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COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES***

***(RE)LECTURES DES ÉTUDES DE RÉCEPTION:
PERSPECTIVES COMPARATIVES***

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**“JE SUIS VOTRE VOIX EN ALLEMAGNE”:
Aimé Césaire and Janheinz Jahn’s *Und die Hunde schwiegen***

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Abstract: Aimé Césaire’s *Und die Hunde schwiegen* is the German version of Césaire’s first play, *Et les chiens se taisaient*, born out of a lyrical tragedy that the author published in his collection of poems *Les armes miraculeuses*. Césaire revised it at several stages to turn it into an actual play, especially through his collaboration with Janheinz Jahn, a German translator and scholar whose work was fundamental for the reception of Césaire and of almost all African and Caribbean writing in French and English in post-war Germany. In my article, I will analyze how the collaboration between Césaire and Jahn engendered a work with an authorship that is largely shared by two voices, Césaire’s and Jahn’s, influencing not only the German reception, but also the French reception of the work. Because of the quite intricate patterns of revision and rewriting that the text has undergone, and because of the equally complex comparisons with the previous, contemporary and following French versions of the text, I will treat the different chronological (and literary) stages of the work, to compare the German version of 1956 to the very different French version published in the same year, and the different paths followed by the two texts. This will allow us to reach a better understanding of the peculiar contrapuntal relationship between Césaire and Jahn, and of the reasons this relationship produced such fruitful results.

Keywords: Translation; Rewriting; Revision; Drama; Theatre; Aimé Césaire; Janheinz Jahn; Caribbean literature; Francophone literature; French-German.

N’oubliez pas : je suis votre voix en Allemagne.

Janheinz Jahn

Introduction

Aimé Césaire’s *Und die Hunde schwiegen* is the German version of Césaire’s first play, *Et les chiens se taisaient*, born out of a lyrical tragedy that the author published in his collection of poems *Les armes miraculeuses*. Césaire revised it at several stages to turn it into an actual play, especially through his collaboration with Janheinz Jahn, a German translator and scholar whose work was fundamental for the reception of Césaire and of almost all African and Caribbean writing in French and English in post-war Germany.

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In this article, I will analyse how the collaboration between Césaire and Jahn engendered a work with an authorship that is largely shared by two voices, Césaire's and Jahn's. To introduce the role of Janheinz Jahn in the reception of Césaire's drama, I will begin by introducing Jahn's initial exchanges with Césaire, to move then to a discussion of the controversial reception of Jahn's work both in Europe and outside of Europe. Because of the quite intricate patterns of revision and rewriting that the text has undergone, and because of the equally complex comparisons with the previous, contemporary and following French versions of the text, we need to analyse all these movements of the text, in order to reach a better understanding of the peculiar relationship between Césaire and Jahn, and of the reasons this relationship produced such fruitful results.

I. "Passionate but Controversial": The Reception of Jahn's Work

The German translator Janheinz Jahn first contacted Césaire to ask his permission to include his poetry in the anthology that he edited in 1954, *Schwarzer Orpheus: Moderne Dichtung Afrikanischer Völkerbeider Hemisphären*, whose title (meaning, 'Black Orpheus: Modern Poetry of African People of Both Hemispheres') is obviously derived from "Orphée noir", Jean-Paul Sartre's preface to the *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française*, edited by Senghor in 1948.

As Jahn makes very clear from his very first letter to the Martinican author, his intention was to make of Césaire's work the core of the anthology, specifying also that he had already translated several of his poems (Jahn 4/8/63).² Césaire replied very warmly to Jahn's request, giving his permission to the translator, with a letter that marked the beginning of this long and fruitful relationship (Césaire 17/10/53).

Before discussing Jahn's work with Césaire, however, it is quite important to discuss the figure of Jahn himself, who was quite a controversial scholar. Jahn's contribution to the field of African studies in Europe would be impossible to deny. Flora Veit-Wild and Anja Schwarz write that he was "one of those few and unique Europeans who played an eminent role in the formation of bridges between black cultures from all over the world and Western cultures, people who assisted in the development and promotion of African literatures in their home country" (Veit-Wild and Schwarz 27). However, they significantly define Jahn in their title as "passionate and controversial" (Veit-Wild and Schwarz 27),

² The correspondence between Janheinz Jahn and Aimé Césaire will be quoted from now citing only the name of the author and the exact date of the letter.

and both adjectives are in fact needed to define this multifaceted scholar, writer and translator, who did help to bridge the distance between Germany (and Europe in general) on the one hand, and African or Afro-American literatures and cultures on the other hand, but who also received harsh criticism both in Germany and in Africa for his work.

Jahn's *Muntu* is a perfect example of the controversial reception of his work. If on the one hand, Césaire has appreciated the work, and has said so not only in letters to Jahn, but also publicly, writing also the preface to the French edition of the work; on the other hand, Jahn's work has also attracted much criticism, as we can read in Chinua Achebe's amazement at the success of *Muntu* in the United States:

Janheinz Jahn came all the way from Frankfurt in the fifties and was bold enough to postulate theories as important as an African poetics in his *Muntu*. Even though we were inclined to be somewhat skeptical – even dismissed it here – I was surprised when I went to teach in the United States how popular, how useful the Black Americans seemed to find his *Muntu*. It seemed they were looking for a crystallization of the ideas of their blackness, and this German seemed to have filled the gap. Therefore one can never rule out the usefulness of such an exercise as writing a poetics of African literature. But this must be done by those who are inclined that way, who are qualified to do that kind of thing. The danger is to create a poetics which is based on somebody's wishful thinking rather than on the poetry of Africa. (Nwachukwu-Agbada 133)

It could be argued that the difference between Césaire's position on the one hand, and Achebe's position on the other hand, is implied in Achebe's words already, which draw a clear line of division among Africans and people of African descent in the Americas, and in this case Césaire could be considered (as has too often happened) as two of those Black Americans "looking for a crystallization of the ideas of their blackness" (Nwachukwu-Agbada 133), who found this work useful. As I said, however, Jahn's success and especially Jahn's influence on the study of what he defined 'Neo-African Literatures' (including both African literatures and literatures of the African diaspora) were not limited to the United States or to the Americas, in the same way that criticism of his works was not limited only to Africa.

Veit-Wild and Schwarz quote a passage from an article published by the Nigeria-based Gertrud Mander in the *Stuttgarter Zeitung* and significantly entitled "Africa is completely different":

Africa enthusiasts like Janheinz Jahn with his "desk-theories of neo-African culture" are very suspect here and give a false – because too general and speculative – idea of the

situation. In Africa there are at least as many cultural differences as in Europe, and you cannot ignore the European influences on the African continent. (Mander)

They also give a meaningful explanation of the reasons for which Jahn was asked by Ulli Beier not to be the co-editor of the journal of African and Afro-American literature *Black Orpheus* anymore, after they edited the first issues together:

A glance into Jahn's extensive correspondence with Beier, with whom he founded and edited the first issues of the journal *Black Orpheus*, reveals that Beier tried to explain to Jahn, why Jahn's position as co-editor of the journal was no longer desirable at the time of Nigeria's Independence in 1960 and the new Nigerian government's move to Nigeria's cultural life. Instead of limiting his role to analyzing and describing African literature – as would be appropriate – Jahn was perceived as imposing his views and trying to push African writing in a certain direction. (Veit-Wild and Schwarz 34)

The opinion presented of Jahn in these passages seems quite close to the one offered by Achebe, and Jahn's attempts to contribute to shaping the work of the writers in the direction he favoured can be perceived even in the letters of Jahn to several authors. He encouraged Abiola Irele to focus on Yoruba language and culture, for example, and he also suggested to Akin A. that he should read Tutuola and think about Senghor's words on the fact that African writers and artists should get inspiration from Africa itself. And it is certainly peculiar that "despite the absence of race as topic that he observed and his emphasis on universality, Jahn wanted to publish black poets exclusively" (Veit-Wild and Schwarz 31) in his anthology.

It would be not just difficult but probably also unjust to evaluate Jahn's work and the criticism he has undergone from our perspective, more than half a century later, since we have to consider that Jahn was working in a completely new field in the Germany of the 1950s, with almost no predecessor. What is certain, though, is that despite some obviously controversial positions, Jahn's genuine passion for – and interest in – African writers and writers of the diaspora is undeniable, as is the key role he played in opening the door to these literatures in post-war Europe. Ulla Schild notes in her bibliography of Jahn's works more than thirty published works by Jahn, including nine critical works, three reference works and twenty-five anthologies and edited works (without counting all the translations and different editions of his works, since only *Muntu* was translated ten times, for example, and *Schwarzer Orpheus* had several reprintings and two different editions), eighteen translations carried out by Jahn (to which we must add obviously all the works he translated for the anthologies), eighty-seven essays and articles and forty-five essays written to be

broadcasted on radio (Schild *Bibliography*). It is easy therefore to see why, “despite such differing reactions, Jahn’s extraordinary achievements in revealing the unknown treasure of African literature to a German audience and readership stand beyond doubt” (Veit-Wild and Schwarz 32). These achievements came from an indefatigable effort, which brought him to have direct contact with hundreds of authors, all over the world, building “the most complete collection of modern African literature in existence” (Sander 64), and which allows Ulla Schild to say that “Janheinz Jahn can undoubtedly and rightly be defined as the founder of ‘African Literary Studies’” (Schild *On Stage* VII), and Ulli Beier to add even that “the history of African literature is unthinkable without him” (Schild *Janheinz Jahn* 194).

However, the reason I decided to discuss the controversial nature of the German scholar, is that I believe it can inform us of the relationship between Jahn and Césaire as well. Césaire is probably one of the authors who was closest to Jahn, and with whom the relationship was undoubtedly one of deep mutual esteem, from the beginning to the end. Still, there are a few things, as we will see by reading their correspondence and by interpreting the destiny of their common literary adventure, that make me think of a lively dialogue between the two, in which they often had different positions from each other, and in which both seemed to remain convinced of their own point of view, though they deeply respected the other’s opinion.

Rather than ‘harmony’, therefore, the image of ‘counterpoint’ might better account for the evolution of this literary relationship, and especially the ways in which the voices of the two authors have combined. To specify the reasons behind this different perception of their relationship, however, we first need to analyse in detail the history of the collaboration between Jahn and Césaire, and especially the history of the German translations and rewritings of Césaire’s *Et les chiens se taisaient*, and the very complex patterns of translation and rewriting that are implied in this exchange between two languages, two genres and two authors.

II. “Ce que j’ai fait de votre tragédie”: Jahn’s Work on Césaire’s Play

The relationship between Jahn and Césaire, and especially their version of *Et les chiens se taisaient*, has been extensively studied by Ernstpeter Ruhe, whose work is fundamental not only for the understanding of Césaire’s reception in Germany, but also because his texts have offered us a completely different perspective on Césaire’s drama, which according to Ruhe was initiated

by Jahn. Recently, the work and the discoveries by Alex Gil³ have enlarged our perception of Césaire's drama once more, and in particular our knowledge of the version for theatre of *Et les chiens se taisaient*, which seems to have pre-existed Jahn's encouragement of Césaire in this direction, and the German author's direct work on the play. Ruhe's results, however, are not denied by these new findings. We simply have to deal with a new context, in which Ruhe's fundamental discovery is accompanied by Gil's equally important discovery, and both give us fundamental information on Césaire's drama.

What I will propose in the following pages is a chronology of the evolution of this work, which joins Ruhe's and Gil's findings with my own archival research in the Janheinz Jahn-Archiv held at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin⁴, to offer a complete perspective of the stages and processes that have contributed to the shaping of this play, of which Césaire said: "c'est un peu comme la nébuleuse d'où sont sortis tous ces mondes successifs que constituent mes autres pièces" (Beloux), highlighting the importance of this first theatrical experience for his following works.

Césaire most likely starts to work on a first version of *Et les chiens se taisaient* around 1941, as pointed out by Gil (*Présentation* 857). This version, which in the critical edition of Césaire's complete works edited by Albert James Arnold is named "L'Ur-texte de 1943" (Césaire *Ur-texte*), is very different from the following ones, and it was found in 2008 in the Fonds Claire et Yvan Goll at the Médiathèque de Saint-Dié des Vosges by Alex Gil (Césaire *Chiens* 1943). Goll, the first translator of Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, together with Lionel Abel (Césaire *Cahier*), had received it from André Breton, to whom Césaire had sent the manuscript.

Gil writes about this version: "cette version ne correspond ni à celle de la tragédie lyrique publiée dans *Les Armes Miraculeuses* ni à l'arrangement théâtral de 1956", and that the analyses conducted allow us to speak of: "un Ur-texte qui genera successivement la tragédie lyrique de 1946 et, dix ans plus tard, l'arrangement théâtral" (Gil *Présentation* 867). What this version could show is that the text had a dramatic potential right from the beginning. Gil writes:

Je dois insister sur le fait que l'Ur-texte de 1944 était déjà éminemment théâtral. Sa découverte, et sa publication dans les *Œuvres littéraires complètes* de Césaire,

³ See, to this purpose: Gil (2010; 2011; 2012; 2013).

⁴ I wish to thank the Institut für Asien-und-Afrikawissenschaften of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and in particular the director of the Jahn-Archiv, Prof. Susanne Gehrmann, all the librarians and collaborators of the archive, for having hosted me during my research supported by a DAAD scholarship in January-July 2016, and for having authorized the publication of the excerpts of the exchanges between Jahn and Césaire.

obligera la critique à reprendre les conclusions qui prévalent depuis la publication, par les soins d'Ernstpeter Ruhe en 1990, de l'édition d'*Et les chiens se taisaient* due à Janheinz Jahn. Là où on a pu croire que c'est Jahn qui a amené Césaire à la scène, il va falloir se rendre à l'évidence. Avant de reprendre son texte pour le fondre en un recueil lyrique en 1946, Césaire avait déjà présent à l'esprit une mise en scène possible de son drame historique. (Gil *Découverte* 155)

In the presentation to the published *Ur-texte* in the critical edition of the complete works by Césaire, Gil also adds some of the reasons he thinks the text was already conceived for theatre:

Des didascalies descriptives suggèrent que Césaire, à ce stade préliminaire, eût songé à une représentation de sa pièce en Martinique, une fois disparue la censure des représentants de Vichy. En effet, l'utilisation de la chanson 'À la Martinique' de Félix Mayol laisse croire que Césaire pensait à un public local. Pris ensemble, ces indices répondent clairement à notre (...) question : au tout début de la rédaction de *Et les chiens se taisaient* Césaire eut l'intention de porter son texte à la scène. (Gil *Présentation* 858-859)

This would mean that Césaire had already made plans to turn this lyrical tragedy into an actual play right from the beginning, although he said something completely different in 1969, when in an interview he replied: "cette première pièce, je ne la voyais pas 'jouée'; je l'avais d'ailleurs écrite comme un poème" (Beloux), and in another interview he said:

Vous parlez de ma pièce de théâtre. A l'origine, c'était un long poème. J'ai remarqué après coup qu'il suffisait de faire s'enchaîner certains éléments pour obtenir une pièce. Mais le procédé est artificiel, les personnages sont plus des archétypes que de véritables êtres humains (Sieger 66).⁵

There was no evidence of this *Ur-texte* version of 1943 until 2008 and until that date there was no evidence of any other version of *Et les chiens se taisaient* for theatre preceding the publication in *Tropiques* between 1944 and 1945 (Césaire *Intermède; Poème* 1944; *Poème* 1945). For this reason, Ruhe (who could not be aware of this version) thought that the German translation/rewriting was the first actual version for theatre of the play. Even a passage in the correspondence between Jahn and Césaire which could have helped to shed some light on the matter remains in fact unanswered, when Jahn directly asks Césaire in his letter of December 1953 if he already had a radio version or if he could tell him what parts to omit (Jahn 7/12/53).

⁵ I must also say that I am not too convinced that the use of a song about Martinique, by the French singer Félix Mayol, is enough evidence of the fact that Césaire thought about a local audience.

The letter is among the very few by Jahn for which we find no answer from Césaire in the personal archives of Jahn. Of course asking if Césaire already had a version for the radio is not the same as asking if he had a version for theatre, but since what Jahn is asking for is basically a reduced version, which could be played out on the radio in the span of forty-five to ninety minutes, it is strange that Césaire did not think of this first version. There might be many reasons behind this: he might have forgotten about it more than a decade later, when Jahn asked for it, he might not have had a copy of that version anymore, or he had indeed said something about it to Jahn in a letter we do not have, although this is probably the most unlikely possibility, since Jahn would have surely asked for a copy in the following exchange.

The most likely reason behind this, however, is that Césaire had dismissed it as a version he was not happy with. This seems to be proven by Césaire's own words to Breton, in which we can see clearly that the Martinican poet was worried that Goll might have published parts of this version, which he disavowed: "de celui-ci j'espère qu'il aura la délicatesse de ne rien publier, attendu qu'il ne m'a rien demandé, et surtout que je désavoue la version de cette œuvre que vous connaissez" (Césaire *Breton*). Excerpts of *Et les chiens se taisaient* were also published between 1944 and 1945 in *Tropiques*, before the work was published for the first time in its entirety in 1946, inside the poetry collection *Les armes miraculeuses*, and labelled as a 'Tragédie' (Césaire *Chiens* 1946).

Janheinz Jahn, who had studied theatre, and who had been writing, directing and performing plays for soldiers during World War II,⁶ manifested his interest in this lyrical tragedy right from the beginning of his exchanges with Césaire. In his second letter to the poet, in fact, Jahn asks for Césaire's authorisation to translate it and to propose it to German radio stations (Jahn 7/12/53). Jahn had not only read the tragedy, he had already talked about it with a radio station, and he had thought about the practical matters of the production. One thing he understood, right from the beginning, because of his practical experience with drama and the radio, was that the play was not yet suitable to be recorded as a radio drama without an adaptation, as it was too long (Jahn 7/12/53).

This play becomes then a "texte-laboratoire par lequel Aimé Césaire a appris le métier d'auteur dramatique" (Ruhe *Aimé Césaire* 9), and Césaire's own definition of "nébuleuse" (Beloux) for the play seems to confirm this, if we take Gil's words about the definition of 'nebula': "an astronomical soup of clashing

⁶ See to this purpose: Ruhe (*Œuvre* 141-142).

dust and gasses, can be read as a metaphor for atelier, as workshop more than work” (Gil *Migrant* 2). In May 1955, Jahn confirmed to Césaire that he had already made progress regarding his intentions of recording the play for the radio, and of publishing it in German, and that he intended to visit him to receive some clarifications concerning his translation, in order to do a “bonne traduction” (Jahn 28/5/55).⁷ What he intends to do is not only, as Ruhe writes: “rien de moins que d’adapter le texte aux conditions particulières de la scène” (Ruhe *Œuvre* 141), but indeed a complete rewriting, a whole new version. This is already clear from the first letter that Jahn wrote to Césaire after meeting him, in which he asked for the new scenes for the new version of the work (Jahn 13/7/55).

During their meeting Césaire and Jahn discussed the changes the tragedy had to undergo to become an actual play, which could be performed in German theatres. Ruhe writes that Jahn was able to convince Césaire that the poem could not be staged without an adaptation (Ruhe *Aimé Césaire* 11; Ruhe *Œuvre* 142). One month later, Césaire replied to Jahn excusing himself for the delayed answer, which he justified mainly with a lack of inspiration. However, he did send a first scene, which marks the beginning of Césaire’s own work at the new version, based on Jahn’s requests and advices to the playwright (Césaire 12/8/55). Jahn’s work, instead, proceeded much faster. When he answered the letter by Césaire, eight days later, he had already finished assembling the radio version, and he only waited for an additional scene promised by Césaire. He also wrote to the author that he had read the radio version to the representatives of Radio Frankfurt, and that it had been sensationally successful, and he explained at length to Césaire the completely new ‘architecture’ of the play that had come out of this rewriting (Jahn 20/8/55).

There were in fact several fundamental changes in this new construction of the play by Jahn: he had added a new character, a new scene, and he had turned some passages of the text into songs, revealing once more the ambiguity – or rather the possibilities – of this text, which seemed to be able to continuously shift from one genre into another. Jahn also added that he was going to continue working on the version for theatre, both for the published text and for its representation (Jahn 20/8/55). What is more important than anything else, however, is Césaire’s reaction to this plan. The author in fact granted the translator the right to do his own montage of the play, asked for his advice about

⁷ This mistake, which would probably appeal to the advocates of the too often pronounced maxim ‘*traduttore traditore*’, derives from Jahn’s peculiar written French, filled with mistakes and awkward formulations.

the new parts he had written, and thanked him, deeply grateful for the effort the translator was dedicating to a play that was so important to Césaire himself (Césaire 26/8/55).

Jahn could not hope for anything better: Césaire had not only agreed to his version of the play, he had also granted him the right to continue working on it, and he had even begun to work on new scenes to fit with the translator's plan. This shows us a very different role for the translator than the one we usually imagine: Jahn was in fact the one who decided how to proceed with the work, what had to be written and where it had to be added, and he commissioned the texts of these new parts to Césaire. It is also very interesting to see that Césaire decides to add a passage that he describes as a debate on colonisation, which shows once more how deeply connected Césaire's drama is to his intention of favouring decolonisation, even in a play written way before the African fights for independence, but revised at a time in which the issue was becoming topical. Revision allows thus Césaire to turn his first play, *Et les chiens se taisaient*, into something quite close to what the triptych of the decolonisation trilogy will be: a literary tool for a political fight.

On December 31, 1955, the play was recorded for the radio, and two weeks later, on January 16, 1956, it was broadcasted. At the same time, the new German version was also being prepared for publication, since Jahn wrote to Césaire on February 9 that it was in print, adding: "j'espère de pouvoir aller à Paris en mai pour vous expliquer ce que j'ai fait de votre tragédie" (Jahn 9/2/56). Despite Jahn's awkward French, a translator saying that he intends to explain to the author what he has made of his work, is certainly significant of the freedom Jahn has enjoyed in his encounter with Césaire and in his creative encounter with Césaire's works.

The two met in May 1956⁸ and Césaire's reaction to the new version of the work, is quite eloquent: "par ailleurs, j'ai terminé la lecture de 'notre' version théâtrale. Elle me satisfait tout à fait. Elle me paraît excellente en tous points" (Césaire 15/5/1956).⁹ Césaire's words seem very clear; the two had reached a common version, which they agreed upon, and for which Césaire talked of a shared authorship with Jahn. However, as we will see, the situation was way more complex than what these words seem to suggest.

⁸ Ruhe writes that they met at the end of April 1956, but consulting the private notebooks of Jahn, in which he carefully noted all of his movements, I can say that he was in Paris between May 7, and May 14, 1956, and that they met four times (on May 8, 9, 11 and 12).

⁹ Ruhe dates this undated letter to May 1956, because it follows the meeting of Jahn and Césaire in Paris but precedes the letter of June 1, 1956. I argue that it was sent together with the contract, dated May 15, 1956, which establishes the common authorship by Jahn and Césaire of the new version of *Et les chiens se taisaient*.

III. “*Un puzzle très complexe*”: Two Versions of the Play

Césaire was not the only one to indicate that the new version of the play satisfied him completely. The same is suggested by the preface to the German version published by Lechte, in which we are told by Artur Müller – the editor of the series *Dramen der Zeit* – that the version proposed was absolutely identical to the one that would be published by Présence Africaine: “the author, Césaire, has accepted the outcome of this process also for the French version, and the new edition, which will soon be published by Présence Africaine in Paris, will be identical to the German edition” (Müller 8, *my translation*). Müller also described the special role that Jahn has played in this process:

The translator, Janheinz Jahn, was not just a translator for the work, he was in fact forced to act deeply also as a dramaturg, since the Hessische Rundfunk had commissioned him to write a radio drama version of the play. Fruitful conversations ensued between the translator and the author, through which the play underwent relevant dramaturgical corrections, which obviously also influenced the stage version. (Müller 8, *my translation*)

The work was indeed published also in French in 1956, by Présence Africaine (Césaire *Chiens* 1956), which prepared a publication of *Et les chiens se taisaient* as a separate work, adapted for theatre, for the *Congrès des écrivains et artistes noirs* organized by Présence Africaine, which took place in September 1956 in Paris. However, even though the new German version for theatre of *Et les chiens se taisaient* and the ‘*arrangement théâtral*’ published in Paris appeared in the same year, with only a few months in between the two publications, and apparently with the same intention (that of giving a version of the lyrical tragedy included in *Les armes miraculeuses* which could actually be represented in theatres), the two versions are very far from being identical. As Ruhe writes, in fact: “les éditions allemande et française diffèrent totalement: des nouvelles scènes apparaissent, d’autres manquent, tout comme des nombreux personnages à la place desquels en surgissent d’autres, etc” (RuheŒuvre 140). If on the one hand, the French version is in fact extremely close to the original version published in 1946 in *Les armes miraculeuses*, with very few and mostly irrelevant modifications, on the other hand, the omissions, displacements, and additions in Jahn’s version are numerous. Ruhe even gives us numbers that are quite eloquent:

Jahn supprime dans les trois actes environ un tiers du texte original de Césaire (...). Il complète ce qu’il a conservé par des scènes et des indications scéniques qu’il a lui-même rédigées et qui constitueront environ 20% de la totalité du texte définitif de

cette version. (...) La version de Jahn se présente finalement comme un puzzle très complexe ordonné à partir du texte original morcelé et totalement redistribué. (...) Jahn n'hésite pas à réordonner et à fractionner les répliques, à en modifier totalement la succession où même à les mettre dans la bouche d'un autre personnage. (Ruhe *Œuvre* 149-150)

The versions are thus very different from each other, both in length, in tone, and in style. The process followed by Jahn is also quite peculiar, since he reordered completely the work, displacing many lines and also assigning them to different characters. What is even more surprising, however, is to look at the French version of the same year to see that there seems to be no sign of the incredible work that Césaire and Jahn had achieved together, through months of writing back and forth to each other:

Lorsque l'on a suivi les échanges entre Jahn et l'auteur qui ont marqué les années 1955 et 1956, l'édition française publiée par Césaire en 1956 a donc de quoi surprendre. Le dialogue très intensif qu'il a eu avec Jahn, la production de nouvelles scènes et de nouveaux passages, nés de ce dialogue, ainsi que les projets qu'avait Césaire pour de nouvelles conceptions de toute la pièce, tout cela a finalement laissé peu de traces dans le texte français de 1956. (...) L'idée qui était née du dialogue avec Jahn de retravailler à fond la structure du texte poétique pour en faire une pièce adaptée au théâtre a été pour l'essentiel abandonnée par Césaire au moment de la publication. Quant aux scènes nouvelles, celle importante pourtant, entre le Rebelle et l'Administrateur, est restée inédite. (Ruhe *Aimé Césaire* 16-17)

Why do we have two completely different versions, and why did the preface to the first edition say that the latter would be identical, if this was not the case? These questions are significant, especially because of the method followed by Césaire and Jahn for writing their new version, a continuous creative exchange in which the author and the translator (or rewriter) constantly stimulated each other and asked for each other's opinion and advice about written or translated pieces, and about how to bring the evolution of the text further. The German version is undoubtedly the outcome of a common work that Césaire and Jahn passionately shared, so why has this work disappeared in the French version? Ruhe has many reasons for saying that the question remains unsolved, and that trying to offer a single answer could prove an act of speculation. However, if we look closer at the exchanges between Césaire and Jahn, we might at least attempt an explanation, which might reside in the fact that the relationship between the two was less 'harmonious' than it would appear at first sight.

We have seen how often Césaire and Jahn shared the same opinion about the evolution of *Et les chiens se taisaient*, while working together on this play, and this proximity probably culminates in Césaire's letter to Jahn on August 26, 1955, where Césaire gave his agreement to Jahn for his own montage of the play (Césaire 26/8/55). However, less than a week after writing this letter, Césaire also wrote another letter to his German translator, which had completely different implications:

Mon cher Jahn,
je me suis remis ces jours à relire d'assez près "Et les chiens se taisaient", et je me suis arrêté à un projet de découpage assez différent du vôtre. Je m'empresse de vous dire que je vous laisse toute liberté pour l'adaptation allemande, surtout l'adaptation radiophonique. Mais pour ce qui est une éventuelle adaptation française, ou de la version théâtrale, voici à quoi je me suis arrêté (...). (Césaire 1/9/55)

Césaire had conceived a "very different montage" from Jahn's, and although he still left all freedom to the translator concerning the German adaptation, and especially the radio drama version, he said clearly that a French adaptation or a version for theatre would differ from the German project, although the French version of 1956 also did not exactly follow this plan sketched by Césaire for Jahn. The archives do not hold any response from Jahn, and it is significantly one of the very few cases in which this occurs. This letter is always quoted by all commentators on the Césaire-Jahn relationship, but it is usually seen as superseded by the following letters in which the two continue to work on their new version, and which bring Césaire to speak of a common work in his letter of May 1956. However, even this very letter gives us an indication of the fact that the two did not completely agree on the arrangement of the text. In fact, Césaire began the letter by informing Jahn that he was sending new passages, to replace the ones Jahn had 'borrowed' from *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* and *Soleil Cou Coupé* (Césaire 15/5/56). Jahn's response is also quite an eye-opener, since he seems to 'resist' Césaire's intentions. If until now we have seen Jahn's free work of montage on Césaire's text, and Césaire's reactions, this is the first time that we have a counter-reaction from Jahn, who asked Césaire for permission to keep the passage he had chosen, from *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, instead of the one Césaire had written on purpose for this new version (Jahn 1/6/56).

These episodes of (poetic) confrontation did not end here. In July 1956, after the German version had already been released, but before the release of the version published in French by *Présence Africaine*, Césaire continued working

on the play, and wrote to Jahn to explain to him what he had done, mentioning a new act representing a metaphorical trial to colonialism (Césaire 23/7/56), which highlights once more Césaire's increasing view of theatre as a political tool for decolonisation, though this new act was never published. However, this letter shows once more how the projects for the play by Césaire and Jahn went at times in parallel directions, though both influenced each other in their own constructions. We can in fact talk of two different works: Jahn had the right to work on the German version as much as he wanted, while for the French one he had different plans. One last piece of evidence of this is probably the last attempt made by Jahn at publishing his version with Césaire in French, more than ten years later, about which we can read in the last letter the Jahn-Archiv holds between the two, and which significantly remained unanswered, perhaps proving that Césaire was not interested in taking advantage of this opportunity (Jahn 30/9/68).

The tone of the letter shows that the two had not been in contact for a while, and they probably never met again after this letter, also because of Jahn's early death in October 1973, only four months after the death of the other fundamental figure in Césaire's drama, Jean-Marie Serreau, who had died in May. What is peculiar in this letter is that the translator was asking his author to translate him, to correct the text and reformulate the passages that he had written. This is yet another proof that Jahn was not a simple translator, but rather one of the two authors of this work, and Césaire – had he indeed corrected the pieces sent by Jahn – would have become his translator. Another interesting passage is the one in which Jahn told Césaire that he had cut in 238 parts and then recomposed the text (Jahn 30/9/68). Ruhe's research has permitted the finding of the copy of *Les armes miraculeuses* on which Jahn had worked, and his peculiar method:

Jahn travaillait sur cet exemplaire sans le découper ; on était encore très loin, dans les années 50, des techniques modernes de copie et des facilités qu'elles entraînent. Il numérotait dans l'ordre de leur nouvelle disposition les parties du texte de Césaire qu'il voulait intégrer dans sa version et les différençait en même temps à l'aide de crayons-feutres de couleur selon les actes dans lesquels devaient être reprises les citations (...) Les divergences par rapport au texte de Césaire sont signalées à l'intérieur des lignes par les corrections et les biffures correspondantes. (Ruhe *Aimé Césaire* 25)

The fact that this French translation of the German version never saw the light of day might certainly be due simply to the fact that Césaire had not much time to dedicate to what would have been a quite long work, but it could also be

due to a choice of keeping the French version of the text much closer to the original version of the lyrical tragedy, allowing at the same time a different evolution for the German version of the text, which lived parallel to it.

A last remark must be made on a couple of passages in the exchanges between Césaire and Jahn, in which there seems to be some tension between the two, mainly on the side of Jahn actually, since, interestingly, both letters remain unanswered by Césaire, and only the first one is answered by his first wife, Suzanne Roussi. Only two months after the publication of the 1956 French version of *Et les chiens se taisaient* (which is, quite strangely, never mentioned in any of the letters exchanged between the two), Jahn writes to Césaire to complain that he had not been informed directly about his decision of leaving the Communist Party, requesting very straightforwardly and quite abruptly to be informed of any political move or any publication (Jahn 21/11/56). The letter is filled with rhetorical questions, and his requests are not far from being orders. Even more, though, the conclusion of the letter – if one did not know how close Césaire and Jahn were – could almost sound like a ‘threat’, and seems to turn the figure of the translator into some kind of spokesperson for the author, rather than a translator: “n’oubliez pas: je suis votre voix en Allemagne” (Jahn 21/11/56). When Suzanne Roussi answered, more than three months later, she justified Césaire’s silence by the drastic political shift that brought new elections in Fort-de-France, and she also confirmed her husband’s admiration and friendship for Jahn (Roussi Césaire 23/2/57). Jahn’s response also came with a long delay, in August (Jahn 8/8/57), and though he used a very different tone, the translator still did not give up on his point.

Another letter in which the tone seems different from the usual exchanges came in 1961, when a German publisher acquired from the French publisher Seuil an option to publish Césaire’s works in translation. Jahn asked Césaire for his assistance in preventing this, and he also reminded him of how central he had been in the diffusion of the ideas of négritude in Germany, and how many enemies he had made himself because of that (Jahn 13/11/61). As I said, the two always admired each other, and deeply respected each other, both on the human and on the literary level, but it would be wrong to ignore these words, as too many scholars have done. What I am proposing, is simply to understand the nature of their relationship in a different way, which is not based on the supposed harmony they reached through their collaboration, but rather on what the dialogue between two voices that were different and that remained different had brought to both of them.

IV. “Janheinz Jahn et moi-même”: A Contrapuntal Relationship

The previous chapters of this article have clearly shown that Jahn has enjoyed a peculiar status in his relationship with Césaire, which does not allow us to speak of him simply as a translator of Césaire, but rather as an author, or a co-author. As such, in fact, he has the opportunity of refusing the author’s decisions, and Jahn has done it several times in his own montage of *Et les chiens se taisaient*. An opportunity Césaire himself had granted to Jahn, and of which Jahn never abused, since he specified every time to the author what he had done or what he intended to do with the text, and he always sent Césaire the definitive versions he had come to. This partnership was also defined from the legal point of view. In a contract signed in May 1956, Césaire authorized Jahn to handle the rights and all contracts regarding the play in the German-speaking environment, and he did not only write that the rights would be divided in equal parts, but he also certified that the play belonged to both, by saying that it was the German translation of the new version of the work, on which Jahn and himself reserved all rights (*Césaire Contract*).¹⁰

Jahn himself even said that he was the author of the new version of *Et les chiens se taisaient*, in the letter of 1968 in which he asked Césaire to translate the pieces he had written in German (Jahn 30/11/68), something which would have inverted completely the roles in the relationship, with Césaire becoming the translator of texts of which Jahn was the author. But what is perhaps even more significant is that there are also several other occasions on which Césaire’s words to Jahn show that he saw him as an author. In a letter to Jahn, in which he asked the translator for some pictures that he had sent him, and which he had promised for the publication of Lilyan Kesteloot’s volume on Césaire (Kesteloot), he also asked for a picture representing both him and Jahn, saying that he would have used as caption: “Aimé Césaire et J. Jahn, l’auteur de *Muntu*” (Césaire 25/8/61). Césaire, in a volume which focuses on his own writing, would therefore have defined Jahn as the author of *Muntu* rather than as his German translator, a peculiar choice. Even more eloquent is the dedication Césaire writes to Jahn in the translator’s own copy of the version published in Paris by Présence Africaine: “à Janheinz Jahn, qui, plus qu’il ne traduit, recrée la poésie noire, avec l’expression de mon amitié et mon immense gratitude” (Ruhe Aimé Césaire 24). This short sentence is in fact possibly the best description of

¹⁰ As unpoetic as it might seem, we also need to take into consideration the possibility that this shared ownership of the new version could be the reason behind Césaire’s choice, or Présence Africaine’s choice, of publishing in 1956 a work that took no account of the new version edited with Jahn.

the relationship between Aimé Césaire and Janheinz Jahn, which gave rise to an extremely fruitful and creative dialogue, in which Jahn cannot be considered simply as a translator but rather as a re-creator, a rewriter. In both of the passages mentioned, Césaire presents Jahn as an author rather than as a translator. With Jahn, Césaire has in fact met not just a translator but an author, with a distinct voice, who worked on his poetry and drama as a co-author.

The immense gratitude which Césaire genuinely expressed to Jahn also leaves no doubt regarding the human relationship between the two, but this should not lead us to talk of a relationship characterized by ‘harmony’, as has often been done. Sylvère Mbondobari comments on their correspondence, and in particular on the letters of August 1955,¹¹ talking about an “échange qui permet d’harmoniser les points de vue” (Mbondobari 81). He also writes:

en définitive, l’harmonie de la pièce vient de ce que l’on sent une étroite concordance de point de vue entre le poète et son traducteur. Entre eux, aucun point de frottement. Les divergences d’appréciation de tel ou tel autre aspect sont le lieu d’une négociation et d’un échange créateur (Mbondobari 84).

Though “creative exchange” is perhaps indeed the best way to define Jahn and Césaire’s relationship, I believe that their differences and their different approaches to the text they worked on together are exactly what has made their encounter so intriguing, and so fruitful. Refusing to abide by the idea of a harmony between the two, in fact, does not imply any negative judgement of their relationship and collaboration, but rather points towards a different understanding of it, which I believe also helps us to understand why the French and German versions have remained parallel rather than being harmonised into a single new version.

If ‘harmony’ is “the combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce a pleasing effect”, “the quality of forming a pleasing and consistent whole”, or “the state of being in agreement or concord” (Soanes 793), Jahn’s voice has rather functioned as a counterpoint¹² to Césaire’s voice, since this special kind of polyphony indicates “the combination of two or more related but independent melodies into a single harmonic texture in which each retains its linear or horizontal character”, or “one or more independent melodies added as accompaniment to a primary melody” (Webster 520). This is exactly the role

¹¹ Mbondobari quotes Césaire’s letters of August 26, 1955, and September 1, 1955, but dates both to August 26, and he quotes without distinguishing between the two and continuously switching between them. However, the two letters are not just separated, but also very different, since they entail opposite choices by Césaire about how to proceed with the evolution of the play in French and in German.

¹² For a view of translation itself as a possible counterpoint to the original, see: Sofu (2019).

Jahn's work has played in Césaire's *Et les chiens se taisaient*. His German version is indeed an independent melody, added to the given melody, which is the original text, and Césaire's own full versions or fragmented scenes in French, generated through the encounter with Jahn, also function as more independent melodies added to the given one. Even when they are combined, to form a single musical texture, each one of these melodies still retains its character and offers us a polyphonic work, rather than the simple evolution of a work, from an original state to its final version.

Conclusion

This is also the reason for which Jahn's collaboration with Césaire has helped the Martinican author to disentangle the 'nebula' of this work, showing him the paths he would have to take for his next plays, the trilogy of decolonisation that most of Césaire's readers and critics identify with his theatre, usually forgetting or dismissing this first tragedy. This polyphony and the combination of these independent melodies, departing from or touching upon the main melody, have in fact functioned as new ways, new routes, opening up onto the directions that Césaire's theatre took in the 1960s. Césaire's drama was thus born and evolved through two encounters: the first one, with Janheinz Jahn, and the second one, with Jean-Marie Serreau, and it was born through the introduction of textual fluidity in his work that happened through these collaborations, in the forms of revision, rewriting, and translation. These practices, rather than being secondary for Césaire's drama were thus the very forces which created the "*theatre nègre*" (Césaire *Tempête*) that Césaire had in mind, the poetic tool which could help the cultural fight of *négritude*, and the political fight of African decolonisation.

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NAME TRANSLATION IN FANTASY LITERATURE AND ITS IMPACT ON RECEPTION AND SELECTING A TARGET READER. CASE STUDY: LORD VOLDEMORT

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***Abstract:** Names and naming have a powerful connection with the construction of a character and thus offer a key of interpretation to the whole text. We have chosen here to attempt an analysis of the impact of the translation of Voldemort's name on the reception that J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series have had in different countries among grown-up readers. The importance of this name as opposed to the others is highlighted by its particular use - of not only creating atmosphere, but inducing fear, as should the name of a proper villain. But here lies the key of identifying the target reader: who does this fear inducing suggestion mechanism work on?*

***Keywords:** literary translation; reception theory; horizon of expectations; charactonyms; identity, target reader; fantasy literature; cultural reference; foreignizing versus domesticating; interpretation through translation.*

Introduction

The name of the character plays a very important part in the novel as it is a name others “fear to speak”. Moreover, saying it out loud functions as an invocation and materializes him. It is, to begin with, a chosen name, a name the character has chosen for himself as part of creating an identity. We find a strange similarity between the character's desire to create himself a different name and the function of pseudonyms, of the pen names authors take - a chosen name instead of a given one, or if you wish, a self-given one: an identity built on their own will, not hazard, and moreover an identity that links one to his work and to a certain context and a certain role he assumes. The author creates, destroys, models the world after his own will, and in this sense, we can see the part of the author in his own fictional world as similar to the part Voldemort desires to enact – He is a ruler, a master.

But what does this name mean - or better yet – where does it come from?

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I. Ambiguity of Meaning and the Fear Mechanism

Following a tradition of translating charactonyms that have an identifiable stem- bear, an identifiable connection to certain words - most names have been translated in the about 80 languages the novel has been published in. This engenders, however, a very difficult question, as we deal here not with something meant to be an explicit reference to the source (English) language, but with a much more subtle one, or even, as we are trying to suggest here, a multitude of meanings. That allows a certain amount of freedom to the reader and might differ from one reader to another and even work on a subliminal level to produce a specific effect on the unconscious of the reader.

Wolfgang Iser calls these indeterminacies "gaps" or "blanks", "vacancies" which require imaginative activity on the part of the reader. *These are essential conditions for communication, for they set in motion the interaction that takes place between text and reader, and to a certain extent they also regulate it.*¹⁴ By breaking/hindering textual coherence, blanks act as stimuli for the reader's imagination and active participation. It is by this interaction that the aesthetic object appears, the "meaning of a literary text" is seen as a "a dynamic happening" – which implies the idea of meaning as a dynamic product of the interaction between text and reader.

This meaning production mechanism seems to work even for the names, as they are themselves potential carriers of meaning or of response triggering stimuli - *strategies which encompass the immanent structure of the text and the acts of comprehension thereby triggered off in the reader.*¹⁵

Roland Barthes in *Nouveaux essais critiques* states that the proper name "*constitue un signe, un signe volumineux [...] toujours gros d'une épaisseur touffue de sens*".¹⁶

To start with, in the English version the name "Voldemort" is very obviously foreign. What is more, we find a close resemblance to the real and quite used northern name Valdemars, as well as to the ancient Germanic Waldomar - from Old High German *waltan* ("power") and *māri* ("famous"). And yet it is not quite the same. What is most interesting is the effect this has on the reader - it works precisely as that mixture of familiar and unfamiliar that is generally used in horror or frightening tales as a way of inducing fear, a

¹⁴ Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, London and Henley, 1978

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 86.

¹⁶ Roland Barthes, *Nouveaux essais critiques* (s. d., 124): "Proper names constitute a sign, a voluminous sign, (...) always loaded with meaning" (my translation)

sensation which is discussed by Sigmund Freud in his essay on “The Uncanny”:
*...the uncanny is that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar*¹⁷.

This subtle mechanism shows that the novel rises above the limiting category of children’s literature, as its implied reader, the reader it addresses, seems here a much more mature one. The Implied Reader, according to W. Iser, incorporates both the pre-structuring of the potential meaning by the text, and the reader’s actualization of this potential through the reading process.¹⁸ In his article “Singular Text, Multiple Implied Readers”, Brian Richardson even suggests the possibility of a coexistence of multiple implied readers as a result of a double coding.¹⁹

II. Translation Strategies

This is where the most difficult problem arises in the translation: How to preserve that complexity and create the same effect on a different language public? What should one sacrifice, the literal meaning and direct references or the mechanism behind them?

I. A. Richards argues that the translation should take into account the cultural background of the target reader and offers a translation theory based on the "Semantic triangle" consisting of "form and sound", meaning, and referent. Richards underlines the crucial part of form and sound in conveying the intended meaning and pointing to the right referent thus ensuring the "faithfulness", “expressiveness” and "elegance” of the resulting translation.²⁰

In the chapter “The Translator’s Task” of the *Illuminations*, Walter Benjamin points out that:

All supra-historical kinship of languages consists rather in the fact that in each of them as a whole, one and the same thing is intended; this cannot be attained by any one of them alone, however, but only by the totality of their mutually complementary intentions: pure language. (...) these languages complement each other in their intentions.²¹

¹⁷ Freud, Sigmund. *The Uncanny*. trans. David McLintock. Penguin Classics, London, 1998, p. 124

¹⁸ Iser, Wolfgang. *The Implied Reader. Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1974, p. xii

¹⁹ Richardson, Brian. “Singular Text, Multiple Implied Readers” *Style*, vol. 41, no. 3, 2007, pp. 259–274.

²⁰ C. K. Ogden, I. A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning*, A Harvest Book Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. NEW YORK, 1923

²¹ “The Translator’s Task”, Walter Benjamin (Translation) Steven Rendall L’essai sur la traduction de Walter Benjamin : traductions critiques Volume 10, numéro 2, 2e semestre 1997, pg. 156

According to Benjamin, translation “points, with wonderful penetration, toward the predetermined, inaccessible domain where languages are reconciled and fulfilled and the relation between content and language in the original is entirely different from that in the translation”.²² Benjamin further states that translation would not be possible if it were aiming to resemble the original. Here we must look upon the choices that translators have made and their results and impact on the reception and public age range in different countries.

Some of the translators have preserved the original name. The French version does, in spite of the fact that it actually translates almost all other names, even ones that other languages leave unaltered (for instance the questionable decision to change Hogwarts to Poudlard). But Voldemort stays the same and perhaps the name works even better and is in fact the more frightening for a French speaking reader than for an English one. For Voldemort becomes here, in literal translation “Flight of Death” which was probably the intention of the author to begin with, but which may have been lost on many of the English speaking readers, especially the young ones. Furthermore, we can’t ignore the double meaning of the word “vol” - which makes the name at the same time “Theft of death”. This ambiguity of the stem plays an essential part in making the name ungraspable, mysterious, strange and thus frightening. What is more, one cannot help but wonder what a theft of death might be - and relate it to Voldemort’s struggle for eternal life - to conquer death. But the name also seems to suggest something even more worrisome/ sinister, the idea of someone stealing *your* death.

Meanwhile, other language versions of the novel have gone for a simple translation of the name, which unfortunately imposes a limiting key of interpretation to the novel, setting it from the start in the minor category of children’s literature. We find the name has a serious influence on the reader’s horizon of expectation, in this case almost as much as the tone of the discourse itself. *Bertrand Russell*, Frege, Wittgenstein, Searle, Strawson all see names as a form of disguised description. Marc Wilmet also identifies the influences on proper names and how their trace remains in the name: ethnic, social-social status, belonging to a certain tradition or history, cultural, but also auditory and synesthetic. Descriptive phonology and wordplay produce *loaded names* - that carry a *semantic load* and both morphology (structure) and phonology (sound) must be adapted.

²² Ibidem, pg.158

The translation of the villain's name in the *Harry Potter* books posed even more problems as in the second volume, since there is an anagram: Voldemort spells his real name, Tom Marvolo Riddle, and then makes the letters rearrange into "I am Lord Voldemort" – what would have been difficult anyway given the need to translate "I am", which became even more so, as the name had already been translated, thus changing form completely. This resulted in a variety of "real names" of the character, from the most obvious and technical to the most creative. This is how the character ended up having the second name "Elvis" in the French version, and becoming "Romeo" in the Danish one. We may even suppose the translation aims to produce a foreign feel to the name, and what the embodiment of "otherness" might be in different cultures.

In Swedish, his name is "*Tom Gus Mervolo Dolder*", an anagram of "*Ego sum Lord Voldemort*". This very interesting choice of translating *I am* in Latin instead of Swedish gives the character's revelation of identity an even more terrifying feel, playing on the foreign and ancient sound of Latin, but also inducing a subtle yet surprising religious and ritual feel which the original doesn't have.

III. Multiple Implied Readers and Their Interaction

Adding a dissonant name, or a term that triggers a dismissive reaction from a mature reader might damage his involvement in the reading experience and even make him refuse to read the book.

Quite often, several words, and especially proper names relay on wordplay, which makes the translation process tricky. As there are several active components, and one is unable to transpose them all at once, there are different strategies that may be employed. A particularly relevant and enlightening study on this subject is Warren Weaver's *Alice in Many Tongues*. If translating *Harry Potter* is a difficult task, *Alice in Wonderland* is perhaps even more difficult. The different levels or multiple implied readers here are said to be three, which seems to be equally true for J. K. Rowling's novel. So the translation has to preserve all meanings, and not limit them to any one reading, furthermore, Lewis Carol's book employs several references to popular British culture, things both a young reader and a mature one will grasp, but which would lose their relevance even to a foreign speaker of English. Here the gap arises between the two translation strategies: some, even different translations in the same language - as both time and success have led to the release of several editions worldwide -

chose to stay close to the original even at the price of leaving things the reader will not understand, and others chose to find an equivalent, a text or reference that is equally relevant to the local reader and fits the context as well. The first, is known as *foreignizing*, the other as *domesticating*. While one might lose some of the relevance and meaning on a different public, the other risks losing the atmosphere and effect. Good translations seem to keep the same level of familiarity and estrangement like in the source text. This falls back to the translator's understanding of the text.

What happens with a book that has multiple implied readers? Brian Richardson, in *Singular Text, Multiple Implied Readers*, states that those readers might see each other, be conscious of the other readings, or not. In the case of *Harry Potter* and of *Alice in Wonderland* and perhaps of C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*, we see a child reader, a "parent"/ adult reader, and also an even more mature reader with a broad and philosophical understanding. But do they see one another? And could they reject one another?

We find that there are certain triggers which, despite the profundity/depth, or mature interest of the content, reject a certain reader that might otherwise appreciate the books. For instance, unlike *Harry Potter* and *Alice*, the narrator of *The Chronicles of Narnia* directly addresses the reader, and tells him about the geography, or biology of Narnia calling upon the children's knowledge. The result is that if you're a kid you feel either happy that you learned in school or unhappy you didn't, if you are a critic or philosopher you definitely do not mind, might even take it as an interesting license, but what if you are a parent, or regular non contemplative adult, or, God forbid, a teenager? On the second level the tale seems addressed to children, even if not simple at all, and while a truly mature reader will understand this as a way of engaging the very young reader, or even of inducing a fantasy mood, an in-between view will be somewhat less successful.

Both Lewis Carol's and J. K. Rowling's novels elude this problem, the text works just as well for all readers. Why? We can identify a number of triggers that approve the different readings. C.S. Lewis's way of addressing the children and their knowledge is pretty clear, while other references such as mathematics or mythology work for a mature reader without rejecting the child, on the contrary, they seem to motivate him and the philosophical level is less obvious a reading, and thus does not impact the other readings on a conscious level. That explains why the philosopher and the child might both enjoy a novel and the regular adult might dismiss it as childish.

IV. Crossover Fiction

While both adults reading children's books and adult novels featuring children as characters are definitely not something new, crossover fiction, who has risen in the past decades, aims at a non-age-specific audience: books declare themselves above literary age categories and thus enjoy a much wider public, but also a better chance at receiving both commercial success and critical approval.

Harry Potter, though preceding the term of crossover fiction, is quoted as one of the best examples. As a result of this ambiguous age target and its success among grownup readers, the same publishing house decided to release two different editions of the series, with the only difference being the cover – a colorful illustrated one for children and a toned down, more minimalist one for adults – as many people seemed to find reading children's books in public to be uncomfortable.

This tendency towards crossover fiction and erasing of age categories in literature is most pronounced on the English-language market. However, in part due to the success of translated versions, other language productions seem to embrace more and more this approach, for instance the Swedish one²³.

We shall choose to have a look at the Romanian translation, which is otherwise quite free, leaving many of the names in their original form. Converting "Voldemort" to "Cap de Mort" seems here a great mistake, as it drags the name and along with it the character, into the explicit.

The first connection that comes to mind is that with the pirate flag - The Jolly Roger – which might not in itself be something funny, but which is linked here to the story only in the superficial key of children's tales and their tropes. What is more "Cap de Mort" (Dead man's skull) is a prefixed, already existent association of terms while "Flight of death" is a highly unusual and unexpected one.

Secondly, the very reference or stem of the name has been moved to the concrete and material- "skull" as opposed to "flight" or "theft"(or both), and even "dead man or corpse" instead of "death". The difference is slight but essential, precisely in terms of selecting a target reader: a skull or skeleton might seem scary to a child, but to a grown man it is simply sad, while death and moreover the highly ambiguous "flight of death" stays seriously frightening for everyone.

²³Agnes Broomé and Nichola Smalley, "A Farewell to Age Restrictions? The Rise of Crossover Fiction in Swedish", in *Swedish Book Review*, 2014:2

This might be the reason why, while it is extremely popular with the younger generation all over the world, the reaction and response of a mature public differs much more according to country. Of course there are other issues that need to be taken into account, such as literary tradition and taste for fantasy novels, but nevertheless names have an important part in the interpretation and effects as well as on the possible rejection through a dismissive or offended reaction to certain triggers - in this case the childish name of the villain.

Moreover, even presuming the reader is acquainted to fantasy literature, the fact remains that its names tend to be more exotic and foreign sounding than in real life, not more explicit. Take for instance Tolkien's novels - here the names tend to matter more for their origin, different races of Middle Earth and not in relation to the character's personality. Charactonyms are most often found either in fairy tales or in humor literature of the kind that aims to make caricature characters, whose guiding traits are so enlarged they become even part of their name. Neither is the case here and the text risks falling in the wrong category, at least in the public's view. Which would be a waste, especially since most of the names in J. K. Rowling's novels are filled with cultural references more or less historical and not devoid of political connotation. What could be a possible alternative for this situation?

An option could be, in fact, a slight distancing from the original term and its direct references in favor of preserving its effects, that is if we chose to translate the term in the first place, which is in itself tricky. While maybe not activating all of its meanings, wouldn't "Voldemort" have just as much meaning to a Romanian reader as to a British one?

Nevertheless, if intent on giving it a translation relevant to a different public, why not consider "Valdemoarte" - exchanging "flight" for the equally fluid and immaterial "wave" and simply translating the word death?

V. Translation and Target Language

The influence of the meaning given to names in discourse on the meanings associated with the word in everyday life proves a less than usual kind of impact of literature upon the social context. In this case, the Romanian translation of Voldemort's name - "Cap de Mort" - has had a major impact on this phrase's already existent meanings.

Young readers will surprisingly link the image of a skull to J. K. Rowling's character, rather than the pirates. They will even think of Voldemort when seeing a danger sign. But this phenomenon is in fact much wider,

impacting the actualized meaning within the whole Romanian language-speaking community. For one thing, people seem to have stopped using the expression to designate any other referent than Voldemort, because doing so would cause confusion. As Marc Wilmet states in *Le nom propre en linguistique et en littérature*:

En discours, le nom propre, circonscrit à un référent tel ou tel, reçoit a posteriori un sens discursif and n'importe quel mot se change en nom propre accidentel dès que l'application à un référent occulte sa signification permanente au profit d'un sens momentané.²⁴

Other words aimed to produce fear follow a similar pattern: the killing spell (*Avada Kedavra*) and the boggart - a magical being that takes the shape of what the one he encounters fears above all. The killing spell has a very close sonority to the phrase Abracadabra – (a very well known word) associated to magic tricks, so common it has even become synonymous with nonsense. We find here the same process of changing a word, while letting it resemble a very familiar one. In fact, *Avada Kedavra* seems to be the older of the two versions. In the 1977 book *Abracadabra*, Stephen Jay traces the origin of the word and its initial meaning from the Aramaic: *Avada Kedavra*, “*May the thing be destroyed*”.

The Romanian translation, strangely enough, turns it back to Abracadabra, thus terrifying a lot of kids and ruining the shows of amateur magicians, which had to adapt and turn to other ‘magic words’. This is a very manifest example of the accumulation of meaning due to fiction and its influence on other practices.

Conclusion

This is undoubtedly a proof of the influence of literature on language and the transformation of meaning and use of words, but it also shows the surprisingly important part the translation has. If we expect certain words or phrases from a very popular book to enter every-day vocabulary of more than one generation, this might be equally true for a translation. Here the task of the translator proves even more difficult, involving responsibility not only towards the original text, its meaning and style, the reception and success it has in translated form, but towards the target language and its speakers as well.

²⁴“*Le nom propre en linguistique et en littérature*”, communication de Marc Wilmet a la seance mensuelle de 13 mai 1995: “In discourse, the proper/ given name, linked to a particular referent, receives a posteriori a discursive meaning; any word may become an accidental proper name once its connection to a certain referent outshadows its permanent meaning.” (my transl.)

A certain amount of carelessness in translating the first volumes into Romanian could be the result of the translator's failure to estimate the impact the books were going to have, that they were going to become such a phenomenon and constitute a major influence on a whole generation and that every word would count. The Romanian edition shows an increase in the quality of translation in more than one way, starting with the third and fourth volume, which can be explained by the success the books were already having, as another translation followed closely every new volume's release.

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RECEPTAREA ELEMENTELOR POSTMODERNE ÎN ROMANUL *NUMELE TRANDAFIRULUI*, DE UMBERTO ECO

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Abstract: *Umberco Eco, as one of the greatest theorists of Postmodernism, gave literature a novel on the beauty and humility of a writer, a human being, and a monk. It is also a book on the beauty of questing for the perfect book, more than the faith found in the Bible, more than books on magic or evil, unless books of knowledge represent the evil. Everything is mixed and twisted in a story of murder and intellectual conflict, a novel with many themes, deep connotations and metaphors – all hidden under The Name of the Rose.*

Keywords: *postmodernism, metaphor, open work, intertextuality, reception.*

Introducere

Postmodernismul reprezintă un subiect, care a fost și este comentat pe larg și continuă să fie dezbătut, tocmai pentru că el definește starea generală prin care umanitatea trece în ultimele decenii. Realitatea postmodernă a societății este caracterizată printr-un labirint cotidian, printr-o fragmentare psihică, cauzată de o complexitate incoerentă, pe care omul nu o poate domina intelectual, un haos de care el nu este total conștient, dar care îl afectează, lovindu-se de el permanent. Situația aceasta se resimte la orice nivel – istorico-social, artistic, literar, indiferent de continentul de manifestare, în Statele Unite: Thomas Pynchon, în Canada: Margaret Atwood, în Europa: Umberto Eco, teoreticianul postmodernismului italian, Italo Calvino, Martin Amis etc.

În încercarea de a găsi un înțeles postmodernismului, Lyotard afirmă că acesta este „fără îndoială o parte a modernului”, continuă prin a spune că „o lucrare poate să devină modernă doar dacă este mai întâi postmodernă”, concluzionând: „Postmodernismul astfel înțeles nu este modernism către finalul său, ci o stare de naștere și această stare este constantă.” (Lyotard, 79) El nu reprezintă o negare absolută a ce s-a scris înaintea lui, nu se impune prin a adăuga reguli / strategii de compunere a unei lucrări, din contră,

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postmodernismul nu se ghidează după reguli bine prestabilite, el descătușează arta de reguli cu scopul de a atinge originalul, noul, sublimul în artă, el este un post avangardist al modernului, postmodernismul trebuie înțeles „conform paradoxului viitorului (post) anterior (modern).” (Lyotard, 81)²⁶

La Umberto Eco și în romanele sale, referindu-mă acum doar la opera narativă, nu și la cea critică, *Numele trandafirului / Il nome della rosa*²⁷ precum și *Pendulul lui Foucault / Il pendolo di Foucault*²⁸, situația se prezintă în cu totul altă lumină. Pentru Umberto Eco nu se pune niciodată problema superficialului, a subiectului tratat doar din dorința autorului de a se scrie despre el într-o revistă literară. Din contră, Umberto Eco pune problema din perspectiva experienței sale filosofice, teoretice, didactico-critice. Astfel, el reușește să îmbine povești bine spuse, împletite cu dezbateri pe probleme filosofice, pentru a scrie opere originale, de valoare estetică și literară, într-un limbaj uneori ermetizat prin metafore, deoarece prin ele naratorul spune adevărul. Tocmai de aceea, metafora „este văzută ca un instrument care permite să vedem lucrurile într-un mod diferit” (Thellefsen & Sørensen, 184), metonimii, sintagme filosofice, codate într-o limbă latină elegantă, puțin accesibilă în epoca noastră.

Dimensiunea postmodernă în scrierile lui Eco s-a manifestat de timpuriu, prin participările sale active la mișcarea literară și artistică italiană neoavangardistă, Grupul '63, unde și-a făcut noviciatul literar alături de alți critici și scriitori ai vremii, inclusiv mentorii Carlo Cassola și Giorgio Bassani. De aici, Umberto Eco își extrage teoriile pe baza cărora scrie și publică prima sa lucrare critică *Opera deschisă / Opera aperta*.²⁹ Cu această scriere, el pune în discuție, în estetica italiană și de aici în cea universală, conceptul de deschidere artistică a unei opere de artă, fie că aceasta este literară, picturală, muzicală sau fotografică.

Umberto Eco a sesizat, în mijlocul societății în care trăia, în literatura acelei perioade, în conceptele și teoriile dezbătute în cadrul grupului avangardist, că orice subiect, întâmplare, lucrare poate să fie interpretat, experimentat, discutat din mai multe puncte de vedere. El a observat că, așa cum oamenii interpretează sub influența propriilor lor experiențe orice văd sau aud, tot așa o operă, la rândul ei, poate să fie interpretată prin mai multe ferestre ca ale unui caleidoscop, combinându-se în multitudini de posibilități și nuanțe.

²⁶ Lyotard, Jean François, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Theory and History of Literature, Edited by Wlad Godzich and Jochen Schulte-Sasse, volume 10, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1984 (traducere personală)

²⁷ Eco, Umberto, *Il nome della rosa*, Ed. Valentino Bombiani, Italia, 1980.

²⁸ Eco, Umberto, *Il pendolo di Foucault*, Ed. Valentino Bombiani, Italia, 1988.

²⁹ Eco, Umberto, *Opera aperta*, Ed. Valentino Bombiani, Italia, 1962.

Astfel, acest concept de interpretare a sensului este privit ca un surplus informațional legat de subiectul operei, în care lectorul, privitorul sau ascultătorul devin prisme de receptare a informației.

Umberto Eco afirmă în *Opera aperta* că opera este creată într-o formă închisă de autor, iar receptorul este cel care o percepe și o deschide printr-o rețea de stimuli: „o situație existențială concretă, o sensibilitate condiționată în mod deosebit, o anumită cultură, gusturi, înclinații, prejudecăți personale, încât înțelegerea formei originare are loc într-o perspectivă individuală determinată” (Eco, 1969: 20). Doar câteva rânduri mai departe de citatul menționat, Eco reia ideea, sintetizând-o prin următoarea afirmație: „O operă de artă, formă încheată și închisă [sic!] în perfecțiunea sa de organism perfect dimensionat, este în același timp deschisă [sic!], oferind posibilitatea de a fi interpretată în cele mai diferite feluri (...) Orice consum este, astfel, o interpretare” (Eco, 1969: 20).

O altă carte, care tratează o problemă majoră a societății postmoderne, perioadă pe care încă o străbatem, este literatura de consum, raportul dintre autor și cititor într-o societate de consum, problemă dezbătută de Eco în cartea sa, *Lector in fabula*³⁰. Pe lângă teoria interpretării operei artistice, postmodernismul său se face simțit în opera narativă, unde nu a mizat pe cantitatea de romane, ci pe calitatea lor. El și-a susținut propriile teorii promovate în *Lector in fabula*, scriind cărți anti-literatură de consum.

Cele două teorii ale sale tratate în volumele menționate anterior, cărora le adaugă multe dintre trăsăturile postmodernismului, le aplică în primul său roman și în scrierile care i-au urmat: *Numeletrandafirului*, *Pendulul lui Foucault*, *Cimitirul din Praga / Il cimitero di Praga*³¹ etc. Umberto Eco afirmă că postmodernismul nu reprezintă doar o mișcare a istoriei culturii, ci el este, de fapt, o condiție definitorie a societății în care trăim. El este, de asemenea, o nouă etapă de revoltă, de reînnoire, de iluminare, de avangardă, de reclădire a ceva nou pe baze desuete, poate și o reinventare a trecutului, o readucere a lui în prezent, o rememorare a trecutului, ceea ce autorul încearcă și reușește să facă în *Numeletrandafirului*.

Povestea acestui roman este amplasată în perioada medievală a Italiei, în confuzia și tumultoasa perioadă istorică, pentru a servi drept decor unei intrigi pe alocuri polițistă, pe alocuri romanțioasă, dar care ascunde aspecte filosofice, estetice, și în care putem detecta o multitudine de trăsături postmoderne.

³⁰ Eco, Umberto, *Lector in fabula*, Ed. Valentino Bombiani, Italia 1979.

³¹ Eco, Umberto, *Il cimitero di Praga*, Ed. Valentino Bombiani, Italia 2010.

Istoria, reactualizarea ei, este prima și cea mai evidentă dintre trăsături. Povestea se desfășoară în 1327, la o abație din nordul Italiei. Până să ajungă să își familiarizeze cititorii cu intrigile povestirii, naratorul are grijă să ne facă o mică introducere în cadrul istoric al perioadei tulbure pe care o traversa Italia, cu Europa în acea perioadă a mișcărilor religioase, pentru ca cititorul să poată înțelege nu doar contextul istoric, dar să aibă și o perspectivă justă a desfășurării evenimentelor în funcție de mentalitatea vremurilor apuse, departe de înțelegerea omului de azi. Umberto Eco ridică din negura istoriei personaje încoronate în istoria omenirii: Clement al V-lea, cel ce „strămutase reședința apostolică la Avignon” (Eco, 1992: 13), Ludovic de Bavaria, „supreul conducător al imperiului” (Eco, 1992: 13), Filip cel Frumos și cruciada sa împotriva cavalerilor templieri, totul cu scopul de a recompune decorul în care urma să-și plaseze povestea.

Pe lângă acestea, pasajele în latină, care abundă în narațiune, deși îngreunează lectura unui cititor neavizat, au rolul de a reînvia o perioadă demult apusă, o cultură, o limbă, care deși considerate moarte, dau o autenticitate incredibilă poveștii și personajelor sale – călugării acelei perioade foloseau latina ca liant între uman și sacru, astfel, omisiunea folosirii limbii latine ar fi reprezentat o lipsă majoră din punct de vedere al esteticii romanului. Uzitarea limbii latine a avut ca scop și ridicarea din cenușa timpului a tradiției studierii limbii latine, care dă clasă nu doar unui roman, ci și unei persoane, studiu care ar trebui să se lărgească de la aria teologiei, la cea a lingvisticii și filologiei. Gestul lui Eco poate fi interpretat și ca o atenționare a celor în măsură de a decide curriculumul școlar al societății postmoderne, care tinde mai mult spre incultură și nonvaloare, decât spre cultură. Totuși, Umberto Eco dă o mână de ajutor cititorilor, lămurind pasajele din latină prin intermediul dialogurilor sau prin relatări parțiale ale esenței acestora. De exemplu, folosește cuvântul *kosmos* [sic!] pe care îl traduce imediat în text – „armonie” (Eco, 1992: 27) sau numele camerelor mănăstirii, păstrate în latină: *scriptorium* [sic!] (Eco, 1992: 469).

Fixarea în istorie a evenimentelor narate se stabilește și prin utilizarea frazei: „*Sao kekelle terre per kelle fini ke ki kontenete, trenta anni le possette parte sancti Benedicti* [sic!]” (Eco, 1992: 405), care, conform lui Florin Chirițescu, reprezintă un scurt fragment din Carta Capuana, primul document de la sfârșitul secolului al X-lea, care atestă apariția limbii italiene³².

³² Chirițescu, Florin, Cuvântul traducătorului, apud Umberto Eco, *Numele trandafirului*, Ed. Hyperion, Chișinău, 1992, pag. 474.

O altă caracteristică a narațiunii postmoderne este intertextualitatea, metanarațiunea, o trăsătură a mai multor scrieri ale lui Eco. De exemplu, în acest prim roman al său, el adoptă un stil arhaic, ce se pierde în negura istoriei, acest stil pune cititorul în fața unui text asemenea celui de tip medieval autentic, o cronică a acelor vremuri, prăfuit de ani, șters de prea multe lecturi. Poate limbajul trădează, uneori, dorința lui Eco de a reface perioada istorică, dar, altruist, acesta s-a gândit la cititorii săi, care ar fi întâmpinat probleme în descifrarea textului, care abundă în cuvinte din limba italiană veche sau din alte limbi, care mai apar inserate.

Stilul folosit, însă, dovedește veridicitate prin detaliile folosite: „am urcat din nou în *scriptorium* [sic!], de data asta pe scara de răsărit, care ducea și la catul interzis” sau „ne-am pomenit într-o altă încăpere, unde se deschidea o fereastră care, în loc de geamuri, avea plăci de alabastru” (Eco, 1992: 163). Eco reușește să reconstituie o epocă din Italia medievală atât de bine, încât cititorul are senzația că oricând poate să viziteze locurile prezentate în roman sau să vadă personajele cum se materializează în fața ochilor.

Intertextualitatea este prezentă nu doar din prologul cărții, adică din prima pagină, ci chiar din primul rând: „La început era Cuvântul și Cuvântul era de la Dumnezeu.” Pentru un roman a cărui acțiune are loc într-o mănăstire a anului 1327, nu este nimic neobișnuit ca începutul să fie un extract din Biblie și nu oricare, ci chiar primele cuvinte ale Cărții Sfinte. Un detaliu cu adevărat de reținut și menționat este faptul că la un moment dat naratorul ajuns la o vârstă înaintată, își manifestă dorința de a relata „pe piele” faptele uimitoare și înspăimântătoare pe care le-a trăit în tinerețe și pe care, până la acea vârstă, le-a relatat „repetând *verbatim* [sic!]” (Eco, 1992: 12). Relatarea experiențelor, poveștilor prin viu grai înseamnă începutul literaturii populare în perioada în care debutează povestea din roman, de care Eco nu a uitat și a ținut să o amintească încă de la început.

În nenumărate pagini ale romanului apar rescrieri ale unor texte ale literaturii vechi, trimiteri la diferite pasaje esențiale din cartea de căpătâi a călugărilor, Biblia, de exemplu versetele înscrise deasupra ușilor de intrare în bibliotecă, la marele Dante și în al său *Infern*, în scrierile lui Michele Psello despre acțiunile diavolilor, în mitologie – reprezentată de biblioteca abației, simbol al labirintului. Personaje istorico-religioase devin personaje în carte, iar cuvintele lor devin citate ale scrierilor sale, ca de exemplu, Michele din Cesena, fra Dolcino, etc. Confuzia intervine din cauza faptului că Eco amintește de multe scrieri cu o vechime considerabilă, pe care cititorul neavizat, cu ușurință le trece cu vederea. Ceea ce ar constitui o altă trăsătură a postmodernismului este și

trimiterea cititorului la alte scrieri pentru a înțelege pe deplin complexitatea precum și valoarea stilistică și literară a romanului *Numele trandafirului*.

Istoria – cheia sub care Umberto Eco ascunde faptele și misterele poveștii sale, mai degrabă decât să le reveleze – este slăbiciunea lui Eco, el o rememorează și o recompune ca un „arheolog cultural”, asemenea lui Barthes și Foucault (cf. Thellefsen & Sørensen, 191).

Numele trandafirului este scris la persoana întâi singular, evenimentele sunt relatate prin prisma unui narator, a unui singur personaj-martor, deci - așa cum ar fi firesc - obiectivitatea afirmațiilor sale ar trebui să fie pusă sub semnul întrebării. Totuși, o scriere ieșită de sub condeiul lui Umberto Eco ne rezervă mereu surprize. Povestea care debutează cu un pasaj din Biblie: „La început era Cuvântul și Cuvântul era de la Dumnezeu și Cuvântul era Dumnezeu. Aceasta era la început la Dumnezeu și datorită călugărului dreptcredincios este să repete în fiecare zi cu psalmodiantă umilintă și de-neschimbabilul fapt al cărui adevăr de nezdruncinat se poate afirma” se vrea o mărturie dreaptă, nepărtinitoare, nealterată de mintea omului, a celor întâmplătoare, iar povestitorul, umil călugăr - „un martor prin care să poată transpărea întâmplările petrecute” (Eco, 1992: 12). Naratorul însuși își recunoaște debilitatea de om, pradă judecății greșite, tocmai de aceea el ajunge să-și nege propriul rol în poveste, se neagă pe sine și îi cere lectorului să nu citească romanul cu scopul de a descoperi sensuri multiple ale poveștii în sine – un narator care i se adresează direct cititorului său, avertizându-l asupra palierelor sinuoase de interpretare, de înțelegere a sensurilor ce, uneori, poate să îi ducă, mai mult sau mai puțin voit, în eroare.

Acest roman tratează tema inițiativă a căutării continue de sine, a cunoașterii, a atingerii purității, a Graalului. Pentru personajele principale ale cărții: tânărul novice benedictin, Adso de Melk și mentorul său, William de Baskerville, Graalul este reprezentat de cartea lui Aristotel despre comedie, din nefericire pierdută pe vecie – ceea ce face ca *Numele trandafirului* să fie doar accidental un roman cu iz polițist.

Includerea romanului *Numele trandafirului* în categoria thriller-ului polițist, nu ar fi total incorectă, însă această catalogare nu definește îndeajuns de real specificul său. Să afirmi despre un roman de o astfel de complexitate narativă și simbolică, cu o deschidere pe mai multe niveluri interpretative că este doar un roman polițist îi diminuează dintr-o dată valoarea stilistică, i se pierde din bogăția de nuanțe și sensuri.

Concluzie

Numele trandafirului nu poate să fie descris printr-un singur cuvânt, ci printr-o sintagmă și nici așa nu i se acoperă multitudinea de semnificații, de aluzii, de ramificații prin mai multe domenii ale cunoașterii: istorie, religie, filosofie, limbă, literatură veche și enumerarea poate încă să continue. Însăși alegerea simbolică a trandafirului în titlul romanului nu este aleatorie. Conform lui Chirițescu „*trandafir* provine în limba noastră din neogrecescul *trandafillos*, adică treizeci de foi, de petale. Treizeci, adică multe, foarte multe, nenumărate – ca și sensurile cărții lui Eco”³³. Nu ar fi posibil să dezgolim de sensuri o asemenea scriere, un astfel de labirint semantic și simbolic.

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³³ Chirițescu, Florin, Cuvântul traducătorului, apud Eco, Umberto, *Numele trandafirului*, Ed. Hyperion, Chișinău, 1992, pag. 475

TRILOGIA UNIVERSITARĂ A LUI DAVID LODGE SAU ILUZIA UNUI ASEDIU

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Abstract: *I propose to discover the reality hidden in David Lodge's works and his manner to build a successful piece of writing. At first glance, his work is satirical. But later it can be seen that his work conceals the most varied processes that only a great theorist can combine with such craftsmanship. I will investigate the reader's role in David Lodge's works. In this paper I invite the reader to an incursion into the work of David Lodge, more specifically focusing on the University trilogy: Changing Places (1975), Small World (1984), and Nice Work! (1988). I chose these works because of the comic manner in which the University is deconstructed, demolished in the carnival style, under our eyes, its perfection destroyed. From here, there is born a fully-justified question: How can an illustrious university professor attempt to demolish the very institution to which he belongs? Was he able to gather so much resentment that he would destroy the citadel of writing by the very act of writing? And does this destruction mean self-destruction? And if, beyond this image of abolition, there is another reality, which is this reality and how does David Lodge succeed in creating it? He creates at least five novels dedicated to this theme. We will focus on the trilogy and discover the current image and the role of the University.*

Keywords: *university, (teachers) reader's role, irony, intertextuality, parody, interpretations.*

Introducere

Propunem spre studiu trilogia universitară a scriitorului englez David Lodge deoarece romanele sale sunt o invitație în culisele vieții universitare cu bune și rele. De fapt, tema principală a romanelor lui este Universitatea cu tot ce implică ea: statutul și rolul profesorilor și al studenților în societate, problemele financiare ale Universității, birocrăția, reducerea costurilor și urmările acestor măsuri, călătoriile profesorilor universitari pe tot mapamondul la diverse conferințe. Toată această țesătură densă are rolul de a menține vie atenția cititorului. Lui David Lodge³⁵ i s-a acordat premiul *Commander of the British*

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³⁵ Romanele pe care le voi analiza au fost premiate. *Schimb de Dame* a câștigat The Hawthorne Prize și The Yorkshire Post Fiction Prize. *Ce mică-i lumea!* a fost nominalizată în anul 1984 la premiul Booker Prize, iar *Meserie!* A fost Book of the Year în 1988.

Empire pentru activitatea literară în anul 1988, autorul remarcându-se în lumea literară și prin activitatea sa critică ca și prin dramaturgie. De asemenea, este cunoscut publicului ca scenarist pentru propriile romane dar și ale altor scriitori.

Postmodernismul a înregistrat prin trilogia universitară a lui David Lodge cel mai virulent atac asupra instituției *Universității* pe care un fost profesor universitar îl lansează. Universitatea are parte de un proces de defăimare fără precedent, cu atât mai eficient cu cât nu este un atac extern, ci unul controlat din interior, o adevărată implozie în urma căreia întregul edificiu se transformă în ruină. De fapt, trilogia este, sau cel puțin așa pare la prima vedere, dezvăluirea incendiară a unui profesor care ontologic aparține acestei lumi, pe care se pare că nu o mai suportă și se erijează în reformatorul ei. Totuși se naște o întrebare: această trilogie lodgiană e doar intertextualitate, comedie, carnavalesc, deconstrucție? Sau există și o *idee* mai profundă, ascunsă, pe care cititorul este chemat să o descopere și *care este de fapt cheia* care dezleagă misterul trilogiei? Trebuie să manifestăm prudență, deoarece textul opune rezistență cititorului și nu se revelează neapărat la prima lectură. Orice scriitor care se respectă strecoară un voal între cititor și înțelesul textului, acest lucru solicitând și momind lectorul.

Tonul adoptat de David Lodge este unul ironic, aducând în discuție toate prejudecățile celor din afara lumii academice. Faptul că acțiunea celor trei romane se desfășoară pe continente diferite demonstrează că nu avem de-a face cu un atac asupra Universității dintr-o anumită zonă, ci cu unul asupra Universității ca instituție la nivel global. De aici se nasc o serie de întrebări, una mai justificată decât alta, pe care cititorul este îndreptățit să și le pună: cum a fost posibil ca un profesor universitar să scrie astfel despre mediul în care a activat zeci de ani? Și dacă a văzut aceste lucruri de ce nu l-a părăsit? De ce a așteptat atât și abia după aceea a dat publicității situația din Universitate? Ce întâmplări trăite de el în cadrul acestei instituții l-au făcut să acumuleze atâtea resentimente?

Dar mai întâi cine este David Lodge? Născut la Londra în 1935, scriitorul englez a ocupat catedra de Teoria Literaturii la Universitatea din Birmingham din 1950 până în 1987, dedicându-se apoi în întregime scrisului. Romanele lui pot fi citite ca niște sinteze ale cursurilor de literatură, teorie literară, istoria literaturii, stilistică, pragmatică, lingvistică – pe scurt, aproape toate disciplinele implicate în studiul umanioarelor. Având în vedere înalta formare academică a autorului vom acorda o atenție deosebită lecturii romanelor, deoarece punctul de vedere al autorului nu îi poate rămâne indiferent cititorului. Lectorul este confruntat permanent cu faptul că un reprezentant important al lumii academice

engleze a scris într-un mod devastator, deconstruind imaginea mediului universitar. Textul este aproape oximoronic: academic și totuși împotriva *Academiei*.

Trilogia lui David Lodge acoperă o plajă largă de cititori, de la cel care caută aventură, la cel care apreciază literaturași până la criticul care caută metatext – toți își găsesc locul în universul lodgian. Chiar și istoricul literar se regăsește în text prin inserarea titlurilor unor opere aparținând patrimoniului universal. Autorul știe că reunirea cât mai multor cititori înseamnă că textul și-a atins ținta: a devenit un succes literar. Scriitorul englez alege să șocheze prin prezentarea lumii academice într-un mod cum n-o știm, n-o bănuiam și nu am vrea să fie. Autorul însuși a fost întrebat de ce a scris despre Universitate din această postură. A răspuns printr-o altă întrebare: credeți că aș fi atacat instituția din care am făcut parte atâția ani? Dar a lăsat cititorului misiunea de a găsi răspunsul la întrebarea care i-a fost adresată.

În loc de imaginea măreață a Universității avem o dezlănțuire de patimi oarbe, orgolii nemăsurate și vicii nedisimulate la cei care ar fi trebuit, așa cum se așteaptă societatea, să fie de un profesionalism și o etică impecabile: profesorii universitari. Textul lui David Lodge construiește un cititor model pe care îl va solicita la maximum din punct de vedere al cunoștințelor, experiențelor de viață și abilităților. Umberto Eco specifică faptul că cititorul model trebuie să fie în stare să conlucreze cu autorul în vederea actualizării textului în maniera în care scriitorul l-a conceput:

Așadar, va prevedea existența unui Cititor Model, capabil să coopereze la actualizarea textuală la fel cum gândea el, autorul, și să se manifeste din punct de vedere interpretativ la fel după cum el însuși s-a manifestat din punct de vedere generativ.³⁶

Textul lui David Lodge, având în vedere complexitatea în care a fost conceput, va crea „lecturi divergente” datorită intertextualității și mai ales interdisciplinarității, cititorii lui fiind obligați într-o manieră atrăgătoare să-și actualizeze *enciclopedia* așa cum bine observa Umberto Eco.³⁷ Aceste „lecturi divergente”, în cazul trilogiei lodgiene, sunt create, așa cum remarca I. A. Richards, de către autor sau cititor prin prisma lecturilor precedente: „(...) în orice (...) fel de comunicare, ambiguitatea poate să apară din pricina poetului sau a cititorului.”³⁸

³⁶ Umberto Eco, *Lector in fabula. Cooperarea interpretativă în textele narrative*, Trad. Marina Spalas, Ed. Univers, București, 1991, p. 87.

³⁷ *Op. Cit.* p. 82

³⁸ I. A. Richards, *Principii ale criticii literare*, Trad. Florica Alexandrescu, Ed. Univers, București, 1974, p. 200.

Deci avem o gamă largă de lecturi produse de această dată și de autor și de cititor. Legăturile dintre planul intertextual și cel interdisciplinar, alimentate de atitudinea ironică a autorului la adresa personajelor, complică interpretarea pe care cititorul trebuie să o dea textului, datorită efectului de consternare pe care textul în sine îl produce în mintea lectorului. Furtuna din mintea cititorului a fost proiectată de către autor cu scopuri precise, păstrate pentru finalul trilogiei. Latura tezigă a scriiturii lodgiene este bine împachetată, revelându-se abia la sfârșit.

Folosindu-se de trăsăturile specifice postmodernismului, enumerate de Ihab Hassan, David Lodge își creează personajele dar în același timp le și deconstruiește, demonstrând că lumea academică este formată din oameni vicioși, poate intelectuali, dar plini de defecte, fiecare dintre ei devenind un arhetip al slăbiciunilor umane. Vom începe studiul personajelor căutând latura lor pozitivă, pe care cititorul o presupunea, urmând să ne oprim asupra defectelor, la care nimeni nu se aștepta, dar care uimesc și contrariază.

Morris Zapp este arhetipul profesorului total, supracalificat, realizat deplin la 30 de ani, având recunoașterea academică internațională, având importante publicații – el e „vârful de lance” al acestor personaje ilustre. Tot ce ar fi dorit să realizeze un profesor universitar, el o făcuse deja, cariera lui era o dezvoltare explozivă într-o sfidare a timpului. Un alt geniu al lumii academice, dar în devenire, este Angelica Pabst care deși este tânără uimește pe toți ceilalți profesori cu vasta ei cultură și cunoștințele de teoria literaturii. În antiteză cu Morris Zapp este construit Philip Swallow, un profesor care nu are lucrări publicate și care ajunge șef de catedră doar prin intermediul primului, ocupând un loc pe care nu îl merita.

Cititorul este invitat să măsoare personalitatea și inteligența fiecărui profesor în parte, având în vedere că toți au destul de multe merite dar au și defecte care tind să le ștergă, să le anuleze calitățile. Textul e construit într-o antiteză permanentă. Unii dintre ei au realizări academice incontestabile, dar în viața privată sunt lamentabili, iar alții eșuează pe toate planurile, nereușind să se impună în campusul global. Morris Zapp, cel de la care ne-am fi așteptat la o etică pe măsura pregătirii intelectuale, dezamăgește prin faptul că își alege catedrele în funcție de banii care i se oferă, că nu îmbrățișează valorile familiei, că este un adept al sexului cu studentele, că își adaptează un discurs unic în funcție de temele conferințelor, că încalcă normele eticii privilegiindu-l pe Swallow în ocuparea catedrei de la Rummidge în detrimentul celui care ar merita-o. Nivelul realizării personale îl face de o comoditate și un pragmatism proverbiale. Ce poate să aștepte cititorul de la celelalte personaje dacă cel mai faimos dintre ele este ros de vicii și ambiții?

Dar autorul are o rețetă care îl face pe cititor să își continue lectura: parodia și provocările intelectuale – aluzii, citări directe din romane celebre, împrumuturi de personaje din operele altor scriitori, parafrazări ale unor opere sau ale unor replici de asemenea celebre. Toate aceste mijloace folosite de autor *îl citească* pe lector înainte ca acesta să citească textul. Trilogia lodgiană este de fapt un imens joc de cuvinte încrucișate aparținând literaturii pe care cititorul este chemat să le descopere pentru a-l completa. Astfel, fiecare cititor descoperă frumusețea textului după numărul de lecturi pe care le are. Și chiar dacă are un bagaj cultural modest se simte stimulat să caute (în biblioteci sau pe internet) referințe despre acele cărți sau opere. De asemenea, referințele livrate cu care textul este înțesat este o strategie auctorială de a coopta toate tipurile de cititori. Am considerat necesară această „paranteză”, pe care am intercalat-o în textul referitor la slăbiciunilor personajelor lui David Lodge, pentru a identifica metodele prin care autorul suscită atenția lectorului.

Rodney Wainwright, profesor universitar din Australia nu-și poate termina lucrarea pentru Conferința de Teoria Literaturii de la Ierusalim din cauza amintirii studentei Sandra Dix cu care avusese relații sexuale și a temerii că aceasta ar fi în stare să-l părăsească soției. Rudyard Parkinson este prolific în ce privește scrisul, dar este xenofob, arogant intelectual și atât de leneș, încât nu merge la toaletă, ci folosește o oliță de noapte pe care o ține la îndemână. Robin Penrose este hotărâtă să lupte cu ajutorul oricărui limbaj, chiar și cel de subsol, împotriva exploatării femeii sau a imaginii ei nude expuse în calendare ori pe pereții fabricilor. Dar și ea are două relații sexuale libere: una cu un student, alta cu un director de fabrică, căruia îi refuză cererea în căsătorie, considerând că e destul de puternică și nu simte nevoia unei căsătorii sau a unei relații de lungă durată. Ronald Frobisher este pornit să îi dea cu sticla în cap la o petrecere a scriitorilor de pe vasul *Annabel Lee* lui Rudyard Parkinson, care cu ani în urmă răsese de tatăl lui. Fiind obligat să părăsească vasul din cauza scandalului pe care îl provocase, acesta se răzbună dezlegând frânghia cu care era ancorat vaporul și lăsându-l să plutească la voia întâmplării. Persse McGarrigle nu reușește să își citească lucrarea despre influența lui T. S. Elliot asupra operei lui Shakespeare, deoarece este plagiat de profesorul german Siegfried von Turpitz, care poartă mereu o mânășă neagră pentru a crea efectul de automatizare, pretinzând că s-a rănit în timpul războiului. Profesorul Robin Dempsey se bate cu profesorul Josh Collins, care modificase programul *Eliza*³⁹ pentru a-i provoca

³⁹ Eliza este numele unui program cu ajutorul căruia calculatoarele puteau dialoga cu oamenii prin intermediul unor răspunsuri scrise, programate ca replici la o gamă de posibile întrebări adresate.

primului o stare de depresie. Iar profesorul Ronald Frobisher folosește un limbaj obscen împotriva lui Rodney Wainwright atunci când ultimul uitase microfonul deschis într-o emisiune radio difuzată și făcuse aprecieri negative la adresa primului. Sybill Maiden își părăsește fetițele gemene în toaleta unui avion și călătorește la toate conferințele scriitorilor pentru a se menține tânără. Arthur Kingfisher se autopropon pentru Catedra Unesco, fiind desemnat ca cel care trebuia să nominalizeze candidatul ideal, ceea ce demonstrează o încălcare flagrantă a eticii academice, mai ales că era nonagenar. Pe lângă autoproponere, mai era și încurcat cu asistenta lui, Song-mi Lee, între ei fiind o diferență de aproape șaiszeci de ani. Lui Howard Ringbaum i se interzice accesul în avioane deoarece a dorit să răspundă provocării lansate de alți colegi de a face sex în toaleta avionului și este prins.

Am exemplificat doar câteva din personaje și comportamentele lor, doar pentru a contura imaginea pe care David Lodge o propune cititorului despre actorii lumii academice. Însuși Morris Zapp oferă verdictul dat scriitorilor: „E adevărul adevărat. Romancierii sunt mincinoși care inventează. Denaturează. Fac din negru alb și din alb negru. Sunt niște creaturi lipsite de orice etică.”⁴⁰ Și totuși, tot Morris Zapp recunoaște că lumea a devenit un campus global datorită progresului tehnologic, și că mișcarea intelectualilor dintr-un spațiu în altul face ca universitățile mici, aproape necunoscute să devină gazde pentru „industria grea a intelectului”⁴¹, afirmație ce vrea să cuprindă cei mai mari profesori ai momentului la nivel global. Eminența cenușie a personajelor lodgiene face astfel o afirmație oximoronică, susținând că scriitorii sunt și mincinoși dar și intelectuali.

Dar această *industria grea* nu este imună, după cum am observat, la viciile prezente în societatea din care și ea face parte. Și totuși cineva trebuie să-și asume rolul de păstrător al ideii de etică. Dacă nu o face Universitatea cine altcineva ar mai pute-o face? Dacă în primele două romane ale trilogiei, *Schimb de dame* și *Ce mică-i lumea!*, Universitatea este supusă atacului pe toate planurile, în finalul celui de-al treilea, *Meserie!*, Universitatea își recapătă statutul de promotor al progresului în întreaga societate. Până acum textul a solicitat puternic cititorul cerând de la el să găsească *locus classicus* nu doar pentru cele trei romane, ci și pentru aluziile și intertextualitatea prezente în ele, ceea ce desigur este un efort intelectual considerabil, dar și o răsplată în sine. Matei Călinescu, citindu-l pe Roland Barthes în *A citi, a reciti*, evidențiază faptul

⁴⁰ David Lodge, *Ce mică-i lumea!*, Trad. George Volceanov, Polirom, Iași, 2011, p. 189.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 69.

că cititorul este deschizătorul textului și că acest lucru nu este o distracție ci o muncă recompensată:

A deschide textul, a instrumenta sistemul citirii lui (...) înseamnă (...) a ajunge la conștiința că nu există un adevăr obiectiv sau subiectiv al lecturii, ci numai un adevăr ludic; dar iarăși, prin „joc” nu trebuie să înțelegem distracție, ci un segment de muncă – din care însă orice urmă de osteneală a fost eliminată. (The Rustle of Language, p. 31).⁴²

Matei Călinescu vorbește despre rolul cititorului afirmând că fiecare cititor poate vedea aceeași operă, diferită la fiecare relectură, ceea ce generează după părerea lui crearea unei biblioteci în fiecare carte:

Pe scurt, asta va implica multe comparații și contrastări între tipuri de text și tipuri de lectură și de relectură, inclusiv între diverse posibilități de răstălmăcire și, mai periculos, de re-răstălmăcire. Dar o astfel de politică ludică a (re)citirii va încerca totodată să dea seama de hotărâta orientare centripetă ațintită spre text a lecturii.⁴³

Cititorul îi dă textului sens și valoare prin interpretare așa cum observă Umberto Eco în *Lector in fabula*. Cu alte cuvinte, prin lecturile sale cititorul îmbogățește textul cu un sens general, dar la nivelul și în planul culturii personalității sale, și cu sensuri particulare pe segmente de literatură, teorie literară, lingvistică etc. Revenind la trilogia lui David Lodge putem afirma că aceasta creează un cititor model de o vastă cultură, multivizionar și profesionist, care la rândul lui dă viață textului și fiecare recitare devine o nouă rescriere. De fapt recitirea este deosebit de importantă, mai ales la David Lodge pentru găsirea sensului trilogiei, având în vedere că imaginea Universității a fost distrusă.

Adevăratul final al trilogiei este episodul în care Robyn Penrose, reprezentanta Universității, și Victor Wilcox, reprezentantul industriei, reușesc să facă o economie considerabilă la o negociere cu industriașii germani de la care au achiziționat un utilaj. Această economie a fost posibilă datorită faptului că Robyn Penrose, profesor de teoria literaturii, știind limba germană, a ascultat conversația germanilor, fără ca aceștia să bănuiască nici măcar o clipă că ea ar înțelege ce vorbeau ei, iar ea l-a îndemnat pe Wilcox să negocieze mai mult prețul, deoarece germanii vor accepta. Industriașul englez nu cunoștea germana, dar a ascultat indicațiile profesoarei și astfel, economia engleză a câștigat douăzeci de mii de lire sterline.

Tot Robyn Penrose are o viziune utopică în care multe autobuze pline cu muncitori poposesc la Universitatea Rummidge și ajung să participe la viața

⁴² Matei Călinescu, *A citi, a reciti. Către o poetică a (re)lecturii*, Trad. Virgil Stanciu, Polirom, Iași, 2003, pp. 144-145.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, pp. 145-146.

academică împreună cu studenții și profesorii. Prin această utopie autorul arată că oamenii din toate păturile sociale au nevoie de protecția și beneficiile Universității, care devine *Catedrala lumii moderne*.

Concluzie

Aici începe reconstrucția Universității și reabilitarea tuturor profesorilor ei. Dacă până acum Universitatea era văzută ca fiind consumatoare de fonduri, iată că aici adevăratul ei rol începe să devină vizibil, ea fiind generatoare de fonduri și nicidecum consumatoare. Nu societatea ține în spate Universitatea, ci Universitatea poartă pe umeri societatea, deoarece ea este păstrătoarea și transmițătoarea științei și formatoarea specialiștilor în toate domeniile vieții sociale. Episodul din Germania, în care un profesor face o economie considerabilă pentru economia engleză, este cheia care descifrează întreaga trilogie. Profesorii universitari, așa plini de defecte cum sunt, reprezintă garanția și stabilitatea societății.

La o primă lectură, trilogia lui David Lodge s-a dovedit o operă de mare întindere narativă, dar de prea mică întindere semantică. La o citire mai atentă descoperim că David Lodge a practicat cu succes *deconstrucția*, termen conceput de Jacques Derrida. Imaginea *Universității*, care pare a fi ținta atacului lui David Lodge, este de fapt opera acestuia. El o reconstruiește dincolo de cortina defectelor de caracter ale profesorilor, mult mai măreață și mai impresionantă. Ea nu mai are în societate un rol printre alte instituții, ci devine *vioara întâi* în concertul vieții.

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DESPRE CUM ÎNCEPE UN *EU* SĂ FIE COPIL

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Abstract: *The article dwells upon Matei Călinescu's Portrait of M and J.P. Sartre's Words, showing how there are surprised events that shape a personality, which events in the case of M do not reach their target. This shaping is seen and analyzed, in the case of M by his father, in the case of Sartre by his own mature conscience over the years.*

Keywords: *autism, biography, ages, language, childhood, reception.*

Introducere

Când vine vorba despre multitudinea de euri din care suntem formați am în minte câteva din tablourile lui René Magritte, cum ar fi *Golconde*. Acolo, în perimetrul ramei, peste un peisaj citadin cade o ploaie de gentlemen identici. Același pictor are o serie de portrete peste chipul cărora suprapune diverse fructe, păsări sau pur și simplu reproduce ceafa personajului în cauză. Este metoda plastică prin care René Magritte redă imposibilitatea găsirii unui eu unificator. Rămânem aceiași într-o diversitate interioară în continuă multiplicare, mereu diferiți în fiecare ipostază a vieții. Ne aflăm în una dintre descrierile făcute de Adrian Marino (1921 – 2005) biografiei: “(...) recunoașterea principiului că orice *om* duce mai multe *vieți paralele* se dovedește de cea mai mare însemnătate pentru obiectul teoretic și practic al biografiei, scriere (gr. *graphien*) despre viață (gr. *bios*)⁴⁵”, văzută ca un câștig al modernității, în primul rând al dezvoltării psihologiei eului. Acestea fiind spuse, doar din comoditate, mulți dintre noi vom lăsa în seama scriitorilor de mistere sau a biografilor posibilitatea găsirii unui scenariu în care eul copil să se întâlnească cu eul matur, sau mai exact spus eul fizic cu eul creator, și să stea la povești, într-un frumos stil borgesian.

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⁴⁵ Adrian Marino – Dicționar de idei literare, vol I, A-G, pg 255

Matei Călinescu în *Portretul lui M*⁴⁶ reușește prin distanța pe care și-o asumă din rolul de observator care îi eclipsează rolul de tată al lui M, să surprindă trei vârste în formare (văzute prin prisma bolii ca trei paliere distincte) trăite de copilul autist, de cele mai multe ori nu concomitent așa cum ar fi trebuit. *Vârsta cronologică* – simptomatică și mereu cu doi pași în urmă față de vârsta cronologică a copiilor din jurul său, *vârsta intelectuală* – de multe ori în avans față de restul, cel puțin din perspectiva mnezică, și *vârsta emoțională* – cu particularitățile atât de imprezvizibile ale bolii. Nearmonizarea acestor trei vârste, văzute și ca trei euri distincte, oferă dramatismul atât de specific existenței autistului care, prin neconștientizarea propriei persoane, răsfrânge apăsarea psihică asupra celor din jur. Prin prisma acestei afecțiuni a fiului său, Matei Călinescu este pus în fața unui copil lipsit de forța protectoare a supraeului văzut ca un construct autoritar indispensabil formării de eu, a unui copil în care poate observa pe viu spasmele, de nedepășit în cazul lui M, ale formării unei personalități fiabile, a unui copil care anulează lumea înconjurătoare trăind-o exclusiv în interior.

Aceleași spasme sunt resimțite, mai mult sau mai puțin real, de Jean Paul Sartre în *Cuvintele*⁴⁷, atunci când se hotărăște să-și privească viața înapoi cu un ochi analitic. Făcând multe legături între evenimentele biografice și cărțile scrise de-a lungul timpului, aplecându-se de la înălțimea vârstei de șaiszeci de ani spre o analiză prea metodică asupra evenimentelor copilăriei, unghi de abordare care i-a adus multe critici, filosoful francez se dovedește a fi un scriitor interesant și prin biografie nu doar prin operă. J.P. Sartre rememorează greutatea cu care s-a desprins din mirajul *trăirii excesive a vieții interioare*, miraj în care M a fost captiv fără puterea de a ieși spre social: “descoperisem lumea prin limbaj (...) am considerat mult timp limbajul drept lume⁴⁸”. Asemeni lui M, copilul Sartre a fost un copil care se maimuțărea:

(...) când îmi amintesc astăzi de strîmbăturile acelea, înțeleg că ele îmi asigurau o protecție: contra fulgerătoarelor descărcări ale rușinii mă apăram printr-un blocaj muscular.⁴⁹

după spusele bunicii, excesiv, un copil care se juca mult de unul singur și care începea să descopere un mirific limbaj al lumii, un limbaj autosuficient pe care îl resimțea în toate zgomotele obiectelor înconjurătoare:

⁴⁶ Am folosit pentru această lucrare ediția Matei Călinescu – *Portretul lui M*, Ed. Humanitas, București, 2016.

⁴⁷ Am folosit pentru această lucrare ediția Jean Paul Sartre – *Cuvintele*, EPLU, București, 1965, trad. T. Dumitru.

⁴⁸ Ibidem p. 176

⁴⁹ Ibidem p. 111

La lăsarea serii, rătăcit într-o junglă de cuvinte, tresărind la cel mai mic zgomot, luând trosniturile parchetului drept interjecții, credeam că descopăr limbajul primitiv, fără oameni.⁵⁰

Spre deosebire de copilul M însă, copilul Jean Paul Sartre îi recunoștea limbajului exterior ce îl cuprindea și din care *tocmai ieșea*, forța socială tot mai impunătoare. Vocea mamei era cea care întrerupea patern, de multe ori brusc și *neplăcut*, reveria. În același timp declanșa conștientizarea ambientului, însoțită de o frustrare înfrânată: “cu câtă *decepție* regăseam banalitatea familială când mama intra și aprindea lumina”⁵¹.

Și aici copilul Sartre iar se desparte de copilul M: surprins în momentul confruntării cu un eveniment (pe plan interior la vârsta copilăriei orice eveniment este văzut ca o dramă) din procesul de creștere, își va cenzura *decepția* interiorizând-o și asimilând-o, trecând-o în constructul inconștient de personalitate, spre deosebire de M care, la cele mai mici presiuni exterioare intra în fazele de regresie ale bolii traduse prin “irascibilitate, refuză să răspundă întrebărilor sau îndemnurilor celor mai afectuoase altfel decât prin strigare.”⁵²,

Iată cum formarea limbajului, privind la cei doi copii, nu mai pare un lucru firesc și simplu. Nici unul din cei doi scriitori nu vede limbajul ca pe o simplă înșiruire de cuvinte legate între ele prin diverse reguli fonetice și gramaticale, mai mult sau mai puțin stricte. Limbajul include un permanent schimb de mesaje, verbale sau/și nonverbal sau puțința de a întui ceea ce interlocutorul ar vrea să spună dar nu poate în totalitate, pentru că limbajul nu este niciodată exhaustiv. În ambele cazuri copilul M este în dezavantaj, dezavantaj care vine ca o amputare a unui ceva esențial viețuirii:

El nu poate *citi* semnalele sociale: e, în fața lor, ca un analfabet care nu poate descifra numele de pe placa străzii pe care se află (...) E rătăcit. Analfabetul poate însă citi semnele sociale (poate interpreta corect semiotica gesturilor (...): e, cu alte cuvinte, *normal* pe când autistul (...) poate foarte bine citi literele și e un literalist. Cu mare greutate și după multe explicații poate înțelege ironia, metafora, analogia simbolică.⁵³

Atât la Matei Călinescu, din perspectiva - după cum spuneam - a observatorului, cât și la J.P. Sartre, din perspectiva persoanei direct implicate, este surprins puțin din vastul proces de formare al personalității. Surprinderea acestui proces în totalitate eșuează în ambele cazuri din motive diferite. În cazul

⁵⁰ Ibidem p. 66

⁵¹ Ibidem p. 67

⁵² Op cit p. 71

⁵³ Op cit p. 139

lui Matei Călinescu această neputință, camuflând sentimentul de rușine legat de felul cum credea că îl priveau cei din jur prin starea copilului, îl face ca, după confirmarea diagnosticului de autism a lui M, să își intituleze notițele cu un titlu patetic - *Caietul cu coperte îndoliate*. La rândul său, J.P. Sartre are un moment de confesiune când își recunoaște defectul fizic:

(...) frumoasele mele plete îi permisese să refuze evidența urâteniei mele. Încă de pe atunci ochiul meu drept începea să apună. Trebuia ca mama să-și mărturisească adevărul. Bunicul păruse el însuși complet înmărmurit: i se încredințase mica lui minune și adusese înapoi o broască râioasă⁵⁴

Motivul pentru care Sartre se află în imposibilitatea surprinderii procesului de formare în totalitate, stă în trăirea intensă și excesiv teatrală a măștilor pe care le tot probează: “nu mai puteam să ignor dubla mea impostură: mă prefăceam că sunt un actor care se prefăcea că este un erou.”⁵⁵

Drama formării personalității, care include drama limbajului și implicit a receptării (a citirii, a privirii etc.), este tratată de cei doi autori în operele menționate de pe două poziții diferite dar cumva complementare. J.P. Sartre este în măsură să dea în vileag inautenticitatea din comportamentul unui individ peste care s-au adăugat straturi de modele sociale care nu-i aparțin, îngropându-i pornirile naturale, iar Matei Călinescu are ocazia, filolog fiind, de a observa cum arată un astfel de individ lipsit de comportamentele stratificate, învățate, adăugate conștient sau nu, de mediul înconjurător (familie, școală, societate etc) *din cauza cărora*, se spune, omul se îndepărtează de natură. De aici poate se înțelege de ce la Matei Călinescu lipsește acea plăcere a întâlnirii cu timpul regăsit pe care Georgeta Horodincă o regăsea la autorul francez, și de ce J.P. Sartre devine critic față de transformările atât de firești ale copilului care era cândva. Oare dacă acest copil M ar lua ceva din personalitatea copilului S, ar ieși un Zacharias Lichter care să moștenească de la primul înclinația înăscută spre asocial iar de la al doilea permanenta tendință de autenticitate cu asperitățile ei comportamentale cu tot?

Ambii autori observă cum imaginația este un factor esențial în formarea personalității. Acesteia îi revine rolul de îmbinare și de permutare aplicat limbajului, cititului sau factorilor sociali, precum empatia sau asimilarea. Ea (imaginația) este spontană, puternică, abundentă la J.P. Sartre. Intenționalitatea chiar din miezul plâsmuirilor unui copil este hotărâtoare în economia formării omului matur, astfel vedem cum apare sentimentul ferm al lucidității:

⁵⁴ Op cit pp. 107-108

⁵⁵ Ibidem p. 141

În cursul galopadelor mele fantastice, tocmai *realitatea* (s.n.) era cea spre care ținteam. Când mama mă întreba (...) *Poulou, ce faci?* Mi se întâmpla uneori să calc legământul tăcerii și să-i răspund *Fac cinema!*⁵⁶

Această proiectare controlată a lumii interioare spre lumea înconjurătoare ajută la asimilarea lecțiilor naturale care vin spre copil.

Puterea acaparantă a imaginației nu stă doar în imaginile create și trăite de copil ci în povestea cu care vine, poveste care are rolul de liant între persoana în cauză și figurile plăsmuite. Fără această poveste actele imaginației devin o simplă imitație, ca în cazul lui M. Matei Călinescu observă cum jocul stârnit de imaginație există și la copilul său dar este lipsit de forța de atracție, chiar sterp, nu duce nicăieri, nu descătușează alte forțe interioare:

Remarcasem mai de mult la M, care împlinea atunci 11 ani, o anumită sărăcie a jocului imaginativ, deși doar parțial, căci într-un târziu ajunsese să-i placă, (...) să imite împreună (...) personajele văzute la televizor, să le imite însă doar verbal, *fără să construiască scenarii independente* (s.n.), acțiuni posibile ale unor asemenea personaje, narațiuni mai extinse. Cu toate că plină de voioșie, imitația era oarecum *mecanică* (s.n.), nu părea a deschide porțile imaginației⁵⁷

La Sartre, în schimb, cititul este o explozie de simțuri, o beatitudine nesfârșită, o înlănțuire de evenimente interioare, nelipsite totuși de o neliniște matură:

(...) mă duceam să regăsesc viața, *nebungia*(s.n), în mijlocul cărților. Îmi era de ajuns să deschid numai una ca să redescopăr o gândire inumană, neliniștită, ale cărei deșertăciuni și tenebre depășeau înțelegerea mea.⁵⁸

Personajele prind viață și își continuă aventurile sub ochii lui sau iau locul membrilor familiei, toate cu puterea de a fascina un copil aflat în formare. Dar sunt oare imaginile din cărți cele care fascinează sau ele nu ar avea nici o putere dacă nu ar fi investită de copil, dacă nu le-ar investi cu acel “simț narativ” despre care vorbește Matei Călinescu?

Principala lui dificultate, pe care o numisem “lipsă de simț narativ” era aceea de a integra ce citea într-un context. Problema lui ca cititor era că nu știa ce să aștepte, că nu ghicea (fie și greșit) ce va urma, că urmarea textul fără anticipări sau schimbări de perspectivă, că procesa informația serial și doar auditiv.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Op cit 140-141

⁵⁷ Op cit p. 110

⁵⁸ Op cit p. 62

⁵⁹ Op cit p. 111

Ceea ce îl fascinează pe Sartre în copilărie și îl impulsionează, ținându-l captiv la joacă ore în șir, pe M îl lasă indiferent, iar forța de captivitate în mrejele jocului tinde spre zero:

În prima copilărie îi plăcuse mult să i se citească povești cu glas tare, dar îi era greu să rezume ceea ce ascultase. (...) Să fi fost plăcerea lui fără legătură cu sensul *cuvintelor* (s.n.) și frazelor pe care le auzea?⁶⁰

Atât la J.P. Sartre cât și la Matei Călinescu sunt surprinse momentele de interferență ale multiplilor eurilor aflați în formare, chiar dacă la M se inhibă aproape instantaneu. Și aici putem aduce în discuție sexualitatea care la Sartre se formează poetic, iubirile luând corpul mamei fără a îndrăzni să gândească o apropiere fizică: „Iubiții se îmbrățișează și își făgăduiesc să trăiască în același pat (ciudat obicei: de ce nu în paturi alăturate cum făceam *noi* (s.n.), mama și cu mine?)”⁶¹, iar la M se află doar în fază incipientă, și nici atunci conștientizate: “M are câteodată - foarte rar - poluții în somn dar e altfel complet dezinteresat în materie sexuală. E de o castitate angelică”⁶². Aceste stingeri rapide ale personalității (înțelege bine dar uită repede) se răsfrâng și în folosirea doar a inițialei de-a lungul cărții, din care mai răzbate spre cititor și un foarte reținut sentiment de compasiune.

Vedem în aceste două cărți cum se dezvoltă eurile la doi copii distanțați de timp, de mentalități, de spațiu. Doar la unul eurile au o finalitate și posedă exprimări pliabile vieții sociale, la celălalt se zbat ca niște pești pe uscat scăpați din năvodul atotcuprinzător al personalității. Vedem eurile cum interacționează cu lumea și cum doar la unul se fac acele salturi calitative în care nu de puține ori ne recunoaștem și noi. Vedem cum ceva indispensabil dar imposibil de definit lipsește unuia.

Iată-ne ajunși în fața aceluia *simț narativ* care îi lipsea lui M. Suntem îndreptățiți să îl numim suflet sau spirit?

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⁶⁰ Ibidem p. 112

⁶¹ Ibidem pg 64

⁶² Op cit pg 207

**OUVROIR DE LITANIE POTENTIELLE?
LITANIE DE JEAN MESCHINOT / JACQUES ROUBAUD
ENTRE LA TRADITION DES CHANTS ROYAUX
ET CELLE DES LITANIES POÉTIQUES CONTEMPORAINES**

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***Abstract:** The subject of this article is the analysis of *Secondes litanies de la Vierge* (1991) by Jacques Roubaud, which unveils three types of relations in which these poems may be perceived: between the form of liturgical litany and the forme fixée of chant royal, between the rules of litany's creation and rules of potential literature, and between the liturgical litany and the poetic litanies written in the twentieth century. The main aim of the article is to represent the work of Jacques Roubaud as a sophisticated public response to the work of one of Grand Rhétoriciens, Jean Meschinot (1420–1491), author of *Litanies de la Vierge*. The contemporary poet reuses the content of old chants royaux as well the rules of the composition provided by Meschinot, and creates the work which fits into the range of contemporary poems, intended as the litany, but does not follow directly the path sketched by poets like Bonnefoy, Stéfan, and Claudel.*

***Keywords:** litany in poetry, litany of Loreto, litanic verse, Grands Rhétoriciens, Jean Meschinot, Jacques Roubaud, chant royal, potential literature.*

Introduction

Les personnes qui ont déjà dit la prière catholique des *Litanies de Lorette* au moins une fois et qui se saisissent des *Secondes litanies de la Vierge: Poèmes en lignes palindodiques de chants royaux composés par Jacques Roubaud, facteur oulipien et alamien* peuvent être surprises par l'absence, dans cette œuvre, des deux caractéristiques propres à la prière en forme de litanie⁶⁴. Nous

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⁶⁴ Bonifatius Fischer, « Litanies », in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, vol. IX (1976), pp. 865–872. La litanie comme la forme poétique est discutée dans: *Litanic Verse I: Origines, Iberia, Slavia et Europa Media* et *Litanic Verse II: Britannia, Germania et Scandinavia*, éd. par Witold Sadowski, Magdalena Kowalska, Magdalena Maria Kubas (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2016). Voir aussi André Maraud, « Litanies, rimes, refrain, » in *La répétition*, éd. par Slaheddine Chaouachi, Alain Montadon, (Clermont-Ferrand: Université de Clermont-Ferrand, 1994), pp. 181–202, p. 183: « la forme des litanies combine étroitement l'énumération (avec la succession des apostrophes) et la répétition (avec le retour de la supplication) ».

n’y trouvons ni la répétition visible dans la série d’invocations telles que « Mère du Christ, Mère de l’Église, Mère de la divine grâce, Mère très pure, Mère très chaste, [...] », ni la formulation inchangée de la supplication, répétée toujours à la suite de l’invocation, telle que « prends pitié de nous » ou bien « priez pour nous ». Certaines métaphores mariales très attrayantes sur le plan poétique apparaissent dans la litanie de Roubaud, comme par exemple « La Tour David »⁶⁵, mais sont très peu visibles dans ce texte dense, truffé d’épithètes. L’explication rationnelle de cette forme de la litanie de Roubaud, qui semble atypique à première vue, se trouve dans la préface où l’auteur nous explique « le principe qui régit ces compositions »⁶⁶. En se basant sur les manuscrits des années 1480–1620 où se trouvent des chants royaux consacrés à la Vierge Marie, l’auteur a sélectionné plus de 200 vers palinodiques. C’est avec ces vers qu’il a écrit *Secondes litanies de la Vierge*⁶⁷. En plus, il les a composées en respectant également les règles de l’écriture de la poésie ancienne, en prenant comme modèle le chant royal ainsi que des *vers estramps*. Dans sa préface Roubaud va jusqu’à mentionner la personne même de son propre précurseur: « j’ai entrepris de composer à mon tour des poèmes, représentant, en hommage à Jean Meschinot, mon illustre prédécesseur, de nouvelles “Litanies de la Vierge” »⁶⁸. Jean Meschinot est un poète du quinzième siècle appartenant au groupe « Les Grands Rhétoriqueurs ». La deuxième édition de son poème intitulé *Les lunettes des princes* de l’année 1494 comprend un recueil de ballades et une *Oraison à la Vierge* connue également sous le titre mentionné par Roubaud: *Litanies de la Vierge*. On peut donc dire que non seulement chaque vers des litanies de Roubaud est une citation de l’ancienne production mais aussi qu’elles en deviennent une citation dans leur intégralité car elles ont

⁶⁵ Jacques Roubaud, « Secondes litanies de la Vierge: Poèmes en lignes palinodiques de chants royaux composés par Jacques Roubaud, facteur oulipien et alambic », *La Bibliothèque Oulipienne*, vol. III, 1990, pp. 135–146, p. 143.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁶⁷ Cette idée reflète les remarques de Véronique Montémont, « Racines et floraisons: tradition poétique, poétique des traditions dans l’œuvre de Jacques Roubaud », *Cahiers du CRMLC: Poétique de la tradition, Poétique de la tradition* dir. par Constantinescu Muguras (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires de Clermont-Ferrand, 2006), pp. 91–101, p. 95: « Pour comprendre la démarche roubaldienne, il convient tout d’abord de faire un sort à deux idées reçues. La première voudrait que la forme poétique, parce que sa naissance se rattache à une époque où une esthétique donnée, coure le risque d’une obsolescence définitive sitôt sa vogue terminée. La deuxième idée, qui découle de la première, consiste, en reprenant le contresens examiné en préambule, à considérer tout retour à la forme comme un recul, voire une réaction, [...]. Comment faire, concrètement, pour échapper à ces deux écueils? L’une des réponses, qui est celle de Roubaud, consiste à repenser la forme. Compte tenu du fait que celle-ci est presque toujours subordonnée à une pluralité de critères définitoires, on peut envisager d’agir non pas sur un contenu littéraire, mais directement sur ces critères pour la rénover. »

⁶⁸ Voir aussi Jacques Roubaud, « Note sur les Litanies de la Vierge de Jean Meschinot » in *Change de Forme. Biologies et Prosodies* dir. par Jean Pierre Faye et Jacques Roubaud (Paris: Union Générale d’Éditions, 1975); Christelle Reggiani, « L’Oulipo et la poésie de la Renaissance », *Cahiers V. L. Saulnier: L’Expérience du vers en France à la Renaissance*, n° 30, 2013, pp. 215–223, p. 216.

été composées selon les règles d'un genre littéraire emprunté à l'époque prémoderne, qui n'est pas aussi répandu en poésie contemporaine⁶⁹ que, par exemple, le sonnet, un sujet qui concerne Roubaud⁷⁰. Ce témoignage de relecture de l'œuvre de Meschinot est donc en même temps un acte de la création de Roubaud et l'émergence d'une nouvelle très intéressante structure littéraire: litanie poétique contemporaine composée avec les vers et les règles anciens. Quant à Meschinot, c'est aussi le témoin de la capacité de son œuvre de susciter une égale réaction créatrice.

Secondes litanies de la Vierge sont composées d'une courte introduction en prose et de quatre poèmes. Les poèmes I et III sont l'objet de mon analyse dans cet article car ils sont représentatifs du genre du chant royal. On les analyse selon trois types de relations établies entre les genres littéraires et différentes époques. La première est la relation entre la litanie et le chant royal qui nous conduira dans le passé, jusqu'au quinzième siècle. La deuxième est celle existante entre la litanie et la littérature potentielle, qui pourrait, en apparence, ne concerner que le vingtième siècle exclusivement, alors qu'en réalité elle attirera notre attention quelques siècles en arrière. Enfin, dans la troisième catégorie de relations, on confronte les litanies de Roubaud aux autres compositions contemporaines de ce genre dans la poésie. En appliquant cette méthode on recherche les règles de base qui ont influencé le phénomène de la préservation, ou bien de la disparition significative des caractéristiques propres au genre de la litanie dans les *Secondes litanies de la Vierge* de Roubaud.

I. Chant royal

Dans sa préface, Roubaud attire l'attention du lecteur avant tout sur les caractéristiques de la forme fixée du chant royal telles que les vers palinodiques. Nous proposons toutefois de procéder à une étude plus détaillée de cette forme poétique⁷¹. Au cours de mes recherches sur les poèmes en forme de litanie, j'en ai trouvée plusieurs chants royaux dans lesquels on peut remarquer l'inspiration de forme propre à la litanie, comme chez Jean Marot, dans *Chant Royal digne d'estre escript en tableau soubz la pourtraicture de IESUCHRIST ayant la*

⁶⁹ Voir par exemple Yanette Delétang-Tardif, *Chants royaux* (1956) ou Yvonne Ferrand-Weyher, *Huit poèmes sous forme de chant royal* (1931).

⁷⁰ Voir aussi Jacques Roubaud, *Quasi-cristaux: un choix de sonnets en langue française de Lazare Carnot (1820) à Emmanuel Hocquard* (Paris: éditions Martine Aboucaya et Yvon Lambert, 1998); *Quasi-Cristaux*: <http://blogs.ouliipo.net/qc/choix-premiere-partie/prologue/>.

⁷¹ Lorna Stewart, «The Chant Royal, a Study of the Evolution of a Genre», *Romania*, 96, 1975, p. 481–496; Gérard Gros, *Le Poème du puy marial: étude sur le serventois et le chant royal du XIV^e siècle à la Renaissance* (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1996).

couronne d'épines sur la teste, tenant un roseau en sa main, et assis tout nud sur sa croix (publié en 1536)⁷², *Chant royal de la plus belle qui jamais fut au monde* de Catherine d'Amboise (écrit entre 1516 et 1530), ainsi que *Suite de chants royaux sur le Concept de la Vierge* de Jean Auvray (publié en 1634). Plusieurs de ces textes sont des poèmes mariaux, ce qui les rapproche de l'œuvre de Roubaud.

Avant de commencer l'analyse courte de ces textes, il faut souligner la ressemblance entre les caractéristiques générales de la litanie et celles du chant royal, qui appartient au type des œuvres solennelles. La litanie qui fait partie de la liturgie peut être dite en cours de procession comme pendant la célébration de la messe à l'église. Quant au chant royal, il est intimement lié à la vie du palais, de la cour royale par exemple. Leur caractère solennel est dû à l'identité du destinataire auquel ils s'adressent, Dieu ou les saints dans la litanie, et les grands seigneurs dans le chant royal. Il ne faut tout de même pas, en se basant sur ces caractéristiques, tirer la conclusion que le chant royal appartient uniquement au monde laïque en établissant une opposition *sacrum-profanum* entre les deux genres qui nous intéressent.

Comme le remarque Daniel Poirion, on trouve dans le chant royal des passages avec des prières et son contenu religieux s'affirme également comme une de ses principales caractéristiques: « [...] le chant royal, non calqué sur une *amoureuse*, servira normalement de cadre à la prière, non seulement dans les puits de Dieppe et de Rouen, mais aussi dans la poésie de cour [...]. Le thème religieux reste donc normalement associé à cette forme »⁷³. Dans la litanie, les destinataires ne sont pas invoqués avec la même fréquence que dans le chant royal. Ainsi, dans la litanie les prières leurs sont adressées dans chaque vers sans exception, alors que dans le chant royal une apostrophe dans l'*envoi* suffit. Pourtant les invocations adressées aux différentes instances apparaissent parfois aussi dans d'autres strophes, comme nous le verrons dans certains exemples. La litanie n'est, bien évidemment, pas enfermée dans une obligation de structure strophique ou rythmique. Cependant la formule de supplication inchangée crée un rythme monotone, donnant un effet proche de rimes exactes ou monorimes. Le refrain dans le chant royal est présent mais n'apparaît que rarement,

⁷² Voir aussi: Magdalena Kowalska, *Litanic Verse III: Francia* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2018), p. 167–169. Il est intéressant d'évoquer dans ce contexte Jacques le Lyeur et son poème *Salut te rend Vierge sans vilité*, dans lequel les titres mariaux sont précédés par des invocations de salutation répétées dans le premier vers de chaque strophe ainsi que dans les refrains latins entre les strophes: *Ave pia humilitas, Ave vera virginitas, Ave preclara omnibus*.

⁷³ Daniel Poirion, *Le Poète et le prince: l'évolution du lyrisme courtois de Guillaume de Machaut à Charles d'Orléans* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1965), p. 364.

seulement après le dixième vers de chaque strophe et le schéma des rimes est *ababbccdede*, comme le rappelle Roubaud dans sa préface. Les chants royaux pouvaient être dialogiques et le dialogue entre celui qui guide la prière et les fidèles est inscrit dans le schéma de la litanie religieuse, mais on ne traitera pas plus largement de cette problématique car aucun des chants royaux inspirés de la litanie n'emploient le dialogue, comme c'est le cas dans la plupart des litanies poétiques issues de différentes époques, y compris celle de Roubaud.

Pour commencer cette analyse, il est intéressant de faire ressortir les caractéristiques principales des *Secondes litanies de la Vierge* en tant que le chant royal que nous définirons paradoxalement par « l'absence »: le manque d'*envoi* et des lignes palinodiques. Ainsi, ces poèmes sont composés de cinq strophes, chacune d'elles de onze vers. L'auteur a donc gardé le onzième vers, bien qu'il ne soit pas le refrain. Dans le poème numéro I, il a gardé non seulement le schéma des rimes, mais aussi les mêmes mots aux mêmes emplacements. Ainsi, par exemple le rime *a* dans toutes les strophes tombe sur le mot « grace », le rime *b* dans le deuxième vers de chaque strophe c'est le mot « belle » – également dans le cinquième vers de la dernière strophe – et les rimes *ede* sont une suite de « vie »-« gloire »-« vie » dans toutes les strophes, à l'exception de la dernière. Roubaud n'introduit pas de refrain et n'utilise les verbes que dans les propositions subordonnées. Ces deux caractéristiques font que les chants royaux dans *Secondes litanies de la Vierge* se présentent comme des poèmes de structure figée, avec une narration très dense qui n'induit pas de tension émotionnelle. Ils ne décrivent pas, non plus, d'histoire dont l'action se développerait dans une séquence donnée. Chaque vers constitue un nouvel élément de cet ensemble dominé par les métaphores mariales. Les deux analyses présentées ci-dessous répondront à la question suivante: comment cette forme d'énumération de la litanie mariale s'inscrit-elle dans le contexte de l'époque d'où proviennent des vers des *chants royaux* utilisés par Roubaud?

Le *Chant royal de la plus belle qui jamais fut au monde* de Catherine d'Amboise est, comme cela a déjà été dit, une œuvre mariale qui utilise le modèle de la litanie. Il est tout de même paradoxal que le caractère marial de ce poème n'ait pas comme conséquence l'utilisation du modèle de la litanie mariale, même si la ligne palinodique de ce chant royal qui s'inscrit dans la stylistique est créée par Roubaud: « La plus belle qui jamais fut au monde » s'adresse à la Vierge Marie, la composition de ces strophes rappelle également le modèle d'une autre litanie, la plus ancienne, *Litanies des Saints*. Lors du déroulement du poème, on enchaîne en fait les invocations aux différentes instances: « Anges, Trônes et Dominations, / Principautés, Archanges,

Chérubins », « Carmes dévots, Cordeliers, Augustins »⁷⁴ etc., que l'on implore de saluer la Vierge Marie le plus dignement possible. C'est surtout la quatrième strophe où les demandes commencent à être construites toujours avec le même verbe – « venir » – qui fait penser à la répétition de la formule de la supplication de la litanie. Le trait distinctif entre le chant royal d'Amboise et la litanie de Roubaud c'est, sans doute, la dynamique de ce poème, construit pour une multitude de destinataires. C'est également l'énergie exprimée par les nombreuses prières qui leur sont adressées, ainsi que la concentration dans certains fragments des épithètes qui nomment les vertus de la Vierge Marie en omettant les substantifs: « Toute belle pour le tout beau des beaux, / Toute clère, necte, pudique et monde, / Toute pure par dessus tous vesseaulx».

Suite de chants royaux sur le Concept de la Vierge d'Auvray est composée de plus de dix chants royaux. Dans ces strophes, le poète a consacré davantage de place aux titres mariaux que ne fait d'Amboise, mais, comme elle, il adresse les apostrophes et les *envois* à de nombreuses et différentes instances, par exemple aux « Cedres, Sapins, Ciprez, Planes, Yeuses », à Dieu, ou bien au prince. Une partie de l'*envoi* en forme de ligne palindromique: « Le Cube ferme en la Rondeur mobile » ressemble également à la stylistique de Roubaud:

O Sainte Vierge entre les vicieuses,
Port de salut en syrthes perilleuses
Colonne stable en freste fondement,
Temple assuré sur un sable fragile,
Je vous adore, & nomme saintement
Le Cube ferme en la rondeur mobile.⁷⁵

L'accumulation de plusieurs représentations métaphoriques de la Vierge Marie rappelle la litanie de Roubaud, mais la dernière partie de ce fragment fait ressortir une importante caractéristique distincte des chants royaux d'Auvray, notamment une présence très marquée du « je » lyrique ou encore des aveux personnels du poète: « je veux chanter », « je veux nommer ». Il évoque aussi « mes comparaisons », « mes vers », etc. Ces techniques font des chants royaux d'Auvray des textes de facture très diversifiée, dans lesquels les invocations, les descriptions et les aveux personnels créent des sauts de tension absents dans les chants royaux de Roubaud pourtant soumis au même principe.

⁷⁴ Catherine d'Amboise, *Poésies* (Montréal: CERES, 2002), p. 71.

⁷⁵ Jean Auvray, *Les œuvres saintes du sr Auvray: desquelles la plus grande partie n'ont encore stéveuësny imprimées* (Rouen: David Ferrand, 1634), p.15.

Ces deux exemples de chants royaux à caractère marial confrontés au texte de Roubaud nous font prendre conscience d'une caractéristique importante des lignes palindodiques. Non seulement, elles contiennent un substantif et une épithète, ou bien uniquement une épithète sans son sujet grammatical, mais elles peuvent encore contenir un nom au génitif – cas possessif, de qui ? de quoi ? comme dans « la Reine des Cieux » et « la fille d'Adam » – un complément circonstanciel de lieu et des propositions subordonnées. Tous ces éléments composant le titre marial font qu'il soit plus détaillé, mais le rendent en conséquence plus long. En soumettant à l'analyse le dernier fragment du passage cité, nous voyons que les formulations: « Port de salut » ou « Colonne stable » auraient été suffisantes comme invocations dans une litanie mariale, comme c'est le cas aussi dans le texte de Roubaud: « La forte armée » ou bien « Le clair miroir », et pourtant le poète les complète encore: « en syrthes perilleuses », « en freste fondement », « en triomphe de gloire », « ou Dieu montre sa grace ». Dans les plus anciennes versions des litanies à la Vierge Marie, les titres mariaux simples sont le plus souvent des formulations laconiques dépourvues de larges descriptions⁷⁶. L'exigence de la versification du chant royal oblige donc les poètes à compenser par un ajout qui n'est pas en corrélation avec la caractéristique essentielle propre à ce type de litanie.

II. Littérature potentielle

Roubaud, qui a créé la litanie mariale en utilisant les méthodes d'analyse combinatoire, n'a pas été le précurseur de ce type d'entreprise, on peut dire qu'il en a eu le « plagiaire par anticipation »⁷⁷, c'est-à-dire Jean Meschinot. Le sous-titre de sa prière annonce: *Oraison qui se peut dire par huit ou seize vers, tant en rétrogradant que aultrement, tellement qu'elle se peut lire en trente-deux manières différentes et plus, et à chascune y aura sens et rime, et commencera tousjours par motz differentz qui veult*. Le poème est composé de huit vers de dix syllabes, comportant une césure après la quatrième syllabe:

D'honneur sentier, confort sûr et parfait,
Rubis chéri, saphir très précieux,
Cœur doux et cher, support bon en tout fait,
Infini prix, plaisir mélodieux,
Éjouis ris, souvenir gracieux,

⁷⁶ Cf. *Venezianische Litanei* et *Lauretanische Litanei* présentées par Gilles Gérard Meersseman, *Der Hymnos Akathistos in Abendland*, vol. 2, (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1960), pp. 214–229.

⁷⁷ Jacques Roubaud, « Vers une oulipisation consécutive de la littérature », *La Bibliothèque Oulipienne*, vol. III, 1990, pp. 85–119, p. 87.

Dame de sens, mère de Dieu très nette,
Appuis rassis, désir humble joyeux,
M'âme défends, très chère pucelette.⁷⁸

Meschinot suggérait que l'on puisse dire la prière en huit ou seize vers, qu'il suffisait pour cela de couper chaque vers après la césure. Grâce à cette opération on obtient huit vers de quatre syllabes et huit vers de six syllabes. Rien ne nous empêche non plus de lire le poème en inversant l'ordre de lecture et de commencer par le dernier titre marial pour finir par le premier. On peut également permuter la deuxième partie du premier vers à la place du quatrième et le poème gardera toujours sa composition de huit vers et de dix syllabes. À l'époque, on a estimé le nombre de permutations possibles à 32. La Borderie, 400 années plus tard, à la fin du dix-neuvième siècle, a vu ici la possibilité d'obtenir 254 litanies puis, au vingtième siècle, dans les années 70, Paul Zumthor en a d'abord obtenu 365 puis Jacques Roubaud 3 548 944 textes⁷⁹. Il faut souligner, dans le cas de ce dernier auteur, que le résultat obtenu a été très élevé; pour y arriver le poète a changé non seulement l'ordre des hémistiches mais aussi celui des mots⁸⁰.

Oraison à la Vierge– cette œuvre ancienne si intrigante, représente pour Roubaud un patrimoine dont il se saisit consciemment. Nous ne pouvons tout de même pas dire que sa façon de comprendre le principe de la composition de la litanie dans *Secondes litanies de la Vierge* est la même que chez Meschinot.

En premier lieu, Meschinot donne au lecteur la version initiale du poème, en proposant des versions supplémentaires; c'est le lecteur qui est obligé de les créer par lui-même. Ainsi, avec les éléments d'un seul texte, il en naîtra plusieurs. Roubaud, quant à lui, utilise de nombreux textes pour créer un seul poème. Les compétences du chercheur et du poète fusionnent en un procédé de création au cours duquel il réserve au lecteur un seul rôle, celui du récepteur.

Le deuxième point, aussi important que le premier, concerne le statut du texte. Pour Meschinot ses litanies sont une prière, il utilise dans son titre le mot « oraison ». Il reste que le problème de la différenciation entre la prière et la simple liste des titres mariaux fait toujours question entre les chercheurs. Un détail joue un rôle déterminant par la présence d'une supplication dans la

⁷⁸ Édouard Le Marant de Kerdaniel, *Un soldat-poète du XV^e siècle. Jehan Meschinot* (Paris: Jouve et cie, 1917), pp. 112–113.

⁷⁹ Gérard Gros, *Le Poète marial et l'art graphique: étude sur les jeux de lettres dans les poèmes pieux du Moyen âge* (Caen: Paradigme, 1993), p. 95.

⁸⁰ Aujourd'hui de nouvelles litanies sont générées par exemple sur le site officiel de l'Atelier de Littérature Assistée par la Mathématique et les Ordinateurs: <http://www.alamo.free.fr/programmes/litanies-x.html> ou via le site <http://permutations.pleintekst.nl/> [consulté le 18 Janvier 2018].

version initiale visible dans le dernier vers: « the form corresponds not to any fixed poetic genre, but rather to the liturgical form of the litany, and it has the two elements present in this form, praise and entreaty »⁸¹. Roubaud donne un titre parfaitement identique à celui de la prière. Peut-on pour autant affirmer sans hésitation que le caractère de sa composition soit le même que celui de la prière? Dans son introduction, le poète n'indique pas la possibilité de comprendre son œuvre de cette manière. À l'inverse, il souligne à plusieurs reprises une autre possibilité :

Les lignes palindodiques constituent chacune **une définition** mesurée de cet éminent personnage. Leur ensemble ne manque pas de frapper par la potentialité eggzuberante (sic) [...] que manifestent, comme il est naturel, des **énoncés définitoires** quasi axiomatiques [...]. Mon Œuvre n'est pas achevée. J'aurais voulu, c'était mon intention initiale, lui donner la forme d'un Chant Royal. Malheureusement, mes données sont insuffisantes à fournir la quantité de rimes indispensables à la fabrication d'un tel poème [...]. Peut-être s'agit-il là d'une impossibilité de nature, puisqu'un Chant Royal ainsi achevé réaliserait, en quelque sorte, **une sorte de Définition Transcendantale de la Vierge**, ce qui sans doute ne se peut envisager.⁸²

La mise en relief de l'importance de la recherche de la définition, une sorte de mission afin de trouver le secret d'un texte, nivèle non seulement le message de caractère supplicatoire de la prière mais également de caractère élogieux, qui sera délicatement suggéré dans les mots : « cet éminent personnage ». La compréhension de la litanie semble être plus proche de traités sur le nom de la Vierge Marie⁸³. Cependant, en poursuivant cette piste nous rencontrons le phénomène de « la prière énumérative » décrit par Suzanne Thiolier-Méjean:

Il s'agit, pour l'orant, d'un moyen d'influencer la divinité en sa faveur par une sorte de litanie à l'effet magique selon un procédé qui remonte, au moins, à l'Antiquité, et dont la tradition s'est maintenue dans la poésie chrétienne. [...] Le procédé de l'énumération [...] trouve ses racines profondes dans la croyance attachée au pouvoir du nombre et de la répétition.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Leonard W. Johnson, *Poets as Players. Theme and Variation in Late Medieval French Poetry* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 99.

⁸² La mise en relief par l'utilisation des caractères gras est opérée par l'auteure de cet article. Roubaud, « Secondes litanies de la Vierge », pp. 137–138.

⁸³ Par exemple *Tractat dels noms de la mayre de Dieu* (publié par Paul Meyer, 1880).

⁸⁴ Suzanne Méjean-Thiolier, *L'archet et le lutrin: Enseignement et foi dans la poésie médiévale d'Oc* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008), p. 311. L'auteure évoque l'énumération « des actes et des miracles de Dieu, ou des étapes de la Passion du Christ », « des épisodes de l'Histoire Sainte », « des miracles », « des prodiges et des noms divins ».

Les chants royaux de Roubaud semblent reposer précisément dans la force des chiffres et paraissent être très limités par les dimensions de la strophe, des vers, des syllabes; cependant l'absence de lignes palinodiques annonçant la fin de la strophe, ainsi que de l'*envoi* annonçant la fin du poème font que nous puissions nous imaginer l'infinitude des combinaisons des vers proposés.

La troisième problématique qui met en relief la différence entre le texte de Roubaud et à la prière de Meschinot est la longueur des invocations: Meschinot introduit deux invocations à l'intérieur d'un seul vers de même longueur que celui de Roubaud. Ce problème a déjà été abordé dans la partie dédiée au chant royal. Nous pouvons donc en conclure que Meschinot conserve la concision naturelle des titres mariaux. Dans *Secondes litanies de la Vierge* il arrive rarement que deux titres mariaux voisinent au cœur du même vers et ce voisinage se produit différemment chez Meschinot. Le plus souvent, les titres sont liés par la conjonction « et »: « Le pelican et l'humble tourterelle », « L'arche de paix et vray tresor de grace ». On retrouve cette conjonction de coordination dans d'anciennes litanies mariales de la liturgie, mais ce n'est généralement pas le cas dans les situations où seuls deux titres sont énumérés⁸⁵.

Le point de convergence entre le texte de Meschinot et celui de Roubaud tient à la liberté dont ils usent dans la manière de construire l'ordre des vers et leur succession – dans les limites du schéma rythmique de ce genre littéraire. Elle se manifeste à travers les différentes possibilités de composer des versions alternatives du texte comme à travers la manière de situer le vers à un emplacement qui ne lui a pas été initialement destiné. Il est alors intéressant de s'interroger pour savoir si ce principe est en accord avec les règles de construction de la litanie. Selon une opinion souvent répandue, il semble que chacune des invocations de la litanie peut être récitée librement sans respecter un ordre particulier. Du point de vue de la grammaire, les invocations ne sont pas des phrases conventionnelles et elles ne décrivent pas l'histoire qui se déroule dans le temps⁸⁶. Cela concerne tout particulièrement les litanies adressées à une seule instance: ainsi dans les *Litanies des Saints*, le fait de mentionner le nom de St Pierre dans la partie où l'on invoque les patriarches, et le nom de Moïse dans celle où l'on invoque les apôtres, pourrait provoquer des

⁸⁵ Voir « Letania de beata Virgine » (Meersseman, *Der Hymnos Akathistos in Abendland*, p. 238): l'invocation « S.M., templum Spiritus sancti, celorum regina, imperatrix clarissima » contient quelques titres énumérés sans la conjonction de coordination, mais dans les titres qui les suivent on utilise le « et »: « S.M., fons dulcedinis, mater misericordie, mater eterni principis et mater nostre fidei. »

⁸⁶ Voir Witold Sadowski, *Litania i poezja* (Warszawa : Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2011), chapitre 2.1. *Genotyp i stereotyp*, p. 72. Pour l'analyse de l'aspect temporel voir aussi: Magdalena Kowalska, « “Certainement le siècle ainsordenée”. Le plan des litanies poétiques médiévales » *Analele Universității din Craiova. Seria Filologie. Limbi și literaturi romanice* 19 (2015), no. 1, pp. 223–236.

controverses quant au changement d'ordre, en même temps que le changement d'ordre entre « Miroir de justice » et « Siège de la sagesse » pourrait ne pas être perçu. Certaines suites d'invocations sont cependant groupées autour de l'épisode de la Passion de Jésus-Christ, comme dans les *Litanies du Sacré Cœur de Jésus*, ou encore en ce qui concerne les étapes de la vie de Jésus, comme c'est le cas dans la deuxième partie des *Litanies des Saints* qui font également partie des *Litanies du Saint Nom de Jésus*. En mode d'invocation, Witold Sadowski propose une métaphore intéressante, qui utilise également l'aspect d'infinitude, déjà abordée lors de notre réflexion sur le chant royal comme une forme de définition de la personne de la Vierge Marie:

La litanie se développe dans l'infinité, mais ce n'est pas l'infinité des étapes qui se succèdent en ligne droite, mais une infinité de rayons issus d'un centre commun. Chaque élément nouveau de la litanie ne prend pas position à la fin de l'énumération, car la fin n'existe pas, mais se révèle entre les éléments déjà exposés comme une autre feuille de l'éventail infini.⁸⁷

Pourrait-on déduire que dans la version initiale des poèmes de Meschinot et de Roubaud, la construction du tissu poétique dans chacune des strophes est intentionnelle? Ou bien cela résulte-t-il peut-être, tout simplement, du fait d'opérer un choix de lignes seyantes au schéma, sélectionnées automatiquement parmi d'autres possibilités de choix? Cette question met dans l'embarras les interpréteurs. Il est impossible de ne pas remarquer l'unité thématique des lignes « Rubis chéri, saphir très précieux », qui sera détruite par la rupture du vers après la césure et l'introduction d'hémistiches décrivant des pierres précieuses dans d'autres vers. Ce qui étonne également est que la seule supplication du poème de Meschinot apparaît dans le dernier vers mais pas dans le dernier hémistich. Cependant ce dernier hémistich intrigue également car il comporte une allusion à la virginité de Marie. Elle apparaît suite à la révélation qui fait d'elle la mère de Dieu. On observe le même ordre des révélations dans d'autres textes comme les *Litanies de Lorette*. De même, on peut tirer des conclusions non univoques en se basant sur l'analyse de Roubaud, bien que la multitude de titres et leur densité permette une analyse, principalement stylistique, du dévoilement de chaque variante dans l'ordre des vers. Il convient donc d'apprécier le choix intéressant qui a été fait pour terminer les deux strophes:

⁸⁷ Witold Sadowski, « A GenericWorldview. The Case of the Chronotope of Litany » in *Literarische Form. Geschichte und Kulturästhetischer Modellbildung*, éd. par Robert Matthias Erdbeer, Florian Kläger, Klaus Stierstorfer (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2017), pp. 347–374, p. 369, traduit de l'anglais par l'auteur.

Toute belle de porter fruit de vie
Les dons de grace et les grands biens de gloire
Le doux ruyseau rendant eue de vie
[...]

Vigne royalle ou fut prins fruit de vie
Amour vertu triumphe honneur et gloire
Le pur fourment dont fut fait pain de vie⁸⁸

La thématique du fruit de la vie, connue des catholiques par la prière de l'*Ave Maria* a été opposée à l'image de l'eau et du pain, symboles de l'Eucharistie. Une nette résonance de « la vie » fait ressortir le contenu du message de Jésus Christ: « Je suis le Chemin, la Vérité et la Vie ».

Dans d'autres strophes, dans des vers qui s'avoisinent directement, on peut encore observer un autre procédé de création d'une dominante thématique dans le choix des métaphores. À l'intérieur de la troisième strophe nous remarquons une accumulation des titres mariaux utilisant la symbolique de la lumière et de ses sources:

Du grand Jacob la tres luyante Estelle
L'aulbe annonçant du Soleil la venuë
La vive flamme entre les flots conceuë⁸⁹

Dans la partie III de la litanie, dans le quatrième vers en commençant par la fin, dans les deux strophes voisines, la Vierge Marie est présentée à travers l'image de la fertilité de la Terre: l'évènement de la naissance du Fils de Dieu est tout d'abord suggéré puis narré seulement après : « La terre neufve en tous bien fructueuse »-« La terre sainte ou Dieu print sa naissance »⁹⁰. Dans la dernière strophe de ce poème nous pouvons observer l'épiphore qui résonne de façon très intéressante : le mot « monde » apparaît tout d'abord en qualité d'adjectif, puis comme nom en cédant la place au mot « immonde » confronté à son synonyme « impure ». En cherchant de subtiles caractéristiques stylistiques, que nous ne remarquons pas à première lecture, il est difficile de résister à l'impression que les *Secondes litanies de la Vierge* sont créées, pour leur majorité, de vers librement ordonnés. Cette impression est, encore une fois, mise en doute à la fin du poème par l'utilisation d'un dernier mot, le nom de celle à qui est adressée cette litanie: Marie. De cette façon, Roubaud a saisi la

⁸⁸ Jacques Roubaud, « Secondes litanies de la Vierge », pp. 139–140.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 140.

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 143–144.

caractéristique essentielle de la version contemporaine de la litanie mariale, la *Litanie de Lorette* dans laquelle le nom de Marie n'est mentionné qu'une seule fois au début mais ne l'est plus à la fin de la suite d'invocations. Pour résumer d'un point de vue historique, il est important de rappeler que *Sancta Maria* est un élément présent dans toutes les invocations des litanies mariales provenant du douzième siècle, c'est-à-dire, litanies vénitienes⁹¹.

III. Litanies poétiques du vingtième siècle

La troisième relation qui fait l'objet de cette analyse est la concordance entre la litanie de Roubaud et les litanies des autres poètes contemporains. Lorsque les poètes du vingtième siècle se saisissent de la litanie, ils le font souvent en utilisant seule sa forme et en renonçant en même temps à son caractère sacré. Ils n'adressent donc pas leurs appels à Dieu et aux Saints, mais aux objets de la réalité quotidienne et aux gens dépourvus d'auréole de sainteté. Nous pouvons observer cette tendance de façon très nette chez Yves Bonnefoy dans *Dévotion* (1959), qui, dans chaque partie du poème, répète la préposition « à (aux) » au début de quelques expressions pour introduire des personnages et des phénomènes de la vie quotidienne. En analysant les vers suivants :

À la « Madone du soir ».
À Sainte-Marthe d'Agliè, dans le Canavese
À Saint-Yves de la Sagesse.⁹²

nous remarquons que des personnages de Saints imaginaires servent uniquement à illustrer son développement également consacré « Aux mathématiques sévères » et « Aux peintres de l'école de Rimini ». L'auteur ne leur adresse aucune demande précise. Son titre indique que le poème est tout simplement un acte d'offrande, et les éléments qui jouent un rôle équivalent aux énumérations commençant par la préposition « à (aux) » sont uniquement les aveux des désirs du « je » lyrique: « J'ai voulu être historien par angoisse de votre gloire. », « Je voudrais effacer l'histoire par souci de votre absolu. » Comme nous le voyons, le sacrum cherche davantage à se camoufler qu'à apparaître.

En soulignant que chez Bonnefoy on retrouve cette inspiration par la forme de la litanie, on pense non seulement à l'anaphore présente dans la suite d'énumérations, mais aussi au fait que les vers énumératifs qui se succèdent ont une longueur différente – le poème est écrit en prose. Le fait de relâcher les

⁹¹ Meersseman, *Der Hymnos Akathistos in Abendland*, pp. 214–217.

⁹² Yves Bonnefoy, *Early Poems, 1947–1959* (Chicago: Ohio University Press, 1991), p. 292.

exigences de la versification a permis à Jude Stéfan, en 1967, de proposer *Litanie*, dans laquelle les limites de phrase ne concordent pas avec les limites du vers, et où le caractère anaphorique concerne justement les phrases qui commencent par la préposition polyonymique⁹³ « par »:

Par désespoir de l'amour qui n'est
pas échu Par désespoir de la mort
qui déjà m'a prévu Par désespoir
du sexe qui nous fut à charge Par
désespoir de l'homme qui n'est que
misère Par désespoir du temps qui
n'est que poussière Par désespoir de [...]⁹⁴

C'est une litanie complètement différente de la litanie de Roubaud. Lors de sa création le poète a été limité par les exigences de la forme de chant royal. La thématique du poème de Stéfan ne concerne pas directement la religion mais englobe l'intégralité de l'expérience humaine en abordant les thèmes de l'amour, de la mort, de l'existence de l'âme, des catégories du temps, de l'art, et beaucoup d'autres. Dans la partie finale, juste après la question qui finit la suite: « où fuir ? », on observe un changement du principe de la composition. À la place de la phrase répétée au début qui commence par la préposition « par », le lecteur reçoit, d'une certaine manière, une réponse: « Dans l'étude par oubli / dans le stupre par malchance mais / dans la mer pour s'y laver ». Le désir de se purifier nous rappelle la conception chrétienne de ce terme, surtout si l'on confronte cette conception avec la thématique aquatique. *Litaniques: poésie parade* de Jacques Rebotier, publiées en 2000, est une œuvre dans laquelle la langue courante et familière s'approprie résolument l'espace du poème ne permettant pas ainsi aux signaux sacraux de le pénétrer. Nous voyons le témoignage de son inspiration provenant des litanies, tant dans son titre que dans les moyens stylistiques très abondamment employés, tels l'anaphore et l'épiphore, ainsi que dans la longueur différente des vers.

Il est également intéressant ici d'évoquer un poème, plus ancien que ceux qui ont été déjà analysés, dans lequel la dimension religieuse est pareillement dominante mais qui par l'une de ses caractéristiques diffère beaucoup des litanies contemporaines déjà étudiées. Il s'agit du poème de Paul Éluard, écrit en 1942, *Liberté*, qui est un poème régulier, strophique. Il puise abondamment dans la richesse des techniques auxquelles ont recours les litanies. Il introduit

⁹³ Witold Sadowski, « Some necessary preliminaries » in *Litanic Verse I*, p. 11.

⁹⁴ Jude Stéfan, *Cyprès* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), p. 14.

ainsi une répétition identique « J'écris ton nom »⁹⁵, qui apparaît en sa forme inchangée, non pas après chaque vers, en effet, mais après deux ou trois vers construits à l'aide de l'anaphore commençant par la préposition « sur ». Sa dernière strophe intrigue également car elle transforme son contenu répétitif, ainsi que son schéma, en conservant les caractéristiques du poème litanique par la présence du gène polyonymique « par », et l'aveu: « Je suis né [...] / Pour te nommer », rappelant en cela les confidences d'Auvray.

En recherchant ensuite des litanies du vingtième siècle, qui sont également des prières, il faut revenir aux *Petites Litanies de Jésus* (écrites entre 1900 et 1903, publiées dans le recueil de poèmes *Le Valet de cœur* en 1908) de Tristan Klingsor, *Litanies de la Sainte Vierge* de Max Jacob (*Le Laboratoire central*, 1921) et *Les Litanies de Bernadette* (1937) de Claudel. Dans le poème de Jacob, comme dans celui de Roubaud, nous retrouvons des points communs: la destinataire notamment ainsi que la richesse des descriptions métaphoriques de sa personne. Cependant la forme de ces deux œuvres diverge de façon significative.

Le poème *Litanies de la Sainte Vierge* peut paraître, sans aucun doute, plus innovant. L'auteur renonce à un schéma strophique, ainsi les vers conservent une longueur différente. Le poète cherche parfois à obtenir un contraste très prononcé entre une épithète et une suite d'épithètes :

Mère confiante, mère émerveillée
Éternelle impératrice des chrétiens
Impératrice à la cour des Parfaits
Impératrice humble
Impératrice intangible, attentive, sensible, juste, savante et pure⁹⁶

L'auteur paraphrase les invocations tirées de la *Litanie de Lorette* avec une habileté remarquable. En conservant la répétition de la première partie de certains titres provenant de versions liturgiques de la litanie, il transmet également la même signification de ces invocations. Mais il obtient ce résultat en utilisant des mots différents, comme par exemple la paire d'invocations: « Mère du Créateur »-« Mère du Sauveur » est présentée dans la série: « Honorée d'un mariage avec Dieu / Honorée de la maternité de Dieu / Mère et épouse du ciel ».

⁹⁵ Paul Éluard, *Poésie et Vérité* (Paris: Éditions de la main à la plume, 1942).

⁹⁶ Max Jacob, *Le Laboratoire central* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), 182.

Nous avons remarqué que les litanies de Jacob peuvent paraître modernes quand nous analysons leur forme, mais nous ne pouvons pas omettre le fait que son imaginaire puise dans des représentations moyenâgeuses de la Mère de Dieu. Par cette opération le poème semble être écrit dans l'esprit de Meschinot et Roubaud. Le motif des pierres précieuses est ainsi utilisé seulement dans trois invocations: « Émeraude du ciel / Diamant des nuits / Topaze des jours ». Jacob introduit également des motifs pastoraux, dans « Bergère de l'Agneau Pascal », ainsi que l'image du jardin dans « Jardinière de nos Âmes ». Il s'intéresse pareillement à la dimension corporelle de la personne de Marie. L'invocation « Entrailles divinisées » rappelle non seulement les textes des Pères de l'Église mais aussi la littérature mariale du Moyen Âge dans laquelle on énumérait les parties du corps de la Sainte Vierge en soulignant leur rôle lorsque Marie élevait son fils: « Benoit ton ventre en sa pure innocence »⁹⁷. Dans le domaine de la langue, il faut souligner l'utilisation de l'anaphore qui tombe sur « Impératrice » et non sur « Reine » – la Sainte Vierge a été décrite de la même façon par François Villon: « Emperière des infernaux palus » et Martial d'Auvergne: « des viergez l'empereuse ». Toutes ces caractéristiques montrent que la délicate stylisation archaïsante est associée dans les litanies de Jacob à leur forme contemporaine qui se manifeste par le manque de régularité et des effets inattendus, comme le raccourcissement de la liste d'épithètes ou bien au contraire son allongement voire même l'interruption du texte:

Ô jeune fille pour toujours
Ô jeune mère pour toujours
Ô pureté pour toujours
Ô beauté

Pareille opération n'aurait pas été possible dans les litanies de Roubaud.

La fonction jouée par les titres mariaux énumérés chez Jacob apparaît à la fin du texte quand la prière tombe – c'est une fonction d'imploration, dans laquelle nous pouvons en outre observer une fonction d'intercession. La personne qui parle dans le poème ne sollicite pas la grâce pour elle-même, mais le salut éternel pour les âmes des amis morts à la guerre. C'est donc là un renversement du statut de la litanie dans laquelle c'est désormais la collectivité qui élève les supplications vers la Sainte Vierge afin qu'elle implore les faveurs qui leur sont nécessaires. Jacob a réduit la manifestation des supplications à un seul vers à la fin de son poème, n'utilisant pas ainsi le modèle de la litanie ecclésiastique dans laquelle la supplication apparaît après chaque invocation,

⁹⁷ Georges Chastellain, *Œuvres*, éd. par Kervyn de Lettenhove (Genève: Slatkine, 1971), p. 281.

mais il n'y a pas, pour autant, complètement renoncé comme l'avait fait Roubaud.

La régularité de la forme strophique est un point commun entre le poème de Claudel et *Secondes litanies de la Vierge*. Chez Claudel les strophes et les vers sont plus courtes car le poète emploie des distiques composés de cinq ou six syllabes. Il utilise également le personnage féminin de la destinataire, influençant ainsi ses représentations d'une symbolique similaire de pureté et de beauté créées à l'aide des motifs de l'eau et du ciel:

Goutte de l'eau du gave,
Priez, priez pour nous!
Œil intrépide et pur,
Priez, priez pour nous!
Servante de l'azur,
Priez, priez pour nous!⁹⁸

Claudiel à l'image de Roubaud limite l'utilisation du prénom propre de la destinatrice, qui apparaît une seule fois au début du poème et une autre fois à la fin, mais cette fois-ci accompagné de son nom. Dans *Les Litanies de Bernadette*, la présence de supplications concises, concrètes et employées brusquement, constitue une différence fondamentale entre ces deux poèmes. Claudel imite donc une autre caractéristique de la litanie: la concision. À l'image de plusieurs autres litanies poétiques du vingtième siècle, la fin de l'œuvre de Claudel apporte un changement du principe de la composition. On déplace sur l'expéditeur l'attention à l'origine portée sur la destinatrice, c'est-à-dire sur le groupe de personnes qui dit la litanie: « Nous disons à genoux: / Priez, priez pour nous! ». Il est suivi par une autre paire de vers qui contient le nom propre de la destinatrice – comme le premier distique – nous pouvons donc le considérer comme un élément d'un cadre délimitant.

Conclusion

Roubaud, en présentant ses litanies sous forme de chants royaux, ne poursuit pas les traces des litanies du vingtième siècle. Il s'en sépare par plusieurs aspects. Avant tout, il n'utilise pas l'anaphore qui constitue un élément invariable des litanies poétiques du vingtième siècle. On peut même dire que cela est l'élément le plus important qui met en lumière le caractère litanique de ces œuvres. Il semble que les litanies contemporaines ont besoin de

⁹⁸ Paul Claudel, *Supplément aux Œuvres Complètes*, vol. 1 (Lausanne: L'Âged'Homme, 1990), p. 181.

la confirmation de leur caractère litanique par le moyen de l'anaphore, car les invocations litaniques ne sont plus aussi compréhensibles pour le lecteur contemporain. La thématique religieuse a été remplacée par celle de la vie quotidienne, ou bien on lui a donné volontairement un caractère archaïque, comme chez Jacob. Deuxièmement, Roubaud n'utilise pas des phrases de la délimitation: la longueur du chant royal constitue pour lui une limite en soi. C'est dans le cadre de cette limite qu'il peut opérer différents choix de composition des citations tirées d'un groupe de lignes palinodiques. Par ailleurs, chez les poètes du vingtième siècle, il est fréquent de mettre en relief la fin de la litanie en opérant un changement de la fonction du texte. On remplace ainsi l'apostrophe par la supplication – comme chez Jacob – ou bien on change la phrase affirmative en interrogative – comme chez Stéfan. Nous remarquons également la présence du cadre délimitant chez Claudel. Roubaud, quant à lui, se base sur des textes anciens comme celui de Meschinot, en utilisant une accumulation de métaphores mariales traditionnelles et en leur laissant une place arbitraire dans la strophe et dans l'ensemble du poème. Alors que les litanies de Meschinot sont représentatives du type énumératif de la litanie poétique du Moyen Age, à l'instar des œuvres telles que *Prière à Notre Dame* de Thibaut d'Amiens et *Loenge Notre Dame* de Robert le Clerc d'Arras, ce genre disparaît ensuite presque complètement de la littérature française⁹⁹. Un autre type de litanie répétitive devient très populaire jusqu'à la charnière du dix-neuvième et vingtième siècles, où l'on écrit beaucoup de litanies poétiques. Cette tendance se poursuit au vingtième siècle. Il est important de rappeler que le mètre de dix syllabes est un mètre qui pouvait contenir plusieurs invocations ou bien une invocation et une supplication. Le caractère narratif des litanies poétiques de Bonnefoy se perpétue par l'allongement du titre marial et l'ajout d'un nombre plus important de détails, et ce par l'introduction de formes autres que celle du nom enrichi par l'épithète.

La décision de choisir la forme du chant royal joue un rôle clef dans la détermination de la structure de la litanie de Roubaud. La répétition peut être une caractéristique du chant royal, comme nous l'avons présenté dans les exemples proposés. Pour autant, elle est difficile à obtenir par la seule utilisation des lignes palinodiques. Ces dernières ne contiennent pas de supplication et c'est la raison pour laquelle elles n'apparaissent pas non plus chez Roubaud. Ce n'est pas la répétition qui peut provoquer l'ennui dans *Secondes litanies de la Vierge*, mais bien l'absence de contrepoint dans la suite des images, c'est-à-dire le fait

⁹⁹ Kowalska, *Litanic Verse III: Francia*, p. 76–78.

de les considérer comme un fragment appartenant à un ensemble plus long, parce qu'elles ne possèdent pas des traits caractéristiques annonçant un début et une fin. Ce rôle de contrepoint aurait pu être joué – et l'a été dans les chants royaux – par la ligne palindromique. Mais, en devenant tout simplement le synonyme de chacun des vers, elle ne remplit pas cette même fonction chez Roubaud.¹⁰⁰

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LA RECEPTION DES COMICS MARVEL EN FRANCE A PARTIR DU COURRIER DES LECTEURS DANS LES REVUES DES EDITIONS LUG

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***Abstract:** In this paper, we study the reception of Marvel comic books in France according to the letters to the editor published by éditions Lug between 1969 and 1989 in their periodicals. The specific editorial requirements for the publications made for a young readership, particularly the scrutiny of the Surveillance committee for publications intended to children and teenagers, have a strong influence on the choices made by the publishers. The perceived young age of the readers is added to the demands of the committee to steer the editors in the choice of a cultural translation, adjusted linguistically and visually to un-americanize Marvel comic books. From this cultural context, we study a large corpus of readers' letters which provides a written trace of the reception. Those reactions across two decades, sometimes written by the same reader, can even form a conversation of sorts between readers with the publisher becoming the middleman. Another distinctive aspect, every letter received an answer by the editors, published or not, if the reader provided a stamp. Those answers were specific to what was asked by the reader and usually written by one of the translators working full-time for the publishing house. For the reader, there is an effort in the reaction, particularly in a time when the only way for that was to send a letter at the nearby post office. The cost (in money and in time) is indicative of their dedication. Those reactions can be a way to measure the gap between the adaptation process followed by Lug and the perception developed by the readers.*

***Keywords:** Marvel, comic books, reception studies, popular culture, letters to the editor.*

Introduction

L'éphémère publication des aventures du Black Rider de 1956 à 1959 mise à part, les comics des éditions Marvel ont été introduits en France par un petit éditeur provincial et familial basé à Lyon. Les éditions Lug, du nom de la divinité celtique à l'origine du toponyme, fondées par Marcel Navarro et Alban

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Vistel en 1950, ont importé entre 1969 et 1989 certaines des séries de super-héros majeures de l'univers partagé de la Maison des Idées, faisant découvrir aux jeunes francophones des publications comme *Fantastic Four*, *Silver Surfer*, *The Amazing Spider-Man*, *Uncanny X-Men*, *Iron Man* ou encore *Captain Marvel*. Durant deux décennies, les équipes de ce petit éditeur ont publié des centaines d'histoires de super-héros, parfois contre l'avis de la Commission de surveillance des publications destinées à l'enfance et à l'adolescence fondée par la loi du 16 juillet 1949, le plus souvent dans une pratique de l'auto-censure intégrée au point qu'il est difficile de la distinguer du processus d'adaptation qu'implique le transfert culturel. Malgré une importance certaine dans le champ des narrations graphiques en France et dans l'objet transmédiatique que constitue l'univers Marvel aujourd'hui, cette aventure éditoriale reste peu étudiée. Longtemps sujets à des préjugés négatifs, les comics ont été considérés comme n'étant pas digne d'intérêt, et c'est sans doute ce manque de légitimité qui a poussé l'éditeur suédois Semic à jeter les archives des éditions Lug lors du rachat et du déménagement de la société dans les années 1990, donnant à ceux qui désirent en faire un objet d'étude aujourd'hui bien des difficultés à reconstituer l'histoire interne de l'éditeur. D'autre part, les revues anthologiques des éditions Lug ne comportant pas de publicités, on ne trouve aucune information statistique spécifique sur le lectorat de ces publications qui auraient été rassemblées afin de vendre des emplacements aux annonceurs potentiels. Toutefois, il existe dans les revues de l'éditeur un matériau précieux pour les études de réception. Durant les vingt années d'activité, les éditions Lug, plus particulièrement la directrice de publication Claude Vistel, ont encouragé les lecteurs à communiquer avec eux en leur écrivant autant que possible. Ce sont donc plusieurs milliers de lettres qui sont arrivées au 6, rue Emile Zola, siège des éditions Lug, qui ont été lues et qui ont reçu une réponse, sous réserve que l'auteur de la missive ait fourni un timbre à cet effet. De cet ensemble, ce sont environ mille-deux-cents extraits qui ont été publiés dans les diverses pages de courriers des lecteurs des revues régulières (*Fantask*, *Marvel*, *Strange*, *Spécial Strange*, *Nova*, *Spidey* et *Ombrax-Saga*). La cohérence de ce corpus est ici assurée par le fait que les auteurs sont tous lecteurs des revues, que ce soit de manière occasionnelle ou régulière, pour quelques mois ou pour plusieurs années. Nous proposons ici une première approche de cet important corpus, à la fois sur le plan méthodologique comme sur les faits les plus saillants concernant le lectorat que cet ensemble permet de saisir et de confirmer.

I. Etudier la réception des comics: questions méthodologiques

Les chercheurs en études de réception le savent, il est parfois difficile de répondre à la question de l'identification des publics. Comme le note Cécile Méadel, la réception « n'est le plus souvent attestée que par des traces, celles des chiffres [...], celles des dispositifs [...], celles des chercheurs qui parlent en son nom » (2009 : 9). Le courrier des lecteurs est de ces traces, un dispositif donnant la parole au public, plaçant celui-ci en interlocuteur et incarnant noir sur blanc un processus dialogique souvent invisible. Plus encore, les courriers publiés par les éditions Lug nous permettent d'accéder à un public difficile d'accès, le même qui a motivé un certain nombre d'études de réception portant sur la télévision, ce « peuple amusé » évoqué par Jérôme Bourdon, « qui implique moins le citoyen [...] que le consommateur ou le flâneur » (2009 : 71). On ne peut que s'étonner que le courrier des lecteurs ne soit pas plus régulièrement l'objet des études de réception alors même qu'il est la trace d'une réception effectivement réalisée. Si la correspondance des écrivains est assez bien connue, comme le montre Karl Zieger (2009), la correspondance des lecteurs, n'étant pas production d'un grand lecteur (i.e. celui qui est lui-même producteur à l'exemple du critique, de l'éditeur ou du confrère écrivain), est beaucoup moins connue. On remarquera en particulier dans ce domaine les travaux de Norbert Bachleitner sur la réception de l'œuvre d'Eugène Sue, en partie basée sur la correspondance des lecteurs à l'auteur (2009 : 107). Le comparatiste note d'ailleurs qu'il est « évident que la lecture d'évasion laisse beaucoup moins de traces que la lecture qui mène à la discussion, voire à l'action » (2009 : 117). Le corpus de lettres qui nous intéresse ici est donc une occasion rare d'accéder à la résultante de « la phénoménologie de la lecture » (Heidenreich, 1989 : 77), occasion d'autant plus à saisir que « la réception est à comprendre comme une activité dans laquelle le sujet vise à se saisir d'un objet, à se l'approprier » (Chevrel, 1995 : 85), et quel meilleur moyen pour le lecteur que l'écriture.

Il est à prendre en compte que le courrier des lecteurs est une réaction appelée par l'éditeur au départ. Dès le *Fantask* n°2 de mars 1969, c'est une pleine page illustrée intitulée « Fans de Fantask un cadeau pour vous ! » qui est consacrée à cette demande, sous couvert de leur co-créateur et *editor-in-chief* de Marvel aux Etats-Unis, Stan Lee :

Enfin, les **Fantastiques** et le **Surfer d'Argent** sont parmi vous ! Leur créateur, **Stan Lee** vous demande votre avis, car les **Fantastiques** et le **Surfer d'Argent** marquent une révolution dans la bande dessinée ! Dites-nous sincèrement ce que vous pensez de ces histoires si différentes de celles auxquelles vous êtes habitués... Si vous les aimez,

dites-nous pourquoi, et d'autres super-héros apparaîtront ! Si elles ne vous plaisent pas, écrivez-nous aussi !

Ce premier appel, renouvelé par la suite régulièrement mais de manière moins voyante dans le courrier des lecteurs, est ici renforcé par la perspective d'une récompense :

Stan Lee récompensera les meilleures lettres en vous envoyant **directement des U.S.A.** un **cadeau-surprise** représentant les héros qu'il a créés ! **100 lecteurs** recevront un prix, et les lettres les plus intéressantes seront publiées régulièrement... (Indiquez dans votre lettre votre nom, votre âge et votre adresse.) **A vos plumes et devenez Fans de *Fantask* !**

Ce court texte est révélateur de la politique éditoriale de Lug. Imitant le modèle américain, les éditions Lug mettent particulièrement en avant Stan Lee. Celui-ci n'est pas qu'un éditeur dont on ignore le nom ou un co-créateur parmi d'autres, il est le créateur de l'univers Marvel, une position qui n'est pas foncièrement fautive mais exagérée et qui laisse dans l'ombre Jack Kirby ou Steve Ditko, co-créateurs et dessinateurs des personnages principaux publiés dans la revue *Fantask*. Les passages mis en avant par la typographie (ici en gras) sont également importants : pour être un des « fans de *Fantask* », il faut réagir, et si cette appartenance au groupe ne suffit pas, c'est un cadeau mystérieux et rare, envoyé d'un continent encore lointain dans l'imaginaire, qui est promis. On remarquera aussi les informations demandées par les éditions Lug. Le nom et l'adresse sont évidemment nécessaires à l'envoi de cette surprise, mais l'âge est également demandé, une information qui n'apparaît pas lorsque les lettres sont publiées par la suite dans la revue. S'il n'y a pas d'archives pour confirmer cette théorie, on peut supposer que c'est là un moyen pour l'éditeur de mieux connaître son nouveau lectorat, potentiellement différent de ses publications précédentes. Cette information pouvait également lui être utile dans la mesure où c'est bien l'âge des lecteurs qui fonde en premier lieu le pouvoir de la Commission de surveillance des publications destinées à la jeunesse.

Le caractère spécifique de l'œuvre reçue pose la question de la notion d'auteur. Les comics publiés par les éditions Lug appartiennent (à l'exception de la série de comics *Star Wars* et de quelques publications mineures) à l'univers partagé de Marvel, ils forment sur le plan narratif une œuvre cohérente. Une cohérence que l'on retrouve d'ailleurs dans le processus de création avec la méthode Marvel mise en place chez l'éditeur qui permet une collaboration plus étroite entre le scénariste et le dessinateur. Malgré cette cohérence, l'ensemble publié par Lug reste une œuvre multi-autoriale pour laquelle les auteurs sont

très peu mis en avant, à l'exception notable de Stan Lee, présenté comme une figure tutélaire aux lecteurs. Si, comme l'indique Hélène Maurel-Indart, « l'appréciation d'une œuvre est d'ores et déjà liée au nom de l'auteur » (2009 : 41), qu'en est-il ici ? Si une première approche pourrait considérer que la figure de Stan Lee mise en avant n'existe qu'au désavantage de ses collaborateurs, ce qui est sans doute vrai d'un point de vue économique, il nous faut prendre en compte la définition foucaldienne de la fonction-auteur, selon laquelle il est responsable d'un « “certain niveau constant de valeur”, “un certain champ de cohérence conceptuelle ou théorique”, une “unité stylistique” et un “moment historique défini” » (Maurel-Indart, 2009 : 42). Selon cette notion, Stan Lee apparaît effectivement plus comme un auteur que les autres créateurs de Marvel car il cumule son statut de scénariste avec celui d'*editor-in-chief*, un aspect particulièrement visible pour le lecteur. Dans leurs lettres, les lecteurs désignent ainsi l'ensemble de l'univers Marvel comme l'œuvre de Stan Lee, et ce dès le début de la publication. Citons la lettre de R. Ratsimihah dans *Fantask* n°3 d'avril 1969 qui « félicite l'auteur Stan Lee » pour son chef d'œuvre qu'est la revue, ou encore le courrier de Jean-Daniel Brèque dans *Strange* n°25 de janvier 1972 où le futur grand traducteur des littératures de l'imaginaire, alors âgé de dix-sept ans, remercie Lug « de continuer à publier les histoires de Stan Lee malgré les nombreuses vicissitudes » qu'ils subissent pour cela.

II. Une approche globale du corpus

Un tel corpus, à la fois très fourni et issu d'un temps éditorial long, permet d'approcher de manière historique la réception. Yves Chevrel le montre, « image et lecture sont, l'une et l'autre, des représentations [...] il est évident [qu'elles] évoluent, dans d'incessants mouvements sporadiques » (2007 : 437). En ce sens, le courrier régulier d'un lectorat qui se compose de plusieurs générations et qui pourraient même être étendu aux éditeurs qui ont succédé à Lug (son repreneur Semic ou Panini comics, encore actif aujourd'hui, qui ont perpétué cette pratique plusieurs années) permet d'accéder à ces mouvements. Une étude approfondie permettra de percevoir les tendances de ce lectorat dans son acte de réception. Par ailleurs, l'étude de la réception des comics Marvel est aussi à replacer dans un contexte de transfert culturel plus large entre les Etats-Unis et la France. Les comics viennent nourrir une image souvent déjà établie à partir d'autres produits culturels, image que les revues des éditions Lug font ou non varier. Sans théoriser ce phénomène, on notera que dans sa lettre publiée dans *Strange* n°21 en septembre 1971, Marc Maleskevitch souhaiterait que les

comics Marvel publiés par Lug fassent réfléchir les détracteurs qui méprisent les narrations graphiques.

L'accueil réservé à une littérature peut être aussi la confirmation d'une image, valorisante ou dévalorisante, du pays d'où elle provient. L'image que des lecteurs se sont forgée d'un pays est un des éléments, plus ou moins décisifs, de leurs critères de lecture, et cette image est constituée à la fois par une accumulation de représentations venues s'ajouter les unes aux autres au fil du temps et par une situation concrète à un moment donné. (Chevrel, 2007 : 439)

Ce lien à la longue durée de l'histoire des mentalités permet également de comprendre des oppositions idéologiques, plus souvent issues des parents que des jeunes lecteurs en ce qui concerne les revues des éditions Lug. Cette non-réception, ce refus d'accéder à un type de production culturelle est toutefois plus difficile à percevoir aujourd'hui et les traces ne sont sans doute pas à chercher dans ce type de corpus mais plutôt dans les ouvrages de concurrents ou de critiques.

Au-delà de la quantité des lettres, il est important d'estimer leur impact sur la politique éditoriale de Lug. L'adaptation se fait aussi par rapport aux attentes du lectorat, y compris lorsque celles-ci vont à l'encontre des demandes de la Commission de surveillance. L'exemple le plus parlant concerne sans doute la forme des publications. Après l'arrêt de la revue *Fantask* à la suite des menaces de la Commission de surveillance, les comics Marvel édités par Lug ne sont pas dans leur format original mais dans une adaptation ce que l'on nomme le « petit format », un type de publication qui renvoie aux *bonelliano* italiens, des publications peu chères de narrations graphiques populaires. Elles perdent également les couleurs qui avaient contribué à leur succès pour passer en bichromie. Changer ces deux aspects, c'est influencer sur le découpage des planches, la lisibilité des textes, la reproduction des dessins, etc. Ces changements mécontentent fortement les lecteurs qui n'hésitent pas à le faire savoir aux éditions Lug dans leur courrier, demandant le retour au format d'origine qu'ils connaissent depuis *Fantask*. Les mêmes lecteurs qui louaient les couleurs vives de la revue *Fantask* sont les mêmes qui sont surreprésentés dans « le courrier des fans de *Strange* » de mars à mai 1971. L'éditeur leur répond « chers amis, vous nous aviez demandé un format plus grand et de la couleur, les voici » dès le premier paragraphe. Si Lug écoute ses lecteurs, revenant effectivement au format comics en quadrichromie pour *Strange* et *Marvel*, cette décision provoque l'interdiction de vente de la seconde. En effet, la publication étant considérée comme plus attirante pour un jeune public, la monstruosité du

personnage de la Chose/Ben Grimm, un des héros des Quatre Fantastiques, n'est plus tolérée par la Commission de surveillance, qui prononce l'interdiction de vente aux mineurs par arrêté le 15 mars 1971. C'est d'ailleurs en réponse à un courrier de lecteur dans *Strange* n°21, en septembre 1971, que l'éditeur explique la situation :

Eh oui, cher lecteur, vous vous inquiétiez à juste raison hélas, car *Marvel* a été interdit à la vente aux mineurs. Nous aurions pu essayer de persévérer mais depuis le mois de décembre [1970] toute publication interdite aux mineurs est frappée d'un taux de T.V.A. de 33% ce qui rend son exploitation impossible. Nous avons donc dû arrêter *Marvel* en catastrophe sans même pouvoir prévenir nos lecteurs. (*Strange* n°21, 1971)

Les demandes sur le format évoquées ici semblent suffisamment importantes en nombre pour que les éditions Lug fassent le pari (perdu) de revenir au format d'origine au risque d'attirer l'attention de la Commission. Pourtant, le changement de format, s'il est le plus voyant, n'est pas le plus important en quantité ni en durée dans l'histoire éditoriale des revues qui nous intéressent ici. Un grand nombre d'adaptations relevant d'une traduction culturelle sont réalisées par les ateliers de retouches des éditions Lug, que ce soit pour s'adapter au goût supposé du public ou pour répondre aux impératifs de la loi, sans qu'elles soient remarquées ou qu'elles ne fassent réagir le lectorat. Ces deux pratiques anciennes dans l'histoire de la traduction semblent nécessaires comme le montre Karl Zieger :

Le passage par des traductions plus "dynamiques qu'adéquates" est un passage (presque) obligatoire dans le processus d'une implantation dans un système étranger. (2009 : 97)

Malgré ces adaptations, le procédé n'est pas suffisant pour éviter la confrontation à la loi, nous l'avons vu. Un exemple de ces adaptations que les lecteurs n'évoquent pas, toujours sur la question du format, serait la publication anthologique dont le contenu est discuté mais le principe jamais remis en cause. Les comics *Marvel* ne sont pas publiés sous cette forme dans leur champ d'origine (ni dans la majorité des pays où ils s'exportent par ailleurs), mais aucun lecteur ne semble se plaindre de cette décision des éditions Lug. On pourrait voir ici l'effet d'homogénéisation mis en place par l'éditeur grâce au paratexte, en particulier la continuité des couvertures réalisées spécifiquement pour le lectorat en France. Sur le plan du contenu, seules quelques lettres remarquent les changements issus de l'autocensure à la faveur d'une comparaison avec les publications originales ou d'un voisin européen qui

n'exerce pas ce type de pression sur ses éditeurs pour la jeunesse. Ces opportunités de comparaison semblent toutefois limitées si l'on se fie à leur évocation dans le courrier des lecteurs. La première est sans doute la remarque de M. Holmière dans sa lettre publiée dans *Fantask* n°3 en avril 1969 qui note que le format utilisé par Lug est légèrement plus petit que le format de la version originale. D'autres lecteurs semblent bien informés sur les publications américaines, citant des revues comme *Horizon du Fantastique* en source de leurs connaissances (Lionel Polard, *Strange* n°20, août 1971). Malgré ces quelques remarques, le ton reste raisonnable et considère bien la nécessité à laquelle l'éditeur doit faire face. De plus, la comparaison est parfois à l'avantage des éditions Lug, comme c'est le cas dans la lettre de Christian Garcin publiée dans *Strange* n°92 en août 1977 qui remarque que même par rapport aux comics « italiens, canadiens et américains », les publications lyonnaises « sont parmi les meilleures du monde, tant du point de vue du papier que des couleurs et du format ». La question et la critique de la censure la plus vive est sans doute à voir dans une lettre de *Strange* n°150 en juin 1982. Elle est de Bernard Joubert, qui n'est alors âgé que de 21 ans et n'est pas encore le spécialiste des questions de censure que l'on connaît aujourd'hui pour son *Dictionnaire des livres et journaux interdits*. Le jeune auteur fait part de sa « colère de désapprobation » face aux pratiques de retouches des éditions Lug sur les comics Marvel, estimant qu'elles devraient disparaître suite à la promesse du nouveau ministre de l'Intérieur Gaston Defferre de ne plus utiliser la loi n°49-956 fondant la Commission de surveillance que pour des revues à caractère pornographique. Loin de partager l'avis de son lecteur, la directrice de publication Claude Vistel préfère se montrer prudente, craignant de se voir interdire une publication et de perdre le numéro d'inscription à la Commission Paritaire qui l'accompagne, numéro difficile à obtenir car il permettait de ne payer que 4% de T.V.A. et non le taux régulier.

La question des modifications apportées par Lug est finalement peu présente dans le courrier des lecteurs et pourtant importante lorsque se pose la question de la réception des comics Marvel en France. Un attrait de ces publications est leur caractère américain. S'il est difficile de précisément définir ce qu'est ce caractère, il a bien une influence dans le processus d'achat, il doit donc être mis en avant par l'éditeur. Pour autant, le processus de transfert est partiellement invisibilisé par Lug. On ne trouve nulle part le nom des traductrices dans les crédits des épisodes, et encore moins celui des artistes chargés de retoucher les planches. Tout est fait pour que le lecteur ignore les infidélités qui sont faites aux œuvres originales. Même si c'est ici en raison de la

pression de la Commission de surveillance, il faut remarquer que les éditions Lug s'inscrivent en cohérence dans une histoire des traductions destinées à la jeunesse.

Traducteurs et éditeurs estiment parfaitement légitime de réduire l'altérité référentielle en avançant la nécessité de ne pas dérouter les jeunes lecteurs. (Nières-Chevrel, 2009 : 92)

On peut également noter que la frontière est parfois brouillée par l'éditeur lui-même entre les publications américaines qui subissent un processus d'acculturation et les œuvres réalisées par des artistes locaux mais qui ont la charge de donner cette même impression d'une histoire venue des Etats-Unis d'Amérique, à l'exemple de *Mikros* de Jean-Yves Mitton et Marcel Navarro. L'éditeur joue alors avec l'horizon d'attente de son lectorat. Ce flou organisé est à prendre en compte dans l'analyse car, comme le note Patricia Willson :

Supposer [...] que la traduction constituait pour le lecteur des hebdomadaires illustrés une pratique discursive décelable par rapport aux écritures directes, telle qu'elle l'est pour le chercheur, constitue ce qu'on pourrait appeler un artefact de l'analyse. (2009 : 128)

Un lecteur écrit par exemple dans *Fantask* n°4 en mai 1969, « pourquoi faites-vous le Surfer d'Argent aussi malheureux ? », ignorant complètement le statut d'intermédiaire de l'éditeur lyonnais et pensant s'adresser aux auteurs.

III. Ce que les lecteurs nous disent d'eux-mêmes

Etudier la réception d'une œuvre étrangère, c'est étudier dans quel réseau d'images, fantasmiques, illusives, sans doute, mais où longue durée et temps de l'événement s'interpénètrent, elle vient s'insérer, c'est-à-dire étudier aussi l'image de soi que le récepteur laisse transparaître. (Chevrel, 2007 : 441)

Les courriers des lecteurs sont un moyen pour nous d'apercevoir les réseaux constitués dans le lectorat, confirmant l'idée que la réception passe aussi par la discussion, accédant aux réseaux interpersonnels. Ce phénomène s'illustre par des lettres signées par deux auteurs, issus d'une même famille (les sœurs Pascale et Claire Dettwiller dans le courrier de *Titans* n°21 en juillet 1978) ou non (Franck Peyret et Patrice Graindorge dans *Strange* n°122 en février 1980) et même par un ensemble plus large constitué par d'autres circonstances comme un groupe d'élèves dans cette lettre de la 1ère A d'un lycée du Cap d'Agde dans *Titans* n°41 en juin 1982. Sous une autre forme, la discussion se fait par l'intermédiaire même des rubriques courriers des lecteurs des éditions Lug, les lecteurs se répondant alors, engageant un dialogue parfois encouragé par l'éditeur.

Là-encore, la réaction est appelée mais elle n'en est pas moins motivée. Des débats sur plusieurs numéros s'engagent alors pour défendre une série, un dessinateur, et même parfois le travail des éditions Lug. Le courrier des lecteurs nous permet d'accéder à une réalité sociale qui ne laisse pas de trace, celle de la conversation. Ce qui anime le débat écrit qui se tient dans les pages analysées ici n'est sans doute pas d'une nature différente que les conversations *in vivo* des lecteurs. Or, comme on le sait depuis les travaux de Gabriel Tarde, « l'opinion se forge dans la conversation » (Katz, 2009 : 32). La participation au courrier des lecteurs a également ses effets sur la représentation de soi de l'auteur du courrier, et particulièrement de soi en société. Comme l'indique Dominique Pasquier en faisant référence aux travaux de Benedict Anderson, « être fan n'est pas une activité individuelle, c'est avant tout une activité sociale fondée sur la participation à des groupes locaux et à une communauté imaginée » (2009 : 92). Une idée que l'on retrouve d'ailleurs dans les demandes de correspondance de certains lecteurs comme Marie-Claude Darroussat dans *Fantask* n°5 de juin 1969, renforcée par la matérialité et la sérialité des œuvres qui permettent les prêts et les échanges, ces derniers étant à l'origine d'une toujours très fournie, voire saturée, rubrique de « bourse aux échanges ». Si le mode de consommation des revues n'a pas la synchronicité de consommation imposée par le programme télévisé, il n'en reste pas moins que la régularité d'un mensuel comme *Strange*, publié le cinq de chaque mois, pose un calendrier des interactions avec l'objet. La perturbation de ce calendrier, le retard dans l'acheminement d'une publication par exemple, est d'ailleurs mal vécu par le lectorat, comme le montre la lettre de Claude Henning dans *Strange* n°18 de juin 1971 :

Après les fleurs, les réclamations. Je ne sais pas si c'est de votre faute, mais *Strange* et *Marvel* ont paru seulement le 18 de ce mois au lieu du 5 et du 10. Pour quelqu'un qui, comme moi, était impatient de trouver ces nouveaux formats... Vous savez faire durer le suspense comme on dit. Mais cela en valait la peine. (*Strange* n°18, 1971)

Le courrier des lecteurs nous informe de manière importante sur les goûts du lectorat, sur ce qui fait la popularité ou l'impopularité de certains scénaristes et, surtout, de certains dessinateurs. Il ressort de ce corpus une très faible popularité de Jack Kirby, cas intéressant car celui-ci est considéré outre-Atlantique comme le « roi » des comics, surnom que lui avait donné Stan Lee lui-même, fort d'une carrière d'un demi-siècle qui l'a vu co-créditer des pans entiers de l'univers Marvel comme de DC Comics. Influence majeure de bon nombre d'auteurs, que ce soit pour son graphisme ou pour sa narration exploitant les forces du médium, il semble pourtant manquer de popularité

auprès du lectorat de Lug. Dès les débuts de la série *Fantastic Four*, on trouve des lettres de lecteurs qui considèrent que « le dessin est un peu fade » (Y. Pichon, *Fantask* n°4, mai 1969) par comparaison au travail de John Buscema sur la série *Silver Surfer*. Les lettres se multiplient ensuite dans la revue *Strange* : encore face à Buscema, J.-P. Legrand trouve que « Jack Kirby est bien faible. Ses dessins ne dégagent aucune puissance » (n°17, mai 1971), Michel Chrétien pense que ce sont « John Buscema et John Romita qui dessinent le mieux. Kirby, lui, malgré sa réputation, n'arrive pas à la cheville de ces deux génies » (n°22, octobre 1971) et Victor Dedaj estime que « *Strange* s'est amélioré en ce qui concerne les *X-Men*. Jay Gavin dessine mieux que Jack Kirby » (n°27, mars 1972). Dans *Strange* n°85, janvier 1977, le débat est lancé par une lettre de Jean Mendez :

Le principal but de cette lettre est de connaître l'avis d'autres lecteurs de *Strange* sur l'opinion que je vais donner à propos du dessinateur Jack Kirby. J'aime beaucoup les aventures des Fantastiques mais je suis contre l'éloge que l'on fait des dessins de Jack Kirby. En effet, il donne aux personnages des formes caricaturales. Il est aussi ridicule de vanter les talents de Kirby pour ses dessins de la Chose, alors que d'autres dessinateurs l'ont dessiné aussi bien sinon mieux (Gil Kane, Georges Tuska, etc.) (*Strange* n°85, 1977)

Ce lecteur évoque des éloges peu présents dans les courriers, nous l'avons vu, et utilise un argument qui revient couramment pour critiquer le style de Jack Kirby ; celui-ci serait caricatural. En réponse à ce courrier, les éditions Lug encouragent le débat contradictoire : « Voici la polémique ouverte ! Qui défendra Jack Kirby ? ». Dès le courrier des lecteurs de *Strange* n°87, en mars 1977, Catherine Pierre évoque la série *Fantastic Four* et précise que « les dessins de Jack Kirby sont excessivement bien faits ». Toutefois, en raison des délais de conception et d'impression de plus de trois mois, cette lettre ne peut être une réponse directe à celle de Jean Mendez. Il s'agit sans doute plutôt d'une volonté des éditeurs d'équilibrer les opinions en attendant l'arrivée des véritables réponses. C'est dans *Strange* n°90, juin 1977, que ces courriers sont publiés. Jean-Marie Leveque répond que

les dessins de Kirby au départ faibles et inconsistants se sont peu à peu affermis, ils ont évolué, et regorgent maintenant d'une puissance sans pareille. Qui, plus que Kirby (sans tenir compte d'Adams, de Buscema et de Starlin) serait apte à dessiner ces machines fantasmagoriques, ces monstres cosmiques à l'apparence horrifiante et aux regards désespérés d'avoir perdu leur humanité ? (*Strange* n°90, 1977)

Une défense en demi-teinte donc, et qui implique toujours la comparaison avec d'autres dessinateurs. Seul Gérard Courtial, sur la même page, livre un éloge inconditionnel de Jack Kirby qui « est un génie et comme tous les génies, il est plus ou moins incompris ». Il donne d'ailleurs son analyse du style Kirby :

Il ne dessine les choses ni telles qu'elles sont, ni telles qu'il les voit, mais telles qu'elles rendent le mieux obtenant ainsi une concrétisation délirante par une sorte de subjectivisme graphique rejetant à la fois le naïf et le réalisme. Certains savent apprécier cela à sa juste valeur, mais d'autres trop épris de réalisme parlent de "caricature". S'il l'avait voulu, Kirby aurait pu les satisfaire par un style plus réaliste. (*Strange* n°90, 1977)

Notons immédiatement un fait sur lequel nous reviendrons plus loin : Gérard Courtial, en plus d'être un lecteur, est un critique des comics. Il est quelques années après cette lettre, en 1984, l'auteur d'un supplément à la revue *Bédésup* n°31 intitulé « A la rencontre des super-héros ». Il montre d'ailleurs sa connaissance du champ en évoquant ici une série peu connue en Europe, *Sky Masters*, à laquelle Jack Kirby et Wally Wood ont collaboré.

Le débat se poursuit encore dans plusieurs numéros de *Strange*. Dans le n°91 de juillet 1977, Jean de March répond en rappelant l'importance de Jack Kirby dans l'histoire éditoriale des comics et son influence sur ses confrères comme Jim Steranko. Dans le n°92, août 1977, Christian Garcin approuve les remarques initiales de Jean Mendez, estimant que « les dessins de Jack Kirby ne méritent pas l'éloge que l'on en fait ». S'il estime que sa production des années 1960 était excellente, ses travaux contemporains à cette lettre sont « trop caricaturaux », évoquant sans doute la série *Eternals* de 1976 et dont Lug a débuté la publication quelques mois auparavant. Cet avis est renouvelé avec la lettre de Max Capel dans *Strange* n°94, en octobre 1977, à laquelle l'éditeur répond qu'il « est vraiment dommage que Kirby se complaise dans le caricatural », une opinion appuyée par le fait que la série *Eternals* vient d'être retirée du sommaire de *Strange* après seulement quatre numéros. Une disparition que regrettent trois lectrices dans les courriers des *Strange* n°97 et n°98, respectivement de janvier et février 1978.

Comment expliquer ces dissensions ? Nous pouvons faire intervenir la notion de lisibilité pour tenter de mieux comprendre ce phénomène.

Nous postulons ici que la lisibilité d'une œuvre n'est pas une propriété du texte, entendue comme une spécificité immuable et intrinsèque, ni le corollaire d'une aptitude du lecteur, mais le produit de l'interaction texte/lecteur à un moment déterminé. (Voisin, 2009 : 22)

Réintroduisant à la fois la « subjectivité de l'instance lectrice » (*idem.*) et toute l'importance des circonstances de la réception, en particulier le passé de lecteur et le moment de l'entrée dans l'œuvre, le concept de lisibilité nous permet d'émettre une hypothèse. Si les créations de Jack Kirby sont régulières tout au long de sa carrière, c'est surtout dans les années 1960 que sont réalisées ses grandes œuvres pour Marvel : son célèbre passage sur la série *Fantastic Four* dure de la création de la série en 1961 jusqu'en 1970, il dessine également *Avengers* de 1963 à 1965, crée Hulk et Thor en 1962, puis les X-Men en 1963, etc. Son style, élaboré depuis les années 1940 avec son compère Joe Simon, ne semble toutefois pas aussi moderne aux lecteurs de Lug qui découvrent dans les années 1970 simultanément les travaux des successeurs de Kirby comme John Buscema, alors dessinateur de la série *Silver Surfer*. Si l'ensemble suit une progression artistique logique pour le lecteur américain, le lecteur francophone voit sans doute une discordance entre les styles graphiques de publications qui ont presque une décennie d'écart dans leur champ d'origine. Comme l'a montré Umberto Eco, « aucun texte n'est lu indépendamment de l'expérience que le lecteur a d'autres textes » (Voisin, 2009 : 31). On peut donc supposer ici, que ce n'est pas à proprement parler le style de Jack Kirby durant son premier passage chez Marvel qui pose problème au lectorat, mais plutôt le fait qu'il arrive finalement trop tard. Paradoxalement, lorsque des œuvres réalisées à la fin des années 1970 par Kirby, lors de son dernier passage chez Marvel, sont publiées par les éditions Lug, c'est sans doute la liberté de ton graphique, la modernité de son emphase sur la puissance, l'expressionnisme de ses personnages qui choquent. Là-encore, c'est le moment de la rencontre et ce que le lecteur connaît déjà de la matière graphique des comics qui fonde la lisibilité d'une œuvre. On ne peut d'ailleurs que remarquer que les courriers des lecteurs qui connaissent vraisemblablement le mieux le champ des comics, pour avoir été par la suite eux-mêmes producteurs de textes critiques, à l'exemple de Gérard Courtial, tendent à défendre Jack Kirby. Ses détracteurs le font bien par rapport à d'autres dessinateurs, sans considérer que ces artistes appartiennent aux générations ultérieures à Kirby. Buscema, Romita, Steranko et Starlin sont tous nés entre dix et trente ans après Jack Kirby, qu'ils revendiquent tous comme une influence par ailleurs. Ils se sont formés autrement à la pratique du dessin et leur carrière émerge dans un champ éditorial très différent de celui des années 1940 dans lequel Kirby a débuté et qu'il a contribué à fonder et à faire évoluer.

La lisibilité d'une œuvre dépend également de « la capacité du lecteur à poursuivre une lecture signifiante de manière fragmentaire » (Voisin, 2009 : 25).

Nous évoquons la question de la synchronicité et de l'éventuel retard des publications, il semble important de considérer de manière générale « la dimension spatio-temporelle de la lecture » (*idem.*), d'autant plus lorsqu'il s'agit d'une publication anthologique elle-même fragmentaire, où le lecteur doit suivre trois ou quatre séries à la fois et dont les arcs narratifs peuvent nécessiter plusieurs mois pour se compléter. Si les comics des années 1960 tendent plutôt vers un format où un épisode constitue une histoire complète, le besoin des auteurs de développer des situations plus complexes les amène rapidement à prendre plusieurs épisodes pour qu'un super-héros s'assure de la défaite de son adversaire, sans compter les développements des personnages sur le long terme comme peuvent l'être les histoires d'amour. Si l'on considère l'exemple de la série *The Amazing Spider-Man*, publiée dans *Strange* par les éditions Lug, nous pouvons voir que Peter Parker rencontre Gwen Stacy dans le n°31 de la série, en décembre 1965, publié dans *Strange* n°29 en mai 1972. La romance troublée se développe sur plusieurs dizaines d'épisodes jusqu'à la mort du personnage dans *The Amazing Spider-Man* n°121 en juin 1973, un épisode marquant intitulé « The Night Gwen Stacy Died », publié en France dans *Strange* n°104 en août 1978. Il faut donc pour le lecteur américain suivre la série pendant presque huit années pour considérer l'histoire du personnage comme complète, et environ six ans pour le lecteur francophone. La question de la complétude des histoires est d'ailleurs évoquée dans les lettres des lecteurs, ceux-ci se trouvant confrontés précisément au moment de transition entre le modèle une histoire par épisode et une histoire sur plusieurs épisodes formant un arc narratif. Les éditions Lug interrogent d'ailleurs leur lectorat dans « le courrier des fans de *Strange* » du n°19, en juillet 1971 : « Episodes complets ou épisodes se terminant sur un suspense, qu'en pensez-vous, fans de *Strange* ? Que préférez-vous ? », cette remarque faisant suite au courrier de Bernard Gillet qui déclare vouloir que les épisodes se terminent chaque mois afin de ne pas avoir à attendre la suite plusieurs semaines. Les avis sur la question sont plutôt partagés, Jean-Daniel Brèque préférant dans le *Strange* n°25, janvier 1972, que les auteurs puissent développer leurs histoires sur plusieurs épisodes, alors que Pierre Duvert, dans le *Strange* n°26 de février 1972, estime que les éditions Lug n'auront de toute façon pas le choix de ne publier que des histoires complètes en un seul épisode puisqu'elles sont de moins en moins nombreuses, montrant que ce changement de modèle semble intégré rapidement par certains lecteurs.

Conclusion

S'il n'est pas possible de faire ici une analyse détaillée de chaque lettre, fût-elle pertinente, il nous faut noter la qualité générale de ces réactions, le plus souvent argumentées et précises, qu'elles soient positives ou négatives. Ce fait n'est pas anodin et permet de confirmer ce que les études sur la lecture observent depuis de nombreuses années : les lecteurs qui s'intéressent le plus aux narrations graphiques sont de manière générale des grands lecteurs, il n'y a pas concurrence directe avec la forme purement écrite, et font souvent montre d'une réussite scolaire supérieure à la moyenne lorsque les études s'intéressent au phénomène. On est donc bien loin du préjugé d'un medium abêtissant pour la jeunesse. Par ailleurs, et puisque cette vision des narrations graphiques a été utilisée comme argument pour en faire la critique, la mise sous tutelle du lectorat qui « renvoie évidemment à l'immaturation d'un public que l'on doit protéger » (Dayan, 2009 : 139) incarnée par un organisme comme la Commission de surveillance des publications destinées à la jeunesse semble d'autant moins pertinente lorsque l'on s'intéresse non à un lecteur supposé mais aux lecteurs réels.

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THE ROMANIAN READERS' REACTION TO *LES TEINDRES PLAINTES* BY YOKO OGAWA

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Abstract: *The purpose of this paper is to analyze the reception of the novel Les teindres plaintes by Yoko Ogawa by the Romanian reading audience. It starts from the event of the book launch, organized for the large public, and not restricted to the academic world, and continues with an analysis in the context of the European readers' reception of Japanese novels and what can make them feel close to this very different culture. The role of the translator as a cultural mediator is also included in the analysis, together with the way both familiar and unfamiliar cultural aspects are included in Ogawa's novels. The Japanese culture has also had a similar fascination with European culture and from here there can be a starting point for reasons why we can feel so close to an exotic culture. Connections between cultures can be established starting from political levels, through promotion of relations, and can continue from fascination with a different culture with different habits and something universal to human nature which is present in all cultures. The theoretical framework combines literary studies, translation studies and reception theories. The importance of achieving cultural empathy from reading literary products is obvious, as suggested by means of minimizing and eliminating culture shock. Nowadays multiculturalism promotes understanding and acceptance of different cultures, even though the slogan "unity in diversity" is familiar from the politics of the European Union. An openness which is on both sides an advantage and a way to adapt to today's world.*

Keywords: *translator; harpsichord; visual; culture; Japanophile.*

Introduction

The novel *Les teindres plaintes* by Yoko Ogawa, translated as *Suspine tandre* by Magdalena Ciubăncan and published in 2018 by Humanitas in Bucharest, was launched on November 15, 2018, at Humanitas Cișmigiu Library during an event organized in collaboration with the Japanese Embassy in Bucharest and called A Japanese Evening. In the first part of the event, the

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translated novel was presented, with an exchange of opinions from the part of the special guests: the translator, writer and cultural journalist Marius Constantinescu, Serban Georgescu, director of the Asian Studies Department at the Romanian-American University in Bucharest, moderator Denisa Comănescu, Humanitas Fiction general director and Takahiko Watabe, Councillor at the Japanese Embassy in Romania, while in the second part of the event there was the concert of the Shamipia group, with Keisho Ohno (shamisen) and Mamoru Motooka (piano). The event was organized within a larger grouping of events in several cities in Romania, including Iași and Cluj-Napoca, called November, the Month of Japan, during which the promotion of Japanese culture elements took place, through workshops of sumie, haiku, painting exhibitions, watching films, as well as through the inauguration of a Japanese Study Center at the Faculty of Economic Studies in Bucharest. At the book launch of Yogo Ogawa's novel, the translator mentioned that she found a Japanese frame of mind in this novel, and without the stereotypical images of Japan such as geishas and samurai. She also claimed that she needed to do some research on the harpsichord, the musical instrument which has a central place in the novel, as *Les teindres plaintes* by Jean-Philippe Rameau is played at this musical instrument throughout the novel and has a significant role in the development of the characters' relationships and emotions.

Ruriko feels lonely when her husband reveals he has an affair after their communication had not gone well for some time, and escapes to a hut in nature which belonged to her father. She is a calligrapher and continues her work there in solitude. There she meets Mr. Nitta, a former musician who creates harpsichords, who has broken up with his wife after many years of marriage and who now has a romance with his young assistant Kaoru, whose husband-to-be had been murdered. The action of the novel can be interpreted as having lots in common with a musical piece for harpsichord, going from nostalgia, sadness, loneliness, peace, towards establishing a relationship, breaking it in a violent way, creating something and then destroying it (in the episode where Mr. Nitta destroys the harpsichord which was not well built), finding out about a murder from the past, and impossibility of feeling accepted and loving and being loved, as well as various states of mind, tenderness, violence, and light humor.

Les teindres plaintes is a Japanese-style poetic novel about relationships, loneliness, the moment of breakage, the impossibility of being loved, the ephemerality of love and the rapprochement of someone, and all these seem to be translated into words from the language of the harpsichord's music. The world of music is interwoven with the world of connections and feelings

between characters. Apparently static, the action of the novel also contains unexpected elements, violent outbursts, even a murder. 'How can we get near someone?' is one of the questions of this novel, and the answer seems to be: 'The way music connects us.' Several mediums appear in translation: emotions are translated into music, which in turn are translated into poetic language. The event of the book launch stressed the strong connection between poetical prose and music. What is more, translator Magdalena Ciubăncan has managed to create a good example of cultural translation, managing to preserve the specificities of the Japanese culture and to present them efficiently to the Romanian public.

The response to the event of the book launch is in tune with the enthusiasm and interest of Romanian readers for translations of Japanese and Asian literature, promoted by Romanian publishing houses. The questions raised by this paper are: How do Romanian readers perceive Yoko Ogawa's novel? What are the reasons for the popularity of and attraction to Japanese and Asian literature and culture in Romania?

The popularity of Japanese, and Asian— generally speaking — literature and culture is a topic of worldwide interest. However, it appears that the Japanese literature and culture has a higher popularity and has reached more of the European audiences due to the fact that it is, in some ways, closer to our contemporary world and its realities, in contrast with Chinese literature and culture:

Japanese fiction seems to be more relevant to European readers because it deals with a life world that is pertinent to the interests and problems of the modern Western reader. In Chinese fiction, whether by Lu Xun, Mao Dun or Ba Jin, there is a strong preoccupation with China's attempts to come to terms with Western influences. We should remind ourselves that China's opening up to the West came much later than that of Japan. (Fokkema 1988: 241)

The way cultures are open to one another influences the process of reception of artistic products belonging to the respective countries. During the event of Ogawa's book launch in Bucharest, mention was made of the Japanese author's interest in European culture. This interest was visible in the way the characters in her book are familiar with musical pieces belonging to the European culture. In this way, European readers have the advantage of going into a world that is both familiar and not known, a world where they discover different people and different frames of mind. European readers will juxtapose Ogawa's characters' emotions over the known musical pieces from their own culture and the Japanese world will become very close to them. Ogawa's novel

was called psychological during the book launch event in Bucharest, which is another feature that has the advantage of bringing an unknown world close to a culture of our own. European readers will find Japanese novels accessible as they resemble well-known authors of their cultural legacy in style:

[...] Western readers—who, in fictional narrative, were looking for psychological explanations—could not find much of their interest in Chinese fiction. The Japanese had had more time and more opportunities to assimilate the legacy of the great Russian realists, such as Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Turgenev, of Proust, Gide and Thomas Mann. I believe it is psychological subtlety that made modern Japanese fiction attractive to Western readers. (Fokkema 1988: 240)

The European readers will find in Ogawa's novel a poetic language which is specific to Japanese culture. It is a poetic language which is removed from the known abstract language of European poetry, it is a visual language which, through images, manages to suggest states of mind through their own power, without a strong intervention from the observer. At the same time, the European reader will notice visible allusions to the visual tradition of Japanese poetry, known to the European and American public from the trend of Imagism. Ruriko, the main character, has the profession of a calligrapher, which has obvious links to the realm of the visual. She meets her husband when she has an eye problem, as he is an ophthalmologist. She notices how he uses the same hands that have performed the most difficult operations on the human eye to strike her at some point. The allusions form sensations which go beyond the reach of the visual sense. The reader will go beyond what is visually described and will use the other five senses – here, the reader will imagine a scene where Ruriko no longer sees properly and can no longer use the visual sense properly, but instead she will use the sense of touch in order to get acquainted with her future husband. He will make her feel protected by his care as a doctor. The sense of hearing is also significant, as through hearing the sounds of the harpsichord acquire a greater meaning: even the way Mr. Nitta plays in his assistant Kaoru's presence is not a simple action, as for Ruriko it is a reason for jealousy. She would like Mr. Nitta to be able to play in her presence. The Japanese haiku poem is known to the European and American public as it was popular and used in the Imagist trend and as a poetry of the concrete, of the visual, and of the five senses, and which is found in the poetic scenes and language in this novel. The sense of the familiarity with this world helps European readers connect with the novel and explain their enthusiasm.

The use of previous experience for understanding a work of art is referred to as the horizon of expectations:

In his essay "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory," Jauss adopts the phrase "the horizon of expectation" from hermeneutic philosophy to describe how the reader's expectations produce interpretation and aesthetic judgments on a literary work. When a reader receives a literary work, it "is received and judged against the background of other works of art as well as against the background of the everyday experience of life" (1967). The horizon of expectation refers to the totality of such background. (Liu 2014: 7)

By combining expected views of Japanese culture in a mixture of what we expect and what we do not know, the novel by Ogawa is successful as it challenges the stereotypical views of Japanese culture, while at the same time it confirms existing knowledge (the visual and the use of the five senses in poetry), and makes the Japanese culture feel so close to us and familiar through the use of European musical compositions. This mixture makes the novel appealing through its technique. The novel by Ogawa offers both specific cultural elements and universal elements, since the feeling of solitude and the difficulty of connection in relationships as well as the longing to be loved in return is common to human nature in any type of culture and during all ages. Solitude has been explored recently in modernist and postmodernist literature in the English culture, such as Virginia Woolf's novels, or Graham Swift's novels, so the contemporary feel is still there. In this way, cultural empathy is achieved. This is an important element in achieving a connection with other cultures and to feel respect for them. In today's world, where moving from one culture to another through travelling for various reasons, knowledge and understanding of another culture are ways to minimize and to avoid cultural shock. When someone finds him or herself in a foreign culture, in order to function properly there, he or she needs to be "equipped" with knowledge about the target culture or cultures, to have the capacity to understand the feelings and needs of other people (empathy) and to show self-confidence, i.e. to know exactly what he/she wants." (Baciu 2013: 79) Literature reception leads us to a better understanding of the other and, through this openness, of the self. Reception theories claim the following: "Reading does not take into account boundaries and man is learning especially from other cultures, from the wisdom of alterity. Reception requires an ontological and epistemological opening towards the other in a search of the world and of the self" (Haşu-Bălan, 2013 : 4). Today's world is open to multiculturalism, and to embracing "unity in diversity" as promoted by the

European Union's slogan. The global village we live in today makes it a necessary skill to understand and accept different cultures and to feel open and curious about them.

In order to achieve cultural empathy, we need a mediator, and in the case of this novel the translator has such a role: "through translation, cultures and societies may come closer to each other" (Haşu-Bălan, 2013 : 8). Magdalena Ciubăncan is not only a literary translator, but also a cultural translator, offering an opportunity to have access to a different culture that is, after all, not completely different, and which shows the same openness and curiosity for our own culture. During the event, the role and status of the literary translator is also brought to the fore, as, in the absence of the Japanese authors, the audience is given the opportunity to get autographs from the translator after buying the novel. Pusztai-Varga (2009: 4) defines the role of the literary translator as a cultural broker, a term from economics, which parallels the term mediator among cultures. In the field of the study of culture in Hungary, it was GyörgySzelják (2000) who first used the Hungarian loan translation of the English term cultural broker (*kulturálisbróker*). In the field of economics, the broker has the same role as a mediator; the use of the term has its origin in the field of economics. "A broker is a middle man acting between a client and a market maker – a broker will charge a commission for his services (Market Terminology)" (Pusztai-Varga 2009: 2). By using the term from economics, the readers of the paper can get a clearer picture of the role of the literary translator's job, which is not always recognized, as the translator tends not to be noticed and the focus is on the book's author. Through this comparison, Pusztai-Varga draws attention to the fact that the literary translator's work is poorly remunerated, but it is an essential and difficult task, which should be recognized as such.

The fascination of the Western world with Japan began quite early in history, with the Victorian age, when Japan started to become open to foreign trade and was no longer isolated from the rest of the world:

When Matthew Perry opened Japan to foreign trade in 1854 after more than two centuries of official isolation, Japan became an immediate locus of extraordinary curiosity and fascination for the West. How Japan would thereafter be understood, negotiated, and imagined became an important part of mid-to-late Victorian consciousness. (McAdams, 2016 : vi)

This marks the beginnings of the Japanophile phenomenon, which then continues to our days with the love of popular Manga culture. One of the

consequences of being attracted to an exotic culture is to imagine it in ways it is not:

This study of Japonisme¹⁰³ as a discourse brings into sharp relief how transnational encounters produce a moment of paradox in which the other nation must be unlearned and simultaneously imaginatively peopled. This process is alluded to in Oscar Wilde's declaration that, "The whole of Japan is pure invention. There is no such place, no such people." I differ with Wilde: I say that both the pure invention and the tangible reality are important parts of the transnational encounter. (McAdams, 2016 : vi)

This imagining is not necessarily a drawback, even if we have an unrealistic image of the respective foreign culture. After all, when we imagine something about a culture this action opens up the way for our motivation to further explore it and understand it better. It prompts us to take a first step in discovering the respective culture. Afterwards, we can come to terms with imagination and reality and further explore it.

The same situation is visible with the Romanian readers' reaction to Ogawa's novel: they may have imagined, like the translator, to find images of geishas, samurai, and tea ceremony, but instead they found a story of the characters' emotions when it comes to the ephemeral nature of life and connection in human relationships. The poetic language of the book is a feature that adds to the further fascination with the book and which makes it easier for readers to connect with the characters belonging to a different culture.

Up to a point, Japanese culture has been unique, by its development in isolation from the Western world for some time. After all, Japan has not been a colony of the Europeans. Even nowadays, while being fascinated in their turn by the Western world and culture, they still retain their cultural specificities.

The Romanian readers follow the existing trend of being fascinated by Japanese culture. Humanitas Publishing House and other publishing houses offer plenty of translations of Japanese authors for them to read. Bloggers and reading group communities on Facebook connect according to similar interests and the interest in Japanese literature is being promoted and shared. Yoko Ogawa's novel has fascinated the blogging community through its mixture between music and poetic language, and a blogger (Andreea Chebac, at bookblog.ro) has started a contest where participants can win a copy of the novel if they pair other novels with a suitable musical piece. This Japanese novel has thus had a significant impact on the reading community in Romania and has opened the way to the

¹⁰³ Japonisme is a French term coined in the late nineteenth century to describe the craze for Japanese art and design in the West.

perspective of connection between a musical piece and a novel. Music is believed to form connections, and bring together persons that resonate with the same musical genre. This obviously happens during concerts. What is more, nowadays, music videos always show a story and this habit can be transferred to imagining a story when reading a novel or making parallels to using the novel's story and language with Rameau's musical piece, as in the case of Ogawa's novel.

Conclusion

Feeling close to the Japanese culture can go sometimes as far as wishing to have been born into this culture: "Often stressed in Japanese media is the emergence of Western otaku, obsessively devoted fans of Japanese animation in Western countries whose love of Japanese animation makes them wish they had been born in Japan" (Iwabuchi 2002: 454). This phenomenon could be noticed even when it comes to the very close bond the community of Romanian (and elsewhere) readers feel with the Japanese literature and culture. The Western otaku phenomenon is another proof of the way two different cultures have something in common, related to human nature, something universal while maintaining interest through specific elements of a different culture which is perceived as exotic. The exoticism of a different culture could be regarded as a means of achieving a need for fantasy, as the need for stories (which can take the readers to fabulous realms) has been claimed to be universal, as discussed by a study from 2018, presented by Robson. One reason was that stories could teach empathy and provide escapism.

The Romanian Japanese culture fans among the reading community fascinated by Japanese fiction are integrated within other Japanophiles and story lovers. They have the same reasons for enjoying Japanese literature and the novels by Ogawa, with the mention that they find both a familiar and an unfamiliar world in *Les teindres plaintes*.

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INFLUENȚA LIRICII LUI HEINRICH HEINE ÎN CREAȚIA LUI ST. O. IOSIF

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Abstract: *As one of the foremost representatives of „sămănătorist”¹⁰⁵ literature, St. O. Iosif idealized village life, considering it the foundation of the people’s virtues and suggested that the city is the source of all vices. In St. O. Iosif’s lyrics we can detect, besides the poems inspired by the life of the Romanian village and the deeds of the ancients, a strong Romantic vein. Iosif exhibits, in general, both elements of German Romanticism as well as French symbolism. The influence of Heinrich Heine’s verses on the lyrics of the Romanian poet is obvious in poems such as *Învinsul*, *Pe deal sau Credințe*¹⁰⁶. The German model can also be remarked upon, in the resignation and melancholy of St. O. Iosif, in the pallid moonlight, in the romantic isolation and the poet’s estrangement. Despite these influences, Iosif remains a traditionalistic poet, because his lyrics lack the elements of crisis, of sentimental eruption.*

Keywords: *Heine, Romanticism, Romanian village, symbolism, traditionalism.*

Introducere

Compasiunea trezită de viața nefericită a autorului *Cântecelelor* s-a răsfânt și asupra poeziei sale, socotind-o, unii, firavă, minoră și fără vlagă. E. Lovinescu, revizuiindu-și aprecierile susținute în timpul vieții lui St. O. Iosif, ni-l înfățișează ca fiind un „poet minor” (Lovinescu, 1937: 81-82). Împotriva unei asemenea opinii se ridică în 1939 însuși Șerban Cioculescu, precizând în prefața ediției sale:

Poezia lui St. O. Iosif e pe nedrept considerată ca expresia minoră a unei deficiente vitale. La cristalizarea acestei impresii, trecută în domeniul public au contribuit foarte mult mărturiile cunoscuților și legenda înduioșătoare a unei existențe nefericite. Cu toate acestea poezia lui Iosif lasă impresia unei robuste sănătăți morale. Orientarea ei spre trecut poate lumina interpretări sociologice, care confundă paseismul cu pesimismul sau decepționismul. (Iosif, 1939, *Introducere*: XX).

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¹⁰⁵ The meaning of the adjective refers to agriculture, to the activity of sowing.

¹⁰⁶ *The Defeated One, On the Hillside, Faiths*

Împărțirea exegeților unui poet în astfel de tabere, critici de o parte, militanți naționaliști de cealaltă, e însă profund dăunătoare înțelegerii integrale a liricii lui St. O. Iosif, ajungându-se la confuzii inutile și chiar la adevărate nedreptăți. Că autorul a fost un poet al melancoliilor intime, un elegiac, un stihuitor cu accente nostalgice sau un bard al revendicărilor naționale, un poet mai înalt sau mai plăpând, din punct de vedere artistic, interesează mai puțin. „Principalul e – precizează Perpessicius – ca a fost un poet de o autentică misiune” (Perpessicius, VI, 1971: 274).

Fără a avea profunzimea lirică a lui Eminescu, vigoarea epică a lui Coșbuc sau tumultul lui Goga, cei trei poeți români de care s-a simțit mai apropiat sufletește, St. O. Iosif are totuși o originalitate și o artă poetică proprie, o grație simplă care în literatura noastră a fost numai a lui. Felul în care a fost apreciat de contemporanii săi a fost admirabil exprimat de N. Iorga, care considera că Iosif „a adus cu sine cea mai mare simplitate a sentimentului, unită cu cea mai mare bogăție de formă, un simț gingaș pentru cele mai ascunse mișcări ale sufletului, măiestria de a smulge accente puternice din mijlocul dulcii tristeți visătoare. Un simț ascuțit pentru tot ce e taină, pentru tot ce e duioșie, pentru tot ce e amurg, penumbră, luminiș de lună, freamăt, șopot, amintirea sigură a lucrurilor străvezii, învăluite, trecătoare (...), puțința de a se strămuta (...) în luminișurile trecutului și ale legendelor;” „minunat grai de icoane nouă, de apropieri neașteptate, de armonie așa de firească și totuși așa de meșteșugită” (Iorga, II, 1985:107-108).

În lirica lui St. O. Iosif regăsim pe lângă poemele inspirate din viața satului românesc, din faptele strămoșești și un vizibil filon de esență romantică. În afara folclorului nostru și a tradiției romantice autohtone, unele dintre poemele cu accent baladesc ale poetului vădesc formația germană a autorului. Substanța lirică a cântecului de cătanie ardelenesc și construcția schemei rimelor, care amintește de poezia lui Heine, alături de o notă de ironie, toate acestea se contopesc în poezia sa *Eroul de la Königgrätz*. Poetul s-a simțit adesea un dezrădăcinat, deplângându-și destinul înstrăinării, în poemele: *O rază*, *Învins*, *Harpistul*, *Romanța*, *Mergeam în întuneric* și altele. În *Harpistul*, sentimentului de tristețe, poetul îl adaugă și pe acela al dezrădăcinării, subliniindu-și prin aceasta propria însingurare: „Nici cei ce n-au purtat blestemul/ Iubirei fără de noroc,/ Cei ce uitați de lumea întreagă,/ Orfani de orice ființă dragă,/ N-au rătăcit din loc în loc.../” (Iosif, 1981: 45).

În *Ielele* întâlnim tentația misterelor și a superstiției populare. Iosif preia motivul din poezia lui Goethe acordându-i tonalitate folclorică românească. Sub

semnul romantismului stau, de asemenea, poemele baladești și istoriile despre iubiri nefericite evocate într-un specific cadru medieval.

Privind vestigiile trecutului, autorul încearcă voluptatea visului, plăcerea retragerii într-un feudalism cavaleresc al baladei vechi germane, un exemplu de acest fel este poezia *Clopotele din Nürnberg*. Poemele sale cu influențe romantice, au, în general, o coloratură occidentală, excepție făcând doar o suită de sonete, care fixează imagini și portrete din feudalismul românesc, cum sunt: *Cronicarii, Boierii, Domnița, Razmerița, Curtea Veche* și altele.

Având aptitudini romantice, Iosif a cultivat cu virtuozitate sonetul, încătușându-și sentimentele în canoanele aspre ale formei fixe ca și Heine în *Sonete*. Uneori, însă, în ciuda realizării formale a acestor poeme, Iosif nu reușește să redea intensitatea trăirii, tensiunea lirică. Iosif este atras și de cântecul de lume în care surprinde tratări romantice ale istoriei și prelucrări baladești. Se disting pe alocuri grădini pustii, parcuri, ploii interminabile, cețuri și nori sub apăsarea cărora se adâncește pesimismul. Decepția erotică este redată prin evocarea florilor veștede, frumuseți efemere uitate într-un parc, pe o bancă solitară: „Jeri am găsit pe banca solitară/ Din parc un biet mănunchi de flori trecute.../ Sărmane flori! Ce mâini necunoscute/ V-au strâns la piept și-apoi vă aruncară?” (Iosif, op.cit.: 82).

Interpretarea istoriei în lirica lui Iosif are, în general, o rezonanță tragică, un ecou al Școlii Ardelene. În poemul *Câmpul libertății* sunt evocate evenimentele revoluției de la 1848 din Transilvania, Câmpia Libertății fiind simbolul luptei românilor ardeleni pentru libertate social-politică și națională. Poezia reflectă și ideea unității tuturor românilor în versul „Dor adânc de neam întreg”.

În lirica lui St. O. Iosif remarcăm și o serie de valențe simboliste. Elementele de recuzită și estetică simbolistă nu se concretizează în poeme întregi, ci sunt prezente în structura unor versuri sau strofe din poemele: *Salcâmul, În parc, De urât, Nürnberg, Grădina morții, Răzlețe, Strofe, Noapte de mai, Toamnă, Înserare, Se-ntorc iar zilele noroase*, etc. Obsesia toamnei sau a nopții apăsătoare constituie un cadru predilect al versurilor lui St. O. Iosif. În aceste poezii, apar și parcurile și grădinile, colțuri de natură în mijlocul mediului citadin, în care se presimt temele expresioniștilor de metropolă.

În lirica lui St. O. Iosif sunt prezente, în general, atât elemente ale romantismului german, cât și ale simbolismului francez, care este, de fapt, un neoromantism. În ciuda acestor elemente simboliste, Iosif rămâne un poet tradiționalist, deoarece creației sale îi lipsesc elementele de criză, de erupție a sentimentelor.

O parte consistentă a operei lui Iosif o constituie pastelurile sale. Autorul surprinde în *Icoane din Carpați* scene și situații din viața satului românesc. Codrul și muntele exercită o atracție deosebită asupra poetului. Remarcabilă este *Doina* care sugerează coborârea unui grup de haiduci la o cârciumă, intrarea și dispariția lor în pădure pe fundalul rece al toamnei. În ciclul *Pasteluri* întâlnim, însă, o serie de poezii în care natura este foarte puțin reprezentată sau chiar absentă. Acestea surprind seceta apăsătoare, un convoi de țigani, un târg, etc. Autorul exprimă în versurile sale, în general, însingurarea, izolarea, neliniștea și melancolia.

Lirica de dragoste a lui St.O. Iosif cuprinde și noi acorduri elegiace în poezia *Mi-e dor de-un vis...*, respectiv în versurile: „Te chem și zi, și noapte, dar/ Tu nu-mi auzi în veci chemarea.../ Și nu-i mai firoasă marea/ În zbuțumarea ei ca marea/ Mea jale, chinul meu amar!” (Iosif, 1903: 179).

În anii tinereții autorul s-a apropiat de mișcarea socialistă, fapt care este prezent și în creația sa. În volumul *Versuri* remarcăm poezii care dovedesc că suferința oamenilor atinge în mod deosebit sufletul poetului. Astfel de poeme sunt: *Târziu*, *Artiști*, *Goana*, *Surorile* etc. Interesul lui Iosif față de copiii obligați să-și câștige singuri existența și față de femeile muncitoare se înscrie în aria preocupărilor mai largi, manifestate la răscruce de veacuri, datorate mișcării muncitorești. Din aceste versuri răzbate dragostea de viață, solidaritatea lui cu mulțimea și compasiunea pentru oamenii care suferă.

În *Patriarhale* timbrul poeziilor (*Îndurare*, *Zădărnicie*, *Învins* și altele) se schimbă, fiind evocat în special sentimentul dezrădăcinării și al inadapării. Ca reprezentant de seamă al literaturii sămănătoriste, St. O. Iosif a idilizat satul, considerându-l baza virtuților poporului și a sugerat că orașul este sursa tuturor viciilor. Acest volum conține, de asemenea, poeme în care autorul exprimă părerea de rău pentru trecut, cu excepția câtorva (*Baladă*, *Cu genele plecate* și *Vremuri apuse*) care prezintă influențe din poezia lui Heine.

Din opera scriitorului german, St. O. Iosif a tradus lirica de dragoste, care se potrivea cu sentimentalitatea lui deosebită. Influența versurilor lui Heine asupra liricii sale e uneori covârșitoare în poezii ca *Învinsul*, *Pe deal* sau *Credințe*. Modelul heinian se poate recunoaște în resemnarea și melancolia lui St. O. Iosif, în lumina palidă de lună (der Mondschein), în izolarea romantică și în înstrăinarea poetului.

Volumul *Cântece* conține mare parte din lirica sa de dragoste, poetul exprimându-și adorația supremă pentru femeia iubită în *Domnișoarei*, *Aceleiași*, dar și dragostea nefericită în *Vremuri apuse*, *Năframa*, *Baladă*, sau iubirea pe care a crezut-o fericirea absolută în *Reînviere*. În general, poemele din acest volum nu reușesc să comunice profunzimea sentimentului.

În *Cântec* constatăm influențe eminesciene, dar și versuri de dragoste care amintesc de unii poeții minori cum este Gheorghe din Moldova. Începând din 1903 poetul a transpus în versuri o singură iubire, aceea pentru femeia care-i va deveni soție, apoi îl va trăda și umili, căsătorindu-se cu D. Anghel, colegul de breaslă al poetului.

Nu numai în volumul *Cântece*, ci și în poeziile erotice anterioare, Iosif își cântă iubirea, el nu cântă femeia adorată, ci sentimentul pe care aceasta i-l inspiră. Autorul nu descrie ca alți poeți chipul iubitei, ci aduce câteva contururi vagi: părul împodobit cu flori, ochii adânci, pașii ușori etc.

*O, zboară iar... se aseamănă cu cea a lui Heine, cu titlul *Leise zieht durch mein Gemüt* (Heine, I, 1972: 217):*

O, zboară iar pe drum de seară,/ Trist cântec, pân-la casa Liei,/ La casa-n veci iubitei
zboară/ Și tainic la ferești adie-i.// Adie-i la ferești și spune-i/ Stăpânei dulci și-n veci
iubite/ Povestea-ntunecată-a unei/ Sărmane inime zdrobite (Iosif, 1903: 177).

Dorința de răzbunare nu-i rămâne străină poetului, fiind prezentă în aceeași poezie în versurile: „Să-i spui că nici să o blesteme,/ Nici ură n-ar putea
să-i poarte,/ Ci plânge sângere și geme/ Și o s-o cheme pân-la moarte” (Iosif, op.cit.: 178).

Iosif a scris multe poeme de dragoste, surprinzând mai ales perioada tragică a despărțirii, care reflectă sfârșitul iubirii sale pentru Natalia Negri. Poemele sale de dragoste se încadrează în post-eminescianismul de la confluența de veacuri, din care s-a născut romanța.

Mare parte dintre poemele lui Iosif reflectă influențe din liedurile lui Heine, și din folclorul românesc. Astfel de poezii sunt: *Domnu profesor, Rămas bun, De urât, Baladă, Icoane din Carpați, În bal, Cântece*, etc. Poemul *Cântec* evocă fericirea celor doi îndrăgostiți într-o lume deprimantă pentru autor: „Dă-mi ochii, dă-mi surâsul/ Și cazi-mi dulce-n brață.../ O, vino de mă-nvață/ Cât prețuiește visul:// Doar pentru el ne darăm/ Noi unul altui, dragă.../ N-aș vrea, pe-o lume-ntreagă,/ Ca și pe el să-l sfarăm!” (Iosif, 1981: 133).

Îndrăgostiții se simt izolați în fața lumii: „Doar tu altar îmi ești, și-mi ești icoană,/ Și dragostea mi-e sfântă și curată/ Ca floarea neatinsă-a primăverii, // Ca și iubirea fără de prihană,/ Scăldată într-a raiului lumină,/ Ce-o preamăreau în zilele vechi truverii.” (Iosif, op.cit.:134).

Natura amplifică sentimentele îndrăgostiților: „Mergeam printre grădini, și toate-n floare,/ Și ne țineam de mână amândoi - / Al firii templu-n zi de sărbătoare/ Părea deschis anume pentru noi, // Și pentru noi cânta, sus, ciocârlia/

Și orice fir de iarbă ne vorbea/ Și ne sporea tot pasul bucuria/ Iubirii noastre care ne orbea/” (Iosif, 1903: 148).

În *Răzlețe*, sentimentul iubirii este întunecat de viziuni sumbre: „De aceea lasă-n clipele aceste/ Să uit ce-a fost și ce va fi odată,/ Și să visăm privind cum înserează // Până s-o stinge cea din urmă rază,/ Până ce umbra nopții-ntunecată/ Ne-acoperi, cu-nctul, fără veste.../” (Iosif, 1981: 130). Iosif evocă în același poem trecerea timpului care estompează sentimentele: „Or trece anii.... Și-odinioară, poate,/ Vei răscoli prin vechi hârtii, copilă,/ În taina odăiței parfumate,/ Vei stoarce-atunci o lacrimă de milă/ Citind un nume pe un colț de filă/ Într-un caiet de cântece uitate.../” (idem).

În *Răzlețe* întâlnim comparația femeii cu un crin: „Tu ești un crin ce crește pe câmpie/ Și poți să stai de strajă-n rai, la poartă./ Pe mine însă un blestem mă poartă/ Ca pe o frunză dusă-n vijelie..../” (Iosif, 1903:141).

În *Trec nopțile* poetul evocă cu tristețe tot ceea ce este efemer: „Vezi tu, mi-e milă/ De-atâta farmec, milă și de tine,/ Ca și de tot ce e frumos pe lume/ Și efemer ca nopțile senine/” (Iosif, op. cit.:172).

Despărțirea de femeia iubită este prezentă în *Te duci*, în versurile: „Te duci - și ca o umbră rătăcită/ Te voi dori în zilele pustii,/ Te voi striga în nopțile târzii, / Și-n veci voi plânge vârsta fericită/ Când nu știam ce-nseamnă a iubi!/” (Iosif, 1965: 108).

În poemul *În noaptea* este schițat chipul iubitei, care este asemănător cu cel din balada *Loreley* a lui Heine, imaginea femeii fiind zugrăvită astfel: „În noaptea-nchiselor pleoape,/ Când somnul vine de mă fură,/ Răsai în gândul meu aproape/ Ca luna palidă prin zgură,/ Și fața albă ți-e ferită/ În blond privaz de plete mari/ De gene lungi lungi e-acoperită/ Oglinda ochilor tăi clari/” (Iosif, 1903: 178).

În *Mandolinate* Iosif evocă, ca și Heine, despărțirea de femeia iubită în versurile: „S-au despărțit;/ Și ea s-a dus // Spre răsărit,/ El - spre apus.../” (Iosif, 1965: 132). Destrămarea cuplului de îndrăgostiți este prezentă și în *Sone*, ca și la autorul german în *Seit die Liebste war entfernt* (Heine, I, 1972: 86):

Departa sunt de tine, așa departe,/ În noaptea-aceasta tristă și senină,/ Și inima mi se-nfioară, plină/ De gânduri negre, presimțiri de moarte.// Ea-mi spune că și tu, fără hodină,/ Plângi chinuită de muștrări deșarte,/ Dar graniță de veci azi ne departe,/ Străin îți sunt, și mie, tu, străină! (Iosif, op. cit.: 192).

Sentimentul de înstrăinare, dus la extrem, apare, de asemenea, în *Strofe*: „Și ne privim uimiți ca doi/ Străini ce n-au nimic a-și cere,/ Și fiecare merge-apoi/ Să plângă singur, în tăcere../” (Iosif, 1965: 162).

Elegiile sale *Asemeni unui trandafir, Cântec, Cum te-am iubit și Și nu mă vei lăsa?* sunt poezii sentimentale, care evocă iubirea pierdută.

În *Nepăsare* femeia iubită este comparată, ca în lirica lui Heine, cu o icoană: „Și dragostea mi-e sfântă și curată/ Ca floarea neatinsă-a primăverei,/ Ca și iubirea fără de prihană,/ Scăldată într-a raiului lumină,/ Ce-o preamăreau în zile vechi truverii”. (Iosif, 1903: 146).

În *Dojană* poetul transpune în mod deosebit iubirea: „Era un cer albastru-ntr-o vacanță,/ Iar noi mergeam ca doi copii drăguți.../ Și ochii-ți plini de tainică speranță,/ Și-obraji-ți albi spuneau: Nu ne săruți?// Mergeam printre grădini, și toate-n floare,/ Și ne țineam de mână amândoi - / Al firii templu-n zi de sărbătoare/ Părea deschis anume pentru noi” (Iosif, op.cit.: 148).

Poetul evocă nepăsarea femeii iubite în *Te duci*: „Te duci, și cum zâmbești nepăsătoare,/ M-abat din cale și mă simt murind.../ Pierdut spre tine brațele-mi întind/ Ca-n urma unei viziuni fugare,- / Dar numai pot în ele să te prind” (Iosif, op.cit.: 165).

În *Trec nopțile* remarcăm elementele romantice luna și stelele: „Trec nopțile, trec nopțile senine,/ Și zilele senine trec și ele,/ Și după o zi senină vine/ O noapte mai senină decât cele/ care au trecut, cu spuza ei de stele/ Și vraja veșnic nouă-a lunei pline...” (Iosif, op.cit.: 172).

În poemul *Stelele* întâlnim o invocație similară celei din *Luceafărul* lui Mihai Eminescu:

Trăind vremelnic pe pământ,/ Ești prea departe ori de stele,/ Dar, suflete, nu-i un cuvânt/ Să nu mai năzuiești spre ele.../ Știi tu ce spun necontenit/ Cu licărirea lor senină,/ Când cauți trist și ostenit/ Din noaptea globului de tină?// O, lasă lumea de noroi/ Și orice patimi te frământă,/ Te-avântă, suflete, spre noi,/ Încrede-te în noi, - și cântă! (Iosif, op.cit.: 189).

În *Poveste*, St. O. Iosif deplânge soarta poetului în general, ca și Heine în *Gaben mir Rat und gute Lehren* (Heine, I, 1972: 136): „Așa copii obijduiți/ În lumea noastră sunt poeții,/ Încătușați și chinuiți/ De vraja blestemat-a vieții// Ei plâng de drag, ei plâng de dor,/ Și cearcă în zadar uitare,/ Sporind cu lacrimile lor/ Comoara de mărgăritare!” (Iosif, 1981: 37).

În poezia *Ideal* întâlnim ironia romantică, specifică versurilor heiniene. Autorul realizează ironic portretul burghezului burtă-verde în strofa următoare: „Îmi place să mă satur bine/ Pe urmă - deschizându-mi vesta - / Să mă așez, lângă fereastră,/ Într-un hotel să-mi fac siesta;/ Să-mi sun în buzunare banii,/ Să beau ciubuc, să sorb cafea,/ Privind de sus la toți golani/ Ce trec pe sub fereastra mea...” (Iosif, 1981: 30).

Cu mine... amintește de poezia lui Heine în care iubita își cheamă din mormânt bărbatul drag, respectiv de *Nacht lag auf meinem Augen* din *Lyrisches Intermezzo* (Heine, I, 1972: 100) „– De unde vii așa târziu,/ Așa pierit și alb la față,/ De pari întors dintr-un sicriu,/ Din lumea celor duși din viață?!” (Iosif, 1981: 170).

În *Domnița* remarcăm cadrul romantic și natura care reflectă sentimentele omului:

Se plimbă prin grădina mănăstirii/ Domnița, albă-n rasă cenușie/ Amurgu-și cerne umbra-i viorie,/ Lung sună toaca-n toiul tânguirii/ Șoptesc încet prin flori de iasomie/ Și parcă vor s-o mângâie zefirii,/ Se scutură pe straturi trandafirii/ Și crinii mor, dar ea nu vrea să știe (Iosif, f.a.: 85).

În ochii tăi... este similară cu poemul heinian *Wenn ich in deinen Augen seh* (Heine, I, 1972: 73). Asemănarea apare, în mod deosebit, în versurile: „În ochii tăi adânci, de-mi pare/ Că ei cuprind pământ și cer,/ Eu nu știu cum se face, dar e/ Atât tulburător mister!” (Iosif, 1981: 97).

Cu fruntea-n mâna albă... evocă frumusețea unei femei, un chip asemănător cu cel din balada *Loreley* a lui Heine:

Cu fruntea-n mâna albă rezemată,/ Cânta frumoasa fată la fereastră,/ Cânta de dor, / Și glasul-i dulce și tremurător/ Se înălța în liniștea albastră/ A luminoasei nopți de vară...// Căci era noapte adâncă, albă, clară/ Și trist cânta copila, fermecată/ De liniște și de singurătate.../ Și singură se asculta cântând,/ Și nu sfârșea un cântec jumătate,/ Că altul îi venea mereu în gând./ Și nu știa nici ea de unde vin/ Aceste triste cântece uitate... (Iosif, 1903: 83).

În *Clopotele din Nürnberg* apare domul din poezia heiniană: „Și cum rămăsesem visând,/ Un clopot începe să sune/ Așa duios și de blând/ De parcă o rugă ar spune...// El sună, și alte-i răspund,/ Cântând ca argintul de clare,/ Și-odată s-aude, din fund/ Și clopotul domului mare!” (Iosif, 1965: 109).

Către lună prezintă imaginea romantică a astrului nopții:

Spune crăiasă a nopților și/ Candelă a nopților line!// Torță de-argint ce spânzură-n cer/ Tristă și palidă liră,/ Taină a nopții, vrajă, mister,/ Cântec în somn ce suspină!// Tu ce ningi floare de argint pe alei/ Și argintoase prin ramuri,/ Faci ca să picure ploi și scânteii/ Pui poleială pe geamuri (Iosif, op. cit.: 148).

Poemul *Cu genele plecate* transpune într-un cadru specific romantic, atmosfera plină de mister a unui castel și evocă drama unei domnițe forțată să trăiască alături de un soț tiran. Versurile: „Însă când bărbatul mândru/ Vine de la vânătoare/ Pașii grei și glasul-i aspru/ Lung vuiesc prin coridoare.../ Toți,

înfiorați aleargă/ De porunci să țină seamă/ Umiliți i se închină,/ Galbeni, tremurând de teamă./ Vai de-acei ce-i stau în cale/ Când sprânceana i se-ncruntă,/ În sălbatica-i privire/ Sângeră pedeapsa crudă.../” (Iosif, 1981: 56.) prezintă imaginea bărbatului aspru care vine de la vânătoare. Aceasa amintește de crudul rege Belsazar, ucis de proprii slujitori, din poemul *Belsazar* al lui Heine (Heine, I, 1972: 53). Domnița tristă, cu privirea pierdută, îl așteaptă resemnată, într-o aparentă liniște, înfruntându-l: „Numai doamna, numai dânsa/ Liniștită îl așteaptă, // (...) Numai ei, când îl zărește, inima nu i se bate,/ Și de-a pururi nu ridică/ Genele ei lungi, plecate.../” (Iosif, op.cit.: 32).

În *Baladă* autorul evocă iubirea și frumusețea primăverii ca și Heine în *Im wunderschönen Monat Mai* (Heine I, 1972: 72), respectiv în versurile: „Prin crângul străbătut de lună,/ De primăvară înflorit,/ (...) O, nu te-ncrede-n jurăminte/ Și nu iubi în luna mai!/” (Iosif, 1981: 35).

Tot în poezia amintită întâlnim o imagine similară cu cea din lirica lui Heine, aceea a îndrăgostitului care rătăcește fără nici o țintă: „Doar am iubit și eu ca tine/ În mai, și n-am avut noroc!/ Privește și ia seama bine/ Cum rătăcesc din loc în loc (...)/” (Iosif, op.cit.: 36).

Poemul *Vremuri apuse* prezintă, de asemenea, asemănări cu versurile heiniene prin peisajul romantic și evocarea îndrăgostitului rătăcitor: „În parcul vechiului castel,/ Pe-aleea solitară,/ Un tânăr prinț rătăcitor/ Se plimbă trist și visător/ În fiecare seară/” (Iosif, op.cit.: 41), dar și cu *Luceafărul* lui Mihai Eminescu, în special, prin adresarea, care amintește de chemarea Cătălinei către cel mai mare astru al nopții: „Se plimbă visător și trist:/ Și cu durere îngână:/ - De ce nu vrei să te ivești/ Din ceața vechilor povești,/ Să-mi faci un semn de mână?/” (Iosif, op. cit.: 42).

În lirica lui St. O. Iosif există, de asemenea, multe accente din poezia lui Eminescu, pe de-o parte, și din cea a lui Coșbuc, pe de altă parte. Lirismul său direct îl deosebește de Eminescu, iar lipsa de energie, de atitudine și expresie îl deosebește de Coșbuc.

Concluzie

St. O. Iosif este consacrat în istoria literaturii române ca un poet autentic și un reprezentant de seamă al liricii noastre de la începutul secolului XX. Prin universul tematic al operei sale, respectiv: sat, natură, folclor, istorie națională, prin modul de construcție al imaginii, dar și prin respectul față de forma clasică a versului, Iosif se menține pe linia tradiționalistă a poeziei românești. Cu toate acestea se simt influențele poeziei noi în opera sa, în special notele simboliste.

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WHERE DOES THE CRISIS OF MEANING IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY ORIGINATE?

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Abstract: *The article discusses the crisis of meaning that may be seen as a crisis of reference models affecting society as a whole. Each marked change obliges to giving new meaning to human actions (endowing action with new meaning), which can help overcome the disorientation into which man falls or is immersed. The accumulation of subjective and intersubjective crises of meaning becomes a social problem, whose causes must be sought in the social structure. Efforts to legitimize superordinate values heighten the crisis, leading to a forced coexistence of different sets of values and different communities of meaning. The emerging situation may be defined as “pluralism”. Globalization has established a world capitalist market and a unified cyberspace, where huge wealth is continuously produced. In spite of this, millions of people starve to death every year (Ziegler, 2005). Shock economy, or disaster capitalism, leads to endless impoverishment (Klein, 2007) in which injustice triumphs (Douglas, 1995), in which those who are in excess are a symbol of that which is not necessary, of that which interferes with the components of the groups and subverts their security (Bauman, 2002). There is a deceptive analogy between the universal and the global: the universal concerns human rights (culture and democracy), globalization concerns techniques, markets and information. The latter appears irreversible, while the former seems to be heading for extinction. In order to overcome this crisis, human action must be provided with meaning to advance with greater faith in the future, not in a solitary march but in a collective one, finding once again in others the pleasure of what joins and appreciating diversity, because it leads to discovery.*

Keywords: *globalization, inclusion-exclusion, crisis of meaning, future-centred approach, collective expectations.*

Introduction

Every society has a specific identity of its own primarily due to its history and the reference to the daily lives of those who make it up. In order to govern, a consensus has to be reached that takes account of the plurality of individuals who ultimately have to share something new characterising that same society.

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Information technologies act as an accelerator and speed up the rate of change, forcing social actors to quickly adjust to what is new. However, consideration needs be given to the fact that the two processes of assimilation and accommodation (Piaget 1950) are not as immediate for humans as they are for machines used with *ad hoc* programming.¹⁰⁸

The current society is undergoing a crisis of social models that no longer have direct reference to the daily life of actors. The word “crisis” has several meanings: choice, separation, decision, critical confrontation. All of these meanings imply a change, because when they are activated they identify a specific semantic area that modifies previous balances. This makes it necessary to endow human actions with new meaning, thus allowing subjects to find a way to overcome the feeling of disorientation invading them (Dubar 2004).

Most of the current social changes stem from globalization, which shifts every responsibility from a democratically elected political class to the supranational economic sphere, creating a lag and generating distrust in what governments can do for their citizens. Pluralism comes from the numerous efforts to delegitimize superordinate values and it may be found in almost all current societies. It is generally accepted that meta-values exist, which are superordinate to the value of the vote, and this is typical of the democratic order. It does not seem possible to morally accept votes that are an expression against democracy itself, the protection of minorities, the separation of powers or free information. Values are personal systems of *desiderata* and imperatives that inform the life projects of each person in a unique way. But if a subject activates his/her “area of the collective”, he/she is led to assess collectivistic values in a specially positive way (Roccatò 2009).

Superordinate values do not always succeed in allowing the coexistence of different orientations of values that define differing sense communities. Such communities create for themselves a context that attacks the very authority that should guarantee reciprocal recognition, allocating each individual a place in real society and not a utopian one. When crises of sense accumulate in a society, the reasons must be investigated in a social structure fragmented by individualism. Even though superordinate categories of symbols and values are meant to orient subjectivities and reduce the increasing contingencies coming from individual liberties, they do not always succeed in doing so (Gili, 1996).

¹⁰⁸ An example highlighting the discrepancy between human and machine is the crash at the London Stock Exchange in 1987. The factor at play was a deviation between human information and IT.

Social complexity forces individuals and institutions to continuously redefine identities and strategies that reflect on both innovation and social control.

The first point to consider in order to maintain a sense to society is the ability to adapt to others. This requires interacting through discussion and argumentation, until a consensus is reached (Moscovici and Doise 1992). Each individual acts and endows his/her actions with meaning. According to Weber (1948), every behaviour may be interpreted as rational regarding its value, its purpose or both. This statement may seem to contradict Weber's claims; instead, it confirms the polytheism of values according to which global society marks a shift from the ethic of conviction to the ethic of responsibility, the latter implying the ability to make just choices where tradition gave way to multiple universes of values (Calzati 2016). A multiethnic society must tend to be a just society. Justice is not sufficient as an ethical conviction and a "juster justice" should be sought. Weber clearly expressed his thinking when stating that "all historical experience confirms the truth - that man would not have attained the possible unless time and again he had reached out for the impossible" (1948: 156).

The analysis of inequality could be explained with the terms inclusion/exclusion. They may be understood as a change in perspective, because modern social systems are based on communication (Stichwech 2006). This involves a structural change that is internal to the social systems emphasizing participation mediated by communication. It is actually a change of scientific paradigm and it reflects the pre-eminence of adhering to the communication process, in contrast with an availability of material resources. Communication and information become preeminent and with them a shift takes place, from the social dimension to the content dimension: who is speaking becomes less and less important in comparison with what is being said. Furthermore, with globalization what is social is freed from its local bond. The pluralisation of reference systems allows participation of the individual in society to be ensured. This takes the form of a plurality of participations in systems, none of which can be regarded as determining. We witness a plurality of exclusions and inclusions that are both interconnected and independent one from the other.

Agamben offers another analysis of the markedly pluralistic situation with his "state of exception", a technical term meaning a state of emergency with attempts to establish emergency powers. Word choices are never neutral and "state of exception" represents a stance on the nature of the phenomenon that is being investigated and on the logic most suited to comprehending it (2003: 13).

The state of exception ultimately refers to the suspension of juridical order and tries to better define the law's threshold, or limit concept. Such state is the alternative that inevitably implies a stronger government, meaning that the government will have more power and the citizens fewer rights. The need to enact a "state of exception" is interpreted as a deficiency in legislation that, in this case, relates to a suspension of the laws in force to guarantee their existence (Rossiter 1948: 5; Agamben 2003: 18).

Another consideration may concern the fact that, notwithstanding social fragmentation and individualism, consensus characterized by choice is the basis of communal life and it is necessary when men want to form a society, act together and make decisions. However, in order to reach consensus, debate is necessary. This not only rests on pre-established reason, but is also developed in the course of exchange and deliberation, thus becoming an institution. Consensus implies the participation of those who discuss in order to find an agreement, which prohibits remaining indifferent to the subjects upon which agreement is sought. Consensus becomes all the more necessary when society undergoes transformations: new problems, unprecedented behaviours, unexpected differences, when there is dissent and a breaking up of bonds (think of euthanasia, surrogate pregnancy, abortion). Consensus acts as a framework within which novelties and controversies on dilemmas that emerged from unstable ground may be absorbed, such as: accepting the risks of nuclear energy, environmental risk etc. (Moscovici and Doise 1992: 9) Consensus is usually resorted to in order to dispel doubts arising from an exchange of opinions for and against.¹⁰⁹ Society may only be reached through discussion. Not discussing means not recognizing the other, silencing him/her or destroying him/her with criticism.

I. Where do crises originate?

The origin of social movements is rooted in injustice existing in all societies: economic exploitation, poverty, inequality, racism, xenophobia etc. Social movements have a wide range of structural causes and individual motivations to clash with other dimensions of social dominance. Social movements form the basis of changes and the very building of society. Usually it all starts with a small group of individuals or one individual who finds some followers, until he/she gathers a mass of individuals with similar motivations.

¹⁰⁹ Moscovici and Doise quote Bergson in writing that universal consensus will be the most certain guarantor of truth and, most of the times, truth will be consensus itself (1992: 11).

They connect, form a network and are able to trigger a process that, in its turn, leads to a transformation of institutions and therefore of the social structure itself. The origin of social movements concerns the transformation of feelings into actions. Fear and enthusiasm are among the strongest emotions. Behaviour is projected towards the future, in the hope of successfully creating a new world. The current period does not lack important events connected to one another, such as the economic crisis, diffused poverty, migration of very large groups of people, pollution and terrorism. The main changes that have taken place in society¹¹⁰ may be traced back to a few fundamental points, one of which is the crisis of delegation. Delegation was once regarded as the essence of political sovereignty based on the vote, from which it received its strength. It is difficult to give stability and predictability to fundamental choices on shared meanings, and also to reconcile dissent on a specific issue by defending the bond of belonging to a group. It is the crisis of delegation that, by a process of mediated propagation, is projected from Downing Street to every periphery in the country (Barbano 2018: 8). In Italy, the crisis of delegation generates divisions and crushing. It takes place in a public space where everybody speaks for him/herself, thus bringing about “direct democracy”. It originated from the crisis of trust affecting men and institutions. Such distrust leads a numbers of actors to rise to the defence of the constitution, but perhaps ignoring that each member of Parliament represents the nation and exercises his/her functions without a binding mandate (art. 67 of the Italian Constitution), meaning in full autonomy: an elected representative can promise, make promises to his/her electorate and betray them in Parliament. The crisis of delegation has contaminated democracy. It goes beyond the use of tactics made by populism and it also affects the knowledge that decreasingly represents the country. The crisis of the notion of authority is followed by the dissolution of civil culture. The hierarchical approach involving gradualness is avoided and a false principle of horizontality is deemed to be the best and is accepted.

An orientation contrary to injustice is more effective in a compact society, as compared with a dispersed population incapable of solidarity. The lack of solidarity undermines the very notion of culture understood as “collective product”. The *Homo economicus* is quite the contrary of a social being: he is selfish and brutal and focuses on his personal profit (Douglas 1995). He is a stranger, presented in the guise of human rationality. He lacks the notion of

¹¹⁰ In Italian society, but not only!

responsibility towards others: someone with no collective conscience.¹¹¹ Douglas asks to what degree the risk may be accepted by comparing probabilistic studies by risk analysts with studies in cultural anthropology. The result shows an effect of culture on the perception of danger that turns out to be a standardized cultural reaction. Percentages are neither neutral nor objective, because the idea of risk should always be perceived as an unacceptable danger. The evaluation of risk may only be explained in terms of social experience, but the very idea of collective action entails difficulties in economic sciences (Douglas 1992: 21). Douglas leads the reflection toward the future appearance of a society where actors move away from one another. A destructured social life frees the actors from reciprocal obligations, thus creating a non-committed population with a growing disinterest in democracy. The sociology of change may have a significant influence on the directions taken by change, and this is why this field of studies attains great importance on a practical and economic level.

Through information coming from mass communication media, the audience composed of private citizens shows its concern to control and influence the management of public interests enacted by the political system (Sciolla 2002). The maximization of the decision-maker's advantage is deemed to be the best, and the same is true for collective decisions. This is optimal not only for the collectivity, but also for the single individuals who belong to it.

We can ask ourselves: "How social is change?" and, in order to answer, we can consider Durkheim's remark highlighting the weakness of communal conscience in comparison with individual conscience. Communal conscience as a conscience shared by the community is individual from the point of view of its object. Collective conscience draws all its strength from society, but it does not connect us to society: rather, it connects us to ourselves (Durkheim 1971: 182-183).

Contemporary man is "neutralized" because he is surrounded by an offer of information that is unlimited and too multifaceted. The taming of the audience, in fact, is achieved with an excess rather than a deprivation of information (Baudrillard 1988). The entities that are still hyper-codified and do not belong to shared codifications, fluctuate between convention and innovation; only with a slow and careful process are they accepted as rules acknowledged by institutionalized society.

¹¹¹ Bourdieu (2004) observes that economy dissociates a category of practices from the social order in which human practice is immersed, thus causing authentic disasters.

Globalization seems to offer the possibility of a greater right to speak, and therefore a more certain access to the “truth” in democratic contexts implying discussion. The word should be a “wager of civilisation”, but it goes unfulfilled when it becomes an instrument of power: due to the simple fact of being “taken”, however, it is capable of changing the order of things and, above all, of human realities (Bréton 2012).

II. Reflections on the public sphere

The systems of media communication and social networks have made the debate in the public sphere more complex. Furthermore, echo chambers provide the illusion of a free discussion by creating communication bubbles, composed of people who only speak together because they agree on specific issues and share a stance. That stance is generally opposed to the official position, so that each person’s opinions are reinforced by the others’ opinions without there being any debate.

A development of the debate on the public sphere of the “classic” kind, however, is public deliberation, which does not intervene in the final decision, but at the stage when a solution is being formulated. Such intervention is configured not just as a further and more intense instance of democracy, as compared with information and consultation; but as a more complete answer to the need of widening the production of social knowledge on the environment (Pellizzoni 2016: 283). This debate leaves aside the problem of defining the boundaries of the public sphere and focuses on the modes and articulations of the discourses oriented towards deliberation, understood as the discussion preceding a decision on concrete issues. The term introduces the topics of uncertainty and risk at the theoretical level and, in practice, focuses on deliberative models concerning local administrations. Contemporary public debate is mostly a discussion where the media have great importance.¹¹²

The opportunity to transform a condition of loneliness depends on the *agorà*, that is, the space that is private and public at the same time. In this space, private problems are connected in a meaningful way, collectively managed tools are sought that are effective enough to raise individuals from the misery they suffer privately, so that they can look for a context where ideas such as “public good”, “just society” or “shared values” can originate and take shape. The problem is that little remains today of the ancient public/private spaces, and the new ones struggle to emerge.

¹¹² Social platforms have also become an instrument for meeting in public squares, as with flash mobs.

Politics generally celebrates and promotes conformism, and conformism may be attained by the person on his/her own as well: politics is not necessary in order to comply. The art of politics, if we speak of *democratic* politics, consists in tearing down the limits imposed on the freedom of citizens; but it also consists in self-limitation, that is, making the citizens free to allow them, individually and collectively, to establish their own individual and collective limits. Individual freedom should be the outcome of a collective effort (meaning it should only be defended and granted collectively). In spite of this, there is now a tendency toward privatization of the means enacted to ensure, protect and guarantee individual freedom, but this leads to mass poverty, unemployment and fear. The art of transforming private problems into public issues runs the risk of falling from use and being forgotten; given the way in which private problems are defined, it turns out to be extremely difficult for them to then solidify into a political force (Pellizzoni 2016).

Public deliberation takes shape as an instance of democracy as compared with information and consultation, but also as a more exhaustive answer to the need of widening the production of social knowledge on the environment (Pellizzoni 2016: 283). Deliberative democracy is a meeting point in which the verb “deliberate” is not to be understood in the sense of making a decision, but in its English sense of discussing and talking something through, as it was during the 1980’s. The merits of public discussion are the sense of public spirit, meaning the citizens’ reciprocal respect, the legitimacy of decisions and also of their effectiveness/efficacy, which goes towards new solutions (Pellizzoni 2005).¹¹³

III. Pluralism

Even when equality is pursued, it is always and only equality concerning the value of the people, their performances and stances, while an equality in quality, in vital contents and destinies among men cannot even be taken into consideration. The alternative to an indiscriminate levelling out of all differences (universal fraternity) is precisely tolerance, that is willingly accepting and even encouraging a great diversity of primary groups. Pluralism is the minimum condition for a modern democracy to be able to work (Marcuse 1969). Those who demand equality and recognition of diversity at the same time are asking for the impossible; there is no diversity that is not linked to a kind of inequality (Touraine 1998: 300).

¹¹³ Deliberative democracy partially meets direct democracy.

According to Bauman (2002), too, the causes of change are rooted in the deep transformation of the public space. The important point highlighted by this author is that the emancipatory project has not dissolved and, in order to relaunch it, a new perspective is needed that consists in filling, as much as possible, the gap between the *de jure* individual and the *de facto* individual. Today it is the public sphere that needs to be defended from an invasion by the private space, and this, paradoxically, in order to increase individual freedom, not to reduce it (Giddens 2002: 48). The expansion of democracy is closely connected to the structural changes of world society. Our elusive world does not need less government, but rather more government; and that may only be guaranteed by democratic institutions. The communal project is intended as the most obvious and predictable response to the fluidity of social relations characteristic of our liquid modernity, but such predictability of communal response does not erase, in Bauman's view (2002), the vicious circle produced by communitarianism. In spite of communities, a meeting between strangers is always possible and belongs to the kind of events that cannot be completely eliminated from our life, although communitarianism perceives the other/stranger as a fundamental danger for the community. This is yet another aspect of our public life pointing to the deep crisis of politics, understood as a negotiation and reciprocal confrontation among individuals.

Research on the need for security (Kruglanski *et al.* 2013) finds that, irrespective of geographical context,¹¹⁴ specificity of place and mode of extremism, the need for security remains unvaried. Furthermore, the main control factors indicated by Chomsky (1973) are still valid and the distraction of information is one of the first.¹¹⁵ Distraction of information brings about a capitalist world market and a unified cyberspace, and enormous wealth is produced in each moment. The burden of wealth is crushing the planet, but millions of people die of hunger and thirst each year (Ziegler 2005). Naomi Klein (2007) writes about the continuous impoverishment generated by disaster capitalism. She calls that which happens after the shock due to catastrophic events the "shock economy". Privatization, cuts to public spending and the liberalization of salaries that follows such events without public consensus (cases of national emergency) are the starting points of her main thesis.

¹¹⁴ The research was carried out in Morocco, Spain, Philippines, Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka.

¹¹⁵ The strategies indicated by Chomsky are: the strategy of distraction, creating problems then offering solutions, the gradual strategy, the strategy of deferring, treating the people like children, using the emotional side more than reflection, keeping the public in ignorance and mediocrity, making the public complacent, reinforcing self-blame, knowing people better than they know themselves.
https://www.disinformazione.it/strategie_manipolazione_media.htm

In modern age, it is precisely the regulatory and therefore prescriptive nature of institutions, besides their cultural legitimacy and their ability to respond to human needs for security and reciprocal agreement that shows signs of crisis. There is no longer a common reference for individuals and the influence of a specific culture fails as well, because individuals are no longer subjected to the authority of the dominant ethic concerning what is right or wrong. This is the situation leading to pluralism, which, in turn, not only allows a choice but compels choosing. Pluralism generates crises of subjective and intersubjective meaning precisely where it aims to strengthen the individual's ability to affect society and change it by freeing one's decision-making power. We are far from the way Merton (1959: 199) viewed conformism: the type of adjustment most widespread in society; and if it were not so, stability and continuity of society would not be granted. According to the American sociologist, the set of expectations representing a specific social order is made to remain stable by the behaviour of the members that conform themselves to stable cultural models, which only change over long spans of time. Nowadays long spans of time do not exist and values are not shared by large groups, but divided among numerous different groups.

IV. Old and new fears

In the globalization of the economy, multinationals, industrial groups and private financial groups tend to rule the world. The planet submits to something that, in the name of progress and development, envisages the systematic destruction of natural environments: depletion and pillaging of all kinds are imposed on the earth's soil, water, vegetation and atmosphere (Ramonet 1997: 11). Pollution has effects on the rise of temperature, depletion of the ozone layer and acid rain, thus endangering the planet. Productivity at all costs is the first cause responsible for devastation, while the demographic explosion and urban pollution are not unrelated to it. Additionally, a few businesses dominate world research, genetic manipulation and the communication revolution.

Economic exchanges are not the only elements that lead to a multicultural world. Humanitarian emergencies are also able to displace thousands of people to countries where they would never think of living. Society is not static, but always moving; it is a formation composed of unequal elements even when migrations do not intervene. But when migrations are forced by poverty, famine and war and people are obliged to leave their country, those who are involved find themselves in a situation that Giddens defines as "cultural shock". It affects

both the refugees and the population of the country of destination. The countries receiving the refugees are often unprepared, both in legislative and logistic terms; and besides, a domestic economic crisis does not facilitate reception and stabilization of newcomers.

A paradox underlined by Bourdieu (2001: 53) is how the politics of depoliticization shamelessly draws on the jargon of freedom. Liberalism, liberalization and deregulation tend to assign a fatal power to economic determinisms, freeing them from any form of control, and tend to subject governments and citizens to economic social forms thus “liberated”. On the same topic, Bauman (2009: 27) also highlights how a symbiosis between the State and the market represents the rule in the capitalist system. A conflict between the two, if it ever comes to light, is an exception. All the politics of the capitalist state (it makes no difference whether dictatorial or democratic), in fact, seem to be directed toward confirming, allowing and guaranteeing the security and longevity of the market’s domination. In such a scenario, all economic and social measures are enacted in the interest of the markets, and not against it; therefore in favour of goods, not of the environment or the people who produce them.

Past and present, however, are not two completely distinct entities: the idea that one may really identify a point in time before which everything is “then”, while what follows is “now”, is an illusion (Zerubavel 2005: 67). Koselleck (2009: 47) observes that history is always something more or less than what is said about it and language always makes something more or less than what is actually contained in real history. Change is not linear motion between a surpassed past and a more modern future. Another myth is the clash between tradition and modernity, because modernity and tradition truly reinforce each other. Agamben’s advice (2008) remains valid: he invites his contemporaries not to follow the fashions of their time but to look for those spots that remain in the dark, so as to discover, hidden there, an unprecedented present and listen to an inner need.

Conclusion

It is therefore necessary to acknowledge that a crisis is much more than a temporary move/gesture and that it contributes to making a critical situation more serious, or to relaunching social and economic life. For this, a democracy transforming workers into responsible citizens needs to be affirmed (Touraine 2012: 183). One of the changes accompanying the rise of modernity is the

attitude taken by man when facing reality: no longer surprise, wonder and gratitude, but doubt and resentment against everything given, even his own existence; he resents the very fact that he is not the creator of the universe and himself (Arendt 1999: 10).

There is a deceiving analogy between global and universal: universal relates to human rights, culture and democracy. Globalization concerns techniques, markets and information, and seems irreversible, while the universal seems on its way to extinction. The taming of the audience takes place through an excess of information and not a deprivation of it, considering the interpretative usefulness of the “state of exception”. This opens up a space for human action between life and law, which once claimed the name of politics. Politics underwent a long-lasting eclipse, it is now contaminated with law and has been reduced to a simple power of negotiation with the law. Truly, politics is instead only the action that cuts the tie between violence and law (Agamben 2003: 112).

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BOOK REVIEW

(Carolina BULZ¹¹⁶)

F.F. COPOLA & MIRCEA ELIADE: *YOUTH WITHOUT YOUTH*. A VIEW FROM ROMANIA

(EIKON, 2018; Author: Cristina Scarlat, 114 pages)

Professor Scarlat's study is dedicated to the textual, intertextual and cinematographic reception of both Eliade's and Coppola's works, being based on the assumption that the movie version may be seen as a way of re-reading the text and also as a means of deepening the textual mystery. Professor Scarlat's background is most fit for this undertaking, since – not including her PhD¹¹⁷ – she has previously published two volumes on Eliade's reception: *Mircea Eliade. The Hermeneutics of Performance, I&II* – in 2008 and 2011. Moreover, Giovanni Casadio from the History of Religions Department at the University of Salerno considers Cristina Scarlat's work to be "the ideal guide for the interface between Eliade, Coppola and the reader or viewer of this complex story." (backcover blurb)

In the context of our journal's reception studies framework, I have found Ms. Scarlat's study to be an insightful proof of the need to build yet another transatlantic bridge, in an age when our connections with American culture are fewer and farther between than they should be. My own survey of the recent reception of Eugene O'Neill's work in Romania has proved that while American culture benefitted from a generous reception by our people in the nineteen-forties (before the onset of the communist regime) and later on, in the sixties (at a time of political openness towards the Western world), in the eighties and during the early years of the turn of the millennium we witnessed the last significant surge of American interest in communicating on a wider scale with the Romanian audience. Truly reaching out culturally towards another nation presupposes acknowledging that Other as a significant presence, one which deserves to be approached and cultivated as a partner in dialogue. But perhaps the recent, post-9/11 American policy of isolationism is not only motivated by the fear of terrorism and I would venture to say that, while the Romanian state

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¹¹⁷ *The Transposition of Mircea Eliade's Work into Other Art Languages (Transpunerea operei lui Mircea Eliade în alte limbaje ale artei)*, Eikon, 2016

may represent a valid NATO partner as a crucial buffer zone in the context of Russian expansionist tendencies, we do not constitute an equally-footed cultural partner, in other words our status may be perceived as asymmetrical with respect to American cultural policy standards. This is highly ironic, of course, since our respective democracies are quite the same age and from the point of view of cultural emancipation, Romania has contributed significantly to the world's (both American and European) heritage, as the cultural impact of Mircea Eliade's work stands proof.

In the preface to the present study, professor Mac Linscott Ricketts¹¹⁸ explains how Coppola's movie became a significant piece of evidence in Cristina Scarlat's research and that, despite its short-lived screening experience in U.S. cinemas, the production deserves to be considered "the most faithful video rendition of a text by Eliade" (preface). Ricketts also believes that a wider transposition on screen of Eliade's fiction would make his literary works palatable to a world-wide audience. However, he points out that there are issues with Coppola's production that have diminished its impact upon the American audience, such as a long erotic scene that is not present in the novella and which led to a viewing restriction for younger audiences. On the other hand, the director is being praised for taking the trouble to localize the action and characters, by shooting the movie in Romania and employing Romanian actors. Needless to say, Ms. Scarlat agrees with the viewpoints expressed by Ricketts. Below, I will discuss several highlights from the "semiotic complementarities" between Coppola's and Eliade's visions of "Youth without Youth", as expounded by Cristina Scarlat in her reception study.

From the volume's preamble, we are informed about the stakes of this critical enterprise: Scarlat has tried to reconfigure Eliade's text using its cinematic transposition, since it is her stated belief that "the text and the movie back each other up, despite being two autonomous artistic discourses" (Scarlat: 14). The author's ambition is to offer an exhaustive study of the parallel reception of the story in the two mediums, because "only few studies exist that have done so" (Scarlat: 15). This would be, therefore, a "different", original reading key to Eliade's fiction, having as its starting point the concept of "literature as a form of imagining and re-ordering, in an autonomous semiotic system, of the author's inner world" (Scarlat: 18). While this type of fiction is easily pliable to the making of movies and the writing of scripts, there were

¹¹⁸ Mircea Eliade's American translator and author of the movie script

nevertheless a few cases, which Scarlat discusses¹¹⁹, when screenings of Eliade's stories failed to rise to the expected cultural standards.

At this point, in order to enforce the aforementioned semiotic complementarity, Scarlat quotes Grid Modorcea's opinion that Eliade's novella is "one of the most cinematographically sensationalistic pieces of literature in the world", due to its meeting of the readers' (and therefore the viewers') expectations, pointing out that "the topic but also the construct is perfect to attract readers and viewers alike" (30). Scarlat subsequently presents the confession of Coppola himself who, nearing the age of 70, found in Eliade's novella an opportunity for artistic resurgence:

When I read the story I know I'd have to learn how to express its themes of time and dreams cinematically. Making a movie is like asking a question; and when you finish, the movies itself is the answer. (Coppola in Scarlat 33)

One of the critical readings of Eliade's text that offer viewers of Coppola's movie more insight into the fictional concept is Matei Calinescu's article, that Scarlat analyzes in conjunction with Oana Covaliu's article on Coppola as an "alephic reader" of Eliade's novella. According to Covaliu, Coppola is an initiated reader who penetrated and accurately captured in his movie the fictional universe consisting in "a symbiosis of myths and symbols", such as: the individual as a sum of labyrinthine challenges, the existence of the post-historic human being, the myth of biological rejuvenation, the bi-univocal event. According to Matei Călinescu, Eliade's prose can be read in a threefold manner: as "a fantastic reverie", "a mysterious gnostic parable" and/or "a sort of insoluble rebus" (qtd. in Scarlat 35) – therefore, more simply put, only re-reading (or re-viewing) the story can offer a fully-fledged, tripartite intellectual grasp of the matter that Eliade and Coppola propound in their complementary artistic visions. Further on, Scarlat demonstrates how Coppola managed to transpose cinematographically Eliade's stylistic markers, e.g. filming upside-down (for the suggestion of "disnarrativity") in order to express the reversal of regular time flow or temporal scission; similarly, the third person omniscience in the text is translated into the movie as an *off*-voice, etc.

Using George Glodeanu's critical appraisal of the "ludic intelligence" of Mircea Eliade and also the former's statement that *Youth without Youth* is one of

¹¹⁹ Scarlat offers two counter-examples of scenarios turned into commercial movies based on Eliade's texts: *The Bengali Night* (directed by Nicholas Klotz and based on *Maytrei*) and *Eu sunt Adam!* (Dan Pița's screening from 1996). By contrast, Coppola's artistic product stands out as "the most elaborate transposition of a fiction by Eliade into a movie" (Scarlat: 29).

the few prose pieces in which the author makes use of the “fantastical artifice” (which involves challenging one’s readers and directing them along unusual imagining avenues), Scarlat’s conclusion is that being “faithful to the text, to the author’s ideas, to the character construct, Coppola has thereby enriched and nuanced, by the entire filmic structure, Eliade’s original score.” (Scarlat: 47)

Despite insisting more on similarities rather than differences between the movie and the book, Scarlat nevertheless presents a selection of critical views that have evidenced distinctions between the two artistic discourses. To mention just one example, an observation by Mihaela Paraschivescu¹²⁰ is singled out with respect to the theme of the double:

For Eliade, the double, a sort of ‘guarding angel’, allows Dominic the freedom to return to his ‘mortal’ condition, which he does in the end. The double in Coppola’s film is a cold, distant, at times tyrannical alter-ego, the logic-driven positivistic self, that would sacrifice human life in the name of science and that humiliates Dominic (Paraschivescu in Scarlat: 51).

On the other hand, far-fetched opinions, such as those that construct Eliade’s hero as a schizophrenic character, are categorically dismissed by Scarlat on the grounds that Dominic Matei is “not a clinical case, but one who has to be framed in a symbolic universe par excellence.” (53) The author concludes her study with a relevant analysis of the character’s pattern of evolution, placing Dominic somewhere in between Goethe’s Doctor Faustus and Ispirescu’s Prince Charming¹²¹. Like in an alchemical work, Dominic dedicates his renewed youth ultimately not to science but to life itself, acknowledging the supremacy of love. In the “Final Considerations” section, Scarlat resumes the opening assertion that Coppola’s film is a successful and faithful transposition of Eliade’s text, a fine illustration of the “semiotic complementarity” principle which offers the interested audience an alternative way of restoring the textual meaning.

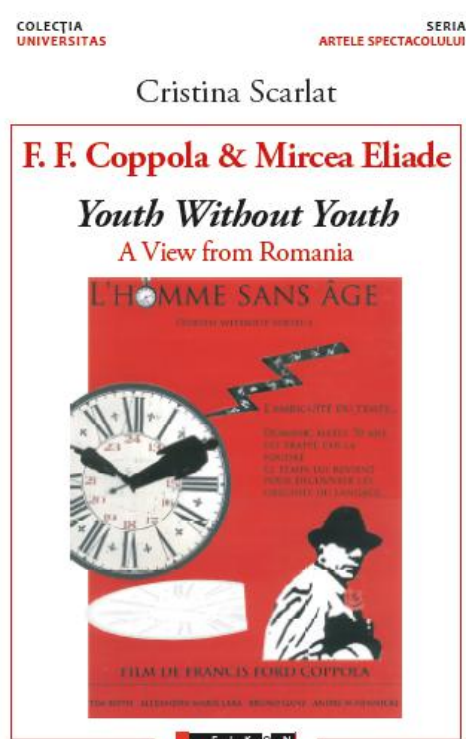
The volume under analysis concludes with an extremely useful bibliography (including a “webography”), the resources that the author employed in her research being made available for further study. What is striking in this long list of sites, books and articles is that Ms. Scarlat has consulted numerous resources in manifold languages (English, French, Italian, not to mention Romanian), from which she quotes directly - this being perhaps

¹²⁰ Author of *Reading Mircea Eliade in America* (Insitutul European, Iași, 2015).

¹²¹ In this folk-tale, a prince who had desired “youth without old age and life ever-lasting”, returns home from the land of immortality only to meet his own death that was waiting for him in an old coffer. Similarly, Eliade’s character gives up his quest for the original language, returns to his birth place and dies an old man.

the only inconvenience that her reception study guide may be said to exhibit. Her endeavor definitely contributes to the transatlantic mutual understanding of the “Other” and may be seen as a valid addition to the continuing tradition of American-Romanian cultural dialogue¹²².

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¹²² It is all the more commendable therefore that the volume has an English version – issued together with the Romanian one, that professor Scarlat translated herself.