding his fears and their possible incompatibilities in terms of everyday life. He is pushed by his division mind/feelings to slip into his former pattern and push away from his existence the woman who inspired in him the ascension of the soul. Her masculine forwardness crashes his feeling of idealization; he can no longer see her as the one who heightens him to the level of angels.

There is a polarisation of the characters in the short story. All other characters apart from Mr. Duffy and Emily appear as secondary. Emily`s daughter is a mediator between Mr. Duffy and her own mother, because, at the end, she brings the glimpse of the cruel reality of her mother`s unhappiness. Emily`s husband, captain Sinico, was away at the moment of her death. He belongs to a different world, that of mercantile people.

Therefore, the protagonists are already separated from the rest of the characters, are already on the same side.

For a person so firmly anchored in principles, giving in to the course of events would have created damage, had they trespassed against the friendship barrier. It could have brought more and a more violent reaction of retreat after the intercourse, in case the adultery between James Duffy and Emily Sinico had happened.

So in a way we, the readers, can say that he stopped the things at a reasonable level, his retreat was justifiable, had they stepped into the grounds of adultery, both could have felt even worse, Emily could have committed suicide sooner.

He prevented things from taking an even worse moment, but he could not prevent her reaction and he could not prevent his own demons and the fact that there was a self imposed void inside him, rejection of others rather than richness of inner life.

Mr. Duffy has forgotten he deals with an oversensitive nature. He does not want to delude her, to make her indulge in more, but at the same time he does not fully acknowledge the exchange, the natural gift

offered by the presence of another fellow being. He takes it as an exchange from which he can retreat, as an exchange of goods. This is his mistake.

The strange fact here is that he thinks he owes her nothing. But he already owes her something. He altered the course of events, he dictated the meetings, he created the opportunity for more openings and he made her dream of an escape. He is not to blame that he accepted the emergence of life in his solitary existence and he accepted the confrontation with another face.

Is the modern Tristan a narcissist? That would be another question. Since he could live without the others, he did not deliberately search for a victim, he did not entangle her with words (but with words inspired by a genuine opening into his being) we can state that he was not a narcissist.

The whole short story is a strange case of resonance and dissonance. The dissonance can be so powerful that its waves could push another human being into killing herself.

The openings of the myth are present, yet they are all under camouflage. The camouflage is so powerful that it is deep in the self of the protagonist. He does not witness *la mort d'Iseult*. He finds about it narrated by the evening paper. Yet it does strike a chord. It does bring the implosion. An explosion would have meant the drama after the consummation of their romance. It is a modern Eros and Thanatos story, under the sign of Tristan and Isolde, but unravelled in the regime of the grotesque, balanced by irony. Other ages could have come with a different musical sheet. Tristan and Isolde could have been so immersed in their love that their meeting would have led to adultery.

Instead, in *A Painful Case* we have implosion more than anything else. The love story is an implosion, not an explosion. It enacts its effects of drunkard Isolde, at the age when she is again mother of a young girl. The modern Tristan is a passed chevalier, a bank cashier in the Dublin of *Dubliners*. He does not have to answer for his feud, there is no king Mark, but Isolde is married to a mercantile irreproachable man.

A meeting between these two, between Tristan and Isolde, has been already missed at the point of their youth. They are about the same age, but she has a daughter. Would the friendship been possible if she had not been married? Would he have approached her had she been single? Probably not, he approached her precisely because she seemed a lady in the society, obeying to some norms, not breaking them.

What has happened to the modern hero, to Tristan?

The two characters are carried to each other on the waves of music. They meet at a concert. His second retreatment into his own shell, not into the layers of protection but into the layers of habitude, might have caused more than he expected. Mr. Duffy is a cold man, finding no joy in the presence of other people, but at the same time, wanting to escape his own self-imposed shell.

If he is guilty of not dealing well with Mrs Sinico, this happens because his rapport of giving and receiving is not balanced. He is in the favour of receiving, yet he is unable to give. They used to share a friendship in which they exchanged ideas, he lent her books, shared his intellectual life with her. He created the necessary opening for friendship.

Though Mr. Duffy, we see the stranger in his own city. Mr. Duffy is not a stranger in his own house, but a stranger in his own body. Why? Mr. Duff will perpetuate the rift between body and feelings. He is very used to it. It is an old *autobiographical* habit.

He had an odd autobiographical habit which led him to compose in his mind from time to time a short sentence about himself containing a subject in the third person and a predicate in the past tense. He never gave alms to beggars and walked firmly, carrying a stout hazel¹².

It is an innate part of identity. Yet the Tristan`s role makes his anti-hero part more bearable. Perfect silence is at the end of the journey. The last phrase suggests a battle that cannot be controlled, a battle that comes with the burden of a life imprisonment. The sentence to solitude is a sentence to life imprisonment, although the hero is free to walk and lead his life.

He turned back the way he had come, the rhythm of the engine pounding in his ears. He began to doubt the reality of what memory told him. He halted under a tree and allowed the rhythm to die away. He could not feel her near him in the darkness nor her voice touch his ear. He waited for some minutes listening. He could hear nothing: the night was perfectly silent. He listened again: perfectly silent. He felt that he was alone.¹³

Joyce`s *A Painful Case* is a story of Eros and Thanatos, as an implosion, not as a full manifestation of feelings. Tristan cannot heal the stranger in himself. Through harmony with a soul companion, music has granted him the temporary alleviation of this burden.

12 James Joyce, op. cit. p. 58.

13 Ibidem, p. 61.

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The Stranger
Cultural-Isms

L'étranger
Études culturelles

Is God *the* Postmodern Stranger? Forms of the divine in Transgressive fiction

Ioana Beteg¹

Abstract: God does exist in Postmodern fiction, in the most dangerous and unpredictable of worlds. There is God in *mayhem*, regardless of whether one believes it or not. What Postmodernism does to the image of divinity is interesting to unravel – Postmodern alienation takes numerous forms and follows unimaginable patterns; thus, the autopsy of religious instances is not to be avoided. God does not need to exist to punish people, as they are capable of punishing themselves and others. God is there, in many cases, to create social and religious ambiguity and to threaten the mischievous and misbehaving individuals. Do they punish each other? Do they take revenge? Collective identity, the identity that comes with believing in a set of rules and regulations imposed by the churches, by a newly imagined God, by books, could be more powerful than individual identity.

Key words: *alienation, dystopia, individual, Postmodernism, religion, stranger*

A Postmodern approach to religion – is God outworn?

Is there any God in Postmodern fiction? If so, how does He help, influence, punish or redeem the rebellious, depressive, inquisitive, skeptical individuals that Postmodernism sits us down with? If He indeed exists, is He forgiving and merciful? Does the Postmodern man look at God as the only lifeboat in the torment of existence, or does he blame God for the Postmodern hazard? Moreover, a tormenting question that needs an answer is: *is God replaceable in the Postmodern era?* These are questions that we aim to answer in this paper; even though it is not (and it could not be) an exhaustive research on the issue of the divinity in Postmodern literature, it is an exploration into the way

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the reminiscence of God can influence and alter the unfolding of Postmodern narratives. *Cat's Cradle*, *Adjustment Day*, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* and *Fight Club* play with confinement and anxiety to the point of madness, but, as we are to find out, the dystopian nightmare would not be final without the *inactions* and passivity of a much-needed God.

Postmodernism pushes the Modernist ideologies and thoughts one step forward, redefining and re-conceptualizing important pillars of literature such as individualism, identity, alienation and even consciousness. If Modernism brings to the surface a type of individual that is difficult to understand and is grounded in the reality of the times, Postmodernism challenges us to grasp and accept the miscellaneous human existence, unveiled and carefully autopsied.

Does God see everything? Does God see and judge the Postmodern man? Is there a God to judge the Postmodern man? Kurt Vonnegut, in *Cat's Cradle*, proves that God, or at least a divine figure, a divine figure of authority, is needed for the functional development and structure of the Postmodern world. He tells us that we do require a collective identity to look back to, to look forward to and to help us prioritize and morally and ethically organize our lives. Postmodernism coins the deconstruction of religious belief. *Cat's Cradle* does not tell us about God, God's worthiness, domination or control, it does not lecture us about the controlling power of the Bible or its followers and apprentices; *Cat's Cradle* tells us about the way people perceive the teachings of a book and the way a certain limited society can fall prey to the written word. All it takes, in our case, is for the aforementioned book to have enough readers that contemplate, not necessarily believe, the sayings in the book. Vonnegut expands our understanding of control and mass manipulation, and, more importantly, of the sadistic manner the Postmodern man enjoys being subdued, while at the same time, ironically disobeying the rules.

Irony veils the critical and satirical way in which the characters in Vonnegut's novel are inspired, influenced, controlled and maneuvered by religion. We say religion, but we know that we do not have to mean God. God is the symbolic figure of religious belief, but religion does not have to translate into God. Religion can take numerous forms, it could be interpreted in different ways and using different lens of appreciation, and whether it exists in the real world or not remains a subject for debate. Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle* brings forward a new form of worship, namely *Bokononism*. Is *Bokononism* real among us, the real readers of literature? We read about *Bokononism* in Vonnegut's novel just as we read the Bible. Does that

make Bokononism real? Does that make the Bible less reliable? These are questions that are to be answered after a thorough and detailed analysis of the way the Postmodern man talks to God, to the divinity, or curses, blames and tries to get rid of any divine authoritarian figures.

Bokononism is popular on an island in the Caribbean, called San Lorenzo. What we need to understand about the practices and rituals on this imaginary island is that the people inhabiting it call themselves Christians and preach about Christianity to anyone that dares ask about their religion, but, as a subcultural religion, they practice Bokononism. The subculture, or the *other-culture* of the book of Bokonon is, at the surface of the society, regarded as punishable by death. We are forced to imagine a religion that everybody practices and is cultured about, but that, at the same time, is illegal. Bokononism attracts individuals that have lost sense of the spiritual world and whose only way to redeem themselves is through violence, or, if not violence, through a brutal punishment that is meant to alienate the individual from his original beliefs. More than this, Bokononism preaches a nihilistic perspective on life that is mingled with peaceful, eerie practices. Could this mean that the Postmodern man needs a divine existence to hold on to but that, at the same time, he needs to replace God? Is God outworn? Vonnegut's 1963 novel and Palahniuk's *Adjustment Day*, first published in 2018, seem to support this idea; more than fifty years of literature, culture and shifts in ideology and we circle back to the same idea, namely that God cannot keep up with Postmodernism.

The first poem, the first calypso, that talks about Bokononism, more precisely, about Bokonon, the island's preacher, does tackle the difference between bad or good, but it does so by emphasizing the necessity of both. Saussure's structuralist theory brings forward the binary oppositions that exist in the structure of language, just as they exist in the Bokononist perspective on life:

"Papa" Monzano, he's so very bad,
But without bad "Papa" I would be so sad;
Because without "Papa's" badness,
Tell me, if you would,
How could wicked old Bokonon
Ever, ever look good?

(Dynamic Tension, 2010: 47)

It is important to understand here that Papa Monzano is the island's most prominent political figure, a face that everybody on the island recognizes and obeys. According to Bokonon's thinking, Papa is

undoubtedly the symbol of evil, of sin and vice, whereas Bokonon represents exactly the opposite. Bokonon thinks of himself no more than he actually is, but he brings to the surface the idea that a greater evil on the island polishes or hides his mischievous nature. One needs a demon, a counterargument, a culprit. The islanders are in need of a powerful figure that is worse than they are, that could be pernicious to their beliefs and ideologies. Their lives are funded in the aforementioned binary opposition – good and evil – regardless of the fact that both good and evil are represented by earthly, human figures. The good is reliable, the good is real, the good is human. So is the evil. The concepts, the symbols, are depicted through some of the islanders' peers, and, as a consequence, good and bad are rendered possible in the real world. The first calypso marks the transition from idealized, abstract concepts to real notions: Bokononism seems, as a religious belief, well-grounded and genuine.

Similarly, the first teachings of the Talbott book in *Adjustment Day* read as follows: “Imagine there is no God. There is no Heaven or Hell. There is only your son and his son and his son, and the world you leave for them” (2018: 37). The black and blue book, the Talbott book, gives humans the ultimate power, the crucial and pivotal faculty: independence. It emphasizes the concept of free-will, if we dare say so, but not following the Christian understanding of free-will, where God enables its worshipers to act according to their system of beliefs and consequently, be judged for their actions. The Talbott book throws its followers into a world where actions do have consequences, but where one does not immediately suffer the repercussions of his actions – one's descendants do. Both the book of Bokonon and the Talbott book play upon the idea that good and evil exist and that they guide people's lives, but, at the same time, intertwine the existence of virtue, dignity, immorality and vice with reason, pragmatism and reality.

Despite the fact that both religions are based on an ironic, satiric, critical but at the same time, idealized view on life, they both make reference to God – the real, biblical God. For instance, the Talbott book says that “God alone can create anything new. We can only recognize patterns, identify the unseen, and combine things to create slight variations” (2018: 198). God's presence is a mere tool of comparison between the real and the unreal, for the Talbott book uses the idealized symbol of divinity in order to control and manipulate the large mass of people reading and following the teachings of the black and blue book. God is present in Talbott's teachings for one single reason: to hold down, to calm down, to compose the readers' actions. The book tries to teach its readers that races, sexual orientations, sexual

preferences, ethnic backgrounds are important. *Adjustment Day* imagines a catastrophic world where races can mix only under certain circumstances, where sexual preferences decide your future and where slavery returns to torture and torment women. *Adjustment Day* comprises what should be a dystopian nightmare for today's society (a society that claims to be lacking these types of racial, sexual or ethnic discrimination) and creates a world where heterosexual people are not allowed to racially mix, even living in different locations, and where homosexuals renounce their sexual freedom and are forced to live in a place called Gaytopia. Colors and sexual orientations rule *Adjustment Day*. The Postmodern man tries to unpuzzle his fragmented identity and live by the rules of a society that seems to have forgotten that there are any rules.

Cat's Cradle deconstructs the idea of Americanism and its presumed foundations, by stating that "American foreign policy should recognize hate rather than imagine love" (Why Americans are hated, 2010: 45). The mechanism that runs the American society is clearly flawed in the eyes of the Postmodern man, but what is there to do to fix it? Hate seems to be a viable solution, a working plan against a world driven by God's principles and altered by humans. Hate, death and reason are the pillars of Bokononism and the Talbott book's teachings: "May each man strive to be hated. Nothing turns a man into a monster faster than the need to be loved" (2018: 101).

What about love? Love, the Christians would tell us, is one of God's greatest gifts; the ability to love and be loved, given to all humans and animals alike, is what should drive us to be better each day. A mother's love to her children, the parents' love to each other, the children's love to their parents, a man's love to a woman and so on, no matter what type of love we choose to talk about, the understanding of the concept does not change. Even in a Postmodern, disrupted world, love ought to have a meaning. Love is rooted both in reason and imagination, both in the palpable and the unseen – love is part of sin. As Kierkegaard puts it, "sinfulness is by no means sensuousness, but without sin there is no sexuality, and without sexuality, there is no history" (2000: 138). Whether we refer to the theological understanding of sin (we ought to keep in mind that, according to the bible, the first sin happened in the Garden of Eden and it led to Adam and Eve's exploring their sexuality) or to the Postmodern sinful man, sin is, on numerous occasions, closely related to sexuality. Sexuality and race divide Palahniuk's characters, reason divides Vonnegut's characters. Postmodern characters do not dare search their hearts and souls for love, accepting their sinful nature without inquiry. Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* follows the

pattern of fragmentary relationships with the divine, a relationship that is bound to exist as a consequence of the Postmodern consciousness and identity; the novel brings into discussion the ways in which, dare we say again, risking redundancy, binary oppositions shape the Postmodern man's thinking and actions. One of McCarthy's characters, similar to characters in *Adjustment Day* or *Cat's Cradle*, acknowledges the fact that reason stands behind free-will. One filters everything he experiences through thought and common sense:

a man's at odds to know his mind cause his mind is aught he has to know it with. He can know his heart, but he don't want to. Rightly so. Best not to look in there. It ain't the heart of a creature that is bound in the way that God has set for it. You can find meanness in the least of creatures, but when God made man the devil was at his elbow. A creature that can do anything. Make a machine. And a machine to make the machine. And evil that can run itself a thousand years, no need to tend it" (2010: 17).

Postmodern literature places God, the God that we all know about, both in the center of the society, in the center of our thinking and acting, and outside of it. The Postmodern individual writes the deconstruction of God, following closely what the Deconstruction taught him. God controls the Postmodern man, whether he acknowledges this or not. Even if one renounces God, and states so, he, in a way, subdues himself to the influence of the divinity over the world.

The Postmodern man needs a religion, he needs a theory, a set of rules and ideas to ground his life on, for otherwise he would be swept away by the mischievous and hazardous dangers of life. Without a religion, no matter how funded in reality or imagination it might be, the Postmodern man would yield to self-destruction without a fight. We are not stating that God prevents the man from destruction or self-destruction, but rather that He helps man dwell in the illusion of a happy ending. The Postmodern man does talk about God, even if he does not talk *to* God. The Postmodern man invents a new God, a better God, a more real, dependable or approachable God, but he does not take God for granted. The Postmodern man sees God as a hard-to-approach but interesting stranger. The Postmodern individual circles around the idea of a divine, superior and more powerful figure that gradually takes control or, on the contrary, that is to gradually lose control over the Postmodern man's destiny, but what is to be noted here is the individual's need for someone to have more power than him. This, as we have already mentioned, means that we still have someone or something to blame for our actions, should they fail, but not thank,

should they succeed. This is the Postmodern God's job: to ideologically exist, to be present if our actions develop consequences beyond repair.

Even the most absurd of worlds takes God as the center. Even a world dominated by carnal sexuality, raw types of behavior, drugs, alcohol and impoverished minds, as the one we read about in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, uses God as a safety net: "you'd better take care of me, Lord... because if you don't you're going to have me on your hands" (2005: 30). Our drugged, tipsy character blames God for his actions, more precisely for the consequences of his actions, saying that taking the Lord's "gibberish seriously" is what got him in trouble (2005: 30). With a suitcase full of drugs and a lot of crimes staining their pasts, the two main characters, Raoul Duke and his attorney, dr. Gonzo, drive recklessly to and from Las Vegas, destroying one of the hotel rooms they are staying in and, consequently, destroying any chance they have at a normal life. They self-destruct their chance to freedom and peace, indulging in a life of hallucinations and imagination. They become the ones that talk *gibberish*, for their hallucinations worsen by the hour. When the miscellaneous imagination-hallucination-reality becomes unbearable and they feel there is no escape and the moment of their arrest is fast approaching, the only safe way to face the reality of their crimes is to talk to a priest. God's sent on Earth, the priest, is the only one that could guarantee them peace of mind and freedom of the soul, for they say: "Jesus Creeping God! Is there a priest in this tavern? I want to confess! I'm a fucking sinner! Venal, mortal, carnal, major, minor – however you want to call it, Lord... I'm guilty" (2005: 30). The two do not try to deny their drug addiction, they, up to a point, take responsibility for what they are doing to their bodies and how their drug binge affects the ones around them. The novel even opens with the narrator, who is also the main character, describing both the location they are in and the state of mind they are in: "we were somewhere around Barstow on the edge of the desert when the drugs began to take hold" (2005: 1).

The novel starts with drugs and thus warns us of what is about to unfold. Addiction is by no means unfamiliar in Postmodern writings, but *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* takes addiction to the extreme. Duke and Gonzo are passing through the desert in order to get to Las Vegas, but the calm and quiet of the desert is rapidly shattered by the sound of their car going 100 miles per hour, by the screeching sound of the brakes and the violence and brutality of the characters' lack of reaction. After being on the verge of suicide and manslaughter, Duke says to his attorney: "Never mind (...) It's your turn to drive" (2005: 1). The atmosphere of the novel – writing, choice of words, pace – allows

one to get a clear insight into the characters' world, hallucinations and vivid dreams. The violence of the text fills in the void of any real action, for not much happens in the novel. Nonetheless, not the action is important here, but language and thought. We become mesmerized by the thoughts of Duke and Gonzo, for the actions are clearly predictable. Everyone knows no good can come out of drug use, and it is not hard to imagine what a suitcase full of drugs and a convertible with two stoned men equals, but it is harder to convey the stream of thoughts they experience in that state of mind. What we understand is that not even drugs can erase the idea of God. When drugs take control of your body and mind, you lose power over everything. Just as one puts his destiny in the hands of God and denies any responsibility for his actions after having done so, drugs allow you not to feel culpable for what you say or do, while under the influence. Thus, Duke makes it easier for us to understand his paranoia and asks us to understand his eerie behavior and sympathize with him, for he says:

“my legs felt rubbery. I gripped the desk and sagged toward her as she held out the envelope, but I refused to accept it. The Woman’s face was changing: swelling, pulsing... horrible green jowls and fangs jutting out, the face of a Moray Eel!” (2005: 8).

Numerous instances of visual imagery drag us into Duke and Gonzo’s world and influence us into empathizing with their obtrusive and degrading behavior.

A world with no God requires one, screams deeply for any sort of divine intervention, whereas a world where God is everywhere, where God is imposed on people, where individuals are force-fed with God’s teachings, tries to dispose of God. Roth’s teenage character in *Indignation* revolts:

“I do not need the sermons of professional moralists to tell me how I should act. I certainly don’t need any God to tell me how. I am altogether capable of leading a moral existence without crediting beliefs that are impossible to substantiate and beyond credulity, that, to my mind, are nothing more than fairy tales for children held by adults, and with no more foundation in fact than a belief in Santa Claus” (Under Morphine).

Marcus is a self-proclaimed atheist, born and raised in a Jewish family, that, despite all odds, is required to attend forty hours of sermons in order to complete his studies. His rant, that we quoted earlier, comes after a long string of events that, nowadays, would not catch our

attention. After moving dorms several times due to his roommates' inappropriate behavior, the Dean asks Marcus into his office to clarify the situation. Marcus, as a reasonable and well-grounded individual, tries to explain to the Dean that the reason behind his decisions was the inability to study, sleep or relax in an environment that he cannot control. Marcus' first roommate had the audacity to listen to music at night, when Marcus was trying to sleep, whereas the second roommate was impossible to communicate with. What Marcus does not want to admit is the fact that he thought he fell in love with one of the students in the campus, a student that seemed more than open to all of Marcus' desires, and that the second roommate dared to challenge Marcus to face reality. While our main character and narrator thought that what he and the student felt was love, his roommate brought to his attention the fact that the girl has the tendency of treating all boys the same way she treated Marcus. One of Marcus' long-lasting wishes was to lose his virginity before turning 19, and the girl seemed willing to help him in the matter. They have a brief sexual encounter in Marcus' roommate's car that rapidly turns into an obsession for our narrator. He cannot help but fall in love with the girl whose actions boosted his self-esteem and confidence. He is no longer the Jewish guy who gets straight A's in school and also helps his parents at the kosher shop they own, he is now like all the rest. Her openness changed his status, but his relationship with God or any other religious figure remained unchanged. He is the same rebellious but quiet atheist that he was before, and he is not afraid to admit it.

We have mentioned the fact that God does exist in Postmodern fiction, in the most dangerous and unpredictable of worlds. There is God in *mayhem*, regardless of whether one believes or not. There is God even in Palahniuk's *Fight Club*, where the line between individualism and collective identity is so blurry that it transforms into multiple identity, where the world is ruled by chaos and wrong-doings and the only rules we get to read and understand are the rules of Fight Club, the underground community where everything is possible. *Fight Club* comes forward with a form of unity that founds itself on possibility, where lies do not matter, and the outside world is of little importance. The members of Fight Club are misfits, are common people that need a place of rest, of relaxation and nirvana, in the most ironic sense. The narrator, depressed, alone and isolated comes in contact with Tyler Durden, the embodiment of everything our narrator is not. Tyler Durden soon becomes the guide, therapist and best friend of our narrator; Tyler is masculine, charismatic, powerful, authoritarian and dominant, while the narrator lacks all traces of

manliness and power. They decide to escape their boring, mundane lives and create Fight Club. In all mayhem, Tyler finds the time to discuss God, to write about God, saying that

“If you’re male and you’re Christian and living in America, your father is your model for God. And if you never know your father, if your father bails out or dies – or is never at home, what do you believe about God? (...) What you have to consider, is the possibility that God doesn’t like you. Could be, God hates us. This is not the worst thing that can happen” (2007: 141).

The image of God is palpable, is real, and, what is more, it is unique for each individual. The image of God is what you create of it, your God is yours only. We must take into consideration the following details about our narrator: he is an ordinary man working a more than common job, a man that has no desires, no aspirations, no goals or accomplishments. What is more, he has no name, or, at least, he does not disclose it. We know close to nothing about his past, his culture, his religion, his social background, so how are we to know about his God? One first question inciter is the fact that he is nameless – this could mean that he has no identity in the sense that he does not feel like he belongs to a certain group (he has no social, collective identity). Besides his suffering from insomnia and a sense of displacement, we are not given information on the narrator. Who is his God, if we know nothing about his father?

The fact that he inquires about the presence, existence and power of God (through Tyler) brings to mind the first calypso in *Cat’s Cradle*, where Papa Mozano talks about the binary good-bad structure. We have mentioned earlier that *Fight Club* blurs boundaries between identities, thus, not understanding the standpoint on the concept of God is reasonable. Our narrator does not know who he is, he is alienated from himself and from the world around him, and his imagination stirs up a fascination with brutality. Therefore, he does not know his God either. The feeling that God might hate him, as Tyler writes, comes from his inability to feel that he is an active part of the society and act accordingly. His only liaison with society was his apartment, where he developed a consumerist obsession with owning IKEA furniture (like the rest of his entourage), and, as a consequence, when his apartment burnt down in a ravaging fire, he lost not only that, but also his identity and sense of self. If he cannot identify himself as a regular individual that plays along with the rules, regulations and stereotypes of the American society, he is nothing. The fire burnt to the ground his identity, his inner self.

He is not connected to God for, according to Tyler, he is not

connected to his father. This paternal relationship one seemingly needs to have to God resembles Palahniuk's vision in *Adjustment Day*, where paradise and hell lose any kind of meaning, and they lose their meaning to reality. One must live only for what he knows, disregarding the fact that his good deeds might be rewarded in the future (in Heaven), or his wrong-doings might be punished later in the afterlife. The fragmentation between the real and the fictional consequences of one's actions ushers the disconnection between identity and imagination. Palahniuk's characters envision a world where rules sarcastically pattern the society, and where you can effortlessly create a new society to fit your desires. *Fight Club's* narrator creates his mayhem where people literally beat the mundane out of each other and where the most important rule is never to talk about their enclosed community, while *Adjustment Day* threatens and, at the same time, entertains people with *the list*: a list accessible to all people that is said to decide the fate of humanity. One can submit a name to the list and depending on the number of votes the name receives in a span of time, the said person is to be murdered. The list gives everybody God-like power, it gives everybody the faculty and competence to decide whether his or her peer is to die or not.

What is to come of a religious dystopia?

How is it to end? Postmodernism faces us with the unstable relationship between common sense and religious teachings, between reason and childish credulity and between pragmatism and indolence. The fight between collective identity and individualism is unjust and violence will always find its place in this battle. *Cat's Cradle* provides us with a vivid and desolate picture of what the world – a world ruled and looked over by God – is bound to look like in the future:

Someday, someday, this crazy world will have to end,
And our God will take things back that He to us did lend.
And if, on that sad day, you want to scold our God,
Why go right ahead and scold Him. He'll just smile and nod.
(Mona thanks me, 119)

Grim, dull, apocalyptic and empty is the end of the world, as Vonnegut coins it. Everything we have and everything we are is only borrowed from God. He, thus, has the power to take our everything back whenever he decides to do so, and there is no fighting back. The Postmodern apocalypse is, according to Bokkononism, not necessarily violent and brutal, people do not grasp their last belongings and start running around chaotically, there is no survival and hope like in

McCarthy's *The Road*, there is no train track leading to a *zone* that dwells the last remains of life and the mystery of unidentified phenomena, as in *Roadside picnic* signed by the Strugatsky brothers, and there is not even the promise of a better, calmer, quieter afterlife. There is only a mean God, a shrewd God that takes away everything. What Bokonon, the father figure, the embodiment of power and the ultimate leader, is sure of is that, in the end:

“In any case, there's bound to be much crying.
But the oubliette alone will let you think while dying”
(The Iron Maiden and the Oubliette 118)

In the end, reason and judgement fail you last. The apocalypse takes everything away from you but reason. This is the liaison between the Postmodern apocalyptic worlds we have mentioned: reason, grounds, rationale. You witness your destruction consciously: the narrator in *Fight Club* watches his apartment burning down and trembles with anxiety, just as one can easily connect to the internet and read his name on the list in *Adjustment Day* and is utterly powerless and incapable of erasing his name from the list and as Raoul Duke's brief hallucinations are purposefully nourished with drugs in order to escape reality and indulge in chaos. They are all aware of their upcoming demise, they are all thinking while dying.

A Postmodern world where God is hand-made, where God is thought and created by the people, why are they pushed to commit the ultimate act of power over their bodies? Suicide is the last statement one can make with regards to their individuality, to their identity and to their exerting control over their bodies. Suicide is the most personal decision one could make. But the road to it must be filled with insecurity and unhappiness, with feelings of alienation and self-doubt – this, or one must feel threatened. Our Postmodern aliens are all threatened by something bigger than them, by something more destructive and powerful than they could ever be. *Adjustment Day* tries to convince us that “*suicide is the ultimate act of consumption*” (2018: 296). Hopelessly awaiting for Adjustment Day, the day when everything is bound to change irredeemably, only through suicide you can prove your self-worth. It is only through suicide that you can consume yourself before the havoc of the world swallows your identity. While *Adjustment Day* pushes people towards suicide, *Fight Club* does not conceptualize the act so much, for it goes through with it. On the other hand, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* builds up the expectations for an upcoming disaster, be it a suicide or a sudden death (maybe caused by drug overuse, maybe a car accident), but fails to meet the

readers' expectations. *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* mingles hallucination with reality but allows the readers to clearly distinguish between the two – *Fight Club* only gives us the key to deciphering reality from imagination in the end.

Cat's Cradle dramatic ending gives us the illusion that suicide is the only escape route from the rapidly solidifying world. The threat in Vonnegut's novel is a chemical substance that, fallen in the wrong hands, could destroy the world. The material is said to solidify every liquid it comes in contact with, from water to mud to blood. Thus, the substance, *ice-nine*, could be used by the army troops when walking through unstable mud or dirt, or it could be used to murder whoever one wants. From this point of view, it functions just like the list in *Adjustment Day*. Nevertheless, while the list in Palahniuk's novel does not incite people to be pragmatic and reasonable, allowing everybody to submit names and to vote, deciding other people's destiny, the Book of Bokonon teaches its believers to search for answers, to be inquisitive and intrigued:

Tiger got to hunt,
Bird got to fly;
Man got to sit and wonder, "Why, why, why?"
Tiger got to sleep,
Bird got to land;
Man got to tell himself he understand.

(A White Bride for the Son of a Pullman Porter, 2010: 81)

The Postmodern individual dies a painless death, be it caused by mysterious chemical substances, a bullet to the head or drug overdose.

To answer the questions we began with, we dare say that God (to use the generic term) is an active, robust and complex character in Postmodern fiction that has no intention to save the other characters from self-destruction. God, as we have already mentioned, acts as a lifeboat when life starts to derail, he is a secondary actor in the miscellaneous Postmodernist play. If one cannot find God, one creates it. When one feels bombarded with God's teachings, one rebels and loses everything over pride and the love for insurrection. When one finds his relationship with God distant enough and comfortable enough, one starts losing faith. God, an alien, a stranger, is interesting in fiction only if he poses a challenge or a threat to the individual's freedom, free will, or mental stability.

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Urban Threats: Institutional Others of Cities

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the ways in which the unfamiliar is perceived socially and emotionally by urban societies as a result of an extended influence of international and global tendencies on both the constant flux of cities and the research carried out to understand and anticipate the changes inferred by the dynamics of their communities. Cities can host the cultural invisibility that allows people to express unexpected attitudes and to proceed to unexpected reactions towards each other within residential islands, each with a different subculture; crime fiction best presents this internal differentiation by exposing hidden facts and faces, commonly epitomized by the outsider, the non-familiar, the stranger, the threat of the city. The characters and investigation strategies foregrounded here by the present selection of texts demonstrate a particular perception of the alien in a transitional age, an apprehension supported by a theoretical body relying on thorough observations and findings in the combined field of psychology and urban studies.

Key words: alien, psychology, urbanization, forensic investigation

Towns and cities have always been hives of social transformations, cultural innovations, and political changes that generated a distinctive local population and shaped a particular community, characterized by regularities and norms to be followed in the spatial relationships established here between people, institutions, and environment. A proper understanding of any city implies observation and acquisition of specific rules of behavior, social attitudes, cultural and political values, resulted as an effect of the process of urbanization, which, theorists admit, involves a physical change in which increasing proportions of populations live in urban settings (see Phillips 94).

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People's daily lives shape and are shaped by the larger structures of urban social life as "the nature of urban spaces conditions various aspects of social organization and disorganization" (Knox, McCarthy 17) and allows modifications, respectively, alterations of city life and city spaces, negatively associated with an artificial novelty, a spurious multiplication of the individuals' options for personal experiences in public spheres which often provide situations for them to feel strangers.

Cityscapes and Their Hidden Threats

It is a fact now that any city can be read as a "multilayered text", a narrative of "signs and symbols", in which the built environment can become the very "biography of urbanization" (Knox, McCarthy 245), giving expression, meaning, and identity to the socio-cultural milieu that particularized it at a certain historical moment. Studies pinpoint that a high level of urbanization is commonly associated with an increased risk of psychosis and depression for both women and men (see Sundquist et al. 293) and that there is a prevalence of abnormal mental states that facilitate development to overt psychotic illnesses, progressively increasing with level of urbanization (see van OS et al. 7663) and leading to violence and aggressiveness, epitomized by a high rate of criminals. Crime fiction has become a site of fretting cases of murders committed by disordered others, misfits, both familiar and strangers to the neighbourhood, as the one called Death's Head Hollow, in Surrender, New York:

Every city or town has a lousy neighbourhood, a wrong side of the tracks, or, as in the case of Surrender, a hollow in which you just don't want to find yourself. Often, when poverty alone doesn't suffice, ignorance and rumour amplify the wretchedness and dangers of such places, simply to satisfy a basic psychological requirement: the need of most people to feel superior to some group, tribe, or ethnicity that resides, not in the next town or city or county, but very close by, providing a constant and comforting sense of superiority. (Carr 550)

Mental health and social life are intimately inter-related, especially in cities that have always been regarded as necessary evils, as demonstrated by the frequent social deficits of psychiatric patients and the increased rate of psychiatric disorders in people exposed to social environmental adversity (see Meyer-Lindenberg Tost 665) and in their liability for committing murders and becoming the hated and feared others, chased and hunted by the law-and-order experts, based on scientific leads provided by profilers, as in the case of Val McDermid's

long Tony Hill series of psychological thrillers:

A serial killer produces signals and indicators in the commission of his crimes. Everything he does is intended (...) as part of a pattern. Discovering the underlying pattern reveals the killer's logic. It may not appear logical to us, but to him is crucial. Because his logic is so idiosyncratic, straightforward traps will not capture him. As he is unique, so must be the means of catching him, interviewing him and reconstructing his acts. (McDermid 437).

There is an accepted view that initially, in any developed, sophisticated city, life was claimed to be vile and corrupt "whereas the good life could be lived in the country" (Pahl 2), so, as a consequence, soon there were inevitable problems to be faced, deviant behaviour of certain neighbourhoods being one of them, together with an anomie expressed by social disorganization (see Knox, McCarthy 408), generating psychological diseases, aggressive behaviour, dissocial disorder/psychopathy, materialized in a higher degree of delinquency, as recorded in Carr's book by his protagonist, dr. Laszlo Kreizler in his attempt to identify the stranger who murders children:

Kreizler kept tapping at the box marked THE MOLDING VIOLENCE AND/OR MOLESTATION. 'We have returned to the core of the matter. This is not a man who hates all children, nor a man who hates homosexuals – nor (...) a man who hates all boy-whoos who dress up like women. This is a man of very particular tastes. (...) He may be a homosexual, and he may be a pedophile, but sadism is the predominant perversion, and violence seems far more characteristic of his intimate contacts than do sexual or amorous feelings. He may not even be able to distinguish between violence and sex. (...) certain boys inspire in the killer a rage so deep he's constructed his entire existence around its expression (...) the boys who are deceitful and insolent in the killer's eyes. (...) he chooses violence as a form for expressing that rage because he learned to do so in some sort of domestic setting, quite probably from a violent father whose actions went unacknowledged and unpunished. (Carr 237)

Hostile Alterity

It has become a common place that major urban agglomerations, a consequence of the city's ability to cope with population movement and migration in terms of handling "great numbers of strangers to integrate into the life of the city" (Elliott et al. 104), most often leads to deterioration and compromise of traditional cultural values for practical purposes as the reader can notice in Carr's book:

it fell to another hollow to become Surrender's joy and nightmare: Fletcher Hollow, a title that could scarcely seem more picturesque, calling to mind as it does an era when respected craftsmen made their living creating arrows of quality. But the latter-day residents of Fletcher-Hollow knew as little of such characters or such artistry as they did of the medieval society in which their road's name was rooted. (Carr 550).

Urban life is marked by restlessness and fight to meet the needs of inhabitants and to provide them a healthy, safe environment, and a specific energy and vigour; they are permanently jeopardized by the invisible others, most often culturally estranged or extremely violent, socially marginalized or mentally disturbed. The selection of crime fiction I have proposed centers on finding ways to discover the author of criminal acts (seen as the other, the stranger, the misfit), happening in urban communities, featuring the investigation avenues via the group of experts who are employed to assist the detectives in their work: forensic anthropologists to analyze human skeletal remains,

Using the X rays, I'd[dr.Temperance Brennan] pulled the fragments containing bones, and dissected the tissue to search for landmarks,. (...) Two left pubic tubercles, or mastoid processes, or femoral condyles meant two different individuals. I'd also spotted evidence of childhood growth problem in some of the long bone fragments. When health is compromised, a child stops growing and skeletal development goes on hold (Reichs 27),

or pathologists to determine the victim's cause of death, "Vince Faulkner's battered corpse was already on its way to the autopsy suite, where a couple of the city's pathologists would go to work on it, their assistants weighing and measuring, bagging and tagging." (Rankin 39), and more recently, profilers (also known as alienists or mentalists or forensic psychologists/psychiatrists), like Dr Tony Hill, a clinical psychologist who "did offender profiling for the police: neural adaptation" (McDermid 304), to identify the likely characteristics of a perpetrator or a crime in terms of the typology of psychopathological violence, a syndrome so often identified in urban communities.

Conclusion

The invisible world of the urban lives most often reveals that there are strangers among us as a consequence of social distance and separation that can obscure possible sufferings and the deep humanity that commonly implies "spirit, courage, determination", facilitating "acts of

violence to shape social and personal life in cities, in neighbourhoods“. (see Moller XII).

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Identité, Altérité et Stéréotype du migrant dans les caricatures de Dilem

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Résumé : La migration est l'objet de nombreuses recherches et discours faisant ressortir tantôt une image négative, tantôt une image pathétique du migrant. Dans notre étude, nous nous intéresserons à la figuration du migrant dans les caricatures de DILEM, figuration recourant aux concepts de la sémiotique et de l'argumentation. Nous nous intéresserons au migrant tel qu'il est représenté par les dessins humoristiques. Au-delà du sens satirique, notre intérêt s'accorde également à l'adéquation existante entre le monde du réel et l'univers du discours. Il est à signaler d'ores et déjà qu'une image négative lui est souvent attribuée.

Mots clés: migrant, altérité, sémiotique, identité, stéréotype.

Introduction

La migration est une thématique d'actualité, chaque jour les médias rapportant de nouveaux cas de migrants qui tentent de rejoindre les côtes européennes. C'est un phénomène qui touche notamment les sociétés des jeunes. Les conditions de vie difficiles poussent les jeunes personnes à quitter leur pays natal pour s'installer dans un autre qu'ils jugent meilleur. De nombreux migrants clandestins succombent avant d'atteindre leurs objectifs, ils périssent souvent noyés.

La migration nourrit également plusieurs discours et débats d'actualité ; elle a fait l'objet de la politique, de l'économie, de la justice comme elle fait l'objet du discours artistique à savoir la littérature, la chanson, la caricature, etc. Notre choix est porté sur la caricature, des caricaturistes algériens ou étrangers qui représentent le migrant dans

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leurs dessins.

Notre analyse portera sur quelques caricatures de DILEM publiées dans le quotidien Liberté que nous avons collectées sur le site www.presseDZ.com qui publie l'actualité algérienne. Ces dessins traitent du migrant dans plusieurs situations et face à différentes politiques. Il est à constater, après plusieurs lectures et observations que, quelle que soit la catégorie du migrant ou sa situation, il est toujours refusé par l'Autre et rejeté, il est étranger. A ce refus s'ajoute un ensemble de stéréotypes et d'images qu'on lui attribue. C'est à ces images que notre intérêt sera porté et nous nous interrogerons sur leur manifestation ainsi que sur leurs fonctions dans le discours caricatural. Notre choix s'articule autour des caricatures qui représentent le migrant comme être marginalisé et rejeté par l'Autre. Nous avons opté pour ce thème, vu l'importance qu'il occupe de nos jours dans différents discours politique, médiatique, littéraire etc., à travers le monde. Au-delà du sens satirique, il serait intéressant d'aller creuser le sens que peut générer la caricature. Il serait important de s'intéresser au réel représenté par l'humour dans le discours caricatural qui nous permettra de voir l'adéquation existante entre la réalité et l'univers discursif.

DILEM, nous l'avons signalé au préalable, s'est intéressé au migrant dans plusieurs situations. Ces situations rendent compte de la réalité et du vécu du sujet migrant qui souffre, qui meurt et qui est mal traité parce qu'il est étranger. Dans notre analyse, nous partons de l'hypothèse que le migrant est rejeté sur le territoire étranger pour la simple raison qu'il est envahisseur ou tout simplement parce qu'il est différent de l'autochtone, en d'autres termes il est étranger, d'où notre intérêt à ce rejet. Ce qui nous invite à nous interroger sur la représentation du migrant dans les caricatures de DILEM. Comment le migrant est-il représenté dans les caricatures ? Quelle image peut-on conférer au migrant dans le corpus en question ? Quels sont les procédés linguistiques et rhétoriques utilisés pour une telle représentation ?

Nous adopterons la sémio-argumentative pour pouvoir expliquer le corpus en question. Nous faisons appel à la sémiotique pour mieux cerner la relation jonctive du sujet vis-à-vis de son objet de valeur. Quant à l'argumentation, nous nous intéressons à la notion de stéréotype, concept de la psychologie sociale, repris par Ruth AMOSSY. Notre plan s'articule autour de trois points essentiels qui versent tous vers le stéréotype du migrant. Dans un premier temps, nous nous intéresserons à la crise identitaire vécue par le migrant sur le territoire étranger. Dans un second temps, il sera intéressant de voir le migrant

dans sa dimension représentative par la notion d'altérité. Dans un troisième temps, il sera question de voir le stéréotype du migrant.

1. La crise identitaire du migrant

La question identitaire est récente dans la recherche scientifique, notamment en sociologie. Avant c'était plutôt une question philosophique. Et la question identitaire paraît simple et claire pour tout individu, elle ne nécessite pas d'interrogations. Alors que c'est une question qui s'avère complexe, un concept polysémique pour Jean-Claude KAUFMANN, où l'homme s'interroge depuis toujours sur son identité et ce qui fait partie de son identité « qui suis-je ? Et qui serai-je ? Quel est le sens de ma vie ? ». Ce sont des questionnements que nous reprenons à KAUFMANN, sociologue français qui a beaucoup travaillé sur la sociologie du couple, tout comme il s'est intéressé aux notions d'identité et d'altérité.

Le concept d'identité est discuté depuis l'Antiquité pour en finir récemment que c'est un concept qui relève des sciences humaines. Les travaux de KAUFMANN partent des travaux déjà effectués par ses prédécesseurs ; il se réfère à David HUME qui conçoit la notion d'identité comme notion engendrée par le temps. ARISTOTE part de la question dichotomique ; si l'identité se situe entre substance et perception ou si elle est fixe ou en perpétuel changement. Quant à Paul RICŒUR, il s'interroge si l'identité est transcendantale.

Dans notre analyse, notre intérêt sera porté sur deux types d'identités ; l'identité de papiers et l'identité culturelle. La première détermine l'individu d'un point de vue administratif, à savoir le nom et le prénom, la date et le lieu de naissance et le lieu de résidence. Cette identité concerne les éléments qui apparaissent sur la carte d'identité ou un autre document d'identité. Quant à la deuxième, elle s'inscrit dans l'appartenance culturelle et sociale ; il s'agit de l'appartenance religieuse, linguistique, les pratiques des rites et des traditions etc. Un individu peut s'inscrire dans l'une ou l'autre des identités, quelle que soit son appartenance géographique.

1.1. L'identité de papier

Il est à signaler pour KAUFMANN que le problème de l'identité ne se posait pas pour la société traditionnelle. Le phénomène de l'individualisation de la société remanie la structure de la société traditionnelle. Pour la régularisation de la société par l'administration, l'identité s'impose. Toujours pour KAUFMANN, la société traditionnelle est une société basée sur l'oralité, par conséquent les codes réglementaires qui la régissent sont connus des individus : « c'est une

société d'interconnaissances aux codes et comportements, communément reconnus et transmis oralement. » (2004 : p.17).

Dans notre corpus, il s'agit de migrants sans papiers d'identité, ces migrants changeant de pays de résidence illégalement. Ce sont des sujets qui tentent parfois de voyager légalement mais l'objectif est d'y rester. Une fois le titre de séjour expiré, le migrant ne rentre pas chez lui. C'est à partir de ce moment-là que la crise identitaire commence pour ce migrant qui vit clandestinement dans le pays étranger. D'autres migrants traversent la Méditerranée après une falsification de procédure de voyage ; une fois arrivé dans la rive nord, le migrant est en crise identitaire, il est clandestin donc il est disjoint de tous ses droits.

Dans la figure 01, le dessin représente la politique migratoire américaine où le président américain se prépare pour la régularisation des migrants clandestins, ce qui est rapporté dans l'entête du dessin : « Trump s'apprête à régulariser 1.8 millions de sans-papiers ». Il est à saisir que l'instance supérieure est dotée de la modalité de vouloir inscrire les migrants clandestins sur papiers, où les administrations fourniront à ces individus un ensemble de documents qui leur permettent de vivre légalement et d'acquérir leurs droits. Dans la bulle c'est écrit « tenez ! ». C'est le sujet dominant qui tend le papier et qui s'adresse aux migrants avec colère puisque son message est suivi de point d'exclamation. En effet, le message linguistique de cette caricature ne révèle pas son sens juste, il l'appuie. La moquerie est manifestée dans l'icône puisque c'est le papier hygiénique qu'on leur tend.

Dans la figure 05, la crise identitaire et la régularisation de migrant sur papier se poursuit encore. Il est à signaler que dans les dessins, l'instance d'origine fait appel à la figure du président de la république qui se trouve face aux sans-papiers. Cette fois-ci, il s'agit du président français qui reçoit le migrant malien après avoir sauvé un enfant. Le migrant occupe le rôle de l'actant adjuvant puisqu'il sauve la vie de l'enfant et l'enfant de son côté occupe le rôle d'adjuvant puisqu'il sauve le migrant reçu par les instances supérieures pour être régularisé. Le migrant sera doté du pouvoir de vivre librement en France et il sera en conjonction avec ses droits et devoirs.

1.2. L'identité culturelle

Cette fois-ci nous nous intéressons à l'aspect culturel du migrant qui est l'origine de son rejet, toute différence culturelle étant rejetée par l'autochtone vis-à-vis du migrant. La différence linguistique, sociale, religieuse, raciale, etc., constitue la différence culturelle. Le migrant est

confronté à la culture étrangère qui certes, n'est pas la sienne, l'autochtone rejette cette culture qui lui est aussi étrangère. Cette différence conduit aussi à la discrimination raciale, le dominant se sent toujours supérieur par rapport au dominé.

La question de l'identité culturelle a vu le jour en France à partir des années 1980, la prise du pouvoir par la gauche est l'une des causes principales de l'identité culturelle. La chute du mur de Berlin en 1989 qui met fin au régime socialiste y contribue aussi selon Michel WIEVIORKA. Toujours pour WIEVIORKA, la découverte par les Français de la présence de l'islam en France, engendre l'inquiétude de ces derniers. Cette inquiétude pousse vers les idées extrémistes avec l'augmentation de celles de l'extrême droite et la montée du Front national qui donne lieu à manifester la haine envers l'Arabe et le musulman. C'est ainsi que d'autres mouvements apparaissent comme le mouvement de la classe ouvrière, le mouvement des femmes, des sourds-muets etc. Ceci donne lieu au chômage comme l'un des phénomènes de ces différents mouvements. Le chômage touche plutôt les migrants selon WIEVIORKA qui a distingué entre le migrant d'avant et le migrant actuel. Le migrant des années 1950-60 est intégré socialement par le biais du travail. Quant au migrant actuel, à partir des années 1980, il est exclu de la société, victime du chômage, il est inclus politiquement et culturellement. Les identités issues de ces inclusions sont ethniques et religieuses d'où la naissance des identités culturelles qui ont suscité un long débat en France.

Dans notre corpus, il est à constater que l'identité culturelle est manifestée par l'usage d'un prénom relevant de la culture africaine. L'instance d'origine projette un cas de noyade de migrants, message du moins démontré dans l'entête du dessin : « une soixantaine de migrants noyés en Méditerranée ». Dans la bulle du dessin est rapporté le discours du garde des côtes : « Alors Mamadou, Tu montes ?! ». L'usage du prénom Mamadou renvoie à l'identité culturelle de l'Afrique subsaharienne où le prénom Mamadou comme identité de papier est très sollicité, il relève de la culture africaine. L'usage de ce prénom démontre la catégorisation de ce migrant, il s'agit d'un migrant subsaharien. Ajoutons que le sujet qui l'interpelle est doté de la modalité du non savoir de l'origine du migrant puisqu'il est dans le non pouvoir de l'identifier. Le sujet n'a pas vu le migrant étant donné qu'il était submergé par l'eau de la mer, se trouvant loin de la perception qui lui permet de le dévisager. Mais cela ne l'empêche pas de le désigner par un prénom commun aux Africains.

Dans la figure 02, l'identité culturelle est exprimée dans l'usage du Front National, mouvement déjà signalé par WIEVIORKA dans la

naissance des identités culturelles. Le Front National rejette effectivement l'identité étrangère qui peut porter préjudice à l'identité autochtone. Ainsi la réponse des migrants dans la bulle, « elle apporte une touche féminine » renvoie au mouvement des femmes qui ont protesté pour la reconnaissance de l'identité féminine durant les années 1960 en France. Dans ce dessin, l'identité culturelle est perceptible dans les deux sens, les migrants vus par le sujet comme une autre identité qu'il faudrait chasser. L'usage de la couleur rose connue comme une couleur de femmes, jugée par les migrants que le sujet du Front National manifeste son identité féminine.

2. Le migrant différent de l'Autre

Dans cette division, nous nous intéresserons à l'altérité, le migrant est un Autre par rapport à l'autochtone et l'autochtone est un Autre différent du migrant. Il est à rappeler qu'il serait impossible d'aborder la question de l'identité sans se référer à l'altérité. Les deux questions se complètent, toute identité construite suppose une altérité d'une autre identité différente ou une identité semblable. HUSSERL part de la conscience qui est dans le pouvoir de synthétiser le monde qu'elle structure. Toujours pour HUSSERL, la construction de l'Autre part de soi, d'où l'importance du corps. La reconnaissance du corps de l'autre passe toujours par le même, l'identification se fait d'abord en le transposant au même. Par la suite, la connaissance de l'autre réside dans la différence de comportement, l'autre est le même, différent par son comportement.

Pour Edgar MORIN autrui est le semblable et le dissemblable à la fois : « autrui, c'est à la fois le semblable et le dissemblable, semblable par ses traits humains et culturels communs, dissemblables par ses singularités individuelles ou ses différences ethniques. Autrui porte effectivement en lui l'étrangéité et la similitude. » (2001 : 81)

Dans la citation, il est à saisir que l'Autre comprend toujours en lui cette étrangéité qui le distingue du même. Ce même, c'est-à-dire le semblable est perceptible par un trait de différence.

Dans notre corpus, il est à signaler que le migrant est un Autre, il est certes le semblable, par ses traits humains, au sujet autochtone mais dissemblable par son étrangéité. Et nous nous intéresserons à deux points importants, à savoir l'étrangéité que nous reprendrons à MORIN et la peur, notion que nous reprendrons à Patrick COLIN dans son article sur l'altérité et la gestalt.

2.1. Le migrant autre par étrangéité

Dans cette partie, il s'agit de voir comment le migrant est différent

parce qu'il est étranger d'où l'attribution d'images pour l'écarter, ce que nous verrons encore plus loin en détails.

Il est à observer dans les huit caricatures qui constituent notre corpus d'analyse qu'il s'agit du migrant étranger, le dissemblable qui est certainement semblable par ses traits humains. Le dominant rejette toujours ce migrant dominé pour la simple raison qu'il est étranger. Il est à déduire qu'il est perçu comme un danger et une menace pour l'autochtone d'où la notion de la peur. Dans ces dessins, il est à remarquer que différents cas de migrants sont évoqués, à savoir la politique américaine, les migrants subsahariens et les migrants vers l'Europe. Sans omettre que le contexte du dessin détermine le sens du discours, puisque le même sujet peut être dans des contextes différents dominant et dominé. Dans la figure 01, le dominant représenté par le président américain refuse de régulariser les migrants reçus sur son territoire parce que ce sont des étrangers, l'autre dans ce contexte est un étranger. Idem pour la figure 02, le même phénomène se reproduit, seulement le dominant change, il s'agit du sujet français manifestant une politique anti-immigration, le migrant est un dissemblable différent du sujet français. Le sujet dominé se transforme à son tour en dominant pour rejeter le migrant subsaharien qui est un étranger en Algérie. Les figures 04 et 08 illustrent ce rejet, le sujet algérien refuse la présence des migrants subsahariens sur son territoire, ce sont des étrangers différents par leur corps et sont considérés comme dangereux.

2.2. Le migrant autre par la peur

La peur de l'Autre se manifeste dans le danger que le migrant cause étant donné qu'il est perçu comme dangereux. L'autochtone éprouve toujours de la peur à la vue de migrants. Le migrant est jugé comme porteur de maladies ce qui peut s'avérer dangereux pour l'autochtone. Pour Patrick COLIN, la peur est basique pour le premier contact avec l'Autre. Le « dasein », concept que nous reprenons à la philosophie d'HEIDEGGER qui signifie existence, prend sens lorsque le soi sort de l'enferment vers le contact qu'il établit avec l'autre qui lui permet de s'identifier. Le refus de l'autre est lié à la peur de perte d'identité au moment d'ek-sister en nous référant toujours à COLIN qui s'est intéressé aux travaux de Martin HEIDEGGER.

Dans la figure 07, il est à observer qu'il s'agit du refus de traitement de situations de migrants pour les régulariser ou du moins les accueillir sur le territoire français. L'instance d'origine projette un bateau et une foule de personnes dedans. Cette foule représente les migrants clandestins en France. Dans l'entête du dessin est

rapporté : « La France reste ferme face aux migrants ». Il est à prendre en considération le contexte de production du discours en question ; il est produit quelques jours après la victoire de l'équipe de football de France, championne du monde en 2018. Signalons que l'équipe de France est composée de plusieurs joueurs étrangers. C'est ainsi que la foule du bateau répond au sujet français : « Et comment vous allez faire pour gagner la prochaine coupe du monde ? ». En effet, les joueurs migrants occupent le rôle de l'actant adjuvant pour la victoire. Le sujet dominant français réagit par un rejet des migrants ce qui est plutôt illustré par l'icône. Le sujet montre une pancarte rouge où est écrit dessus le mot « stop » et lève l'autre main qui tient un marteau avec lequel il menace les migrants. Cela signifie que le sujet autochtone refuse la présence des migrants sur son territoire malgré leur utilité par peur de perdre son identité. L'autochtone préfère rester dans l'enfermement sur soi en nous référant à COLIN que de s'ouvrir vers l'Autre par peur.

3. Le migrant stéréotypé

Dans cette partie, il serait question de s'intéresser aux images souvent négatives qu'on attribue au migrant d'où la notion du stéréotype. Le stéréotype est un concept de la psychologie sociale, utilisé dans les années 1920 pour la stigmatisation des groupes sociaux, puis c'est un concept développé par Ruth AMOSSY. Elle part de cinq concepts qu'elle reprend à l'ancienne rhétorique, à savoir les poncifs, les lieux communs, les idées reçues, les clichés et les stéréotypes. Le stéréotype est un ensemble d'images négatives qu'on se fait d'un individu ou d'un groupe social. Ils ont souvent pour fonction de marginaliser, de manifester la haine et le mépris vis-à-vis de l'autre. Ce sont aussi des images mensongères qui expriment un imaginaire social. C'est aussi une manière de persuader par l'aspect négatif de l'objet stéréotypé. Walter LIPPMAN cité par Amossy le définit :

« Ces images (les stéréotypes) sont indispensables à la vie en société. Sans elles, l'individu resterait dans le flux et le reflux de la sensation pure ; il lui serait impossible de comprendre le réel, de le catégoriser ou d'agir sur lui. Comment en effet examiner chaque être, chaque objet dans sa spécificité propre et en détail, sans le ramener à un type ou à une généralité ? (Walter Lippman : 26)

Il est à saisir que, dans la citation, LIPPMAN juge que le stéréotype aide le sujet dans son raisonnement d'où l'usage du terme « indispensable ». Ce qu'il justifie après par le fait qu'il permet d'établir un modèle taxonomique de la société. L'être pourra classer les

individus dans leurs différents groupes selon des traits particuliers observés dans leurs différents comportements ainsi que leurs multiples réactions.

Dans notre analyse nous nous intéresserons à deux aspects du stéréotype à savoir le dénigrement et le rejet. Il est à remarquer que le dénigrement est aussi une forme de rejet mais un rejet implicite tandis que le rejet est souvent exprimé explicitement.

3.1. Le migrant dénigré

Dans cette partie, il s'agit de voir le migrant réduit au statut animal, le fait de le considérer comme un objet à posséder ; ceci nous fait penser à l'esclavagisme. Posséder des groupes d'individus pour les exploiter dans les tâches ardues. Il est à signaler aussi, dans le dénigrement que la force physique du migrant est mise en valeur au détriment de ses capacités mentales et intellectuelles ou de son intelligence.

Le dominant s'adresse violemment au migrant dominé, plusieurs écarts de langage sont à signaler. Comme il ne le désigne pas par son prénom ou nom ou un titre de civilité qui montre que le dominant éprouve du respect envers le dominé, au contraire, il use des noms ironiques, des interjections, etc., Il est à observer également que le migrant est victime de violence physique en plus des tâches ardues et de la mauvaise nutrition. En un mot, il est confronté à la violence verbale (registre relâché), physique et symbolique.

Dans notre corpus, le dénigrement du migrant est excédentaire, le sujet européen dénigre le migrant maghrébin qui occupe le statut d'objet. Le migrant, dès qu'il atteint la rive nord se transforme en objet de valeur après un statut de sujet menant une quête. Il mène une quête pour se conjointre à un objet de valeur et se retrouve lui-même objet de valeur de son dominant. Dans la figure (02) l'instance d'origine projette un actant féminin figurativisé en femme politique française du Front National. Cet actant féminin occupe le statut de sujet doté d'un faire, à savoir l'écriture sur un mur, ce que l'on appelle en sociolinguistique « un tague sur les murs ». Le sujet dresse un message aux migrants en France, l'actant migrant est figurativisé en un actant masculin et un actant féminin. L'actant migrant est en train de lire le message tagué « Les bougnoules dehors ». Dans ce passage, le dénigrement est exprimé, l'usage du terme « bougnoules » qui est une expression utilisée par le dominant pour dénigrer le dominé, une manière de le dévaloriser, d'exprimer que le migrant est inutile en France, il ne sera que cause des malheurs. Le sujet dominant dénigre le migrant à travers l'appellation, son patronyme n'est pas évoqué, il est ignoré même s'il est connu. Le sujet a fait le choix d'une expression

péjorative qui désigne les migrants en France pour les dévaloriser. Le dénigrement est exprimé dans le message linguistique notamment le tague du mur et non le discours iconique.

Le dénigrement est exprimé aussi dans la figure 01, où l'instance d'origine évoque la politique migratoire américaine à savoir la régularisation des sans-papier. L'actant sujet figurativisé en président américain traite d'une loi pour la régularisation des migrants sans papiers. Le dénigrement est exprimé dans l'icône et non dans le discours linguistique où le sujet migrant est réduit à la saleté, le dominant l'appelle à la propreté. En effet, le sujet américain tend le papier hygiénique au migrant et non le papier d'identité.

Le dénigrement se poursuit toujours dans la figure 08, où cette fois-ci le sujet algérien dénigre le migrant subsaharien. Il met en valeur sa force physique puisqu'il le voue aux tâches de chantiers, à savoir la construction d'une villa pour le sujet dominant. L'icône et le message expriment à la fois ce refus de l'Autre.

3.2. Le migrant rejeté

Dans cette partie, nous nous intéresserons au migrant rejeté, en d'autres termes la présence du migrant sur le territoire étranger n'est pas tolérée. Plusieurs démarches sont entreprises pour manifester une haine envers lui. Le migrant est rejeté et discriminé pour la simple raison qu'il soit étranger et perçu comme dangereux pour l'autochtone.

Il est à remarquer que le dénigrement aussi est une forme de rejet, et dans notre corpus, le rejet est parfois exprimé implicitement à l'exemple du dénigrement, dans d'autres dessins il est explicite. Il est exprimé par l'aspect linguistique, des expressions qui signifient explicitement le rejet comme « rentrez chez vous, repartez, etc., » comme il est explicité dans l'icône des migrants lancés dans l'air comme un objet inutile jeté ou repoussés pour les empêcher de rejoindre le territoire souhaité.

Toujours dans la figure 02, en plus du dénigrement du migrant il est aussi rejeté « bougnoules dehors » l'usage de l'expression dehors, signifie que la présence du migrant en France n'est pas souhaitée. Le sujet français est doté de la modalité de vouloir l'expulser de son territoire, il s'agit d'un rejet explicite puisque c'est annoncé par un usage linguistique commun et quotidien, sans omettre que c'est une expression accessible.

Quant à la figure 03, le rejet est exprimé d'une manière ironique, il s'agit de deux actants en train de discuter des nouvelles procédures de visa Schengen. L'un des interlocuteurs, pour décourager son ami, lui dit sur un ton ironique « avec un peu de piston on te le refuse tout de

suite ». Il est à retenir, du discours rapporté dans la bulle, que le refus nécessite une intervention de la part d'un membre responsable de l'ambassade, alors que le lecteur s'attend au contraire. L'aide d'une tierce personne dans le but d'obtenir un avis favorable et non un refus. Cette aide pour un refus signifie le rejet catégorique du sujet européen au migrant d'où les procédures qui se compliquent de plus en plus ainsi la durée longue pour le traitement de la demande.

Dans la figure 04, il est à saisir qu'un changement de statut s'effectue, le migrant algérien, objet du sujet européen ou américain, se statue en sujet pour rejeter à son tour le migrant subsaharien présent en Algérie. L'instance d'origine projette une scène de violence envers le migrant subsaharien. Dans l'entête du dessin, la violence et la maltraitance sont déjà annoncées : « migrants maltraités en Algérie, le Pouvoir dément ». L'accent est mis sur les instances supérieures dotées de la modalité de ne pas vouloir reconnaître la violence envers le migrant. Ce qui démontre l'importance du démenti c'est l'usage de l'écriture en gras et la grande police. L'image démontre aussi cette violence puisque le migrant subsaharien comme objet est lancé dans l'air comme un objet jeté et inutile.

Conclusion

Dans notre analyse, nous avons constaté qu'il serait impossible de s'intéresser à la problématique de l'identité sans aborder le concept de l'altérité, comme il serait impossible d'étudier l'altérité en faisant abstraction de l'identité. Ce sont deux concepts complémentaires où l'un détermine l'autre.

Dans notre corpus d'analyse, il a été clair que le migrant est un autre différent par la différence de son identité. Cette différence a permis au dominant de lui attribuer un ensemble d'images négatives ou ce que l'on appelle aussi les stéréotypes. Ces images, nous l'avons vu, attribuent un statut négatif au migrant en le dévalorisant, une forme et une manière de le rejeter.

Nous avons constaté que l'identité de papier à elle seule ne suffit pas et c'est ainsi qu'un autre type d'identité s'est imposé, notamment l'identité culturelle. C'est ainsi que la question identitaire a été envisagée dans une perspective d'altérité où nous sommes intéressés à deux points, à savoir l'autre par étrangeté et par peur.

Enfin, nous confirmons notre hypothèse de départ selon laquelle le migrant est rejeté sur le territoire européen parce qu'il est étranger. Porteur de maladies et un être dangereux qui vit au détriment de l'autochtone. Et nous répondons à notre problématique de départ que plusieurs procédés linguistiques et iconiques sont utilisés pour

démontrer le rejet du migrant.

TRUMP S'APPRÊTE À RÉGULARISER 1,8 MILLION DE SANS-PAPIERS



Figure 01 : 30-01-2018.

FRANCE: MARINE LE PEN RÉÉLUE À LA TÊTE DU FRONT NATIONAL



Figure 02 : 14-03-2018

VISA SCHENGEN LA PROCÉDURE PREND BEAUCOUP DE TEMPS



Figure 03 : 23-04-2018

MIGRANTS MALTRAITÉS EN ALGÉRIE LE POUVOIR DÉMENT



Figure 04 : 26-05-2018

IL AVAIT ESCALADÉ UN IMMEUBLE POUR SAUVER UN ENFANT UN JEUNE SANS PAPIERS MALIEN REÇU PAR MACRO



Figure 05 : 29-05-2018

UNE SOIXANTAINE DE MIGRANTS NOYÉS EN MÉDITERRANÉE



Figure 06 : 05-06-2018



Figure07 : 19-07-2018



Figure08 :02-08-2018

Dans une future étude, il serait intéressant de porter notre attention à la migration dans le domaine de la chanson afin de voir si ces images négatives se manifestent de la même manière ou le champ représente autrement la migration.

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A Theoretical Overview on Migration Literature

Anca Tomoioagă¹

Abstract: The present article focuses mainly on the cultural and literary theories that define and describe migration literature and attempts to outline the main features of migration prose, in regard to literary themes, characters' identity profile and struggle, the novel as specific literary composition. First part of the study briefly presents the social phenomenon in Romania, its social context and the artistic productions generated by the emigration phenomenon. The second part of the study sketches several characteristics of the migration novel, including some short mentions of two recent Romanian novels related to emigration literature: Dan Lungu's *The Little Girl Who Played at Being God* and Liliana Corobca's *Kinderland*.

Keywords: ethical-literary, in-betweenness, dislocation, alienation, temporariness

Migration represents a social phenomenon post-communist Romania has been confronted with for the last almost thirty years. Some of the emigrants left behind their children to be brought up by their spouses or parents, hoping to turn back as soon as possible. In the last period, emigration has slowly been reduced, Romanians try to come back to their countries, but encounter difficulties in re-adapting themselves.

Official data published in 2018 by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics (Pisică, Țibu) show us that in the last three years (2015, 2016, 2017) over 207 thousands Romanian citizens emigrated annually and the number slowly increases. Most of the Romanians who have chosen emigration have their permanent residence in North-Eastern Romania. Over 76% of the Romanian emigrants are adults aged between 25 and 54, with a medium level of education, mostly male, heading towards Great Britain, Italy and Spain (Pisică, Țibu 17-

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18). The majority of Romanian emigrants leave their homes for working outside the country, less for studying, a part of them come back to their homes, some of them emigrate together with their family. These social metamorphoses have been amplifying themselves since the '90s when the borders of the free post-communist Romania opened.

Soon after, the book market decompressively flourished through the editing of beforehand censored writings and journals (belonging to the victims of socialism, exiled Romanian writers and refugees). Meanwhile, the economic and political crisis that followed the revolution sent many Romanians abroad, some of them risking their lives or freedom. At that time, the critical '90s generated the emigration flux, starting the history of the multiple abroad departures the Romanians engaged into. The cultural, social and identity consequences of the migrative tendencies partially reduced today, have started to be felt more intensively in the last decade, within all the sectors of Romanian society.

The emigration phenomenon has raised questions and profound dilemmas regarding the national and European identity, family, gender roles, the successive generations and education, all within the actual continuous process of globalisation. Apart from the sociologist observers, arts and fiction record emigration effects not only for the aesthetical sake, but mostly for raising awareness on the phenomenon at a very personal level. Statistical data depersonalise the social phenomena by means of numbers, charts and diagrams, but art in general and, specifically, fiction describes and explores the collective metamorphosis from the perspective of the individual. I am going to enumerate recent examples of such approaches, both in cinematography and Romanian contemporary fiction.

In cinematography, the recent movie *Lemonade*, released in 2018 and directed by Ioana Uricaru, explores the experience of a Romanian mother, married to an American citizen, confronted with the prejudices regarding Romanian female emigrants in USA. Another representative movie, in this respect, was released in 2013 and directed by Ciprian Mega under the title *The Very Last Morning* (Dimineața care nu se va sfârși). The movie tells the story of a Romanian single mother, emigrant in Cyprus, transformed into a prostitute, suffering of AIDS.

Romanian contemporary literature approached the subject of work emigration, *stricto sensu*, in several novels such as *Kinderland* written and published by Liliana Corobca in 2013; *The Little Girl Who Played at Being God* written and published by Dan Lungu in 2014, re-

edited in 2016 and 2018; *Bitter Cherries* (Cireșe Amare) written and published by Liliana Nechita in 2014; *The Strawberries Pickers* (Căpșunarii) written and published by Dani Rockoff in 2013; *A Strawberries Picker's False Journal* written and published by Mirel Banica in 2010.

The present study will make mention mainly of the first two novels published by the same printing house, *Polirom* as examples for the series of theoretical arguments. There are several similarities that make possible this double approach. Firstly, both novels use as narrative perspectives the voices of the children left behind by their parents who had chosen to emigrate for ensuring a better life for their offspring. *Kinderland's* heroine is Cristina. She is 12, has two younger brothers, Marcel and Dan. The three children leave together in their parents' house from a Moldavian village; their mother is at work in Italy and their father works in Russia. There is also a child heroine in *The Little Girl Who Played at Being God*. Her name is Rădița, she is younger with three, four years than Cristina, has got only one elder sister, Mălina, and lives with her grandparents in a Romanian small town. Her mother, Letiția Cosoi, works in Italy as elderly care worker at Bosse family. Her father, an engineer out of a job, lives together with his elder daughter at the family apartment.

Apart from the former novel, the second inserts also the mother's perspective. Chapters alternate the daughter's perspective on events with the mother's narrated experience. Both novels make usage of the free indirect speech, configuring a more authentic vision on the consequences of migration upon children.

Most of the novels about migration focus mainly on the migrants and their biographical experiences, identity issues and their cultural convergences. In the case of the two novels, the focus stays mostly on the ones left home (i.e. children), those who actually encounter almost the same problems regarding identity, authority and freedom, family relationships and gender roles, guilt and responsibility, transforming them into emigrants in their own homes. Children left behind emotionally run through the same experiences as their parents, and especially mothers. For instance, as so many parents from Rădița's hometown have left in Italy, Spain, the children were named the Italians or the Spanish in the neighbourhood. Certainly, this happens also with their parents who become the Spanish or the Italians in Romania, and the Romanians in Italy and Spain.

It is important to state that such novels are not just social narratives that could be easily replaced by sociological studies. Gnoseologically speaking, sociology and fiction provide, on the same

background, details regarding migration, at different levels. Indeed, as Soren Frank asserts, “the concept of migration functions as a bridge linking aesthetic and sociology, as migration relates to both theme and form” (5).

Sociology works mostly at a morphological level, creating synthetic views on society in time and space, recording forms and typologies, calculatingly searching the logical connections among causes and effects. The modern novel puts its magnifying glass on the very moment of the synapse, working mostly at a syntactical level of human existence, forging inside human sensibility and analytically describing it.

Apart from these confinements, the novels of migration often succeed in creatively integrating both the sociological morphology and fiction syntax into a literary conglomerate that may define, in nuce, our world. Some researchers speak about a poetics of the migrant novel, the general migratory aspect of contemporary literature, the migrant as the main character of the postmodern era heading towards globalization and coincidentia oppositorum.

For theoreticians, to situate the migration novel on the stage of contemporary literary creations was somehow out of reach, especially because of its transitory, fluctuant and heterogenic nature.

There are some preliminary differences between its social and fictional character, its ethical and its esthetical features. Robert Merlo, in a study dedicated to the italoophone literary writings belonging to Romanian immigrants of Italy, explains how the migration literature has got, due to its socio-cultural context and its documentary value, an ethical-literary quality (481). Therefore, the literary art, through the literature of migration, regains nowadays with dignity one of its social roles i.e. telling truths about the condition of contemporary individual, raising awareness regarding the other, our neighbour, but also ourselves. The aesthetical and stylistic aspects give literary force to such texts in expressing their message.

Some of the novels, such as, for instance, Nechita Liliana’s *Bitter Cherries*, have a more biographical character. Readers, though, look for authenticity in order to understand the other, despite the fact that the author is not a professional writer. In this case, the ethical character of the writing is more significant. Still, migration has steadily become a literary theme for contemporary novelists, some of them migrants too (see also literary postcolonial trends). In the same study (479), Robert Melo explains that the biographic experience of migration, as cathartically described in biographies, has become an existential condition writers explore in their literary creations and that

is why one may speak about a real poetics, a poetics of transitoriness. Actually, migration literature is possible because of this poetics that legitimates its definition.

Migration literature has been hard to define for several reasons. There are novels written by writers who have experienced the condition of emigrant and wrote about it in their host country and literature and also writers who witnessed the social phenomenon in their own country but haven't had the experience. Robert Melo includes in the migration literature all the literary productions that make close references to the experience of migration (472). In this respect, Soren Frank questions the legitimacy of terms such as "migrant literature and migration literature, the former referring to the person behind the work, the latter referring to intratextual concerns", but concludes that migration should refer "not only to the life of the author, but also to the lives of the fictional characters and to the overall thematic framework and the discursive strategies of the novels" (15). Accordingly, we agree that novels like *The Little Girl Who Played at Being God or Kinderland* could be considered such instances of migration literature in spite of the fact that their authors are not migrants, nor their subject focuses mainly on the emigrant's experience, but on the family left behind.

Within the large thematic framework of migration, the condition of the child left at home was less explored. Particularly, in Romanian literature such a topic is more than appropriate, not only because of the expanded emigration phenomenon in our country, but also because apart from the labour emigrants' confessions and narrated biographies, Romanian professional writers who do not belong to diaspora or had no migrant experience watch from inside the effects of emigration on the ones who stay and wait at home.

In such novels, the stress seems to fall on the home crisis generated by the emigrant's departure and not on the migratory experience. The accent moves from the emigrant as protagonist to the children as main characters who witness and experience their parent's departure in such way that they have to reconfigure and redefine their identity and their sense of involving and belonging. In one of his interviews, Dan Lungu confessed that he prefers the novel of vulnerability, of margins, of the secondary effects, of the minority, of the outraged sensibilities while migration represents the socio-cultural context that explains this outraged sensibility. (*Zece întrebări...*) Both Dan Lungu and Liliana Corobca are these children's messengers among the plurality of perspectives that the literary poetics of migration creates. Nevertheless, their literary creations, as Soren Frank puts it, prove "that authors with no history of actual migration are able to write

migration literature.” (16)

In terms of literary theme, most of the theoreticians agree that the term *migration literature* appropriately defines the specificity of such literary creations. Robert Merlo (14) asserts that the term *migration* is more inclusive, focusing more on the in-between experience and less on the privative aspects of emigration or immigration and on their dichotomy. The former term suggests dislocation, homelessness, nostalgia, the second expresses alienation, marginalisation, otherness and estrangement. For a migrant, both total integration and total estrangement are critical because they are impossible and this impossibility generates suffering. This is why, in the literature of migration the focus moves from exclusive belonging towards the place of crossroads: “The migration literature is not, as the national literatures, the literature of a space, of a culture, of a language, but a literature of the relationships among spaces, cultures, different languages.” (Robert Merlo, 16)

Nevertheless, there are researchers who cannot omit the identity distances between home and abroad, the duplicity of migration and “the hiatus between the transformative force of migration and its positive metabolization of differences, and the conservative aspect of migration, which reinforces communal and ethnic enclaves in order to safeguard the identity of the guests *vis-à-vis* the omnivorous assimilationist force of the host country.” (Ponzanesi, Merolla 4-5) Moreover, Paul White identifies the migration literature as being the literature of great dislocations that investigates human estrangement and identity issues: “migration is generally about dislocation and the potential alienation of the individual from both old norms and new contexts. It is about change and, as argued earlier in this chapter, about identity. It is about movement.”(6)

We assume therefore that migration literature has been associated with two different perceptions of the social phenomenon. On one side, migration suggests the way of the world, celebrating the plurality of the perspective, diversity and multiplicity. On the other side, migration relates to emigration and immigration and reflects the dislocation, identity crisis, the change not embraced, but experienced as alienation. In the case of the two novels we discuss here, the focus stays mainly on the consequences of migration. Romanian children, so many left at home, are being impelled towards prematureness. Rădița, such a playful character Dan Lungu creates, gives in going to ski and dangerously decides to go to her mother in Italy when she realises that her mother’s emigration is convenient for everyone. Moreover, she feels like her mother’s safeguard. Cristina’s case is even more dramatic.

At the age of 12 she is obliged to renounce to her ingenuity and take care of her brothers, continuously looking for reasons to justify their loneliness and their sense of homelessness.

In fact, *Roy Sommer* (apud *Sten Pultz*) identifies two categories of the contemporary novel: the 'multicultural' and the 'transcultural novel'. As Sten Pultz describes them, "the former views cultural flux and unbelonging as a problem that deprives the individual of the stability of homeland and rootedness, the transcultural novel is thoroughly anti-essentialist and celebrates uprootedness and cultural fragmentation as liberatory processes." (5) The migration novel is seen as a subcategory of the multicultural novel. Anyway, Roy Sommer places the migration literature in the thematic area of dislocation, identity crisis, restraining somehow the definition.

Regarding dislocation, in the case of nowadays literature, space needs to be redefined as much as the term *home*. Soren Frank explains that we live "in a time of the redrawing of maps, of intense deterritorializations and reterritorializations: people are passing borders, but borders are also passing people." (2) People are not anymore defined by the territories they used to belong to. Our fluctuant world continuously reshapes identities and redefines the concept of *homeland*. The migrants oscillate among the aspiration to live somewhere else and making that place a home and the nostalgia of turning back to their native place. Ha Jin explains that the homeland can no longer be the authentic homeland because the journey changed the traveller enriched with the experience of the destination: "the issue of homeland involves arrival more than return." (Ha Jin, 85). Homeland is not defined by collective belonging, territory and nation, but by the perception of the individual.

Rădița oscillates between her grandparents' house and the father's apartment where actually she is only a guest, although most of the memories of her early childhood are related to this space, the apartment as a paradise lost. In Kinderland, Cristina remains together with her brothers in her parents' house, the place for the children "refugees" that sometimes do not want to turn back to their neighbour home. Cristina offers shelter to her friends as a profound need of certifying her home as destination and place of belonging. Both children are placed somewhere in the middle, at the crossroads, in a tragic estate of simultaneous expectation and transitoriness.

Therefore, such a creation as the migration novel is the coherent product of our world. Keywords like transition, globalization, transcultural, hybridity, in-between, syncretism, creolization and diversity (that actually describe our world) circulate throughout the

recent studies of literary theory regarding contemporary fiction, in general, and migration literature in particular.

The historical events of 20th Century, the recent fulminatory development of technology and incredible communicative force of the internet have changed the face of the world. Sten Pultz is right to say that:

our age is supposed to be an age of unparalleled mobility, migration and border crossing. Reading the literature of globalisation, the whole world appears to be on the move. It is the grand spectacle of a virtual surge of people flowing across the surface of the globe: refugees, exiles, expatriates, international vagrants, guest workers, immigrants, globetrotting travellers and package tourists, wanderers of all kinds crisscrossing the planet and all its national, ethnic, cultural, social and linguistic borders. It seems that we are witnessing a massive international and transnational defeat of gravity, an immense uprooting of origin and belonging, an immense displacement of borders, with all the clashes, meetings, fusions and intermixings it entails, reshaping the cultural landscapes of the world's countries and cities. (1-2)

This is why, Robert Merlo considers the migration literature as being transnational, transcultural, translinguistic, transidentitary. (521) This mobility and dynamics between home and destination, literarily extremely fertile, celebrates the travelling, the literature of the interval, as much as our complex world continuously fluid among identities, cultures and nationalities.

Furthermore, Homi K. Bhabha in his work *The Location of Culture* defines differently the term of world literature: "Where, once, the transmission of national traditions was the major theme of world literature, perhaps we can now suggest that transnational histories of migrants, the colonized, or political refugees – these border and frontier conditions – may be the terrains of world literature". (12) In this respect, the migrant as the hero of our times is never placed at the beginning of the voyage, nor at the end, but somewhere in-between or somewhere *beyond* because "The 'beyond' is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past." (Bhabha, 1) Briefly, this vision upon the world continuously moving changes also the perception of the human nature. Humans are basically travellers, not settlers. Nowadays, the migrant represents the exponent of the contemporary humanity, characterised by "restlessness" and "mobile identity" (Pultz, 3).

For such a dynamic world and such a human specificity, the literature of migration seems to be the predilected one. Even in the case of some nonmigrant literary productions, Soren Frank has noticed

“themes and discursive strategies often thought of as typical of migrant literature” (3).

In his study, Sten Pultz tries to describe the migration novel by using Roy Sommer’s classification of this type of novels, Bakhtin’s notion of the heteroglot novel and Guattari and Deleuze’s description of the rhizome novel, focusing mainly on the hybrid nature of such novels. Pultz asserts that “*hybridity* typically manifests itself in tropes and thematisations of the experience of cultural in-betweenness, processes of intermixture, fusions or doublings of two or more cultures or two or more systems of signification.” (4) Hybridity as a concept that essentially defines our world, the continuous mingling of cultures and identities, endlessly reshaping and reconfiguring maps, mirrors itself in the plurality of narrative structures and discourses obvious in contemporary novels, but especially in migration novels. This hybrid nature is also enough visible in Dan Lungu’s novel. Not only Rădița, but also her mother’s voice can be heard; other migrants narrate their experiences (for instance, Laura, a secondary character that polarises with Letiția), readers are acquainted with the grandparents’ stories and past. This novel is closer to what heteroglot novel means. Both girls try to adjust through self-correction their perspectives and their inner voices to the new situation they are in. Cristina overcomes difficulties through false arguments (when parents are at home, they are violent); Rădița instead adapts herself through the imaginary act of play, apparently controlling the world (staying on the top of the block of flats, she plays at being God, because when she whispers commands, people, objects and animals move and respects her words).

Still, *Kinderland* apparently lacks this plurality; this subjective novel is partially structured as a diary and partially as an epistolary novel. Hybridization is perceptible at the level of the discursive techniques, creating what Deleuze and Guattari considered to be a rhizome.

The association of the migration novel with the concept of the rhizomatic book explained by Deleuze enlarges endlessly the definition. The world itself is organised today as a rhizome, without any pivot or genetic axis: the principal root has aborted, or its tip has been destroyed; an immediate, indefinite multiplicity of secondary roots grafts onto it and undergoes a flourishing development.” (5) The rhizomes are the bulbs and the tubers that may reconnect or create new radicular webs. The world as well as the book is considered to be such an assemblage. The book *per se* forms a rhizome with the world, as authors explain (4), and does not mirror the world but intersects with it. This association with the rhizome accentuates once more the

heterogenic intrinsic nature of the migration literature, the multiplicity of voices, the cultural hybridity and the celebration of diversity.

In his book, Soren Frank frames an operational method of analysis regarding migration literature, trying “to outline more precisely the different functions of migration in a novel.” (17) The researcher enlists several subcategories related to theme and style and mentions some of the aspects we already discussed here: the condition of being a migrant, whether the migrant is the author or the character, the fluid national identity, secularism, globalisation, pluriperspectivity, rhizomatic structures, heteroglossia, in-betweenness. (21)

For a close analysis of the specificity of a migration novel Soren Frank’s thematic focal points and textual strategies could represent a starting point.

Conclusively, to summarise in a comprehensive definition: the migration novel is a literary creation that bridges aesthetics and ethics, describes a world defined by multiplicity, globalisation, transitoriness and hybridity, identity fluidity. Such a novel might focus on the celebration of diversity, but also on dislocation, identity crisis, homelessness. The protagonist of these literary creations is the migrant who represents the citizen of our world.

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Diversity-isms

Notes on Liberal Humanism in E. M. Forster's Fiction

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Abstract: The tenets of liberal humanism underpin most of E. M. Forster's work. My article is a sketchy review of some of the writings where this is present, from the early titles to 'A Passage to India' - the classic account of the clash of cultures in British India in the first years of the twentieth century.

Key words: metropolis, colony, cultural encounters, confrontation, reconciliation

Introduction

In his possibly most famous essay, 'What I Believe', published by Hogarth Press in 1939 and later included in his second collection of essays 'Two Cheers for Democracy' (1951), E. M. Forster (1879-1970) articulates his humanistic convictions in ways that echo back to his 1924 masterpiece, 'A Passage to India'. What he truly values, he says, is "not an aristocracy of power based upon rank and influence, but an aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate, and the plucky...They represent the true human tradition, the one permanent victory of our queer race over cruelty and chaos". Furthermore, "If I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country." (<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/what-i-believe-by-e-m-forster>, retrieved Nov.18th, 2019).

The statements qualify both the liberal humanist disposition of a writer who believed strongly in the value of interpersonal relations and the thematic concerns of his best fiction which explores the need for reconciliation in various forms: between personal freedom and cultural impositions, between the sexes, cultural barriers, colony and

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metropolis, or, at the most general level, between cultures. “Only connect...”, the epigraph of his 1910 novel, “Howards End” speaks once more of this very need for human sympathy and mutual acceptance of difference.

After graduation from Cambridge, his traveling to Italy, Greece and, later, to India will enlarge his horizons and enrich his knowledge of other cultures. His early novels and short stories use Italian and Greek settings as fresh, stimulating opposites to the spiritual emptiness of his native England. Thus, in his first novel, “Where Angels Fear to Tread” (1905), the Italian landscape and the local people trigger in the English middle-class characters a feeling of liberation and self-knowledge, so different from the snobbish gentility and the narrow-mindedness of the suburban world at home, the fictional Sawston in the novel, a locus of middle class gentility and philistinism. Forster anticipates here the themes of cultural oppositions and the sterility of the English middle class that he would develop later in “A Room with a View” (1908), and especially in “A Passage to India” (1924). The two settings, Sawston, a suburb of London and the sunny town of Monteriano in Tuscany are used to highlight the differences between the two cultures and their accompanying stereotypes as, for example, the romantic fascination with the beauty of the Italian landscape, the joy of living of its inhabitants, or the role and position of women in the two cultures, matriarchal in the case of England and patriarchal in Italy.

Italy as a “liberating agent”(Daiches: 1159) is used again in Forster’s third novel, “A Room with a View” where the shifting of setting from Florence to Surrey allows for the final possibility of self-fulfillment against societal restrictions in Edwardian England.

The conflict in the novel is symbolically present in its title: rooms as stifling, closed-in spaces stand for social conventions and limitations, while views suggest open, natural horizons, freedom and the possibility of expansion. The novel may have been inspired by an extended trip to Florence that the writer made in 1901. The experience meant for him spiritual release from the rigid codes at home. His increasing mistrust of English middle class society is mirrored in the novel, by the choice the cautious, thoroughly English Lucy Honeychurch must make between the free thinking George Emerson whom she meets in Florence and the repressed supercilious aesthete Cecil Vyse she will meet back home. Ultimately, a choice between convention and passion. The ending of the narrative finds Lucy and George reunited and back in Florence, looking out of their room at the view of the Arno valley.

The novel can also be enjoyed as a story about the contradictions and conflicts of being human: how we reconcile our inner lives with outside expectations and how it becomes possible, by opening one's mind, to find faith and love in unexpected places. To connect, that is.

Metropolis and Colony

"A Passage to India" is the last novel Forster would write, although the writer continued to be a public figure until his death. Completed soon after WW I, the narrative is probably set before it, at the time of Forster's first visit to India, 1912. (He would revisit it in the following year, when, for six months, he acted as the private Secretary to the Maharajah of Dewas State. The experience, documented in the "The Hill of Devi" 1953, will be used in the final section of the novel).

Incorporating both 'symbolism and realism' (Lodge: 97), "A Passage to India" was written at a time when the supporters of the British Empire were split between *paternalists*, who thought that Britain had a moral and cultural supremacy over its colonies and *liberals*, such as Forster, who believed it right to spread values of understanding and education but disagreed with the empire's military and commercial exploits. Throughout the novel, the constant emphasis on 'goodwill', 'friendship' and 'tolerance' is an assertion of Forster's liberal creed.

Thematically, the book is concerned with the Anglo-Indian relations which become the background against which Forster conducts "the most searching and complex of all his explorations of the possibilities and limitations, the promises and the pitfalls of human relations" (Daiches: 1159)

The plot, set round the Indian city of Chandrapore, foregrounds from the beginning the idea of the quest, as embodied by the symbolically named Adela Quested, the English young lady who comes to India with her elderly friend Mrs. Moore whose son, Rony Heaslop, now the city magistrate, is her fiancé. Gradually, the quest becomes one concerning the nature and the spirit of India, as well as that concerning the possibility of reconciliation between the two races.

The central episode of the rather minimalist plot occurs when the two English ladies start on an expedition to the Marabar Caves on the invitation of their friendly acquaintance, Dr. Aziz. In one of the caves, Adela has the impression that she is sexually attacked by Aziz, but the nature of the incident is never clear. All that Mrs. Moore hears, as she is waiting outside, is an echo which makes her experience "the twilight of double vision". Although Adela retracts her accusation of attempted rape at the trial, the incident exposes the latent tensions in

the Anglo-Indian relations and also racial tensions in the country.

The white reactions are far from unanimous either: the liberal-minded Cyril Fielding, the headmaster at the local school for Indians, proclaims his belief in Aziz's innocence and is therefore ostracized by the English community and condemned as a blood traitor; Mrs. Moore becomes apathetic and irritable. Her experience in the cave and in India, in general, seems to have ruined her faith in humanity. Although she believes that Aziz is innocent, she does nothing to help him. She leaves India before the trial takes place and dies during the voyage. As for Adela, her attitude in courts is seen by the Anglo-Indians as a betrayal of the white race. Ronny Heaslop breaks off the engagement and the bride-to-be goes back to England never to return. Fielding, too, returns home but he will come back two years later, married to Stella, Mrs. Moore's daughter from a second marriage. He and Aziz will become friends again in spite of the latter's previous vow to befriend a white person again. At least not until India is free from the British rule, as the final words in the novel suggest: "No, not yet" and the sky said, "No, not there" '.

Rhythm and symbolism

Two elements in the book are illustrative both for its modernist stance and for its message: rhythm and symbolism. Forster will use the term *rhythm* in his 'Aspects of the Novel' (1927) to describe the structural use in fiction of recurrent words, phrases and characters, or repetition with variation. The purpose is to enhance meaning and resonance and to create a pulsating effect in the evolution of a text's themes. In 'A Passage to India' the technique is apparent in the use of the echo which haunts Adela and Mrs. Moore after their visit to the Marabar Caves. And it haunts them since it is an echo of impossible meanings, just like the whole modernist narrative of Forster in which 'orderly syntax, grammar, alphabet, get reduced to mere noise, nonsense, glossolalia, *ou-boum*, chaos' (Cunningham: 228). As a matter of fact, the whole book is structured so as to create rhythm and patterns of repetition, both in its division into three chapters- *Mosque, Caves, Temple* and in the use of time since it follows a seasonal pattern, from cold to hot weather, from the dry to the rainy season.

The other key element for the book's design is the central symbol of the caves and it has led to many critical interpretations. First, they appear as a hollow space which may represent Forster's perception of metaphysical emptiness in a Godless universe. Secondly, they stand for the author's view of India as a place of mystery and void. Thirdly, the empty caves can be read as a symbol of the main textual absence in the

book, its missing centre, the enigma of what happened to Adela. And fourthly, the caves can be seen as a break, a gap in a hypothetically continuous thread that would connect the two cultures, English and Indian. In this sense, Adela's and Mrs. Moore's quest for the real India becomes for them the equivalent of the Marabar Hills and caves, with their accompanying atmosphere of spiritual emptiness, sexual fear and human inconsequence in the universe. In Childs's opinion,

Everything we learn about the caves applies also to European views of the country; they are dark, empty, oppressive and mysterious. The common way of imagining India as a land occupied by monsoons, heat and dust rather than people is repeated in the fetishizing of the caves in the novel. The caves are considered inexplicable and unknowable, remote and timeless, like India (Childs: 192).

In 1960, E. M. Forster told his biographer that the novel was not 'about the incompatibility of East and West [but] was really concerned with the difficulty of living in the universe' (Childs; 208). Later, in the essay 'Three Countries' (1954) he added that 'the book is not really about politics...It's about the search of the human race for a more lasting home' (ibidem). The statements suggest Forster's view that politics is always opposed to, or at least at odds with friendship. His progressive, liberal-minded characters try to play fair and be friendly in a social context of politics and imperial administration: Fielding, we are told, 'was happiest in the give- and- take of private conversation. The world, he believed, is a globe of men who are trying to reach one another and can best do so by the help of goodwill plus culture and intelligence' (PI: 56)

'Goodwill' is one of the most frequently used words in the novel and amicable personal attitudes are seen as ways of uniting people, while political factors are portrayed as sources of division. The easy familiarity with Fielding's first meeting with Aziz is contrasted, for example, with the formal and impersonal attempts at cross-cultural connection as they appear at the Collector's bridge party. The three-part structure of the book also encourages such an interpretation. At the end of the first section, 'Mosque', we read: 'But they were friends, brothers. That part was settled, their compact had been subscribed by [Aziz showing Fielding his dead wife's photograph], they trusted one another, and affection had triumphed for once in a way (PI: 113). The end of the second section, 'Caves', sees Aziz and Fielding returning to England. Finally, the last section, 'Temple', concludes with a pessimistic or, at least ambivalent ending pointing to the difficulty of their mutually desired friendship.

In his seminal study, 'Orientalism', the postcolonial critic Edward Said contends that the Western benefits of logic, efficiency and material well-being are highlighted by the positioning of oriental countries as illogical, inefficient and mysterious. Forster, more for metaphysical than for cultural reasons, repeatedly alludes to this representation of India. : 'they did not one thing which the non-Hindu would feel dramatically correct; this approaching triumph of India was a muddle (as we call it), a frustration of reason and form' (PI; pp. 284-5.). This sense of muddle and mystery is cultivated by Forster and it becomes a feature of the narrative whether we consider what happened in the Marabar Caves or whether a car accident is caused by an animal, or whether Adela sees a stick or a snake from the train. Thus, the book makes extensive use of inconclusive incidents, and Fielding's comment that 'a mystery is a muddle' is used to translate even India's spiritualism into instances of simple human failure. Speaking of the incident in the Caves, Forster stated that

In the cave it is either a man, or the supernatural, or an illusion. If I say, it becomes whatever the answer a different book. And even if I know! My writing mind therefore is a bit of a blur here- i. e., I will it to remain a blur, and to be uncertain, as I am of many facts in real life. This isn't a philosophy of aesthetics. It's a particular trick. I felt justified in trying because my theme was India. It sprang straight from my subject matter. I wouldn't have attempted it in other countries, which though they contain mysteries and muddle, manage to draw rings around them (Editor's Introduction to the novel: 23)

Muddle- *everything is anything and nothing is something*-, as the Hindu professor Godbole says, is very much a part of the novel, from the chaos of mud on the opening page to the final 'Temple' section where the Hindu God and other offerings thrown into the river are described as 'emblems of passage; a passage not easy, not now, not here, not to be apprehended except when it is unattainable' (PI: 314-5). This mystery and misunderstanding point to the metaphysical realm in all the aspects of the narrative and this is apparent in the opening chapter already. The introductory scene is illustrative for the novel's scope, describing first the two worlds of Chandrapore- the muddy and shapeless Indian section of the town which is sharply contrasted to the orderly and neat British civil station, the two settings linked only by 'the overarching sky'. The ending of the episode is also ominous as it mentions, almost casually, the distant 'fists and fingers' of the Marabar Hills and their 'extraordinary caves' (PI" 8-9)

Not only does the incident at the Caves render problematic the

idea of reconciliation between the two races, but the very conclusion of the novel seems to point to Forster's rather pessimistic attitude regarding human endeavour, in general. As Adela tells Fielding I Chapter 29, 'all these personal relations we try to live by are temporary'. Similarly, after Fielding has returned to India, we read that he and Aziz, in spite of their apparent reconciliation, 'socially they had no meeting place' and that their separation is inevitable- a condition that applies to human life in general, not only to the racially torn India. (It is not without significance that the two meet not in British India, but in the native state of Mau, a place 'somewhere else'). This is already suggested in the introductory section of 'Caves' which presents a perfectly natural symbol for the attempted union between man and his fellow beings, or between the individual and Transcendence. The image is that of the striking of a match in the inner chamber of the cave:

They are dark caves....There is little to see and no eye to see it, until the visitor arrives for his five minutes and strikes match. Immediately another flame rises in the depth of the rock and moves towards the surface like an imprisoned spirit....The two flames approach and strive to unite, but cannot, because one of them breathes air, the other stone. A mirror inlaid with lovely colours divides the lovers, delicate stars of pink and gray interpose....all the evanescent life of the granite here visible....The radiance increases, the flames touch one another, kiss, expire. The cave is dark again, like all the caves (P I: 125)

However, to say that Forster's view is irremediably pessimistic would be reductionist and incomplete. Things are never one way in the novel. The concluding section suggests, even though it does not affirm explicitly, the possibility of reunion and reconciliation. The rainy season brings about the sacred and merry festival of the birth of Krishna, with its slogan 'God is love' and the accompanying suggestion that, at least there and then, everything exists and has value. The divine chaos of the holy ceremonies contain an impressive natural symbol of baptismal rebirth as humans reach out to one another and to what lies around and beyond them. Thus, although the last meeting of Cyril Fielding and dr. Aziz takes into account 'the divisions of daily life', Gardner is right to say that 'we are able to sense in the final negatives "not yet" and "not there", the presence, the possibility of "some time" and "somewhere"' (Gardner: 35)

Aziz in an awful rage danced this way and that, not knowing what to do and cried: "Down with the English anyhow. That's certain. Clear out, you fellows, double quick, I say. We may hate one another, but we hate you most. If I don't make you go, Ahmed will, Karim will, if it's

fifty-five hundred years we shall get rid of you, yes, we shall drive away every blasted Englishman into the sea, and then....you and I shall be friends (PI: 322)

This inconclusiveness is a mark of all modernist fiction. The emphasis on incomplete epistemology, on 'muddle' and indirection underlines the elements of doubt and uncertainty that are present in many early twentieth century texts in which skepticism regarding knowledge, God, identity, morality, civilization and communication seems to undermine the imperial, masculine and Victorian certainties of the previous century.

Conclusion

In the second half of his life, E. M. Forster remained a prominent intellectual, an avid reader, reviewer, lecturer and an ardent champion of democracy. The collections of essays that he had written along the years, 'Abinger Harvest' and 'Two Cheers for Democracy' reveal a liberal humanist thinker concerned with the condition of the individual and with the chances of personal integrity confronted with the darker tendencies of the century.

What he valued most was the spiritual dimension of existence. What he detested was philistinism, intolerance and political totalitarianisms of any kind. Both in his longer narratives and in the shorter pieces, he remained faithful to his humanistic credo which he professed in the epigraph to his 'Howards End': "Only connect, the prose and passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its height"

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Book Reviews

Comptes rendus de livres

To Be or Not To Be ... Homo Sapiens

Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens. A Brief History of Humankind*. Vintage. 2011

Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens. Scurta istorie a umanitatii*. Ed. Vintage. 2011

Anemona Alb¹

It is with spectacular acumen that Yuval Noah Harari sets out the main tenets, ontological and epistemological of our becoming as a species. Indeed, his is equally a work of splendid academic achievement in terms of accuracy and in-depth analysis, and an enthralling read. Not only does Harari engage in laying out and commenting on the landmarks of evolutionism, but he also foregrounds insightful interpretations that are at the cutting-edge stance of the humanities.

His approach is not solely that of the cultural anthropologist, but that of the sociologist, the economist, the historian and the political analyst alike. The broad domains he tackles range from the cognitive revolution, the agricultural revolution, to the scientific revolution; indeed, the three staples of evolutionary sequencing. His exegesis goes far beyond the straightforward, onto the philosophical. His is a philosophy-based and, more saliently still, a philosophy-begetting endeavour. The novel interpretations he provides make up a hermeneutics of the human that yields unprecedented depth. All this forged in a subtle narrative that cannot leave the novice and the scholar alike indifferent to the analytical framework it offers. Equally relevantly, illustration from literature is provided in all porousness of genres (science, literary creation) and discourses (factual *vs.* fictional). Very much like Alain de Botton, another western guru decoding the intricacies of capitalism and the capitalist, Harari translates, as it were, the esoteric into the accessible. Truth be told, his work can arguably be labelled as the popularization of science. Indeed, the underpinnings of all things evolutionary are rendered in a reader-friendly manner, so as to fit the young readers' reading *modus operandi*. That is not to say that it fails to provide food for thought for the *connoisseur* as well.

Stylistically, Harari's writing is provocative and mesmerizing, to

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say nothing of its brevity, that is always the mark of concise, quintessential thought; he displays true talent thereof. Instances like,

Unfortunately, complex human societies seem to require imagined hierarchies and unjust discrimination. Of course not all hierarchies are morally identical, and some societies suffered from more extreme types of discrimination than others, yet scholars know of no large society that has been able to dispense with discrimination altogether."(Harari 2011: 153) is a case in point. Or, in another instance, "Humankind was trapped in this predicament for thousands of years. As a result, economies remained frozen. (...). If credit is such a wonderful thing, why did nobody think of it earlier? (Harari 2011: 344)

whereby sociological suspense is engendered, alongside stark factual data, so as to make this a thought-provoking read, in the process yielding myriad novel paths of further interpretation.

All in all, this is a book highly commendable both to the consummate scholar and to the novice.

On Mirror-Women and More.

Delia Maria Radu, *Specular Women in Romanian Literature* (Palamart Publishing-House, Hungary, 2017)

Ioana Cistelean¹

Starting with its very title, Delia Maria Radu's book *Specular Women in Romanian Literature* (Palamart Publishing-House, Hungary, 2017) introduces itself to the reader as an intriguing, appealing and promising study; the story explaining the title is to be found in the first sentences of the volume, de-conspiring thus its departure, its inspiration: Cristian Moraru's *Poetics of Reflections* is to blame for distinguishing a Narcissism of parallel mirrors from a Narcissism of concave mirrors. The distinguish in question denominates the first syntagm by two parallel images mirroring themselves, one reaching self-consciousness the minute the other one is rendering its form, in other words: the minute the latter is mirroring the first; the second syntagm of the equation displays two mirrors which are actually replaced by a single one, a concave one, that is reflecting its own parts while the result hidden in the concave mirror is nonetheless reproducing itself at various levels of self-reflection, consequently theorizing its form and structure.

Delia Maria Radu is drawing her study by minutely and carefully driving it mile by mile, moving from concepts towards text interpretations, from generic to specific, from landscape to "leaves of grass", from a conceptual context to its applications on literary texts. Thus, *metaphor, mirror, image, female character* – all these are x-rayed, divided and subdivided so that the reader might fully grasp the intended picture of a theoretical paradigm which is to be later analytically applied on Romanian selected literary texts.

The very core of the present study is actually designated by the *mirror-woman* and the author defines this particular metaphorical concept as "women seen from the perspective of the role they play in the narrators' self-knowledge and self-understanding"; a necessary distinction is made between *mirror-women* on one hand and *mirror-men* ("those obsessed by self-knowledge at the expense of the others' suffering"), respectively *river-men* ("those reflecting the image of their beloved one, those who want to monopolize her"), on the other hand, just before the book progresses into its

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more juicy part: text interpretations.

Five Romanian novelists, all men, each with one prose (Marin Preda, Modest Morariu, Radu Petrescu, Nicolae Breban), except for Alexandru Ivasiuc who is subjected to literary scanning with two of his novels, cover the most interesting segment of Delia Maria Radu's printed work. Every single text is scrutinized in detail, the researcher pointing out along with her analysis distinctive paradigms, paradoxical associations, significant remarks – all connected to the central symbolical notion of her study: mirror-women dressed in the proper clothes of female characters as perceived, used, transformed, altered, loved and/ or abandoned by male protagonists .

- “Besides triggering Ilea's introspection, the mirror character, the student also has the role of ordering the text. (...) Therefore, the mirror metaphor plays an essential role in the poetics of Ivasiuc's novel. After starting his lines confessing that he was in love like a teenager, Ilea admits that his love for the student is but a pretext.”; “The sign of the mirror is a factor of cohesion for the couple, presupposing a tragic reflection of one in the other, an identification with the other one's failure. (...) For Margareta as well, the mirror she watches herself in after her strange guest's departure is a means of identifying her ego.”; “However, this first love is only meant to reveal him the world of senses (...) Although he is fully prepared to commit to this relationship, enthralled by the girl's presence, she remains reserved, i.e. at the stage of an intermediary mirror, of passage to other perspectives”; “By isolating themselves, they each depend in their thoughts in order to mirror themselves into a virtual image of their partner (...) Each woman reflects the man differently, and when he is no longer satisfied with the reflected image, he has the possibility of resorting to another *mirror*.”; “Matei falls in love with Dora's image as she differs from others by her elegance and attitude. As his constant preoccupation has been to stand out, to differentiate himself from the other “provincials”, he finds their common feature in these two of the young woman's qualities. (...) Radu Petrescu's protagonist, like Marin Preda's hero, sees everything from his perspective, and what he hears about her convinces him more and more that their destinies are alike.”; “By ignoring all responsibilities, Don Juan symbolizes absolute power and freedom, the refusal of necessity and constraint. That is why Rogulski wishes to be, in his turn, a master who gets initiated into freedom. His attraction to Tonia begins with a feeling of pity (...). In Rogulski's original way of understanding things, Tonia is a deeply unhappy woman.” -

Hopefully, all these chosen discursive samples are proofs enough to persuade the reader that the given book attentively and progressively casts a new light on both texts and characters, placing its approach under the mirror metaphor umbrella, constructing and de-constructing crisis, patterns, common spaces in Romanian contemporary literature.
patterns, common spaces in Romanian contemporary literature.

**Christian Moraru, *Rewriting. Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*,
Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001**

Magda Danciu¹

Though not a specialist in writology but in humanities, Professor Christian Moraru of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, whose interests ranges from 20th-century American literature, mostly fiction, and literary and cultural theory, to theories of community and comparative studies in literature and philosophy, transnational perspectives on Cold War and its aftermath, or Central-East-European developments, has authored a large number of articles and books emerging from his research findings in the present history of ideas. *Rewriting. Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning* is his first published book as an answer to the frequently asked question regarding the originality of the present culture/fiction in an age of continuous rewriting texts, reinventing situations, rediscovering values, redistributing energies, reworking ideas, eventually cloning cultures and reconstructing identities We become part of a larger process of intensive-extensive remaking narratives within the contemporary sociohistorical ambience when realizing how „rewriting determines not only a remolding of a certain literary matrix, but, by means of this very retextualization, also a revision – critical retelling – of those cultural tales.” (Moraru, 2001: XIII).

Postmodernism urged writers (and readers) to constantly recreate texts thus multiplying the cultural arena by actively employing rewriting as a major operational instrument meant to link previous texts, bringing them together in an intertextual format, a generous „palimtext”(18), thus demonstrating that „renarrativization effects a developed narrative transposition of a previous prose text, which the critic has to pursue and prove by reconstructing in detail the more or less analogous storytelling structure visible, first, as plot or plot segments, characters, and more broadly, as aesthetic doctrine, style, or ideology.”(20).

Christian Moraru’s study dwells on the importance of treating literary intertextuality as a model of referentiality in which references to the world and to another text mix as a result of creatively rewriting the past as a procedure per se, foregrounding the ways in which „earlier texts are rewritten, re-encoded, buried in order to be resurrected.” (42). Any anxieties of authorship seem to be transcended in the novelists’ attempt to purposefully reconstruct a traditional narrative through „rewriting the past, ‚mythic value’,

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hidden stories' of a certain culture"(39) in the light of present perceptions and contexts, an approach that allows them to critically recover historicity by putting facts and lives together.

The author's research targets at a re-reading of the work of major post/modern American writers (E.L.Doctorow, Paul Auster, Robert Coover, or Ishmael Reed) in his attempt to demonstrate how the inevitable incorporation and cultural reproduction of texts, meanings, symbols operates at different levels in their texts, as identified by readers in a number of „allusions, references, paraphrases, or unacknowledged quotes" (79), foregrounded in some writings.

There seems to be a constant concern for this kind of „revisionist narration of canonical works, (...) a defining mode of postmodern writers"(88) as proven by the Hogarth Shakespeare Project, an experiment by which the British publishing house Hogarth Press commissioned, according to electronic information (Wikipedia) important writers (among them being Jeanette Winterson, Margaret Atwood, Tracy Chevalier) to select and retell works by William Shakespeare, re-imagining the old plays and characters, often re-plotting the newly provided texts. If „only literature gives reality its full dimension, at the same time allusive, lethal, unpredictable, marvellous, and widely open to interpretation", and if literature, along with the rest of the arts, is „just reality becoming aware of itself in its enigmatic, symbolic and secular activity" (Haddad, 2014: 319), then rewriting extant texts means redoing a particular socio-cultural textuality, impacting social formations (readers, critics among them), by de-coding and re-coding meanings, symbols, values.

Moraru's work overtly demonstrates his belief that rewriting is a „uniquely aesthetic performance as well as a means used to rebuild and relocate identity, assign its new position by raiding its former locales, disfiguring and re-figuring its previous social, racial, national, and cultural figuration" (Moraru, 2001: 173), and postmodern rewriting becomes a modality of „setting up –and straight- the cultural accounts of society, its memory, and its struggles."(174).

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Alex Michaelides: The Game of Concepts in *The Silent Patient*
Celadon Books, 2019

Heredea Ioana -Daniela¹

A new spectacular release has stunningly struck the literary stage with the best-seller *The Silent Patient*, wearing the signature of writer Alex Michaelides. The novel was originally published in 2019, and it was also translated in Romanian in 2019, being the first novel of the author. The thriller has received a very enthusiastic criticism at the time of its publication, gaining fame among the international and national readers. The novel's title is quite significant and relevant for a reader who is not familiar with medical terms, as it already anticipates a specific domain of subject. In the meanwhile, it helps the page-turner to become familiarised with the subject in course. The reader is invited to step up into the mysterious world of murders, investigations, recovery medical therapy and law.

The novel starts from the very beginning with the tragic end of a fashion photographer, Gabriel Berenson, who is killed by his own wife Alicia. One evening, her husband returns home late from a fashion shooting, a crucial moment when Alicia shoots him five times in the face, and then never speaks any word. It is by no means an arbitrary, value-free choice on the author's part to have the plot of his book triggered by the female protagonist Alicia Berenson, the famous painter who seems to have a perfect couple life. The unusual game between *end* and *beginning* is strongly related to every character and becomes an important theme along the novel. Therefore, the author provides the reader an interesting perspective on these concepts, highlighting the fact that every term can "suffer" a new meaning. What seems to be the end for Gabriel starts to be an unusual beginning for the protagonist, Alicia, and even for the other characters. Her life is primarily changed by the powerful emotional shock she suffers after the murder.

Not only her social mood and life are affected, but she somehow reborns within. Of course, an unusual reborn, as her medical condition is considered to be so severe, that media, medical stuff and people call her crazy. Her emotional struggles, hidden in her soul since childhood, come back to life as a monster when she discovers the harsh truth about her husband's affair

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with another married woman. The emotional collapse is so dangerous for the protagonist, that she relives painful memories from the past as a screen before her eyes. All the unconscious bonds of her pain are now recognized and convicted by the supreme act of revenge on her past: the death of Gabriel. The reader should be aware that the entire dramatic incident is just the final drop from a full cup of a painful past; the murder itself represents the final inner shout from Alicia's hurt soul. Alicia's reborn happens in the moment of murder, because so far she considered herself a dead person. Interestingly, her husband's death makes her feel she is finally alive, untied from the heavy past she bore so many years.

The author constructs the entire plot of the novel by using the general theme of love and alienation, combining it with the suspense. In this way, the common understanding of love receives a modern meaning. By reading the entire novel, the page-turner will find some answers for the following questions: is love strong enough to kill the beloved one? What means to love and also to turn the back to all the pleasant memories? If you kill your past, will you reborn? What if loving yourself does not mean being egocentric, but rather being a guardian of your heart? But the most important: how is to feel like a stranger in a crowd? Could solitude really heal someone from alienation?

Beyond all these, what makes the thriller so spectacular is the overwhelming suspense which envelops every page of the book. Here, the silence is not silence, as every part of the characters' behaviors and events provide full expression of hidden thoughts, desires, struggles, and self affirmation. Alicia Berenson should not be considered a silent patient, as the game of meaning is present again. However, please note that Alicia is depicted as an antisocial patient, who will not use any word, as she will apparently hide her feelings. But the medical therapy will play a significant role in depicting a striking contrast, since her paintings made in the hospital will represent the pure evidence of her soul reality, which is transposed or brought to life. Among all the characters, her shouting soul is so noiseful that people pretend to rather tabulate her as a helpless victim of mental illness, without any possible regeneration, than seeking the complex and the true reality.

This game of concepts is described in Part One, which starts with the quote of Sigmund Freud: "He that has eyes to see and ears to hear may convince himself that no mortal can keep a secret. If his lips are silent, he chatters with his fingertips; betrayal oozes out of him at every pore." In Sigmund's perspective, every small gesture betrays the human feelings. Like in Alicia's situation, the words tend to receive a sacred meaning, as the character will start to communicate verbally with the psychotherapist Theo Faber only at the end of the book. Surprisingly, along the novel, every character experiences a specific fear to speak up and reveal information which is related to the committed murder of Gabriel. It seems that a word could rather condemn someone than bringing light during the investigations. This phenomenon is tightly linked to the entire complex process of medical therapy, which is performed by doctor Theo, another mysterious figure who

seems to appear at The Grove from nowhere, and shows a sudden interest in Alicia's case.

The fearful silence and the mysterious lives of characters give a sweet taste to the thriller. In the middle of medical investigations and therapy, Theo goes beyond his professional limits and creates a full agenda of interrogations, involving even the police at some point. What makes the novel to be considered a psychologist writing is the author's affinity for the medical and the investigation fields. The medical terms are presented and explained in an accessible way so that the reader would not get lost in the sea of unknown, but keep every page closer and closer. The author's aim is to let the reader become dependent on every next page which will be turned. While turning the pages, the reader will develop a honest desire to discover what's next in the mystery of the entire novel.

The artistic field is also not neglected, as the author depicts a different world: the art and the way it helps you survive in a painful world. Until the murder, Alicia's paintings were previously a source of attraction for the public, but after the dramatic incident, the public's eye has showed a hysterical interest for her works. Alicia's new image as a killer changed the public's impressions about her, therefore the museum has gathered crowds of people just for curious eyes, not necessary for art lovers. The fatal murder still represents a turning point for Alicia's artistic work, as she is closed in The Grove, being kept away from breathing with her soul while painting. After several years, when Alicia didn't touch any painting tool, she is eventually given a chance to mental recovery by art therapy, whose results will astonish the medical specialists.

Alcestis should not be omitted, as this is the most important painting of Alicia. Being finished just before Gabriel's death, this painting reveals a hidden inner world of the protagonist. All her fears and struggles were put visually on the canvas, allowing the public see her naked body and soul. By using the title *Alcestis*, the writer makes reference to the Greek mythology and its ethical implications, starting from the myth that the Greek heroine Alcestis experiences a love story of the saddest kind by unwillingly sacrificing her life in the favor of her husband, Admetus, and dying in his place. The ending of the play shows Heracle saving Alcestis from Hades' hands and bringing her back to Admetus, but her recovery is visible only after a few days. Alex Michaelides makes a complex parallel to Alicia's life and her inability to communicate after her husband's death.

The Silent Patient is a sum of sketches, separately depicted and analyzed, but also put together as a whole story of love, life and hope. The artistic writing talent of Alex Michaelides makes the entire novel a radiant jewellery for every reader's taste. The labyrinth of investigations, the introduction of reader in the complex medical world, but also the exploration of artistic painting itself are the vital elements for a successful novel which managed to touch even the most insensible readers' hearts.

Yamen Manai : *L'amas ardent*
Editions Elyzad, 2017

Florica Mateoc¹

Ecrivain francophone d'origine tunisienne, Yamen Manai publie en 2017 son troisième livre, *L'amas ardent*, pour lequel il remporte le « Prix des cinq continents de la francophonie ». S'y ajoutent, *La marche de l'incertitude* (2010) et deux autres prix « Coma d'or » à Tunis et le Prix du roman métis à La Réunion. Tout comme les deux autres romans *La sérénade d'Ibrahim Santos* (2011), *L'amas ardent* a paru à la maison d'édition tunisienne Elyzad et il est inspiré de ses voyages en Tunisie, après le Printemps arabe.

Très ancré dans l'Histoire, Yamen Manai se penche sur la réalité sociale et politique de son pays natal, sur les transformations qui ont lieu après la Révolution de 2011. Son projet a été de les transférer dans une œuvre de fiction, le roman *L'amas ardent*. Ce livre se rapproche, par son contenu et par sa forme, de trois genres littéraires : conte, fable politique et fable écologique. Il l'est à tour de rôle par la variété des faits présentés et le pouvoir imaginaire de l'écrivain, par la fiction utilisée pour faire passer un message politique et par la mise en évidence de la nature environnante. Dans toutes les situations, l'écrivain se propose de surprendre le lecteur, en l'amenant à réfléchir sur les valeurs humaines et sur la marche du monde, sur la prolifération du mal.

Le livre est structuré en six chapitres portant des noms qui font référence au contenu respectif : *Le Chaos*, *La discorde*, *La confusion*, *En aparté*, *La bureaucratie* et *l'Aftermath*. Des sous-chapitres historiques alternent avec ceux fictionnels. L'Histoire du pays natal se mêle à des séquences historiques venant des pays arabes voisins ou des régions très éloignées, voire l'Extrême-Orient. L'écrivain remonte dans les temps anciens et dresse une courte histoire de ce pays qui a éveillé la convoitise d'autres peuples et qui en a été conquis plusieurs fois. Une énumération relève chronologiquement les Phéniciens, les Romains, les Vandales, les Byzantins, les Arabes, les Turcs et les Français qui l'ont transformé en colonie.

On ne donne nulle part des indications précises concernant la dimension spatiale et temporelle du roman. Cependant, dès la première page on peut deviner qu'il s'agit de la Tunisie car le yacht luxueux du prince du Qafar qui traversait la Méditerranée devrait arriver au rocher de Sidi Bou. L'action du roman ne suit pas un ordre chronologique, le narrateur faisant

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beaucoup de digressions et donnant des explications de toute sorte, des fois très précises, comme celles qui visent la vie des abeilles.

Yamen Manai se concentre sur les conséquences de la Révolution, notamment après l'émergence du mouvement islamiste et la pénétration des terroristes dans le paysage national. Il dévoile les forces occultes formées d'Emirs, d'hommes d'affaires, de chefs islamistes du lieu qui veulent profiter de la nouvelle situation géopolitique. On apprend tout cela dès la scène inaugurale du premier sous-chapitre qui décrit l'atmosphère sur un yacht luxueux en Méditerranée où l'argent, les drogues, les boissons, le sexe et des personnages douteux renvoient à un roman d'espionnage. Avant d'arriver sur la côte tunisienne, le prince avait rencontré Silvio Canneloni (allias Berlusconi) en Sardaigne, pour parler affaire. Deux hommes politiques influents dont l'écrivain énumère les rôles multiples joués dans la vie de tous les jours : présidents de compagnies de médias et de télécommunications et propriétaires de clubs de football européens. En dehors des discussions sur le football, ils entament le sujet du complot pour liquider Mamar, dont l'argent pourrait servir à Silvio en contrepartie de son aide. Ils veulent transmettre partout, en Orient et en Occident, le message que seul le renversement du tyran Mamar peut rendre la liberté aux bédouins. Le plan d'attaque est dressé, tout devrait se passer depuis le bateau. L'auteur donne des explications et des détails sur la forte position politique du prince et sur la prospérité économique de son petit pays. Yamen Manai se montre un bon connaisseur de la réalité présente de ce pays qui se réjouit d'une civilisation éclatante. En plus, il dévoile ses tentatives d'hégémonie sur les pays voisins plus fragiles et plus pauvres.

Le Pouvoir conféré par sa richesse le pousse à penser que tout peut être conquis et le contexte socio-politique de la Tunisie lui était favorable. Il s'est proposé à financer le parti de Dieu qui avait de grandes chances à se hisser au Pouvoir pendant les élections libres post révolutionnaires. C'est un parti religieux, fanatique qui prêche la terreur et le crime contre ceux qui n'y croient pas ; et tout cela au nom d'une vie d'au-delà, dans le Paradis. Parti clandestin pour longtemps, il gagne du terrain et c'est pourquoi il veut profiter de l'ignorance des gens et de leur pauvreté pour leur offrir en guise de subvention des biens de toute sorte. Le chaos règne dans la vie politique puisqu'une soixantaine de partis politiques créés récemment aspirent au Pouvoir.

Sur ce cadre inspiré de la réalité, l'auteur insère une fable : dans un village appelé Nawa, situé dans l'arrière-pays, les ruches d'un apiculteur, nommé Don, sont saccagées par une étrange espèce de frelons géants. Les gens vivent près de la nature, loin de la civilisation moderne : sans eau courante, sans électricité, sans école, sans infirmerie. La presse écrite n'arrive jamais à Nawa et d'ailleurs, les gens étaient illettrés, ils ne sont pas au courant des événements politiques. Choisir librement leur dirigeant leur semble quelque chose d'incroyable car, la majorité n'a pas eu le droit de choisir son conjoint. Allusion à la mentalité du pays concernant les mariages arrangés, la soumission à la belle-mère et des contraintes de toute sorte. Ils

ne possèdent aucun élément de culture politique de sorte qu'ils ne savent même pas qu'ils forment le peuple à côté des autres Tunisiens.

Peu de personnages sont individualisés parmi les villageois, excepté Don qui se trouve au centre du récit et quelques personnes dont le sort va changer après les élections. Les deux jeunes hommes Toumi et Douda sont deux amis d'enfance illettrés mais bons joueurs aux cartes : « deux enfoirés qui n'ont rien et qui ne servent à rien ». (p. 38). Toumi finira par rejoindre les membres du parti de Dieu qui veulent maîtriser la vie du village. Il faut nommer aussi l'épicière Douja, une « pipellette » qui possédait toutes les nouvelles du village et se plaisait à les transmettre et à en faire des commentaires.

Don est un apiculteur singulier, un homme simple mais très sage. Il vit un amour fusionnel avec ses abeilles qu'il appelle « ses filles » et pour lesquelles il est capable de tout sacrifice. Il mène une vie d'ascète dans une maison isolée, située sur une colline fleurie, au milieu de la nature qu'il aimait intensément : « Ses filles. C'est ainsi qu'il appelait ses abeilles. Tout Nawa le savait et connaissait l'amour qu'il leur vouait. A l'heure des récoltes, les villageois pouvaient mesurer cette passion et s'en délecter après avoir pointé chez le Don au chant du coq pour chercher leurs pots de miel. L'environnement était idéal et un tel nectar était la juste récompense de cette harmonie entre l'homme et la nature. » (p. 25). Quoique Le Don soit un taciturne, il communique très bien avec Staka, sa mule et avec ses abeilles qui produisent « le miel divin » (p. 26) animant tout le village à la période de la pollinisation. Les lignes qui les décrivent sont pleines de poésie, trahissant la sensibilité de l'écrivain et ses connaissances sur ces insectes miraculeux.

Lorsque le Don trouve ses ruches décimées, trente mille abeilles massacrées et tout le miel disparu, il les pleure mais il ne cède pas à la douleur. Courageux et digne, il se donne de la peine et découvre les auteurs du massacre ; ce sont des frelons géants que son expérience d'apiculteur n'a jamais rencontrés. Très déterminé, il se propose de trouver des renseignements sur ces insectes étranges pour défendre ses abeilles de nouvelles attaques.

Cette histoire dramatique est reliée au changement de l'atmosphère dans le village où vient la première caravane électorale qui le fait sortir de son sommeil ; les femmes se voilent de noir et les hommes portent des tuniques noires aussi. La générosité des prêcheurs du parti a conquis ces gens démunis qui, le jour du vote, vont cocher le pigeon, le signe électoral du parti de Dieu. Dans le chapitre « *La confusion* », le lecteur apprend les méthodes des leaders musulmans de même que leur discours pour les convaincre de les voter. Ce n'est qu'une religion de pacotille telle que l'a comprise dans sa jeunesse l'apiculteur Don, après ses expériences inoubliables en Arabie Saoudite. Il découvre là-bas la vérité sur cette religion et sur leurs soi-disant pratiquants, les princes héritiers avec leurs orgies et leur luxe qui n'avaient rien à faire avec les valeurs morales d'une vraie religion. Le « miel divin » de Don devient pour ces gens « le miel pervers » dans leurs fêtes où règnent la perversion et l'obscénité.

Tout comme dans l'action d'un conte, les personnages se rangent dans deux camps bien opposés : d'un côté les bons et de l'autre les méchants. Don, intelligent et courageux, ne se soumet à la nouvelle religion ni n'abandonne sa lutte pour dépister et détruire les ennemis de ses abeilles. Il fait un voyage jusqu'à Tunis cherchant remède au mal qui a frappé ses abeilles. Ce sont sa nièce Janett et son mari, Tahar, le doyen de la Faculté des Lettres qui vont l'aider dans sa démarche. C'est une bonne occasion pour l'écrivain de décrire des images de la capitale qui n'a plus rien de son charme d'autrefois. Partout il règne le gris, la saleté, les barbelés encerclant les places publiques, les blindés de l'armée placés par endroits, les figures tristes des gens, les inscriptions mélangées : « Liberté au peuplé ! mais aussi « Que le royaume de Dieu advienne ! (p. 147).

Après avoir fait une vraie recherche dans les encyclopédies de la bibliothèque, Tahar et Janett découvrent des informations sur l'insecte étrange. La solution pour s'en sauver se trouve très loin, à l'Extrême Orient, à savoir au Japon où vivent des abeilles qui se défendent toutes seules des frelons gigantesques. Elles se ruent sur le frelon et l'encerclent formant une boule autour de lui. C'est ce que l'écrivain appelle « l'amas ardent ». Il précise d'ailleurs dans un entretien que ce n'est pas un concept scientifique mais une métaphore, une invention poétique qui donne aussi le titre du roman. Les deux personnages se rendent au Japon pour apporter quelques exemplaires de ces abeilles que Don puisse adapter à ses ruches.

Pourquoi le Japon ? C'est une bonne occasion pour l'écrivain de relier les événements de Tunisie à d'autres qui se sont passés dans des coins éloignés de la planète. De montrer, en plus, les différences de mentalité et d'attitude des deux peuples devant le désastre. Il s'agit toujours de l'année 2011, à la même époque que le Printemps arabe, lorsque la centrale nucléaire de Fukushima a explosé après un terrible tsunami. Se guidant sur la devise que « la vie doit continuer », les Nippons témoignent du courage, de la dignité, de la solidarité, de la discipline et de l'optimisme. Aucune trace de résignation ou de fatalisme. En opposition avec les images de la capitale tunisienne, on voit la civilisation moderne de Tokyo mêlée harmonieusement à la tradition. Une capitale reconstruite après les terribles bombardements à l'aide de la philosophie de vie de ces gens que Yamen Manai nous fait connaître : « comme nos abeilles qui doivent coexister avec les frelons géants, nous sommes un peuple qui doit coexister avec les failles de la terre : séismes, tsunamis, éruptions de volcans... Nous savons que notre existence est fragile et qu'il nous faut toujours reconstruire avec les survivants. (p. 196)

On sait bien que dans le conte les méchants sont punis ; c'est ce qui arrive vers la fin de l'action lorsque le Don libère les frelons qu'il avait dénichés pour se venger contre la cruauté et le massacre de la katiba terroriste. Il croit au vrai Dieu, à sa bonté et à son aide pour sauver ses abeilles et pour mener une vie tranquille près de la nature. « Il reprit le chemin du village, maudissant dans son cœur l'émir, sa katiba, tous les assassins et les marchands de guerres qui prostituaient Dieu à leurs fins. Ce Dieu qui, par la douceur de ses abeilles, arrivait encore à le consoler de la cruauté des hommes

» (p. 233).

Yamen Manai se montre dans ce roman un écrivain courageux et engagé. Il critique et condamne le fanatisme et la corruption. Comme il le dit dans un entretien, la ruche attaquée se présente comme une salle de spectacle où l'on peut aussi attaquer. En fait, les actes terroristes commis en novembre 2015 à la salle Bataclan de Paris l'ont inquiété et rendu malade mais l'ont provoqué, à la fois, d'agir pour trouver des solutions. Oriental de formation, il a pris de la littérature arabe l'allégorie et la poésie pour transmettre son message.

Par sa formation scientifique d'ingénieur dans les nouvelles technologies, l'écrivain pense que le monde est ordonné et non pas chaotique. Même si dans notre temps, il est dérégulé sous plusieurs aspects, le message transmis par Yamen Manai est qu'il faut lutter pour le respect de la liberté, contre l'ignorance et la pauvreté, tout en croyant à la solidarité et à la tolérance.

Tara Westover: *Educated: A Memoir*
Random House, 2018

Mădălina Pantea¹

Tara Westover is an American writer and historian, the youngest of seven children born in Clifton, Idaho, whose parents guided through life by survivalist ideas which meant that they did not trust doctors, hospitals, public schools or the federal government. Consequently, Tara did not benefit from any social aid until later in life. She was nine years old when she received a birth certificate. According to her *Memoir*, she learnt how to read from an older brother and then studied independently and bought books to pass the ACT exam and get admitted to University (Brigham Young University), a turning moment in her entire life.

Her story, astonishing as it is, is barely another entry in the subgenre of extreme American life, mostly because of the uncommon perceptiveness of the person telling it. Westover takes a look at her childhood with intriguing clarity, with curiosity and love, even for those who have seriously affected and put a mark on her. It is, in a way, a book about being a stranger in a strange land; Westover, now at university, can't stop herself from missing her mountain home. In fact, her subject is memory. Westover is attentive to remark the differences between her own memories and those of her relatives. She tries to understand and respect those whom she had to escape from in order to get free.

Another breakthrough moment the author shares with the readers is the feminist approach which can place this *Memoir* in another subgenre category so debated and acquiring such force in this century:

I carried the books to my room and read through the night. I loved the fiery pages of Mary Wollstonecraft, but there was a single line written by John Stuart Mill that, when I read it, moved the world: "It is a subject on which nothing final can be known." The subject Mill had in mind was the nature of women. Mill claimed that women have been coaxed, cajoled, shoved and squashed into a series of feminine contortions for so many centuries, that it is now quite impossible to define their natural abilities or aspirations. Blood rushed to my brain; I felt an animating surge of adrenaline, of possibility, of a frontier being pushed outward. Of the nature of women, nothing final can be known. Never had I found such comfort in a void, in the black absence of

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knowledge. It seemed to say: whatever you are, you are woman.

Life stories such as Tara Westover's force us to remember that we are privileged to enjoy education, chances, and the real meaning of diversity. The story of this young woman and her family is just one of many who lived through hardships, be them economic, with limited education, and mental illness. Such stories should be published as they are the stories that need to be heard. Educated is troubling at times, but there are also incredibly tender moments of a brother leaving behind a beloved choir music CD for a sister, and her studying at a borrowed desk working toward her education. It is a story that encourages profound reflection in each of us as to how we become who we are once we step outside the shadows of family.

This review favourizes Tara Westover's determination and hard work. She had no formal education but managed to study and qualify to go to college. She struggles so much and in the end, is admitted to Cambridge. Her transformation shows the great determination that she had in which she tried to establish all that lay within her capacity. The author had a strong will to follow through her studies. This made her develop a more in-depth interaction with the world around her. It also helped her identify who was important in her life and, therefore, establish ways in which she would interact with them to achieve more success. I believe Westover's story is worth both sharing and reading. I also think her background sends a strong message about the United States. Even in a country like the United States where there is a great opportunity, one can grow up with no idea of how the world away from her home looks like.

This memoir is a true survival story a girl's victory in becoming herself despite being wronged and abused. This quote from the book summarizes Tara's journey, "I am not the child my father raised, but he is the father who raised her." -Tara Westover

The Blurring of the Public/Private Boundary in Anna Burns's *Milkman*

Anna Burns: *Milkman*. London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 2018

Éva Székely¹

Anna Burns's award-winning novel: *Milkman*, winner of the 2018 Man Booker Prize for fiction, is a novel inspired by the Northern Irish conflict during the 1970s. The book mediates the period of political violence through the stream of consciousness narrative of an 18-year-old girl, who is pursued unscrupulously by a middle-aged paramilitary. It is the tale of an ethnically divided community obsessed with group loyalty and vigilant for members who do not behave as they are expected to.

Anna Burns (b. 1965) is a 21st c. Irish Catholic authoress, born and educated in Belfast (Northern Ireland), who garnered critical attention with her debut novel *No Bones* (2001) about the Troubles, the conflict between the Catholics and the Protestants in Northern Ireland. The novel won the 2001 Winifred Holtby Prize for the best regional novel of the year. *No Bones* is a meritorious novel that has been compared to James Joyce's *Dubliners*, the authoress being praised for her successful rendering of the Anglo-Irish idiom spoken in contemporary Belfast. Her second novel: *Little Constructions* (2007), which is no less dark than her first novel, tackles taboo topics such as murder, torture, infidelity, rape, incest etc.

Milkman (2018) is the work of a mature writer in full control of the writer's toolbox: character, plot and language. In this novel, Anna Burns returns to the theme of *No Bones*, and produces a masterpiece: this time an atmospheric novel inspired once again by the conflict between the Catholics and the Protestants in Belfast. It must be emphasized, however, that, unlike *No Bones*, *Milkman* is not a historical novel. *Milkman* does not retell facts or refer to specific, documented events, nor does it name the geographic space that serves as the setting of the plot. Likewise, it does not focus on the conflict between the two adversary communities. The conflict between *us* (the Catholics) and *them* (the Protestants) serves only as the backdrop to the major conflict of the novel: the interior conflicts within an isolated, fear-ridden community. The novel presents us how this community (which could be any community in the world) responds to the problem of living in a

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permanent battlefield, how the fact of living in constant fear breeds monsters within, and how a community turns in on itself and eventually becomes its own worst enemy.

For most people private space is where they can take refuge from the outside world to relax, to make sense of the universe, or to feel in control. In *Milkman*, which presents the reader with a war and identity-obsessed community, group loyalty is paramount. The space inhabited by this community, public and private alike, is a place where any choice (however commonplace), gesture, facial expression is interpreted as a political statement. The boundary between public and private is, therefore, blurred as the private choices of individuals become a matter of public interest.

There was food and drink. The right butter. The wrong butter. The tea of allegiance. The tea of betrayal. There were 'our shops' and 'their shops'. Placenames. What school you went to. What prayers you said. What hymns you sang. How you pronounced your 'haitch' or 'aitch'. Where you went to work. And of course there were bus-stops. There was the fact that you created a political statement everywhere you went, and with everything you did, even if you didn't want to. There was a person's appearance also, because it was believed you could tell 'their sort from over the road' from 'your sort this side of the road' by the very physical form of a person. There was choice of murals, of traditions, of newspapers, of anthems, of 'special days', of passport, of coinage, of the police, of civic powers, of the soldiery, the paramilitary." (Burns, 25)

Under such circumstances the only private realm that an individual has access to is the recesses of his/her own mind: "you had to go around not being anything; also not thinking, least not at top level, which was why everybody kept their private thoughts safe and sound in those recesses underneath." (Burns, 54)

The setting of the novel is a divided space, a permanent battlefield, a liminal space: divided into their side of the road (or that side of the road, over the road, over the water) and our side of the road (our district, this side of the road). The novel focuses on what it names 'our side' only, "our intricately coiled, overly secretive, hyper-gossipy, puritanical yet indecent, totalitarian district" (Burns 65).

The dividedness of the space is reflected by the way in which the novel groups characters. There is *them*: the enemy: defenders-of the- state, the government, the police, soldiers, people wearing uniforms: doctors, gas workers etc., and *us*: the dark people, people living in constant fear. Yet we do not see the actual conflict between the two groups. In the novel, there are no violent scenes involving the enemy. The focus of the story is only on the internal conflicts of *us*.

The community of *us* involves various groups of people representing various ways of responses to the setting and the situation they find themselves in: There are the renouncers of the state, which are people, mainly males, that are part of a paramilitary group. Allegedly, the renouncers of the state defend

the community from *them*: 'the enemy', but in reality they spend most of their time trying to control and tyrannize the people they purport to defend. Then there are the Groupies: power hungry young women that attach themselves to the renouncers. They frequent the places where they can meet the renouncers and think themselves superior to everyone else. The most numerous group is that of the Johns and Maries who are civilians, non-renouncers. What connects them is their way of dealing with the constant terror and fear, and the intrusion on and violation of their privacy. They all detach themselves from the outside reality by focusing on a hobby (running, collecting car parts, cooking, and religion) and ignoring the atrocities that surround them. They are the novel's anti-heroes, who dislike both the enemy and the renouncers. They know what is wrong with the community, they know what they should do but choose to stay passive. Fourthly, there are the traitors and informers: despised and severely punished, and also banished from the community. And, last but not least, there are the 'beyond the pales' who are ostracized within and verbally abused by everyone. They include the shiny people (people that are able to experience happiness, and stand up for themselves and for others), homosexuals, feminists, informer-type people (but not proven informers), and weirdos. Actually anyone who resists to live by the very strict rules of the community of *us* becomes 'beyond the pale'.

The narrator of the story: middle sister (or 'maybe girlfriend') who is pursued unscrupulously by Milkman, the middle-aged paramilitary, belongs to the 'beyond the pales' for the simple reason that she tries to distance herself from the conflict by boldly and openly not paying attention. She walks the streets reading 19th c. books and refuses to look out for possible sources of danger, such as bombs. She also does not have a name. Actually, the characters of the novel haven't got names, except for the villain renouncer: Milkman. Individuality is erased in this community. What matters is the type of relation that exists between various members of the community.

As the story is presented from the point of view of a teenage girl, the type of relationships the novel focuses on are family relationships and friendships. Middle sister comes from a big family (comprised of a widowed mother, six sisters, three brothers, three brothers-in-law, and two sisters-in-law. None of these characters have names.). She is also involved in an on-again-off-again relationship with 'maybe boyfriend', who is a bisexual car mechanic involved in a homosexual relationship with a young man: Chef, with whom he shares an apartment.

Settings and characters are mutually constitutive in this novel. For instance, the Ten Minute area, which is on the outskirts of Downtown, the part of the town that belongs to the other side: is an eerie abandoned area with three unused churches, four shops without customers, a bus stop where no one is waiting for the bus etc. Nobody can account for the eeriness of the place, but some horrific event from the past long forgotten and the dark mood and pessimism of the people in general turns it into a haunted place.

'What is the provenance of the eeriness of the ten-minute area?' I asked ma once.

'You ask peculiar questions, daughter,' ma replied. (...) she said she didn't know, but that always that ten-minute area had been a strange, eerie, grey place, that even in her mother's day, in her grandmother's day, in antebellum days – had there been any – still it had been an eerie, grey place, a place attempting perhaps to transcend some dark, evil happening without managing to transcend it and instead succumbing to it, giving in to it, coming to want it, to wallow in it, even, in fact, deteriorating so far in character as to feel a great need for it, dragging down too, she said, neighbouring places along with it when who knows? – she shrugged – there mayn't have been anything evil that happened in it in the first place. 'Some locations are just stuck,' said ma. 'And deluded. Like some people.' (Burns 93)

Another good example is the home of Middle sister. When Middle sister, who is stressed out by the fact that she is constantly stalked by Milkman, experiences her home as if it were haunted by ghosts, her family shares her surreal experience as well.

The house too, was having a go. Raps, noises, movements, agitations of the air, displacement of objects. It was banging and retorting and causing discordance – all to berate me, to warn me, to call attention to the threat that already I knew was surrounding me. And always this would be in my bedroom right in the middle of the night. (...). Ma shouted from her room, 'For the love of God, littlest daughters, I'm trying to have a night's reading here before sleep. What's all that banging?', with wee sisters shouting from their room, 'It's not us, mammy! We're sleeping. It's middle sister.' 'It's not me!' I shouted. 'It's the house. The spirits of the house. I'm sleeping too.' (Burns: 123)

In conclusion, *Milkman* by Anna Burns is an atmospheric novel that focuses on the experience of a community stuck in a permanent liminal situation (ethnic war), into a liminal space (a permanent battlefield). All the characters are in a limbo living in constant fear of death, and of loss. The liminality of their experience is reflected not only at the level of the setting and character but also at the level of the plot. The plot of the novel has an episodic structure, in which present events are pinned between flashbacks and flash forwards. Likewise, syntax, sentences are seemingly interminable: full stops are avoided. Paragraphs run for pages. In spite of these, the novel makes a pleasant and extremely rewarding read, which testifies not only to Anna Burns's talent of creating memorable characters but also to her linguistic craftsmanship.

David Bentley Hart, *Atheist Delusions. The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies*

Doxologia, Iași, 2017.

Florin Toader Tomoioagă¹

David Bentley Hart, one of the best contemporary Orthodox authors in the field of Apologetics, defends in this book the Christian contribution to the welfare of society against some widely spread stereotypes. He understands that Christianity resists or fails as a whole and this is why he prefers to address these stereotypes not in a confessional manner, but in an ecumenical way. The nuances and differences between various Christian confessions are secondary here, because the contemporary challenges they confront with are the same: secularism, atheism, an aggressive propaganda that stresses their negative impact over time.

What is remarkable about this author is his intellectual honesty. His Apologetics is not gratuitous because the author listens with care, understanding the arguments of those accusing Christianity. The seventeen chapters that form the book are a permanent dialogue between Christianity and paganism, accusers and defenders, between past and present, culture and science, ethics and philosophy and so on. There are innumerable topics that are uncomfortable for the Christian conscience and Church, all of them approached by the author with openness, critical spirit and honesty. Thus, one by one, historical events that usually are interpreted as unfavorable to the faith are being analyzed starting with their social, religious and philosophical roots. David B. Hart successfully demonstrates that the Crusades, the Inquisition, the European religious wars are not the fruits of the Gospel but are contrary to its spirit.

In the author's vision, the Church has alienated of its truth and loving spirit each time it used violence and persecution as means of imposing its creeds and interests on people. This alienation started from the 4th Century, when persecution against the Christian Church stopped and the followers of Constantine the Great offered its clergy privileges, social status and wealth. In its essence, the Christian ethos was revolutionary at all levels: a revolution of thought and vision upon society, human being, good and bad, the relationship with divinity.

Jesus Christ, the founder of the Church, imprinted this revolutionary

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spirit to His followers. He reverted the pyramidal way the society was conceived in His time. The most powerful were on its top, the weakest and the vulnerable at its basis. The worldly and unjust authorities, with their strict hierarchy, were contradicted by God through the Resurrection of His Son. Instead of a hierarchy of domination, the primary Church cultivated a hierarchy in which the most powerful members served their weaker and vulnerable brothers. As a consequence, the pagan Roman and Greek society were completely transformed. In time, the fights between gladiators, the crucifixion as a method of punishment, the cruel treatment of the slaves were abolished. Of course, this did not happen overnight, but the Christian message was always present in society and determined changes without precedence in world history. The care for the sick, the orphans, the poor and other vulnerable groups of society spread from the vision of a loving God. This is why, Emperor Julian (361-363), trying to revitalize the dying paganism of his time, had in mind the Christian models of virtue, goodness and love.

Reflecting on the religious and social frame of the Antiquity, David B. Hart notices that Christianity nourished the best aspirations and expectations of the human being. It is simultaneously a breaking and continuity with the past. For example, it freed the human being from the powers of nature symbolized by the ancient gods. Nature was depleted of sacred and recognized as creation. The stars, the sun, the moon and the planets were not controlled by deities and spirits but were part of the nature. As such, human life was not controlled by them and, consequently, the old belief in destiny or fate (the Greek *moira*) was abolished. The monotheism required by the Platonic philosophy was well established and the ambivalent image of the Deity, which could be cruel, immoral and good in the same time, was substituted by the model of a loving God.

One of the stereotypes addressing the Church is that it stopped the advancement of the science. Using arguments from the history of science, David B. Hart proves that the Greek scientific progress was in decline around the 2nd Century B.C. and its decline reached its peak around 2nd Century A.C (p. 95). Christian thinking did not brutally interrupt a linear evolution of science! On the contrary, it continued to promote the education, especially that of the clergy. In its schools and monasteries, it protected the intellectual accomplishments of the past and transmitted them to the new generations. The conflict between science and religion is a modern myth. Even in the famous case of Galileo Galilei, widely discussed in the book (p. 91-94), the Church acted as a benefactor of the physicist and his process was more a conflict between his personality and that of pope Urban VIII, aggravated by unhappy circumstances. Nevertheless, the accomplishments of Galileo (1564-1642), Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) and Isaac Newton (1643-1727) did not appear out of nothing, but after centuries of evolution of thought inside the Christian world.

Many pages are dedicated to the polemic with contemporary scientists that attack religion, especially Christianity, for its wrongly presupposed anti-scientific spirit. Daniel Dennett and Richard Dawkins are frequently quoted

and contradicted. The last one doesn't recognize the limits of science and its field of competences. According to David Bentley Hart, without the minimum philosophical education, no scientist can express metaphysical judgments. The field of science is limited to the physical world, while religion and theology can properly address issues that transcend it. What the militant atheists of the scientific wing attack is not religion, nor Christianity. It is its caricature. They are not able to enter in an open dialogue with the most valuable sources of the Christian West and East, of its millennial tradition.

A consequence of atheism is the nihilism that sizes large parts of society. In the absence of a frame story for the human life, as the one offered by Christianity, human being ends in ethical relativism, which destroys the old moral values and substitutes them with the personal preference, with each one's will. Personal will and freedom becomes an idol/ a deity which, like the old ones, must be fed and served!

There is no objective truth and each individual, according to his or her will, may opt for one, in a post-Christian society. Those accusing the violence, the intolerance, the intellectual interdictions existent in the former centuries consider, in an Illuminist manner, that the progress in knowledge, tolerance, peacefulness, and care for the marginalized people of society and so on is a linear process in the history. Therefore, according to them, if Christianity is removed from society (with all the restrictions traditionally associated with it), the people will become more civilized, benevolent and carrying. David B. Hart asks who can guarantee for this. How can we be sure that things will not evolve in a different direction and violence, the dominance of the most powerful over the weak will not become the rule in society? There are already signs of this process: the infanticide as a right of the parents, proposed by some relativist ethicists (Peter Singer, p. 77) or a new racism manifested in the work of some philosophers, like Joseph Fletcher (p. 276) which sustained obligatory abortion in order to improve the quality of human species. In this context, Nietzsche's cry is interpreted as a premonitory signal.

It is worth noting author's humor and irony, even when dealing with the most serious topics. For example, he stresses that the great scientists, like Copernicus, do not appear out of nothing, 'like Athens from Zeus's head' (p. 85), but in a step by step evolution of science and related to the former scientists. David B. Hart 'envies' Jacques Le Goff, the writer of *Medieval Civilization 400-1500*, for his capacity to read the hearts of people that disappeared centuries ago and to see reasons hidden even for themselves, when Le Goff treats the attitude of Christian medieval toward the pariah.

The book rewards the reader with many interesting and beautiful pages about the Christian past and with deep reflections regarding the Christian contribution to the culture, ethics and welfare of contemporary society. It also represents an honest defense for Christianity, after listening to both sides, the accusers and the apologists, and finally it helps the Christians to find themselves a right place in a secularized, nihilist and postmodern society.

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Next Issue's Topic:

Silence
in Literature and Culture

*Thématique du prochain
numéro:*

Le silence
dans la Littérature et Culture

2021 Issue's Topic:

Love
in Modern and Postmodern
Literature

Thématique 2021:

L'amour
dans la littérature moderne et
postmoderne

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

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

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

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The administration of the peer-review process is the attribution of the journal's editors that are selected from the members of the advisory board. The sender of the manuscript does not know the names of the reviewers of his/her particular case, only the complete list of reviewers. *Confluences*, les Annales de l'Université d'Oradea, Fascicule Littérature moderne, est une revue académique évaluée qui paraît une fois par an. Les directeurs exécutifs et le comité scientifique vont décider tout changement concernant la fréquence de la revue.

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

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Les dynamiques de la littérature, tendances
L'interconnexion de la littérature et de la culture
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Myths et auteurs postmodernes
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Fondation:

Comme revue de recherche, son commencement remonte loin, dans l'année académique 1966/1967, lorsque sous le nom de *Travaux scientifiques*, la section de la recherche académique a démarré à l'Université d'Oradea. En 1991, la revue a changé son nom et sa forme se fixant sur des sujets d'intérêt immédiat et sur des études approfondies, sur la culture, sur la littérature roumaine, sur la littérature comparée. En 2006 a paru *Confluences*, un Fascicule de littérature moderne incluant des recherches académiques littéraires en anglais, en français, en allemand et en italien. L'année 2012 la revue a été classifiée niveau C per le Ministère de l'Education et de la Recherche

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

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