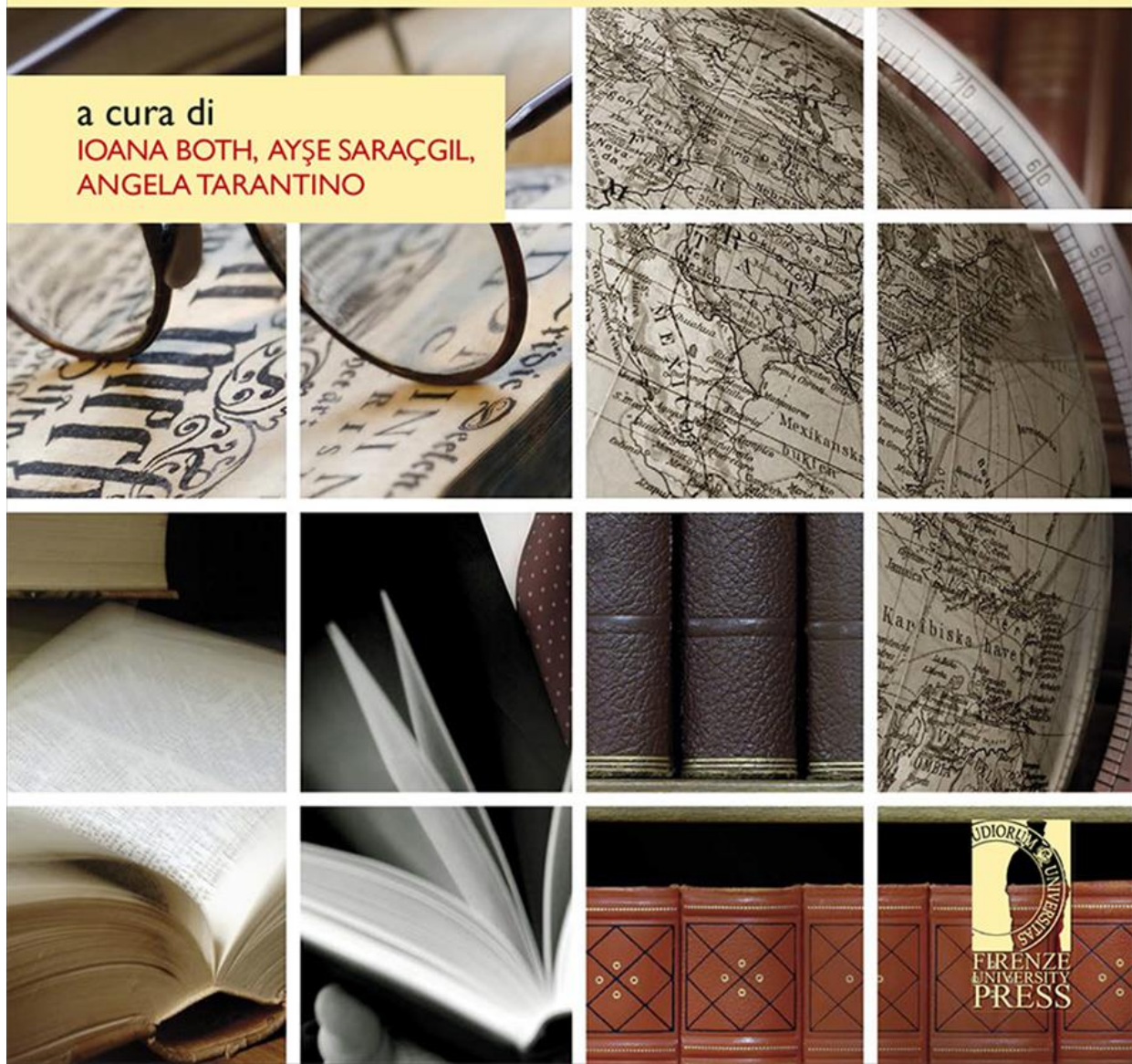


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Storia, identità e canoni letterari

a cura di
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a cura di

Ioana Both, Ayşe Saraçgil e Angela Tarantino

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Ioana Both
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Premessa

Il volume *Storia, identità e canoni letterari* intende in primo luogo dare ragione dell'incontro/confronto intellettuale tra giovani universitari europei. È, inoltre, uno degli esiti editoriali, l'ultimo in ordine di tempo, della lunga collaborazione scientifico-didattica fra l'Università di Firenze e l'Università 'Babeş Bolyai' di Cluj Napoca, segno tangibile della vocazione all'internazionalizzazione che contraddistingue le diverse strutture coinvolte: Dipartimenti, Scuole Dottorali e Corsi di Laurea di entrambe le università partner.

Il volume raccoglie gli interventi dei dottorandi e post-dottorandi delle Università di Cluj Napoca, Bucarest, Budapest e Firenze (in particolare, per quanto riguarda quest'ultima, i Dottorati di Ricerca in 'Lingue e Culture del Mediterraneo', e in 'Lingue, letterature e culture comparate-Indirizzo Lingua, Letteratura, Filologia: Prospettive Interculturali') che hanno partecipato al Seminario Internazionale 'Storia, identità e canoni letterari', tenutosi presso il Dipartimento di Lingue, Letterature e Culture Comparate nei giorni 22-23 novembre 2011. Il Seminario, organizzato nell'ambito dell'accordo di scambio e collaborazione internazionale attivo fra il Dipartimento di Lingue, Letterature e Culture Comparate e la Facoltà di Lettere dell'Università Babeş-Bolyai di Cluj Napoca, ha goduto dei finanziamenti dell'Ateneo fiorentino e del Programma Europeo POSDRU (Program Operational Sectorial pentru Dezvoltarea Resurselor Umane) per la Romania.

Sia il Seminario che la preparazione del volume sono stati occasione di uno stimolante e assai proficuo confronto intellettuale tra giovani universitari di diversa formazione umanistica.

Nel progettare il Seminario, le docenti promotrici hanno individuato quale elemento aggregante due aree di ricerca sulle quali i singoli gruppi avevano lavorato nei mesi precedenti: i contributi dei giovani studiosi provenienti dalle università partner vertono infatti sul tema dei nazionalismi nell'Europa Centrale nel XX secolo, a partire dal quale avevano svolto



seminari e progetti individuali di ricerca nel corso del 2011. Da parte italiana, i partecipanti hanno presentato interventi intorno al tema 'Canone e canoni', oggetto del programma didattico del XXVII ciclo del Dottorato in 'Lingue, letterature e culture comparate-Indirizzo Lingua, Letteratura, Filologia: Prospettive Interculturali'. Il dibattito tra i partecipanti nel corso del Seminario è stato più stimolante di quanto si fosse potuto immaginare nelle fasi preparatorie. I singoli contributi, muovendo da differenti prospettive storiche e geografiche e da diversi approcci metodologici e tematici, hanno suscitato una vivace e partecipata riflessione, un arricchente e fecondo scambio di esperienze di ricerca, sfociati in suggerimenti e spunti per future collaborazioni scientifiche grazie alle quali si potrà mettere a frutto l'acquisita condivisione della complessità e della pluralità delle prospettive di interpretazione.

Proprio tale clima di partecipazione e condivisione scientifica ha determinato la decisione di raccogliere i contributi in un volume. Nella convinzione di quanto fosse necessario lasciare una traccia di questo impegno di lavoro plurale, abbiamo deciso di pubblicare i singoli contributi conservando l'ordine e la lingua in cui sono stati presentati nel corso del Seminario. Pur consapevoli della loro intrinseca diversità, siamo certe che la molteplicità degli argomenti trattati e la conseguente ricchezza di approcci critici sarà un elemento di stimolo e curiosità per i destinatari del volume, così come lo è stato per noi.

Cogliamo l'occasione per ringraziare le autrici e gli autori, per la diligenza e la costanza dimostrate durante la fase di allestimento del volume. Un particolare ringraziamento va alla redazione del Laboratorio editoriale del Dipartimento di Lingue, Letterature e Cultura Comparete, in special modo alla dott. Arianna Antonielli, capo redattore, e alla prof. Beatrice Tottosy, responsabile delle attività editoriali del Dipartimento, per l'impegno e l'attenzione profusi nella realizzazione di questo libro.

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Imre József
Balázs*

Avant-garde as a Provocation in Hungarian Literature from Romania

I. Regional Literatures and Transylvanian Hungarian Literature: the Problem of Narratives

The concept of regional literature(s) emerged and was promoted during the twentieth century in close connection with the collapse of the historical *grand récits*, when the monolithic narratives of national literatures were more and more challenged from different alternative points of view. These narratives were reinterpreted as logocentric, patriarchal, bourgeois (in the case of English-speaking cultures even as racial) constructions. This type of criticism pointed out that there is no single central value in a culture, but many centres, and this is also true in the geographical sense. Therefore, the project of promoting regional values in literature went on along with the decentering of romantic national cultures which tried to legitimate themselves through claims for an organic community.

In the case of Transylvanian Hungarian culture this shift was somewhat different: as a consequence of the peace treaties after the First World War, Hungarians lived in at least five different countries – therefore Hungarian culture became regionalized in a quite radical way. However, in time the effects of regionalization became very similar to those taking place in Western European and American countries over the following decades. Hungarian literature became a literature with many centres – with Budapest as a main centre, but also Újvidék (Novi Sad), Kolozsvár (Cluj), Pozsony (Bratislava) etc. – that contributed to the shifts of literary discourses in different periods of the 20th century. Thus, Hungarian literature can be considered somewhat more than the mere sum of its regional literatures because the structures of the different regional cultures are not the same: they are not fully ‘compatible’ with each other.

This view on regional literatures – conceived as being a ‘reaction’ to a formerly monolithic canon – seemed to fit in quite well into the concept of



American multiculturalism. During the 1990s, however, critics also pointed out some fallacies of this system of thought. A 1996 paper published in «Critical Inquiry» shows that regional narratives often reinvented the truths that had previously been contested within national narratives. In many accounts of 'the regional', the regional community is presented as more «natural» and thus less divided than the national community with its differences in economics, gender, creed, race and so on. «It is in this re-evaluation of notions of authenticity, of natural and organic community, that I see regionalism as an attempt to revive some peculiarly nationalist ideals by passing them off as “new” regionalist ones»¹ – points out the author of the above mentioned paper.

If we try to adapt this point retroactively to the histories of Transylvanian Hungarian literature, we may notice many similarities. The problem of these histories is, in many ways, that they try to essentialize this literature, either by referring to a permanent historical-geographical character that defines the Transylvanian region, or by describing this literature as being a minority literature and therefore having different functions (for example: preserving an intact culture, or asserting cultural identity) than those of a 'regular', national literature. These debates already began in the 1920s and 1930s and were reconceived at the beginning of the 1990s, when several writers and critics tried to deny any regional 'touch' in Transylvanian literature. In fact this latter approach was an attempt to subvert the formerly monolithic, 'transylvanianist' canon which neglected almost entirely the values that did not fit into this identity project of cultural preservation.

Regions – even if they function as 'anecdotes' in the narratives centred on the histories of national literatures – are themselves 'hybrid' societies or communities. They have a utopian nature: they are not something given, but rather an ideal concept. Histories of Transylvanian Hungarian literature (and later, of Hungarian literature from Romania) never tried and therefore never managed to show the diversity of this literary corpus. Essentializations followed each other in different books, either in geographically-historically 'transylvanianist' approaches, or in minority discourses, or (during the 1945–1989 period) even as Marxist essentializations (that re-interpreted Transylvanianism as an aristocratic-bourgeois construct), insisting on the referential and socially defined reading of literature.

In the 1920s the theoretical writings of Károly Kós, Aladár Kuncz and others exceedingly insisted on the multicultural aspect of Transylvanian culture that had its roots in the presence and coexistence of different ethnical groups in the region. The Romanian critic Ion Chinezu, who wrote a whole book about Transylvanian Hungarian literature, accepted this point, and summed up quite clearly the ideas expressed at that time by the Hungarian essayists:

We shall try to see if there really is an art-generating Transylvanianism, a specific soul of this region, a Transylvanian way of thinking, capable of crys-

tallising itself into its own form of literature. Such an approach of the issue is within the field of literary geography. Well, it is beyond doubt that such a Transylvanianism does exist, and that it also existed when it was being ignored, the same way one could discern a Moldavian, Muntenian, Transylvanian and Oltenian soul in Romanian literature. [...] Out of the torrent of articles and studies that have tried to analyse the content of this so much debated concept, two conclusive elements have resulted, that are at the basis of Transylvanianism: the geographical and the historical. [...] Much attention has been given to the century-old contacts between Romanians and Transylvanian Saxons, on the various mutual influences resulting from this contact, which gradually gave rise to a specific outlook according to which Romanians, Transylvanian Saxons and Hungarians have common characteristics. Scholars have also dwelled on the historic role of Transylvania as a mediator between two worlds, between the West and the East, a role which became very important with the penetration of Protestantism.²

However, Chinezu's standpoint did not receive special attention at the time. Partly because Romanians and Transylvanian Saxons were less interested in a 'transylvanianist' project (perhaps having a greater interest in the 'immediate' integration into their national cultures), and partly because for Hungarians themselves, who promoted this idea, the Romanian and German concepts of Transylvania were less visible, therefore the interaction between these ideas was weaker than they had hoped.

In a recent paper, Endre Bojtár discusses the possibility of writing the history of regional literatures, referring in particular to the possibility of constructing a Central-European historical narrative³. His conclusion is that the diversity of the cultures in this region (even if they have many parallel social-historical aspects) makes such a project almost impossible.

I would argue that if literary history itself is possible, it should be the narrative of diversities, of paradoxes. If regional literatures exist, they are literatures of diversities and paradoxes. Avant-garde itself can be seen as a provocation for the regional canon from multiple points of view: first of all, because avant-garde tries to transcend all kinds of borders – be they inter-artistic or inter-national – and secondarily, because of its specific views concerning literary and cultural tradition.

2. The Presence of the Avant-garde

The analysts of the phenomenon have agreed in the last decades that the avant-garde movements had a large influence on Hungarian literature approximately between 1915 and 1930. Although some important avant-garde texts were written later, the institutional, militant period ends in 1930. This periodization (which therefore separates the historical avant-garde from the mimetic, 'proletcultist' literature of the '30s, but also from the 'neo-avantgarde' after the Second World War) is also functional to Transylvanian Hungarian literature: in 1926 reviews from Arad like «Genius» and «Periszkop» ceased

to appear, and «Korunk» from Cluj, initially quite tolerant as far as the avant-garde was concerned, became rather hostile towards these trends under the direction of Gábor Gaál.

This paper also restricts the meaning of the term in connection with the sense of *littérature engagée* (a sense that was largely abused by the Marxist theory of the '60s and '70s), only discussing texts that show besides possible 'socially engaged' characteristics also additional techniques of montage, simultaneism, desemiotizing effects and so on.

I also operate with a kind of 'geographical' delimitation, concentrating on the regional presence of the avant-garde within Hungarian literature from Transylvania. These geographical aspects are not conceived, however, in a very restrictive sense, because many of the works included are written outside of Transylvania. Instead, the totality of the avant-garde works is considered with every author, irrespective of whether they were written/published in Transylvania or not. Avant-garde artists are famous for their peregrinations, for their cosmopolitan views, and these aspects can also be verified in the case of Transylvanian writers, many of them writing a considerable part of their works in cities like Vienna, Budapest or Berlin.

However, this paper adopts a vision that is much closer to the reception of these works than to their creation, this way examining the readings that included them or could include them in the tradition of Transylvanian Hungarian literature. In such an approach, it is not the concrete, geographically identified places that are taken into account, but rather an institutional network specific for the zone – however, these institutions are not the only definitive features for this regional literature.

3. Specific Aspects of the Avant-garde in Transylvania

From the perspective adopted in this paper, Hungarian literature from Transylvania has two main characteristics. First of all, we can observe a simultaneity of different poetics and literary discourses in the interwar period – sometimes even within the same 'eclectic' texts. This phenomenon can be better seen in works of authors like János Bartalis, Róbert Reiter, Irén Becski or Jenő Szentimrei. In prose, György Szántó uses multiple ways of writing, usually within self-reflexive structures of artist novels.

Secondarily, the possibilities of reception are specific in the case of the avant-garde. The interpretations from the interwar period, although inventive and deep, as in the case of László Dienes for example, remain outside the centre of the literary canon of the epoch – and here multiple explanations could be evoked, from the status of 'immigrants' of the critics to the geographical distances (in other cases) between Arad, Temeswar and the centre in Cluj.

The statement of Peter Bürger in the *Theorie der Avantgarde* (1974) which points out that the avant-garde attacked not only 'bourgeois' poetics, but also the institutional system of 'bourgeois art'⁴ is relevant in the case of

Transylvania, because here the avant-garde was integrated in a quite disciplined way in the pre-existent structures (as in the case of reviews like «Napkelet» or «Genius» for example), resulting in a sort of 'overshadowed' nature of the phenomenon.

From a poetical point of view, the influence of expressionism is the strongest in this literature (thus also showing a different orientation than that of Romanian literature, where expressionism left minor traces), and in the case of migrant poets who lived throughout their lives in several countries, such as Róbert Reiter, Mózes Kahána, Ferenc Heves, and Ágoston Erg, we can also point out elements from dadaist and constructivist-surrealist discourse.

The way of avant-garde in Transylvania led in some cases to the 'heli-conist-transylvanianist' literature (György Szántó, János Bartalis, Jenő Szentimrei), or else, losing its desemiotizing elements, to the proletcultist-realist literature of the review «Korunk» (as in the poetry of Andor Becski). However, authors like György Szántó or Áron Tamási used, also during the '30s, non-linear structures of prose inspired by their avant-garde period, but without trying to adjust their discourse to either of the avant-garde literary movements.

An inventory of the institutions and reviews that promoted the avant-garde in the Transylvanian region would include:

1. The 1917 experiment of Róbert Reiter in Temeswar with the review called «Holnap».
2. Then «Napkelet» (1920–1922, edited by Jenő Szentimrei and others) in Cluj.
3. «Genius», «Új Genius» (edited by Zoltán Franyó) in Arad (1924–1925).
4. «Periszkop» (edited by György Szántó) in Arad (1925–1926).
5. A project of the young poets Ágoston Erg and Ferenc Heves, «Levelek» (1926), can also be considered. This review was lithographed in Sighet and sent to direct addresses only.
6. «Korunk» (1926–1940, edited by László Dienes, 1926–1929, and Gábor Gaál, 1929–1940) can also be considered with its ambivalent relationship towards the avant-garde.

The structure and dynamics of the Romanian and Hungarian avant-garde differ on several points. The presence of expressionism in Hungarian avant-garde literature (including Hungarian literature from Romania) essentially outweighs its presence in Romanian literature. At the same time, it is also characterized by a much more powerfully militant politics in the expressionist period. The nature of the two avant-gardes became quite similar in the period of constructivism in fine arts, and the great experimentations in international avant-garde. By the 1930s however, the activities of Hungarian avant-garde artists lose much of their verve, while Romanian surrealism is still active in this period.

The ideal of ‘modern synthesis’, mentioned by Ion Pop in his book entitled *Avangarda în literatura română* (Avant-garde in Romanian literature, 2000) in connection with integralism, lies probably closest to the project that György Szántó also tried to accomplish through the «Periszkop» in Arad at that same time. Mihail Cosma in an interview with Luigi Pirandello describes the trend of ‘integralism’ as follows:

[...] a scientific and objective synthesis of all previous aesthetic endeavours and experiments (futurism, expressionism, cubism, surrealism, etc.), on a constructivist basis, with the purpose of picturing the intense and admirable life of a century subverted by the engineer’s cool intelligence and the sportsman’s victorious health.⁵

The essence of this programme, I believe, corresponds with that of György Szántó’s, who characterized the aspirations of his projected journal as follows: «internationalism and just a little text, lots of images. It will contain everything, not merely tunnels chewed in the cheese by literary cheese worms, but a diameter all the way from Picasso to a match box and a skyscraper»⁶. This optimistic and eclectic synthesis can also be seen as a starting point for any account that tries to discuss the art of the period.

4. Conclusions

While the ideology of Transylvanianism focused on the regional elements of culture, trying to construct a positive ideology for Transylvanian Hungarians, whose political status had changed radically during the first years after the First World War, avant-garde literature involved a free circulation of ideas across any borders, trying to connect writers and artists in an international network, more or less on the basis of the ideas concerning social change and progression in art. Although these ideas seemed to oppose each other, the system of literary institutions in Transylvania allowed them to co-exist within the same structures and within the same literary journals. Journals were open to publish avant-garde texts as well as ‘transylvanianist’ ones, and we can also speak about some specific, hybrid texts that included elements of regional identity melted into expressionist poetics: authors like Iván Ormos, Ferenc Sükösd, János Bartalis and Jenő Szentimrei were at the same time expressionists and promoters of ‘transylvanianist’ ideology.

Notes

¹ Postdoctoral researcher at Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj – Romanian Academy of Science, research programme code: POSDRU/89/1.5/S/61104. The research reported in this paper was co-financed by the project Humanistic social sciences in the context of globalized evolution – development and implementation of the postdoctoral study and research programme code POSDRU/89/1.5/S/61104, project that is co-financed by the European Social Fund through the Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013.

¹ R.M. Dainotto, "All the Regions Do Smilingly Revolt": *The Literature of Place and Region*, «Critical Inquiry», 22, 1996, p. 488.

² I. Chinezu, *Aspects of Transylvanian Hungarian Literature (1919–1929)*, Centrul de Studii Transilvane–Fundatia Culturală Română, Cluj-Napoca 1997, pp. 45-46.

³ E. Bojtár, *Lehetséges-e regionális irodalomtörténet?*, Gondolat, Budapest 2004.

⁴ P. Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Berlin 1974.

⁵ I. Pop, *Avangarda în literatura română*, Atlas, București 2000, p. 118. Translation by the author.

⁶ Gy. Szántó, *Szántó György levele Fábry Zoltánhoz* (György Szántó's letter to Zoltán Fábry), in J. Kovács (ed.), *Periszkop 1925–1926. Antológia* (Periszkop 1925-1926. An Anthology), Kriterion, București 1979, p. 421. Translation by the author.

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Embassy to Constantinople: the Image of the Orient and the De-Construction of the Canon in Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's Turkish Letters

Tis certain we have but very imperfect relations of the manners and Religion of these people, this part of the World being seldom visited but by merchants who mind little but their own Affairs, or Travellers who make too short a stay to be able to report any thing exactly of their knowledge.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to Abbé Conti, Adrianople, 1st April 1717

Your whole Letter is full of mistakes from one end to 'tother. I see you have taken your Ideas of Turkey from that worthy author Dumont, who has writ with equal ignorance and confidence. Tis a particular pleasure to me here to read the voyages to the Levant, which are generally so far remov'd from Truth and so full of Absurdities I am very well diverted with'em.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to Lady –, Belgrade Village, 17th June 1717

I. Introduction

As a woman who wrote essays, poems, and theatrical works, but spurned the vulgarity and commercial taint of practising the trade of authorship; as an aristocrat who campaigned publicly for medical progress, capturing imaginations and focusing debates; as a *bel esprit* who gossiped at court and played an energetic part in high-profile erudite disputes, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu undoubtedly represents one of the most fascinating and versatile female characters of the eighteenth century. And this becomes much more significant if we consider that she was the first English woman to «[...] have past a Journey that has not been undertaken by any Christian since the Time of the Greek Emperours»¹.

In 1741, in a letter to his mother, her friend Joseph Spence thus remembered Lady Mary's reactions to the announcement of the political mission

which would have probably kept her far from London for as long as twenty years:

Lady Mary, who had always delighted in romances and books of travels, was charmed with the thoughts of going into the East, though embassies are generally an affair of twenty years, and so 'twas a sort of dying to her friends and country. But 'twas travelling; 'twas going farther than most other people go; 'twas wandering; 'twas all whimsical, and charming; and so she set out with all the pleasure imaginable.²

The arduous overland expedition across the shores of the Mediterranean began in August 1716 when, with her infant son in tow, she embarked from Dover to accompany her husband to Constantinople. Here, the Whig politician Edward Wortley Montagu, appointed George I's ambassador extraordinary to Sultan Ahmet III and representative of the Levant Company to the Sublime Porte, had been entrusted to negotiate peace between the Turks and Charles VII. As the consort of an important foreign diplomat, Lady Mary was treated with the greatest civility and exploited the rich opportunities that her upper-class status and her gender allowed her, to gain access to realms entirely uncharted by male travellers. She obtained permission to visit a mosque, accepted invitations to the houses of the Circassian military and official elites, dined with a high-ranking sultana, and entered into the luxury of well-guarded, interior spaces such as the *hamam* and *harem*. As Ludmilla Kostova suggests, it should likewise be noted that in the course of her voyage she penetrated into the interior(s) of an East about which the West knew very little³.

From the moment Lady Mary arrived in the Ottoman Empire to the moment she left it, in the spring of 1718, she also devoted a great deal of time to corresponding with relatives and friends. In the letters she sent them, she described all the stages of her delegation with abundance of details: the foibles of court life, the Viennese carnival with its balls and performances of Italian comedy, the ride across the frozen, war-ravaged plains of Hungary, her intercultural encounters through the Balkans, the basking in the exotic splendour of Adrianople. These letters, however, are biographically noteworthy beyond the fact of being a remarkable travel memoir, as they also show the progressive growth of their author's literary skill and intellectual sophistication and the valuable contribution of her remarks to the exchange of ideas between Islamic Turkey and Christian Europe. It is not a coincidence then that Billie Melman, in her famous study entitled *Women's Orients. English Women and the Middle East*, defined them «the first example of a secular account, by a woman, on the Muslim Orient»⁴.

Thanks to the clear-sighted inspection, friendly open-mindedness and candid sympathy they express, the *Turkish Embassy Letters* (1716-1718) have brought Lady Mary the sincere posthumous appreciation of figures as great and varied as Voltaire, Dr. Johnson, Thomas Carlyle, and Lytton Strachey.

Edward Gibbon is said to have exclaimed, when he finished reading them, «what fire, what ease, what knowledge of Europe and Asia»⁵.

In this paper, through selected passages of the *Turkish Embassy Letters*, I will try to show how Lady Mary progressively deconstructed the prejudicial representation of the Orient that her male compatriots had formulated during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Although British attitudes towards the Ottoman Empire were not as uniformly hostile or as fearful as we have often been led to believe by followers of the school of Richard Knolles⁶, the idea that the Turks were violent, dangerous, lascivious and inferior had practically become 'canonical' in early modern England⁷. Texts like those written by Thomas Dallam, William Biddulph, Henry Blount and Mr. T. S. not only show the difficulties these men had in seeing for themselves and testing received opinions by careful observation, but also highlight how firmly the English readers' imagination had become gripped by stories that had a lot in common with those incredible tales told by Sheherazade in the *Arabian Nights*⁸.

Lady Mary, though inevitably influenced by this background, decided nevertheless not to limit herself to collecting data in the way that the modern ethnographers were instructed to do. While abroad, she listened and looked attentively around herself, carefully chose her anecdotes in order to both entertain and subtly instruct and, using specific incidents to illustrate general trends, she tried to guide her correspondents into a strange culture by suggesting familiar signposts. And in this attempt, completely in countertendency with the previous tradition, lies all the exceptionality and originality of her *Turkish Embassy Letters*.

2. The Turkish Embassy Letters

The *Turkish Embassy Letters* extant today, fifty-two in number, are not the same ones Lady Mary actually posted, but a compilation she carefully preserved and autographed, that were duplicated into two small albums. Robert Halsband calls them «pseudo-letters, dated, and addressed to people either named or nameless»⁹.

We know that a record written in Lady Mary's hand and endorsed by her husband as «L.M.'s Letters from Turkey» has been found and that it contains the correspondents' initials followed by concise summaries of the messages she forwarded between April 1717 and March 1718. While she drew on her daily log to create the embassy anthology, other evidence indicates that she edited out the personal references, transposed and manipulated sections, and rearranged information. For this reason, the resulting *Letters* evade generic classification. They cannot be considered as purely epistolary; rather, they form a re-elaboration, a recalling and re-thinking of the journey carried out. If the original letters Lady Mary sent to her addressees were natural utterances, then by reserving copies and revising them for a larger, indeterminate audience, she transformed them into fictive speech-

es. In Barbara Herrnstein Smith's terms, Lady Mary «re-authored her own text; in taking verbal structure as something other than what it was given as, in some way other than its original constructor intended or expected it to be taken, we have in effect re-given it to ourselves»¹⁰.

As a conscious literary artist, she selected what she wanted to include. This need to achieve a more creative and inventive collection could have been motivated by the consciousness her letters might have a certain circulation and consequently that someone would have judged them positively or negatively. We have testimony of this through a curious circumstance: Abbé Antonio Conti, a cosmopolitan savant living at the time in Paris, was so proud of the witty letters he received from Lady Mary that he used to share them with his friends. And one of them, Antoine-Robert Pérelle (1695-1735), was so stupefied by the elegance of her words that he praised her in his diary:

[...] I have seen Master Kownte. Il m'a montré une Lettre de Mylady Marie; je n'ai gueres vu tant d'exactitude avec tant de vivacité. Elle luy le Recit de son Voyage de Constantinople, ou elle est Ambassadrice d'Angletere. Elle parle de Peuples qu'elle a vu sur son Chemin qui de crainte de son tromper honorent Mahomet et Jesus Christ. Ils vont les vendredis aux Mosquées et les Dimanches a la Messe, et ils dissent qu'après leur mort ils scauront quell est le Veritable Prophete. Elle y parle des Monts Hemus et Rhodope et du fleuve Hebrus et cite a ce propos les fameux vers du 4e livre de Georgiques. On voit dans toute cette letter un esprit indifferent, degage de préjugé, et consequentment tres tolerant. Elle se moque des differentes sects des Turcs et les Compare avec Les Lutheriens, Les Calvinistes, et les Romanistes [...]. Dans sa lettre elle paroist aimer fort la Verité et surtout a dire librement son sentiment.¹¹

Nicolas-François Rémond behaved similarly; in 1718, he wrote a letter to Lady Mary in which he expressed all his approbation and appreciation:

Si vous aimez les choses extraordinaires cette lettre ne vous deplaira pas. Je n'ai jamais eu l'honneur de vous voir et vraisemblablement je ne l'aurai jamais, cependant je vous écris sans pouvoir m'en empêcher. Monsieur l'Abbé Conti, qui est particulièrement de mes amis, m'a confié une lettre que vous lui avez écrite de Constantinople. Je l'ai lu; je l'ai relu cent fois; je l'ai copié et je ne la quitte ni jour ni nuit. Voyez ma vanité; sur cette seule lettre j'ai cru connoître la singularité de vostre caractère et les agremens infinis de votre esprit.¹²

Lady Mary's interest in writing an accurate record of her two-year stay abroad could have also been encouraged by the plan to publish the letters. It is certain that she intended to do that, although not in her lifetime. In 1724 she lent the albums to the feminist and pamphleteer Mary Astell (1668-1731), who wrote an exuberant preface in the blank pages at the end of the second volume:

[...] The noble author had the goodness to lend me her M.S. to satisfy my Curiosity in some enquiries I made concerning her Travels. And when I had it in

my hands, how was it possible to part with it! I once had the Vanity to hope I might acquaint the Public that it ow'd this invaluable Treasure to my Importunities. But alas! The most Ingenious Author has condemn'd it to obscurity during her Life, and Conviction, as well as Deference, obliges me to yield to her Reasons. However, if these *Letters* appear hereafter, when I am in my Grave, let *this* attend them in testimony to Posterity, that among her Contemporaries *one Woman*, at least, was just to her Merit. [...] You see, Madam, how I lay every thing at your Feet. As the Tautology shews the poverty of my Genius, it likewise shews the extent of your Empire over my Imagination.¹³

Lady Mary brought the albums with her when she left England in 1739; and on her way home two decades later, while delayed by bad weather in Holland, she met an English clergyman and presented the albums to him with the following inscription: «These 2 Volumes are given to Reverend Benjamin Sowden, minister at Rotterdam, to be dispos'd of as he thinks proper. This is the will and design of M. Wortley Montagu, Dec. 11, 1761». In May 1763, less than a year after her death, the letters were sent to press without her daughter's permission from an imperfect duplicate of the manuscript. This text was the basis of all editions of the *Turkish Embassy Letters* until 1861, when the albums themselves were finally used for the first time¹⁴.

3. Another Orient, «not so unpolish'd as we represent [it]»¹⁵

Lady Mary first experienced Turkish life in Belgrade, where she tasted that East she had so much longed for. Her initial impressions were largely favourable, even though she felt uneasy in a town so subjected to impudent soldiery; while nominally ruled by a Pasha, the city was largely controlled by Janissaries, whose brutal and merciless treatment of the local people seemed to justify the conventional Western perception of the Orient as a space in which barbarous acts took place:

We cross'd the Desarts of Servia allmost quite overgrown with Wood, thò a Country naturally fertile and the Inhabitants industrious, but the Oppression of the peasants is so great they are forc'd to abandonn their Houses and neglect their Tillage, all they have being a prey to the Janizarys whenever they please to seize upon it. We have guard of 500 of 'em, and I was almost in tears every day to see their insolencies in the poor villages through which we pass'd.¹⁶

As an impartial observer, Lady Mary felt so indignant about the cruel and unacceptable behaviours of the Janissaries that in one case, rather than diminishing, she exceptionally confirmed something that had already been noted by another English traveller:

The Janizarys had no mercy on the poverty [of the villagers], killing all the poultry and sheep they could find without asking who they belong'd, while the wretched owners durst not put in their claim for fear of being beaten.

Lambs just fall'n, Geese and Turkeys big with Egg: all masacre'd without distinction. When the Bassas travel 'tis yet worse. Those Oppressors are not content with eating all that is to be eaten belonging to the peasants; after they cram'd themselves and their numerous retinue, they have impudence to exact what they call Teeth-money, a contribution for the use of their teeth, worn with doing them the Honour of devouring their meat. This is a literal known Truth, however extravagant it seems, and such is the natural corruption of a Military Government, their Religion not allowing of this barbarity no more than ours does.¹⁷

Fascinated by men of breeding and culture, Lady Mary was highly entertained by *Effendi* Ahmet Bey, the scholar she and her relatives were lodged with. He read Arabic poetry to her; in return she helped him in mastering the Roman alphabet; together they supped, drank wine and conversed about the position of women in Ottoman society:

I have frequent disputes with him concerning the difference of our Customs, particularly the confinements of Women. He assures me there is nothing at all in it; only, says he, we have the advantage that when our Wives cheat us, no body knows it.¹⁸

They also took up the subject of comparative literature; to Abbé Conti, she referred the substance of some of their *tête-à-tête*:

Mahometism is divided into as many Sects as Christianity, and the first institution as much neglected and obscur'd by interpretations. I cannot here forbear reflecting on the natural Inclination of Mankind to make Mysteries and Novelty's. The Zeidi, Kadari, Jabari, etc. put me in mind of the Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, etc., and are equally zealous against one Another. But the most prevailing Opinion, if you search into the Secret of the Effendis, is plain Deism. [The Cadi] assur'd me that if I understood Arabic I should be very well pleas'd with reading the Alcoran, which is so far from the nonsense we charge it, tis the purest morality deliver'd in the very best Language. I have since heard impartial Christians speak of it in the same manner, and I don't doubt but all our translations are from Copys got from the Greek Preists, who would not fail to falsify it with the extremity of Malice.¹⁹

She ended her reportage by adding: «I don't ask your pardon for the Liberty I have taken in speaking of the Roman. I know you equally condemn the Quackery of all Churches as much you revere the sacred Truths in which we both agree»²⁰. Her belief in Deism is enunciated in several letters, she saw it as a means to forge links between East and West, and as a way to demonstrate that the differences between Islam and Christianity were only relative.

On the way to Adrianople, the delegation stopped at a Bulgarian village and here life did not strike the traveller very much:

The Bulgarians lived in little huts, raised of dirt baked in the sun, they were very industrious husbandmen, and produced several sorts of very delicious

wine. Bulgarian women dressed themselves in a great variety of coloured glass beads and were not ugly, but of tawny complexions.²¹

Sofia, on the contrary, offered Lady Mary one of her most astonishing adventures: she hired an *araba* and set out for the public bath. The whole excursion was enchanting, beginning with the couch, which had louvers or lattices instead of glass, painted and gilded with flowers and mottoes, with a fringed canopy in scarlet cloth. The baths occupied a five-domed stone building lit only through its roof. Behind the entrance hall came four rooms, in three of which there was an uncomfortable heat. The fourth one, a marble interior with sulphurous steam seeping through it, contained perhaps two hundred Turkish women, drinking coffee or fruit juice, embroidering, doing each other's hair and «in plain English, stark naked»²². Many male travellers had singled out the *hamam* as the site of «much unnatural and filthy lust»²³, but the falsity of such views is discredited by Lady Mary who, depicting the nude bathers in terms that evoke a distinctly classical and essentially Eurocentric ideal of beauty, wanted to highlight that they behaved in a most appropriate way:

[...] There was not the least wanton smile or immodest gesture amongst 'em. They Walk'd and mov'd with the same majestic Grace which Milton describes of our General Mother. There were many amongst them as exactly proportion'd as ever any Goddess was drawn by the pencil of Guido or Titian, and most of their skins shineingly white, only adorn'd by their Beautifull Hair divided into many tresses hanging on their shoulders, braided either with pearl or riband, perfectly representing the figures of the Graces.²⁴

The good order, decent humour, and friendliness of the undressed assembly – devoid of surprise or impertinent curiosity, disdainful smiles or satiric whispers – delighted Lady Mary so deeply that she

[...] had wickedness enough to wish secretly that Mr. Gervase could have been there invisible. I fancy it would have very much improv'd his art to see so many fine Women naked in different postures, some in conversation, some working, other drinking Coffee or sherbet, and many negligently lying on their Cushions while their slaves (generally pretty Girls of 17 or 18) were employ'd in braiding their hair in several pretty manners.²⁵

This wicked wish has been condemned by Felicity A. Nussbaum, who claimed that it «attests to the impotency of a mere woman's description and accentuates a man's superior ability to paint women's bodies»²⁶. But Lady Mary never implied that Jervas could paint better than she could write. The emphasis here is not on the male artist's superiority to the female writer, but on his inability to gain access into the enclosed world of the *hamam* from which he is disqualified by his gender.

The account of this scene became particularly notorious when the *Embassy Letters* were posthumously printed²⁷. Numerous reviewers found something

to blame in them: barbaric nudity, condoning of it, lack of delicacy in telling it, failure of integrity in inventing it. Recently the question has been reopened on a different set of premises, with special attention to the supposed eroticism of the account, and Lady Mary's declining to join the Turkish ladies. We know that she unequivocally described the Turkish women by comparing their living bodies to the works of famous Italian and English artists. Her idea of associating their beauties with the Three Graces, the figures of Titian and John Milton's Eve could be interpreted as a delicate attempt to portray them without the excesses of the 'Orientalist discourse' and to demonstrate that the author well knew the aesthetical theories of the time as well as the concept of disinterested contemplation. This process of 'personification', however, has been only partially carried out: the representation of the Ottoman ladies as art works could in fact free them from the label of being exotic and sexual objects, but the comparison condemns them to be objects rather than active subjects²⁸.

Initially criticized for tolerating nakedness, Lady Mary has also been decried for having remained clothed in the bath (thus affirming superiority or denying womanhood):

I was in my travelling Habit, which is a rideing dress, and certainly appear'd very extraordinary to them, yet there was not one of 'them that shew'd the least surprize, or impertinent Curiosity, but receiv'd me with all the obliging civility possible. I know no European Court where the Ladies would have behav'd them selves in so polite manner to a stranger. [...] The Lady that seem'd the most considerable amongst them entreated me to sit by her and would fain have undress'd me for the bath. I excus'd my selfe with some difficulty, they being all so earnest in perswading me. I was at last forc'd to open my skirt and shew them my stays, which satisfy'd 'em very well, for I saw they beleiv'd I was so lock'd up in that machine that it was not in my own power to open it, which contrivance they attributed to my Husband.²⁹

The image of Lady Mary, physically constraining her stays by the artifice of her civilization, can be here compared with the Western conception of the veil as an emblem of female subjection in the Islamic East. But the all-enveloping *ferigée*, seen as a disadvantage by most observers, was viewed in a quite different light by our traveller, who firmly believed that it gave Ottoman ladies the liberty of anonymity and the possibility to move from one place to another undetected. After experiencing the freedom of wandering in a veiled garb, she confessed to her sister that:

Tis very easy to see they have more Liberty than we have, no Woman of what rank so ever being permitted to go in the streets without 2 muslins, one that covers her face all but her Eyes and another that hides the whole dress of her head and hangs halfe way down her back; and their Shapes are wholly conceal'd by a thing they call Ferigée, which no Woman of any sort appears without. This has strait sleeves that reaches to their fingers ends and it laps all round 'em, not unlike a rideing hood. In Winter 'tis of Cloth, and in Summer, plain stuff or

silk. You may guess how effectually this disguises them, that there is no distinguishing the great Lady from her Slave, and 'tis impossible for the most jealous Husband to know his Wife when he meets her, and no Man dare either touch or follow a Woman in the Street. This perpetual Masquerade gives the entire Liberty of following their Inclinations without danger of Discovery.³⁰

Although European men almost certainly never saw an aristocratic woman unveiled, or spoke to her or were invited by her in the *harem*, they confidently talked of them as not truly beautiful, or, as Carlsten Niebuhr did during his voyage to Arabia in 1761, as «excessively ignorant and merely great children»³¹. Charles Sonnini de Manoncourt, a naturalist who stayed in Egypt between 1777 and 1780, thus described the women of the Mamluks: «perpetually recluse, or going out but seldom, and always with a veil, or, to speak more correctly, with a mask which entirely cover their face [...]. And for whom are so many charms thus carefully preserved: for one man alone, for a tyrant who holds them in captivity»³². Another interesting description is provided by the Comte de Volney who was in Syria between 1783 and 1785 and who affirmed that women there were

[...] rigoureusement séquestrées de la société des hommes. Toujours renfermées dans leur maison, elles ne communiquent qu'avec leur mari, leur père, leur frère, & tout au plus leur cousin-germain; soigneusement voilées dans les rues, à peine osent-elles parler à un homme, même pour affaires.³³

The French noble also lamented what he considered Muhammad's low consideration of women, as they were not allowed the honour of being treated as part of the human species. Finally, he claimed that the government deprived them of the right to own and manage their property, to will it to their heirs after death and to endow it as *waqf*. But as the Qur'an reveals, this interpretation was totally mistaken: «from what is left by parents/and those nearest related/there is a share for me and there is a share for women, whatever the property be small or large – a determinate share»³⁴. And Lady Mary corroborates the meaning of these lines in a letter to her sister by stating that Turkish women did not

have [...] much to apprehend from the resentment of their Husbands, those Ladys that are rich having all their money in their own hands, which they take with 'em upon a divorce with an addition which he is oblig'd to give 'em. Upon the Whole, I look upon the Turkish Women as the only free people in the Empire. [...] 'Tis true their Law permits [the men] 4 Wives, but there is no Instance of a Man of Quality that makes use of this Liberty, or a Woman of Rank that would suffer it.³⁵

This assertion gains further support from Lady Mary's description of the *harem* as another feminine space, *locus amoenus* inaccessible even to the Sultan and respected by his Council of Ministers³⁶. The *harem* as rep-

resented by her is very different from the eunuch-dominated reign of Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*, in which women were seen as capricious slaves, always ready to transgress rules³⁷. Lady Mary did not find anything of that lechery, perversion and sexual promiscuity that she knew to be so common in the Western imaginary of the *harem*. All her attention and interest were, on the contrary, caught by the astonishing magnificence of the place:

I was led into a large room, with a Sofa the whole length of it, adorn'd with white Marble Pillars like ruelle, cover'd with pale bleu figur'd velvet on silver Ground, with Cushions of the same, where I was desir'd to repose till [the mistress of the house] appear'd.³⁸

The Sultana Hafife's marvellous clothes, enriched by diamonds, pearls and a fine coloured emerald like a big Turkey Egg are pictured for her sister, as is the table setting:

The Knives were of Gold, the hafts set with di'monds, but the piece of Luxury that griev'd my eyes was the Table cloth and napkins, which were all Tiffany embroider'd with silks and Gold in the finest manner in natural flowers. It was with the utmost regret that I made use of these costly Napkins, as finely wrought as the finest handkerchiefs that ever came out of this Country. You may be sure that they were entirely spoilt before Dinner was over (a dinner 50 dishes) of meat which, after their fashion was placed on the table but one at a time.³⁹

Conversations with the widow and former favourite of Mustafa II are used by Lady Mary to clear up various questions concerning the harem and the Seraglio:

The Emperor precedes his visit by a Royal present and then comes into her apartment. Neither is there any such thing as her creeping in at the bed's feet. She said that the first he made choise of was always after the first in rank, and not the Mother of the eldest Son, as other writers would make us believe. Sometimes the Sultan diverts him selfe in the Company of all his Ladies, who stand in a circle round him, and she confess'd that they were ready to dye with Jealousie and envy of the happy She that he distinguish'd by any appearance of preference. But this seem'd to me neither better nor worse than the Circles in most Courts where the Glance of the Monarch is watch'd and every Smile waited for with impatience and envy'd by those that cannot obtain it.⁴⁰

Here, again, there is a comparison with a well identifiable cultural pattern. Lady Mary was clever enough to forestall criticism of her meticulous comments. After all, many of her correspondents had, by this time, read the tales of the *Arabian Nights*, translated into English between 1707 and 1718 from a French version edited by the Orientalist Antoine Galland (1646-1715)⁴¹. To the Countess of Mar, she wrote:

Now do I fancy that you imagine I have entertain'd you all this while with a relation that has (at least) receiv'd many Embellishments from my hand. This is but too like (says you) the Arabian tales; these embroidier's Napkins, and a jewel as large as a Turkey's egg! – You forget, dear Sister, those very tales were writ by an Author of this Country and (excepting the Enchantments) are real representation of the manners here. We traveller are in very hard circumstances. If we say nothing but what has been said before us, we are dull and we have observ'd nothing. If we tell any thing new, we are laugh'd at as fabulous and Romantic, not allowing for the difference of ranks, which afford difference of company, more Curiosity, or the changes of customs that happen every 20 years in every Country. But people judge of Travellers exactly with the same Candour, good Nature, and impartiality they judge of their Neighbours upon all Occasions. For my part, if I live to return amongst You, I am so well acquainted with the Morals of my dear freinds and acquaintance, that I am resolv'd to tell them nothing at all, to avoid the Imputation (which their charity would certainly incline them to) of my telling too much.⁴²

Until she was away, she courageously continued to underline how much her considerations were innovative and detached from those of her predecessors:

I am more inclin'd [...] to tell you the falsehood of a great part of what you find in authors; [...] 'Tis also very pleasant to observe how tenderly the Brethren Voyage-writers lament the miserable confinement of the Turkish Ladys, who are (perhaps) freer than any Ladys in the universe, and are the only Women in the World that lead a life of uninterrupted pleasure, exempt from cares, their whole time being spent in visiting, bathing, or the agreeable Amusement of spending Money and inventing new fashions. A Husband would be thought mad that exacted any degree of Economy from his wife, whose expences are no way limited but by her own fancy. 'Tis his business to get Money and hers to spend it, and this noble prerogative extends it selfe to the very meanest of the Sex. They go abroad when and where they please. 'Tis true they have no public places but the Bagnios, and there can only be seen by their own Sex; however, that is a Diversion they take great pleasure in.⁴³

Although she evidently admired the liberty of the Turkish ladies, she was not so blinded by romanticism not to be aware of the many problems. News of the death of a young woman by the hand of an unknown murderer prompted a discussion on crimes of honour:

I was 3 days at one of the finest in the Town and had the opportunity to seeing a Turkish Bride receiv'd there and all ceremonys us'd on that Occasion [...]. I was very well pleas'd with having seen this ceremony, and you may believe me that Turkish Ladys have at least much wit and Civility, nay, Liberty, as Ladys Amongst us. 'Tis true the same customs that give them so many opportunitys of gratifying their evil Inclinations (if they have any) also puts it very fully in the power of their Husbands to revenge them if they

are discover'd, and I don't doubt but they suffer sometimes for their Indiscretions in a very severe manner.⁴⁴

While Lady Mary was absorbed by the discovery of what she called «a new World, where every thing appear'd [as] a change of Scene»⁴⁵, her husband Edward Wortley tried to protect British naval and commercial interests with the Sublime Porte. But his ineptitude, combined with reshufflings in the English Cabinet, led to his substitution and recall after only fifteen months. For his brilliant wife, who for more than a year had been in the condition of giving free play to her imagination, the idea of returning to the affected and snobbish life of the London court did not appear very stimulating, but forced by the events she resigned herself to her destiny. Her last words from Constantinople, condensed in a touching letter dated 19th May 1718, show once again all the strength and charm of this captivating figure: «I have not been yet a full Year here and am on the point of removing; such is my rambling Destiny. [...] I endeavour upon this Occasion to do as I have hitherto done in all the odd turns of my Life, turn'em, if I can, to my Diversion»⁴⁶.

4. Conclusion

What emerges from the brief excursus outlined in these pages is Lady Mary's challenge, through her *Turkish Embassy Letters*, to demystify most clichés about the East that her male counterparts had unjustifiably produced and made canonical in early modern England. «Out of a true female spirit of Contradiction»⁴⁷, as she was to confess to an unidentified Countess, she engaged in such a corrective competition with other voyagers, continually emphasising the authenticity of her experience in the Ottoman Empire as well as the troubles she occasionally had in writing about it:

We traveller are in very hard circumstances. If we say nothing but what has been said before us, we are dull and we have observ'd nothing. If we tell any thing new, we are laugh'd at as fabulous and Romantic, not allowing for the difference of ranks, which afford difference of company, more Curiosity, or the changes of customs that happen every 20 years in every Country.⁴⁸

Obviously, in examining Lady Mary's epistolary narrative we cannot forget that her conception of the 'otherness' with which she confronted herself was influenced by the sense of her own national identity. By the beginning of the eighteenth century the process of forging the nation had reached its major phase, producing a mythology whose principles were to stress British political and economic supremacy and to justify ethnocentric attitudes. The *Turkish Embassy Letters* show only a few traces of this attitude and underscore how difficult it was for their author to free herself completely from the filters of her original culture. Sometimes, for example, Lady Mary's stance as a mediator was darkened by her evident preference

for intellectual elites, whose members had no scruples at all about manipulating less privileged majorities; in other cases, when looking for a proper way to sum up the total effect of what she saw, she used metaphors plainly recognizable by her compatriots. Edward Said illustrated how this method also occurred in the male Orientalist discourse he took into account in his well-known study *Orientalism* (1978):

Something patently foreign and distant acquires, for one reason or another, the status more rather than less familiar. One tends to stop judging things either as completely novel or as completely well-known; a new median category emerges, a category that allows one to see new things, things seen for the first time as versions of a previously known thing.⁴⁹

The resort to these familiarizations, however, seems to be devoid of the typical European malice and more focused on underlying the author's insatiable search for knowledge and her acute ability to empathise with local customs, mores, and particularly Turkish ladies, whose generosity and spontaneous friendship had offered Lady Mary the possibility of making a sensational discovery, such as the cure for small pox⁵⁰.

As a consequence, writing about them for Lady Mary corresponded in a certain way to writing about herself and, by extension, about those Englishwomen of her class who still knew too little about female cooperation and solidarity. Similarly, trying to unmask and deconstruct the lies of those who had anticipated her in the Levant meant reformulating the canons of non-fiction and making it possible for travelling to be regarded – in Eric J. Leed's words – «as a means of gaining access to the "truth" rather than as stories of an invented world»⁵¹.

Notes

¹ Lady M. Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. by R. Halsband, Oxford UP, Oxford 1965, p. 1. There is very little evidence in British history of women visiting the Ottoman Empire before Lady Mary. As far as we know, the first wife of an English diplomat to accompany her husband on his posting was a certain Anne Lamb, who died of the plague in the residential neighbourhoods of Pera in 1608 (for an account of her story, see W. Ford, *A Sermon preached at Constantinople, in the Vines of Perah, at the Funerall of the Vertuous and Admired Lady Anne Glover, sometime Wife to the Honourable Knight Sir Thomas Glover, and then Ambassador Ordinary for his Majesty of Great Britaine, in the Port of the Great Turke*, London 1616. Other information can be found in Sir W. Foster, ed., *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant, 1584-1602, with his Autobiography and Selections from his Correspondence*, Hakluyt Society, London 1931). Twenty years later it was the turn of one Frances Wych, who sojourned in the Ottoman Empire with her whole family from 1628 to 1639 (see J. Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis: Man transform'd; or, the Artificial Changeling historically presented, in the Mad and Cruel Gallantry, Foolish Bravery, Ridiculous Beauty, Filthy Fineness, and Loathsome Loveliness of most Nations, fashioning & altering their Bodies from the Mould intended by Nature*, printed by J. Hardesty, London 1650). Records also tell us of the adventure of the Quakers Katherine Evans and Sarah Cheevers, who set out in 1659 to convert Alexandria in Egypt and were held captive by the Inquisition on Malta (K. Evans, S. Cheevers, *This is a Short Relation of some of the Cruel Sufferings (for the Truths Sake) of Katherine Evans & Sarah Cheevers, In the Inquisition in the Isle of*

Malta, printed for R. Wilson, London 1662. See also S. Arcara, *Messaggere di luce. Storia delle quacchere Katherine Evans e Sarah Cheevers prigioniere dell'inquisizione*, Il Pozzo di Giacobbe, Trapani 2007). The names of other women also appear in lists of ransomed captives. In 1647, for instance, an expedition from Algiers and northern Morocco returned with 242 former captives, including nineteen women coming from England, Ireland, and Scotland (see E. Cason, *A Relation of the whole Proceedings concerning the Redemption of the Captives in Algier and Tunis*, printed by F.L. for L. Blaikelock, living at Temple Barre, London 1646). Finally, traces of expatriate females occasionally appear in rumours of disreputable goings-on. William Biddulph was reported to have met an «Inglishe strumpitt» on Zante, while even the extremely broadminded Samuel Pepys was staggered by the behaviour of some women living in the English colony at Tangier (see S. Pepys, *The Tangier Papers (1683)*, transcribed, edited and collated with the transcription of Mr. W. Matthews by E. Chappel, Navy Records Society, London 1935). Lady Mary then was by no means the first wife of an English ambassador to accompany her husband, but was the first to write about it.

² J. Spence, *Anecdotes, Observations, and Characters of Books and Men. Collected from the Conversation of Mr. Pope, and other Eminent Persons of his Time, now first published from the Original Papers, with Notes and a Life of the Author*, by S.W. Singer, Library of Old Authors, London 1856, p. 248.

³ Cf. L. Kostova, *Constructing Oriental Interiors: Two Eighteenth-Century Women Travellers and their Easts*, in V. Fortunati, R. Monticelli, M. Ascari (eds), *Travel Writing and the Female Imaginary*, Pàtron Editore, Bologna 2001, p. 17.

⁴ B. Melman, *Women's Orients. English Women and the Middle East, 1718-1918. Sexuality, Religion and Work*, Macmillan, London 1992, p. 78.

⁵ E. Gibbon, *Private Letters, 1753-1794*, with an introduction by the Earl of Sheffield, ed. by R.E. Prothero, Murray, London 1896, p. 53.

⁶ In 1603, the British chronicler Richard Knolles had declared the «Ottomans to be the present terror of the world» (R. Knolles, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes, from the First Beginning of that Nation to the Rising of the Ottoman Familie, together with the Lives and Conquests of the Ottoman Kings and Emperours, etc.*, Arnold Islip, London 1603, p. 31).

⁷ With respect to this particular aspect, see L.A. Fiedler, *The Stranger in Shakespeare. Studies in the Archetypal Underworld of the Plays*, Barnes & Noble, New York (NY) 1972, pp. 139-197.

⁸ Thomas Dallam, from Lancashire, was a skilled artisan who travelled to Istanbul in 1599. An account of his voyage was published in *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant: The Diary of Master Thomas Dallam, 1599-1600. With some Accounts of the Levant Company of Turkey Merchants*, edited, with an introduction and notes, by T.J. Bent, London 1893. William Biddulph was a clergyman whose prejudices were religion. While chaplain in Aleppo, he travelled to Jerusalem using the Bible as his guidebook and disbelieving anything he saw that was not confirmed by it (W. Biddulph, *The Travels of certain Englishmen into Africa, Asia, Troy, Bithnia, Thracia, and to the Blacke Sea*, printed by T. Habeland, London 1609). Henry Blount went to the Levant in 1634 and admitted that his desire to travel to the Ottoman lands was both sceptical and rational; he sought to examine tradition and authority and find out if the «Turkish way appeare absolutely barbarous, as we are given to understand, or rather another kind of civility, different from ours, but not lesse pretending» (H. Blount, *A Voyage into the Levant. A Briefe Relation of a Journey, lately performed by Master H. B.*, printed by J. Legat, London 1636, p. 5). Mr. T. S., whose identity remained entirely obscure, was an English man who experienced a five-year captivity in Algeria, on the Western limits of the Ottoman Empire (T. S., *The Adventures of (Mr. T.S.), an English Merchant taken Prisoner by the Turks of Algiers*, printed by M. Pitt, London 1670). For a comparison of these four travellers, see G. MacLean, *The Rise of the Oriental Travel. English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580-1720*, Palgrave Macmillan, London 2004.

⁹ R. Halsband, *Introduction to Volume I*, in Lady M. Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters*, cit., p. XIV. See also R. Halsband, *Lady Montagu as a Letter-Writer*, «PMLA», 80, 3, 1965, pp. 155-163.

¹⁰ B. Herrnstein Smith, *On the Margins of Discourse*, Chicago UP, Chicago (IL) 1978, pp. 59-60.

¹¹ R. Halsband, *Introduction to Volume I*, in Lady M. Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters*, cit., pp. XV-XVI.

¹² Lady M. Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, cit., p. 395.

¹³ Ivi, pp. 466-468.

¹⁴ See R. Halsband, *The Life of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, Oxford UP, New York (NY) 1960, pp. 278-279; 287-289. See also I. Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Comet of the Enlightenment*, Oxford UP, Oxford 1999 and C.J. Lowenthal, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter*, The University of Georgia Press, Athens (GA)-London 1994.

¹⁵ Lady M. Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, cit., p. 414.

¹⁶ Ivi, p. 310.

¹⁷ Ivi, p. 316. See also G.F. Abbott, *Under the Turk in Constantinople. A Record of Sir John Finch's Embassy 1674-1681*, Macmillan, London 1920, p. 91.

¹⁸ Ivi, p. 308.

¹⁹ Ivi, pp. 317-318.

²⁰ Ivi, p. 320.

²¹ Ivi, p. 316.

²² Ivi, p. 313.

²³ J. Mabro (ed.), *Veiled Half-Truths. Western Travellers' Perceptions of Middle Eastern Women*, Tauris, London 1991, p. 137.

²⁴ Lady M. Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, cit., pp. 313-314.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶ F.A. Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones. Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives*, Johns Hopkins UP, Baltimore (MD)-London 1995, p. 139.

²⁷ The description was copied out of the 1805 French translation of the *Turkish Embassy Letters* by Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, and is found in his notebooks. As a result, his famous painting *Le Bain Turc* (1862), now in the Louvre Museum, is said to reflect some of Lady Mary's observations (see M.A. Stevens, ed., *The Orientalists. From Delacroix to Matisse: European Painters in North Africa and the Near East*, Royal Academy of Arts in Association with Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London 1984).

²⁸ Cf. E.A. Bohls, *Women, Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics, 1716-1818*, Cambridge UP, New York (NY) 1995, pp. 28-35.

²⁹ Lady M. Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, cit., p. 314.

³⁰ Ivi, p. 328.

³¹ C. Niebuhr, *Travels through Arabia and other Countries in the East*, Robert Morison, Edinburgh 1792, p. 123.

³² C. Sonnini de Manoncourt, *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt*, illustrated with Forty Engravings, translated from the French by H. Hunter, printed for J. Stockdale, London 1799, p. 164.

³³ C.F. Chasseboeuf Comte de Volney, *Voyage en Syrie et en Égypte pendant les années 1783, 1784 et 1785*, Volland et Desenne, Paris 1787, vol. II, p. 441.

³⁴ *The Holy Qur'an*, translated with a commentary by A. Yusuf Ali, Aman Corporation, Brentwood 1983, p. 180, quoted in M.A. Fay, *Ottoman Women through the Eyes of Mary Wortley Montagu*, in P. Starkey, J. Starkey (eds), *Unfolding the Orient. Travellers in Egypt and the Near East*, Ithaca Press, Reading 2001, pp. 163-164.

³⁵ Lady M. Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, cit., p. 329.

³⁶ The representation of the *harem* as a place entirely dedicated to women is a common feature in travel literature (see B. Monicat, *Itinéraires de l'écriture au féminin. Voyageuses du 19e siècle*, Éditions Rodopi, Amsterdam 1996, pp. 94-111). B. Melman affirms that between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries two different kinds of female travel literature took shape: the 'harem literature' and the 'travelogue literature'. The first one cannot be considered real travel literature because the narration is subject to the description of the Oriental women's daily conditions of life. The second one, on the contrary, describes the travel itinerary from one stage to another. It is therefore to the first category that many of the accounts of the female writers who described the *harem* and *hamam* belong (see B. Melman, *Women's Orients. English Women and the Middle East*, cit., pp. 16-17). See also L. Borghi, N. Livi Bacci, U. Treder (a cura di), *Viaggio e scrittura. Le straniere nell'Italia dell'Ottocento*, Libreria delle Donne, Firenze 1988; S. Foster, *Across New World. Nineteenth-Century Women Travellers and their Writings*, Haervester-Wheatsheaf, New York (NY) 1990; S. Mills, *Discourses of Differences. An Analysis of Women's*

Travel Writing and Colonialism, Routledge, London-New York (NY) 1991, and F. Frediani, *Uscire. La scrittura di viaggio al femminile: dai paradigmi mitici alle immagini orientaliste*, Diabasis, Reggio Emilia 2008.

³⁷ C. de Secondat Barone de La Brède et de Montesquieu, *Lettres persanes*, chez Pierre Brunel, Amsterdam 1721.

³⁸ Lady M. Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, cit., p. 381.

³⁹ Ivi, p. 382.

⁴⁰ Ivi, pp. 383-384.

⁴¹ See L. Rossi, *L'altra mappa. Esploratrici, viaggiatrici, geografe*, presentazione di M. Hack, Diabasis, Reggio Emilia 2005, p. 163.

⁴² Lady M. Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, cit., p. 385.

⁴³ Ivi, pp. 405-406.

⁴⁴ Ivi, p. 407.

⁴⁵ Ivi, p. 312.

⁴⁶ Ivi, pp. 405, 412.

⁴⁷ Ivi, p. 405.

⁴⁸ Ivi, p. 385.

⁴⁹ E. Said, *Orientalism*, Pantheon, New York (NY) 1978, p. 58.

⁵⁰ In a letter to Sarah Chiswell, dated 1st April 1717, Lady Mary tells: «A propos of Distempers, I am going to tell you a thing that I am sure will make you wish your selfe here. The Small Pox so fatal and so general amongst us is here entirely harmless by the invention of engrafting (which is the term they give it). There is a set of old Woman who make it their business to perform the Operation. Every Autumn in the month of September, when the great Heat is abated, people send to one another to know if any of their family has a mind to have the small pox. They make partys for this purpose, and when they are met (commonly 15 or 16 together) the old Woman comes with nutshell full of the matter of the best sort of small pox and asks what veins you please to have open'd. She immediately rips open that you offer to her with a large needle (which gives you no more pain than a common scratch) and puts into the vein as much veno mas can lye upon the head of her needle [...]. The children or young patients play together all the rest of the day and are in perfect health till the 8th. Then the fever begins to seize 'em and they keep their beds 2 days, very seldom. They have very rarely above 20 or 30 in their faces, which never mark, and in 8 days time they are as well as bfore their illness. Every year thousands undergo this Operation, and the French Ambassador says pleasantly that they take the Small pox here by way of diversion as they take the Waters in other Countries. There is no example of any one that has dy'd in it, and you may believe I am very well satisfy'd of the safety of the Experiment since I intend to try it on my dear little Son. I am Patriot enough to take pains to bring this usefull invention into fashion in England, and I should not fail to write to some of our Doctors very particularly about it if I knew any one of 'em that I thought had Virtue enough to destroy such a considerable branch of their Revenue for the good of Mankind, but that Distemper is too beneficial to them not to expose to all their Resentment the hardy wight that should undertake to put an end to it. Perhaps if I live to return I may, however, have courage to war with 'em» (Lady M. Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, cit., pp. 338-340).

⁵¹ E.J. Leed, *The Mind of the Traveller. From Gilgamesh to Global Tourism*, Basic Books, New York (NY) 1991, p. 107.

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Isidore Isou or the Meanders of an Identity Construction*

From the bottom of a canvas, the immediate proximity of a title or from the very ending of a literary text, the signature functions as an ultimate proof of authenticity within the field of art. Its presence upon a representation surface – corresponding either to an iconic, plastic, literary or musical work of art – is the equivalent of a ‘value warranty’, as, for an artist, the ‘name’ is not only a condensed artistic testimony but also «a business card»¹, which insures the legitimacy of art on the international market. In the terms of Pascale Casanova, in the world of art

Toute idée générale ressemble à un chèque bancaire. Sa valeur dépend de celui qui le (ou la) reçoit. [...] C’est la même chose avec les chèques tirés sur le savoir [...]. On n’accepte pas des chèques d’un étranger sans références. En littérature, la référence est le ‘nom’ de celui qui écrit. Au bout d’un certain temps, on lui fait crédit.²

[a]ny general idea resembles a bank cheque. Its value depends on the one who receives it. [...] It’s the same thing with the cheques which must be drawn on knowledge. [...] We don’t accept cheques from a stranger without references. In literature, the reference is the “name” of the one who writes. After a certain period of time, we give him credit.

Hence, even for (or especially for) an *avant-garde* artist from the second half of the 20th century, such as Isidore Isou – the initiator of the Lettrist movement in the mid ‘40s, the ‘name’ is a *conditio sine qua non* for artistic recognition, because «any idea needs a business card to introduce itself» («Toute idée a besoin d’une carte de visite pour se présenter»)³. However, in Isou’s case, the role of the signature and of the ‘name’ it represents goes beyond the regular functional frame, revealing a tensional relationship with the work it accompanies. Similarly to the creations that Michel Butor analyses in his paper on *Les Mots dans la peinture* (1969) – in which the signature frequently becomes the painting⁴, by orientating the attention onto

the graphic gesture itself, as a central part of the work of art – the Lettrist works of Isidore Isou tend to let themselves be defined by the presence of the ‘name’, up to the point in which a neat distinction between the artifact and the name of its creator is merely impossible: «At this moment», writes Isou in his first theoretical treatise published in France in 1947 «LETRISM = ISIDORE ISOU»⁵. A series of questions arise, regarding the crystallizing process of this ‘name’ and the circumstances that make such an equivalence possible. What are the elements that induce this «agrégation d’un Nom»⁶? What are the factors that influence and direct its functioning, and finally what are the consequences for the work itself? The answer to any of these questions is conditioned by an understanding of Isou’s need to create a ‘name’, parallel to the creation of his work of art, especially since – according to him – «The Name is also against the Work, because there are works which don’t leave a Name, as there are Names which don’t leave a work» («Un Nom est aussi contre l’Œuvre, car il y a des œuvres qui ne laissent pas de Nom, comme il y a des Noms qui restent sans besoin de l’œuvre»)⁷. Why is it so important for Isidore Isou to leave, not only a ‘Work’, but a ‘Name’ as well?

Coming from a cultural space often classified as peripheral and minor compared to the great European artistic worlds, the young adolescent and, later on, the mature artist he would become, seem to be perfectly aware from the start that, in the artistic horizon of the 20th century, there is nothing more important for a new *avant-garde* voice than to be able to signal its presence as unique, than having a ‘Name’ and being forever associated with it. If the ‘name’ of a work of art dissolves itself in the title, which becomes much more than a reference but a true interpreting direction with a hermeneutical value⁸, for an artist the ‘Name’ is the «nucleus of a man», the part that «devotes itself to the spirit». «I haven’t met a spiritual man without a Name», writes Isou in his autobiographical novel, «even if we call him Incognito or Anonymous. [...] A Name is the first thing which is defined, the premises, the beginning of everything, the primordial certainty» («Le noyau de l’homme qui se voue à l’esprit est son Nom. Je ne connais pas un homme d’esprit sans Nom. Même si on l’appelle l’Incognito ou l’Anonyme»)⁹. In other words, for Isou the Name is the only ontological dimension with an authentic existence. It is the only word that overcomes the triviality of the commonplace, the only linguistic sign with a unique referent, capable of condensing at once a multitude of messages, of representing a heterogeneous presence:

Un Nom, c’est la première chose qui se définit, les prémices, le commencement de tout en tout, c’est la certitude primordiale [...] Un Nom est devant la Parole. Il la dépasse, car les paroles peuvent être vagues et indéfinies. Une parole n’existe pas parce qu’elle peut être l’œuvre d’un fou ou d’un sot. Elle n’est pas certitude, car elle ne veut rien dire. Un Nom est déjà un contenu. C’est le seul mot qui en contient plusieurs.¹⁰

The name is the first thing or the only thing or all the things that we know about a man. [...] A Name is before the Word. It passes beyond it because words can be vague or indefinite. A word does not exist because it can be the work of a madman or of an idiot. It does not express a certainty, because it does not mean anything. A Name is already content. It is the only word that contains several others.

Therefore, ever since his Romanian childhood and adolescence, Isidore Isou had decided to become «the Name of Names» («Le Nom des Noms»), a Name as big as those of Tristan Tzara, André Breton, Marcel Proust or James Joyce¹¹, «the biggest man of [...] [his] time» («le plus grand homme de mon temps»)¹²; in short, a part of the universal literary canon. What is such a canon, at its most basic level, if not a list of works connected to a list of names, of (hi)stories, of identities, created and promoted through rhetorical means? As strange as it might appear, Lettrism – the most radical and extreme *avant-garde* of its time, the artistic movement always placed «in the avant-garde of the avant-garde» («à l'avant-garde de l'avant-garde»)¹³, the most «colossal, total, neat and abrupt attack» («Cette fois, il s'agit d'une attaque colossale et totale, nette et abrupte, précise et ouverte, pour la destruction complète de l'ennemi»)¹⁴ on artistic conventions, is constantly seeking the recognition of the canon, the institutionalization of its name and that of its creator. Paradoxically, in order to become the most violent and complete *avant-garde* of the 20th century, Lettrism must first define itself as a 'Name', ensuring its presence among the gigantic names which preceded it.

Consequently, Isou is determined to create a 'Name', a messianic name that would lead the world to absolute happiness and a supreme artistic expression¹⁵; it is a «Name and not a master that [...] [he] want[s] to be» («C'est un Nom est non un Maître que je veux être»)¹⁶. However, 'forging' a name is not as easy as it might appear, especially in an artistic context like that from the mid 20th century. After *avant-garde* movements such as Futurism, Dadaism and Surrealism, it is quite difficult for a brand new artistic *avant-garde* to be acknowledged at an international level. The sheer desire of an unknown teenager is not sufficient to ensure the artistic strength required to shatter, once more, the entire western European heritage. Nevertheless, Isidore Isou is determined to succeed. Hence, in 1944, during World War II, the young Jewish poet living in Bucharest presents himself before Paul Morand, the French ambassador at the time, saying: «I am nineteen years old, I am Jewish, I want to write literature, and I want to leave for France. Can you facilitate the formalities?» («J'ai dix-neuf ans, je suis juif, je veux faire de la littérature, et je désire partir en France. Pouvez-vous me faciliter les formalités?»)¹⁷. This concise self-description reveals not only the three major pillars of his identity construction (his age – the prodigious child, his religion – the long waited Messiah, and his literary inclination) but also the intensity of his ambitions. His appeal was not taken seriously by the famous French writer, who never followed-up on his bold demands, but at least this encounter allowed the young poet to realise, once more, the nature of the actions he had to take in order to achieve his dream. One year later, echoing the destinies of his Romanian *avant-garde* predecessors – amongst which the most important were undoubtedly Tristan Tzara and the Janco brothers – Isidore Isou sets out for Paris, since «France is like an almost dry silkworm, which still has to give the most beautiful butterfly: Isidore Isou» («Pour moi la France est un ver à soie presque sec, qui doit donner encore le

plus beau papillon: Isidore Isou»¹⁸. Unlike his prior Dadaist compatriots, Isou has no intention of trading Paris and France for any other European cultural centre. It is Paris and only Paris that could provide this artist the grandeur he is seeking. When away, he remains «suffocated [...] [While the others] become», according to him «giant[s], [...] [he remains] little, a midget» («suffoqué [...]. [Tandis les autres] devien[nent] géant[s], [...] [lui, il reste] petit, nain»¹⁹.

Acquiring the proportions of a utopian space, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, Paris becomes – as Pascale Casanova points out – «*La république mondiale des lettres*»²⁰. For the artistic world, Paris translates into the symbol of the Revolution, the «Greenwich literary meridian», the perfect transnational place, the ultimate synonym of ‘modernity’: «Paris was where the 20th century was» («Paris était là ou se trouvait le XXe siècle»²¹). Hence, it is Paris that the young adolescent aims for, decided to become the one who «tramples it underfoot, [who] will set all corners on fire, just as Nero» («[...] quelqu’un qui réalisera ce que je n’ai pas réussi à réaliser? Il foulera Paris au pied, il mettra le feu dans tous les coins, comme Néron»²²). It is not adoration but envy that animates him, pure hatred, experienced with maximum intensity by the one whose entrance is still denied: «How I detest Paris», writes Isou further on in his biographical novel, «this inviolable old girl who has the looks of withered actresses! Oh, how I detest Paris and the France that lays at its feet, like a big piece of shit!» («Comme je déteste cette vieille fille inviolable qui a le visage des actrices fanées! Oh, comme je déteste Paris et la France qui s’étend à ses pieds, comme une grande merde»²³). Some would say, it is a matter of ego, and there were quite a number of times when Isou was accused by critics and fellow artists of megalomania. However, in his essay *Précision sur ma poésie et moi* (Notes on my poetry and on myself), published in 1950, three years after his first biographical and theoretical works, Isou insists:

<p>Je n’ai jamais eu de l’orgueil que parce que les autres m’obligeaient à en avoir, parce qu’il était nécessaire d’en avoir pour impressionner les autres et avoir autre chose. J’ai toujours pensé qu’il faut être très modeste pour pouvoir se contenter de l’orgueil [...].²⁴</p>	<p>I have been proud only because the others forced me to, because it was necessary to be so in order to impress the others and to have something else. I have always thought that one has to be very modest to be capable of contenting oneself with pride [...].</p>
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At a quick glance, this seems to be quite an unexpected confession, coming from someone who has constantly defined himself as a «Messiah named Isidore Isou» («Le Messie s’appelle Isidore Isou»²⁵). Nevertheless, a closer look allows a more subtle understanding of Isou’s self-definition, because more than obeying the common logic of any artistic recognition, it also plays by the rules of rhetoric constructions. Throughout *Précision sur ma poésie et moi* there is nothing more striking to the reader than the out-front manner in which the writer reveals the intentional and sustained mechanism of this identity construction. Right from the preface, a distinction is made between

'Isou' – the author – and 'I': the (other) self. On the centre right of the page, with small-print characters, the following text appears, resembling a motto:

Par le titre, je situe dans l'ordre des valeurs premièrement 'ma poésie' et ensuite 'moi'. Tout 'moi' me semble moins important que ce qu'il invente ou qu'il découvre.²⁶

By the title, I set the order of values: firstly "my poetry" and then "myself". All "I" seems to me less important than what it invents or discovers.

A few lines below, another paragraph begins:

L'auteur a ajouté un 'Jean' à son nom pour des raisons de pratique quotidienne. Stendhal aussi a signé ses livres avec les pseudonymes divers et Kierkegaard choisissait, pour chacun de ses ouvrages, un autre nom. La complicité de ces exemples illustres me sauvera peut-être de l'esprit des veaux.²⁷

The author added a "Jean" to his name for everyday practical reasons. Stendhal as well signed his books under different pseudonyms, and Kierkegaard used to choose, for each one of his works, another name. The complicity of these illustrious examples will save me from the herd mentality.

The reader cannot but ask whether there is a true distinction between the two instances or whether we are facing a masked equivalence. If so, why would a writer prefer to represent himself within his text by the use of the 3rd person pronoun instead of the usual 1st person one? Is it the confessional effect, the personal implication that this substitution is supposed to elude? But even so, why then return to the 1st person pronoun within a matter of lines? Why maintain, throughout the entire essay, this constant alternation between the 1st and the 3rd personal pronoun? How could it actually benefit one singular identity construction?

When trying to answer the question of 'who is speaking' in a discourse, Michel Foucault²⁸ insisted on the importance of the personal pronouns in the projection process that each reader engages him/herself in. According to Foucault, the presence of personal pronouns, of time and space adverbs, as well as verb conjugations, are never innocent within a discourse. If the author's real life persona should not be confused with his/her function inside a text, the elements that mark his/her presence in the discursive act, the 'shifters' – in Foucault's terms – should not be neglected. By nature a text contains signs referring to the author, and the way in which the reader chooses to represent this auctorial image is permanently affected by the functioning of these discursive marks. Foucault insists that «all discourses endowed with the author function» possess a certain «plurality of [the] self»²⁹. On the one hand, there is a self, an 'I', with an equivalent 'who' in the real world; then, there is an 'I' that only functions as an instance of the demonstration (the 'I' who concludes, suggests, considers etc.), and, finally, there is a reflexive 'I', appearing in the end and looking retrospectively onto the discourse, and normally being able to speak about the obstacles encountered, the results achieved, and so on and so forth; in other words, it is a sort of 'critical I' that weighs the input and the output of the discursive practice³⁰. Consequently,

texts disclose a «dispersion of selves»³¹, a certain division and scission between the representations through which the auctorial 'I' can manifest itself.

From this point of view, the 'multilayering' of Isou's text and the polarity of selves it generates are not unusual. What is unusual is the manner in which Isou decides to explore this polyvalence. Whereas most texts would proceed towards a unifying projection – either through a highlighting of the 'selves', with the use of 1st person pronouns and possessive adjectives, or through a proliferation of a 3rd person discourse – Isou's text exploits the caesura that exists between these instances. He would have not been the only one to write or to talk about himself in the 3rd person, but he certainly would be one of the few, if not the only one, who would deliberately oscillate between the two. In an interview taken by Roland Sabatier in 2003 on *Précision sur ma poésie et moi*, Isou actually elaborates on his rhetorical decision. Confronted with the polarity of his writing, Isou links it to a method he elaborated between 1942 and 1943 within his work *La Créatique* consisting of the use of the 3rd person:

Mon idée, à cette époque, était que le Système de la Création, c'est-à-dire l'invention et la découverte, devait remplacer le système de la Raison. [...] [Cette méthode] était encore informelle. J'avais la conviction de posséder quelque chose d'inédit qui me permettait d'avancer plus rapidement que mes prédécesseurs dans l'exploration spirituelle. Tout en écrivant les premiers textes, comme Introduction, j'accumulais des notes sur la manière dont je procédais, et, [...] c'est bien plus tard que je l'ai rédigée dans le but de la rendre publique. Donc, c'est cette certitude de détecter cette méthode qui m'a conduit à écrire sur mes œuvres à la troisième personne.³²

My idea, at the time, was that the System of Creation – that is of the invention and of the discovery – should replace the system of Reason. [...] This method was still informal. I had the conviction of possessing something new, which would allow me to advance faster than my predecessors inside spiritual exploration. Writing my first texts, such as *Introduction [à une nouvelle poésie et à une nouvelle musique]*, I was accumulating notes on the manner in which I was proceeding [...] it was a lot later that I started to write them with the intention of making them public. So, it's this certainty of possessing this method that led me to writing my works in the 3rd person.

Nonetheless, it was much more than a simple method born from a self-critical process, because when accused by Breton of writing like Salvador Dalí, Isou counterattacked by saying:

André Breton n'a pas compris ce but quand, un jour, il m'a reproché d'écrire comme Dalí. Il pensait que je me prenais pour le Messie. Mais, chez Dalí, même le banal était écrit à la troisième personne, alors que chez moi, seule l'expression de la dimension éternelle s'exprimait de cette manière.³³

André Breton hadn't understood this purpose when, one day, he reproached me for writing like Dalí. He thought that I took myself for a Messiah. But, with Dalí, even the banal was written in the 3rd person, whereas for me, only the expression of my eternal dimension was expressed this way.

At another point of his interview with Sabatier, he also insisted on the relevance of his distinction:

Je désirais [...] marquer la différence entre le 'je', que je suis, comme être périssable, et le 'Isou', qui, porté par La Créatique, est éternel. Le 'moi' n'a pas d'importance, il est insignifiant par rapport à l'oeuvre que je situe au dessus de tout.³⁴

I wanted to mark this way the difference between the "I" that I am, as a perishable being, and the "Isou", who, carried by *The Creation [La Créatique]*, was eternal. The "I" has no importance; it is insignificant compared with the work that I place above all.

In other words, if Isou decides to introduce a heterodiegetic discourse in his theoretical writings, it is for much more than a simple rhetorical distance. The hesitation between the 'I' and the 'Isou' hides, in fact, in Isou's perspective, the acknowledgment of all human nature, tragically sentenced to mortality. The difference is, therefore, the one between an 'I' with a real designation – the 'I' corresponding to the limited and mortal human inventor/creator – and an 'I' that stands for the immortality of the artistic creation. If «Isou *invented* the Lettrism, haunted by the dryness of a certain versification and by its end», if «Isou *discovered* that the Lettrism was an IRREVERSIBLE solution of poetry» («Isou *a inventé* le 'Lettrisme', hanté par la sécheresse d'une certaine versification et par sa fin»; «Isou *a découvert* que le Lettrisme est une solution IRRÉVERSIBLE de la poésie»)³⁵, it is because Isou is the inventor of a word like Lettrism, which «hadn't existed before Isou forged it» («[...] ce mot n'existait pas avant qu'Isou le forgeât»)³⁶. Nonetheless, he is also the creator of a 'Name', that of Isidore Isou. It is as if for Isou the creation of his 'Name' obeyed the same construction rules as his aesthetic system; either way, we are dealing with an intentional construct, supported by a rhetorical frame.

This is the reason why, Isou proceeds just as meticulously in the aggregation of his 'Name' as in the creation of his work; in both cases, he acts as a «character who loves to build itself» («Mon personnage est peut-être un avare, mais il aime se bâtir»)³⁷. Thus, once inscribed on the surface of the paper, the Name of 'Isidore Isou' will be different from any other name or signature, because

Mais le reste, la foule, tous, les hommes, les femmes, les enfants meurent sans entrevoir leur nom autrement qu'écrit par eux-mêmes en hâte, griffonné, sans attention, toujours comme pour échapper à son emprise, pauvre signature d'une perpétuelle trahison, sans lui deviner la magie [...].³⁸

[...] the rest, the crowd, everyone, the men, the women, the children die without catching a glimpse of their name otherwise than written by themselves, in a hurry, jotted down without care, always as to escape its hold, poor signature of a perpetual treason, without guessing its magic [...].

Whereas for him, the presence of the name – especially of the written name – is invested with an ontological strength:

[...] La concentration totale de l'attention sur le néant, effort de sortir d'une zone blanche inexistante. Je ne suis plus! je ne suis plus! je signe mon nom sur un papier. Comme en prononçant une formule magique, je reviens.³⁹

[...] the total concentration on the void, effort to go out of a white in-existent zone. I no longer am! I no longer am! I sign my name on a sheet of paper. As pronouncing a magic formula, I return.

Similarly to an incantation, the Name acquires, in the horizon of Isou's artistic creation, a mysterious intensity, suggesting the power of a resurrection, of a literal act of 'bringing into presence'. It is precisely this promise, which seems to be guiding Isidore Isou throughout his artistic practice. The perspective of an artistic immortality, of an everlasting Name that would overcome the barriers of time and space, imposing itself as omnipresent, omnipotent and unanimously accepted, is the reason why Isou insists on defining himself as: «[...] an accumulator of Immortality (the ambassador of Eternity), the greatest accumulator [...] [he] has ever known» («[...] Je suis un accumulateur d'Immortalité (l'amasseur d'Eternité), le plus formidable accumulateur que j'ai connu!»)⁴⁰. And nothing can guarantee all that better than the presence of his 'Name' in the Western literary canon. Although France and Paris take their time in laying themselves at his feet, this unique creative method should secure him a place among the 'giants'.

Notes

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¹ I. Isou, *Introduction à une nouvelle poésie et à une nouvelle musique*, Gallimard, Paris 1947, p. 17. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the author.

² P. Casanova, *La république mondiale des lettres*, Seuil, Paris 1999, p. 31.

³ I. Isou, *Introduction à une nouvelle poésie*, cit., p. 17.

⁴ Cf. M. Butor, *Les Mots dans la peinture*, Albert Skira, Genève 1969, p. 101.

⁵ I. Isou, *Introduction à une nouvelle poésie*, cit., p. 17.

⁶ See the title of Isou's autobiographical novel: I. Isou, *L'Agrégation d'un Nom et d'un Messie*, Gallimard, Paris 1947.

⁷ Ivi, p. 193.

⁸ A. Danto, *La transfiguration du banal; Une philosophie de l'art*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris 1989, p. 32.

⁹ I. Isou, *L'Agrégation d'un Nom*, Gallimard, Paris 1947, p. 192.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ Ivi, pp. 198-200.

¹² Ivi, p. 26.

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¹⁴ I. Isou, *L'Agrégation d'un Nom*, cit., p. 291.

¹⁵ For more details on the messianic dimension of Isou's name construction, see his novel *L'Agrégation d'un Nom*, especially pp. 286-300.

¹⁶ I. Isou, *L'Agrégation d'un Nom*, cit., p. 202.

¹⁷ Ivi, p. 182.

¹⁸ Ivi, p. 204.

¹⁹ Ivi, p. 169.

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²⁵ I. Isou, *L'Agrégation d'un Nom*, cit., p. 286.

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³⁰ Ivi, pp. 112-113.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² I. Isou, *Précisions sur ma poésie et moi*, cit., p. 139.

³³ Ivi, p. 140.

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³⁵ Ivi, pp. 30-31. Italics in the original.

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Le canon de l'amour courtois dans les poésies d'amour en musique d'hier et d'aujourd'hui

L'Amour a toujours été le thème principal de la Poésie. Avec mon étude, qui se fonde sur quelques uns de mes travaux (le *Glosario del Cancionero de Castillo*¹, un étude sur le lexique amoureux des poésies de Jorge Manrique² et ma communication au Congrès de Corfu pour la *Mediterranean Studies Association* en mai 2011³), je voudrais démontrer que l'on peut trouver aujourd'hui encore le canon de l'amour courtois, typique de beaucoup de poésies d'amour en musique de la littérature médiévale, même si avec des nuances différentes, dans nos chansons d'amour.

Pour la littérature médiévale j'ai analysé les poésies des Troubadours, du *Dolce Stil Novo*, de Dante, de Pétrarque, de la lyrique galicien-portugaise et du *Cancionero General* de Hernando del Castillo (Valencia, 1511), c'est-à-dire l'anthologie poétique espagnole la plus importante du XVe siècle.

Pour la musique contemporaine j'ai choisi les chansons d'amour du chanteur italien Walter Fontana, ex *frontman* des Lost⁴, et aujourd'hui soliste, car il y a une véritable concentration de thèmes et de figures rhétoriques des poésies médiévales d'amour en musique.

Les Lost ont publié trois CD: *XD* en 2008, *Sospeso* en 2009 et *Allora sia buon viaggio*⁵ en 2010. Walter Fontana comme soliste a publié le texte de la chanson inédite *Semplice*⁶, *Tutto in una notte*⁷ avec le projet *Mobb* et trois clips du studio d'enregistrement, le premier desquels contient le final d'une nouvelle chanson⁸.

Mon étude a même le but de suggérer une approche méthodologique pour l'enseignement de la littérature, en particulier pour ce qui concerne les anciennes poésies, à travers l'écoute et l'analyse de chansons contemporaines, par exemple pop, rock et rap, qui sont sûrement plus passionnantes pour les jeunes.

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Les poésies médiévales ont comme source d'inspiration principale l'amour courtois pour la plupart des poètes français, italiens, galicien-por-

tugais et pour les poètes lyriques espagnols du XVe siècle⁹. Ici j'analyserai surtout les aspects de la femme aimée et de l'amant, des thèmes (comme le 'feu d'amour', les larmes, les *lauzengiers*, la *senhal*, l'importance des couleurs et le baiser) et des figures rhétoriques (comme l'anaphore, la métaphore et le parallélisme).

I. La femme aimée

L'amour courtois est l'amour du culte de la femme qui est né en France au XIIe siècle et qui s'est répandu ensuite dans tous les pays de l'Europe occidentale. Ses caractéristiques principales sont l'amour qui ennoblit, la supériorité de la femme et l'amour vu comme un désir incontentable et toujours croissant¹⁰. La dame fait partie d'un procédé de stylisation de tous les éléments du *fin'amors* des Troubadours, elle est très souvent adorée comme une déesse, elle est distante et muette, et à partir des *trouvères* elle devient la 'belle dame sans merci' aimée par l'amant martyr¹¹. Pedro Salinas a dit qu'à travers la femme aimée, l'amant courtois adore «un ideal de feminidad idealizada que no reside en mujer alguna en particular y es superior a todas»¹². Pour ce qui concerne un vaste répertoire d'images et de situations de la lyrique amoureuse, le traité *De Amore* d'Andrea Cappellano est l'un des textes principaux qui ont inspiré les poètes des XIIe et XIIIe siècles, y compris les *stilnovisti* et Dante¹³.

Vers la fin du Moyen Âge la vie culturelle courtoise devient un jeu de société où l'on pratique des joutes, des tournois, des fêtes de palais avec de la musique, de la danse et de la poésie ou les *galanes*, c'est-à-dire les hommes galants, veulent susciter l'admiration de la dame. Dans ce contexte, l'amour devient un jeu social où le rôle de l'amant est celui d'un vassal fidèle à une dame de la cour à laquelle il rend hommage, un service que la dame accepte, malgré son rôle de 'belle dame sans merci'¹⁴. Toutefois, les poésies d'amour du XVe siècle en Espagne sont caractérisées aussi par la mélancolie et par le plus haut degré de spiritualisation de la femme aimée¹⁵.

Dans la lyrique des Troubadours, de la dame, appelée *domina* ou *domna* et presque toujours femme du *dominus* ou *senher*, on célèbre la beauté, la sagesse, la bonté et la noblesse¹⁶. Beaucoup de poètes du *Cancionero General* l'appellent *señora* ou *dama* et ils en flattent la *belleza* ou *hermosura*, *mesura*, *gracias* et *valer*. Toutefois, bien que la beauté de la dame soit la cause principale de l'amour, elle n'est jamais décrite en détail. Les poètes préfèrent l'éloge impossible, c'est-à-dire la constatation de la perfection de la femme aimée, sans spécifier de quoi il s'agit¹⁷ (GM 18.1 [Sazedo]: «Por vuestra gran perfection / os amo y tengo en memoria»). Les mots employés pour exprimer l'amour sont: *afición*, *alma*, *amador*, *amar*, *amor*, *corazón*, *desear*, *deseo*, *fe*, *firmeza*, *pasión*, *prender* et *querer* (C 34.5.6 [Anónimo]: «Ventura quiso cos viesse / amor que luego / os amasse»; Sant 9.74.75: «Quien fue tan enamorado / que sin coraçon amasse»; C 133.3.4 [Soria]: «os tengo señora dado / mi alma y mi coraçon»; C 54.1.2 [don Jorge Manrique]: «Quien tanto veros dessea / señora sin co-

nosceros»; R 23g:trad.51.52 [Soria]: «Miembrate con que firmeza / te mostruas amador»; C 19.1.2 [Cartagena]: «Nunca pudo la passion / ser secreta siendo larga»; C 14.1.2 [Tapia]: «Ausencia puede mudar / amor en otro querer»; C 34.11.12 [Anónimo]: «conosceros fue quereros / quereros fue desventura»). Ces mots sont souvent des personnifications des sentiments dans un contexte allégorique (C 56.4.5 [Cartagena]: «los ojos yel coraçon / amigos de fe que son»; C 3.2 [don Luys de Vivero]: «seso con amor guerrea»)¹⁸.

Dans les chansons écrites par Walter Fontana la femme aimée est appelée *baby*, avec la prononciation à l'anglaise dans *Di fronte a te*¹⁹ («Nessuno sa / nessuno sa / quanto ti amo baby»), et à l'américaine dans *Semplice* («Ma baby raccontami il tuo nome / baby, sussurra un'emozione semplice / domani ancora io ti cercherò ti sfiorerò»). Walter Fontana ne décrit jamais les caractéristiques physiques de la femme aimée, de la même façon que les poètes *cancioneriles*.

Dans la magnifique chanson des Lost, *Un segreto*²⁰, l'amour est exprimé avec trois mots: *amore*, *verità*, c'est-à-dire le vrai amour, et *cuore*. Dans les vers «Quando il mio pianto è stato anche il tuo / quando hai messo il cuore al posto del mio» les deux amants pleurent pour leur amour impossible, aussi vrai que leurs larmes viennent du fond du cœur, comme on peut comprendre ici: «davanti a quel segreto che mi unisce a te / che ci bagna gli occhi con la verità».

Pour ce qui concerne les qualités de la femme, dans les *cantigas de amor* de la lyrique galicien-portugaise les poètes apprécient surtout le regard (*catar*), la sagesse (*sen*) et la valeur (*prez*)²¹.

Pour décrire la douceur de la femme les poètes du *Cancionero General* emploient les mots *dulce* et *dulçor* (Sant 9.91: «mi bien y mi dulçe amiga»; Manr 41.31.32: «por que de vuestro dulçor / no fallezca ala mi boca»). Dans *Per te*²² des Lost elle est appelée *mia dolce essenza* («Ed il mio cuore è in festa / per te mia dolce essenza»), ce qui prouve que même aujourd'hui la douceur reste l'une des qualités les plus appréciées.

La douceur et l'inspiration poétique sont deux caractéristiques des *stilnovisti* qui précisent que c'est la femme qui fait naître l'amour en l'homme et qui devient une créature presque surnaturelle, angélique, capable d'élever l'âme du poète vers Dieu; mais ce sentiment d'amour, si pur et noble, peut naître seulement dans *i cuori gentili*, c'est-à-dire, dans l'âme des hommes sensibles et vertueux²³. Pour la *Scuola Siciliana* aussi la femme aimée est vue comme un modèle de vertu et de perfection et elle doit être adorée de loin.

Dans *Un segreto* des Lost le protagoniste réussit à devenir un homme même grâce à l'importante fonction de sa femme secrète, qui a des irréprochables qualités morales:

Forse l'hai visto tempo fa
quello che non ho visto io
quell'uomo che assomiglia a me
che ci provava a crescere;
Quando all'improvviso sono cresciuto
tutto per colpa di quel segreto.

Dans les poésies du *Cancionero General* grâce à sa perfection la femme est comparée à Dieu ou à la Vierge. C'est ce que María Rosa Lida de Malkiel a appelé *hipérbole sagrada*²⁴, qui permet aux poètes d'employer les images, les idées et les symboles des textes sacrés (R 17trob.13.14 [Comendador de Avila]: «quen su gesto muy hermoso / el de dios esta esmaltado»; Mena 5.34.35.36: «que nacer ya no podria / despues dela virgen maria / ninguna tal como vos»). On ne trouve pas ce *topos* dans les chansons des Lost.

2. L'amant

L'amant est l'autre protagoniste de la poésie *cancioneril* car c'est lui même qui parle de ses sentiments, presque toujours à une dame cruelle.

Selon Victoria A. Burrus on distingue trois catégories d'amants:

- le vrai amant;
- l'amant-poète qui s'occupe de poésie, de musique, de danse et des tournois et qui peut se servir de la poésie pour faire la cour à sa dame;
- le poète-amant qui pratique l'amour courtois comme un jeu social²⁵.

Les différences entre ces trois catégories d'amants dépendent des sentiments du poète, c'est-à-dire s'il aime vraiment ou s'il fait semblant. Par conséquent, il y a, d'abord, des vrais amants qui ont écrit une poésie où ils ont trouvé une thérapie contre leur maladie d'amour; ensuite, il y a beaucoup de poètes occasionnels qui ont écrit une seule pièce, ou deux ou trois au maximum, et qui sont des poètes plus que des amants; enfin, il y a beaucoup de poètes courtois pour qui la poésie a été principalement un jeu littéraire²⁶. Les poètes du *Cancionero General* appartiennent surtout à la deuxième et à la troisième catégorie. Pour ce qui concerne Walter Fontana, il a dit que pour lui écrire est thérapeutique et, d'après moi, ses chansons les plus sentimentales et émouvantes sont autobiographiques car dans des interviews il a précisé, par exemple, qu'il a écrit le CD *Allora sia buon viaggio* pendant une période douloureuse de sa vie et «di pancia», c'est-à-dire d'une façon très intense; en outre, il a avoué que quelquefois il a été inspiré par des mails ou des lettres de ses fans. Les sources d'inspiration de *Come in un quadro di Chagall*²⁷ sont l'un des tableaux des amoureux de Chagall et le livre *Il giorno in più* di Fabio Volo²⁸.

Pour Jeanne Battesti-Pelegrin les trois caractéristiques principales de l'amant de la poésie espagnole du XVe siècle sont la fidélité, la discrétion et le martyr d'amour²⁹ (R 23g;trad.51.52 [Soria]: «Miembrate con que firmeza / te mostrauas amador»; P-R 38b.6.7 [Comendador Román]: «Pero dios y nos y vos / que saben deste secreto»; C 109.1.2 [Vivero]: «Que triste mal de sufrir / que dolor quellalma siente»; C 124.86.87. [Soria]: «que yo de mi voluntad sufro mi graue tormento»).

Même l'amant des chansons des Lost est très fidèle, il est discret sur ses sentiments et il souffre pour les peines d'amour (*Tra pioggia e nuvole*³⁰: «Io sarò per te / quello che vorrai / e sarò così per sempre»; *Un segreto*: «Io non ti perdo / non mi perderai / c'è un segreto tra noi»; «Quando il mio pianto è stato anche il tuo»).

Associé au martyr d'amour il y a les tòi poi de la tristesse et de la solitude (C 1.1.2 [don Juan Manuel]: «Quien por bien seruir alcança / beuir triste y desamado»; R 22c.11.12 [Anónimo]: «y agora que os seruiria / veo me triste morir»; C 116.1.2 [Comendador Escrivá]: «Soledad triste que siento / y cuydados me combaten»; R 33trob.17.18 [Quirós]: «y metiome en vn desierto / muy solo sin compañía»). Même les amants de la chanson *Un segreto* des Lost vivent la même condition de solitude et de tristesse.

3. Le feu d'amour et les tons hyperboliques

Dans les poésies médiévales l'amour peut prendre même des tons hyperboliques, surtout à travers le 'feu d'amour'. Le poète du *Cancionero General* est *encendido*, *quemado*, plein de *fuegos* ou de *dolencias mortales*, *heridas* et *llagas* (GM 30.1.2 [Quirós]: «La fe de amor encendida / me tiene tan encendido»; Manr 34a.4.5: «deluno soy encendido / delotro cerca quemado»; R 19a.18.19 [don Alonso de Cardona]: «y sesfuerça la porfia / del fuego de mi desseo»; C 54.7.8 [don Jorge Manrique]: «pues amor en vuestra ausencia / me hirio de tal herida»; GM 5.8.9.10 [don Jorge Manrique]: «con amor por quela llaga / bien amando del dolor / se sane y quede mayor»). Les traités médicaux du Moyen Âge étudient le phénomène de l'amour comme une maladie physique car pour l'amant l'image de la blessure d'amour est une source continue de souffrance. Par conséquent, on emploie un lexique médical pour exprimer ces effets douloureux. Dans la chanson *Sopra il mondo*³¹ des Lost l'amour est si passionnel que les amants brûlent ensemble comme un feu: «Il mio respiro sopra te / i tuoi occhi dentro me / bruciamo assieme e ora so perché». Même dans *Vieni con me*³² l'amour est un feu qui brûle, et ici le désir sexuel grandit comme une vague:

Sento il tuo sguardo addosso
e come un fuoco brucia lento
il modo in cui ti muovi
è un'onda che mi assale
vorrei poter tuffarmi dentro.

Sur le corps de l'amant le sentiment amoureux provoque les sensations d'une cire chaude, en antithèse avec le souffle de la femme aimée qui glace plus que la neige:

e come cera calda ti sento sulla pelle
il tuo respiro ghiaccia più della neve
prendimi
che io ti sento vivere dentro me.

Comme on a déjà précisé, l'amour *cancioneril* est synonyme de tristesse perpétuelle pour l'amant parce qu'il s'agit d'un amour marqué par la dou-

leur, un sentiment malheureux et malchanceux, à cause du pessimisme de l'amant qui est condamné à vivre en souffrant et sans l'espoir de gagner une récompense ou l'oubli de sa douleur³³. La douleur peut même tuer l'amant qui quelquefois considère la mort comme la seule solution à sa triste condition. Les mots *muerte*, *morir* et *matar* se répètent plusieurs fois dans les poésies de Manrique et d'autres poètes de la lyrique *cancioneril* (Mena 4.53.54: «Ca peno contra razon / y muero por quien me mata»; C 18.7.8 [Cartagena]: «que biuiendo dala muerte / y muriendo dala vida»).

La cruauté de la dame est l'un des *topoi* principaux des chansonniers médiévaux. La douleur pour cette cruauté est souvent accompagnée par la supplique du poète vers la femme aimée ou par l'analyse des sentiments de l'amant et l'explication des raisons qui conduisent à désirer la mort³⁴ (V 32.1.2.3 [Badajoz 'El Músico']: «Amores tristes crueles / sin ninguna compassion / combaten mi coraçon»; Mena 6.21.22.23.24: «Por que despues de mi muerte / enti otro nunca falle / piedad con que se calle / tu crueza tanto fuerte»). À ce propos, Pierre Le Gentil a parlé d'*amant martyr* parce que cet amant souffre un vrai martyr d'amour³⁵. Dans ce contexte la souffrance amoureuse est souvent exprimée par les couples suivantes de mots antithétiques: *vida / muerte*, *ganar / perder*, *bueno / malo*, *pesar / plazer*, *penar / gozar* et ses dérivations *morir / vivir*, *matar / voir*, *pena / gozo* etc. De toute façon, cette mort, qui est en même temps la douleur et la médecine du poète amoureux, est aussi une stratégie du jeu de l'amour courtois. *Villancicos*, *glosas*, *canciones* etc. répètent l'agonie du poète malchanceux à travers «el morir y vivir a un tiempo», l'une des antithèses typiques de Pétrarque, en employant une hyperbole qui permet de jouer avec les valeurs réelles et figurées de tous les mots³⁶.

Le vers «parole come sassi contro me» de *Sopra il mondo* des Lost indiquent la douleur de l'amant qui a la même intensité de celle provoquée par un jet de pierres sur lui. En outre, on peut dire que toute la chanson est comme un cri à cause de l'énorme souffrance de l'amant abandonné, qui attendra le retour de la femme aimée 'sur le monde', en pensant toujours aux beaux moments passés ensemble.

L'absence de la personne aimée est un autre *topos* de la poésie d'amour médiévale. Dans le *Cancionero General* elle est décrite presque toujours par un homme qui est l'auteur d'une poésie où la dame n'est pas là et où le chevalier est triste et seul. L'absence est l'une des causes principales de la douleur et elle est reliée aussi à la fidélité de l'amant et à l'oubli de la dame³⁷ (C 54.7.8 [don Jorge Manrique]: «pues amor en vuestra aussencia / me hirio de tal herida»; C 5.11.12 [don Jorge Manrique]: «pues son oluido y mudança / las condiciones dausencia»).

4. La fonction des yeux et les lauzengiers

Dans les poésies médiévales les yeux ont une fonction très importante. Pour le *Dolce Stil Novo* l'amour naît justement des yeux, comme on peut le remarquer dans le sonnet *Lo vostro bel saluto e 'l gentil sguardo* de Guido Guinizzelli,

où le regard de la femme aimée peut même tuer l'amant, produire des flammes et blesser comme une flèche ou un rayon de soleil³⁸. Il s'agit d'un *topos* qui appartient à une tradition très ancienne qui remonte à Platon et que l'on peut trouver dans chaque mouvement littéraire sur le sentiment amoureux.

Dante et Pétrarque aussi flattent la beauté des yeux, où l'on peut même voir l'amour (Pétrarque, *Rerum vulgaria fragmenta*: «Gli occhi di ch'io parlai sì caldamente»; Dante, *Rime de la Vita Nuova* XXI – 2-4: «Ne li occhi porta la mia donna amore»); et avec les yeux les poètes du *Cancionero General* peuvent admirer la beauté de la femme aimée et tomber amoureux. Dans le vers «Io rivedo l'amore dentro gli occhi tuoi» de la chanson *Blu*³⁹ des Lost, l'amant peut voir l'amour dans les yeux de la femme aimée de la même façon que Dante. Par conséquent, l'analyse de l'évolution de l'amour dans l'âme implique aussi la participation des yeux et du cœur, comme dans Manrique et d'autres poètes du *Cancionero General* où les yeux (*ojos*) (avec le substantif *vista* et les verbes *mirar* et *ver*) et le cœur (*corazón*) sont les complices de l'amour pour trahir l'amant; et si l'amour pénètre à travers les yeux, la tromperie est la technique employée pour tromper l'amant (Manr 7.19.20: «fuerza que hazen los ojos / al seso yal corazón»; Manr 10.17: «Mis ojos fueron traydores»⁴⁰). Dans l'*Escala de Amor*, magnifique poème allégorique de Jorge Manrique, les forces de l'Amour pénètrent dans la 'forteresse' de l'amant, en gagnant la Volonté, la Raison et le Cœur, de sorte que l'amant doit se rendre. Ici les yeux sont les traîtres qui ont permis le siège de la 'forteresse' (Manr 10.17: «Mis ojos fueron traydores»). Dans le vers *Vittima degli occhi tuoi* de *Tra pioggia e nuvole* des Lost les yeux ont la fonction de faire tomber amoureux et en même temps de tuer l'amant.

Les yeux sont aussi la source des larmes pour les peines d'amour.

Dans l'*invención* Inv 27 de Jorge Manrique, ils sont comme les seaux pleins d'eau d'un puits:

Estos [les seaux pleins d'eau] y mis enojos	Celles-ci et mes peines
tienen esta condicion	ont cette condition
que suben del corazón	qu'elles viennent du coeur
las lagrimas a los ojos	les larmes aux yeux.

et dans le sonnet de Pétrarque *O passi sparsi, o pensier' vaghi e pronti*, vv. 1-4:

O passi sparsi, o pensier' vaghi e pronti,
o tenace memoria, o fero ardore,
o possente desire, o debil core,
o occhi miei, occhi non già, ma fonti!⁴¹

les larmes ressemblent aux fontaines.

Dans *Un segreto* des Lost les deux amoureux pleurent en solitude et en tristesse pour leur amour impossible («Quando il mio pianto è stato anche il tuo»; «davanti a quel segreto che mi unisce a te / che ci bagna gli occhi

con la verità»). Selon ce qu'a dit Walter Fontana dans une interview à MTV, ici l'amour est caché par crainte de ce que les gens pourraient en dire.

Même au XXI^e siècle, il y a encore des préjugés en amour; quelquefois on peut trouver les mêmes *lauzengiers* de la lyrique des Troubadours, qui pourraient détruire une liaison amoureuse par des rumeurs maléfiques. Cependant, dans *Ah la dolchor del temps novel*, Guillaume IX Duque d'Aquitaine (1071-1126), le premier Troubadour connu, nous dit qu'il n'a pas peur des rumeurs des gens et qu'ils ne seront jamais capables de le séparer de sa femme («Qu'eu nom ai soing d'estraing lati / que mi parta de mon Bon Vezi»⁴²).

Dans la chanson *Per te* des Lost les mots «verso un posto che non c'è» pourraient se référer à un amour impossible qui ne deviendra jamais réel à cause des préjugés des gens. Au contraire, dans *Vieni con me* l'amant ne se préoccupe pas de l'avis d'autrui, et il invite même sa femme à l'ignorer («e non pensare a quello che la gente dice perché / quello che conta ora è / che siamo soli io e te»).

5. L'amour fou et la vassalité

Un autre thème de la lyrique *cancioneril* est l'amour fou qui peut vaincre la raison, comme on peut voir dans Manr 7.1.2.3.4.5:

Es amor fuerça tan fuerte
que fuerça toda razon
vna fuerça de tal suerte
que todo seso conuierte
en su fuerça y aficion.⁴³

L'amour est une force aussi forte
qu'elle force chaque raison
une force de tel type
qui change tout esprit
en sa force et affection.

et dans *Sopra il mondo* des Lost («Seduto sopra una realtà / così evidente e stupida / parole come sassi contro me»; «la voglia di mandarti via / la voglia di vederti qui»), où l'amant connaît très bien sa triste situation sentimentale, mais il ne veut pas abandonner sa femme, même si elle le fait souffrir énormément.

Les traités médicaux du Moyen Âge étudient le phénomène de l'amour comme une maladie physique et comme une maladie mentale, une sorte de folie due à l'inflammation du cerveau à cause du désir insatisfait qui peut même tuer⁴⁴. Pour les poètes du *Cancionero General* l'amour est comme une force violente qui supprime le pouvoir de la raison, voilà pourquoi on trouve des poésies avec la lutte entre la raison et la passion (C 30.1.2.3 [Anónimo]: «Anda porhazerme afruenta / la passion del coraçon / y no le dexa razon»).

Quelquefois l'amant de la lyrique *cancioneril* est tellement dominé par l'amour qu'il se sent comme un *cautivo* (prisonnier), sans aucune possibilité de *ganar* ou *vencer* (vaincre) (Manr 1.61.62: «Yen hallandome catiuo / y alegre de tal prision»; V 26.4.5 [Garci Sánchez de Badajoz]: «Mi anima queda aqui / señora en vuestra prision»⁴⁵). Il s'agit du *topos* de la *Cárcel de Amor*. Dans la chanson *Tra pioggia e nuvole* des Lost la phrase «Vittima degli occhi tuoi» pourrait se référer même à une prison parce que l'amoureux est tellement dominé par les yeux de la femme aimée qu'il ne peut pas se libérer d'elle.

En outre, l'amour courtois est un idéal aristocratique fondé sur l'adoration de la femme, où le chevalier est à son service selon une forme de soumission très semblable à celle d'une vassalité, c'est-à-dire d'un vassal envers son seigneur⁴⁶ (Manr 14.4.5.6: «conosceres luego qual / es el leal / seruidor yenamorado»⁴⁷). Comme les chansons des *Lost* appartiennent à l'époque contemporaine, on ne trouve pas le thème de la vassalité féodale; cependant, dans les vers:

Io sarò per te quello che vorrai
vittima degli occhi tuoi
e sarò così
per sempre

de *Tra pioggia e nuvole* l'amant est dans une condition très semblable à celle d'un vassal, car il est disposé à faire n'importe quoi pour sa femme et il lui est complètement dévoué comme les anciens chevaliers du Moyen Âge.

La *Cárcel de Amor*, la *vassalité*, les blessures d'origine médicale, la *religio amoris* et le 'feu d'amour' décrivent des images de la réalité à travers un univers mythique-allégorique de l'âme, en employant un lexique souvent concret, mais avec une signification toujours abstraite⁴⁸.

6. La senhal

Un autre thème de la poésie médiévale, en particulier de la lyrique des Troubadours et *cancioneril*, est celui de la discrétion sur le nom de la femme aimée, surtout parce qu'elle était mariée. Le poète ne révélait pas son nom, et très souvent il l'appelait avec un pseudonyme (la *senhal*) qui se trouvait dans les derniers vers de la poésie⁴⁹. L'un des exemples les plus célèbres est celui de *Ah la dolçor del temps novel* de Guillaume IX Duque d'Aquitaine, où la femme secrète est appelée *Bon Vezi*. Dans les poésies du *Cancionero General* il y a rarement le nom de la femme aimée, et dans les textes de Walter Fontana on ne le trouve jamais. Le cas le plus emblématique est celui de la chanson *Un segreto*, qui du même titre nous fait comprendre qu'il s'agit d'un je ne sais quoi. Dans cette chanson le secret sur le nom de la femme aimée est gardée et on décrit l'intensité et la souffrance d'un amour vécu en secret. Les mots du refrain «quanto ti costa non dire mai / ciò che vorresti eppure non puoi» nous font comprendre que l'amoureux ne révélera jamais son amour pour cette femme; il voudrait le crier, mais il ne peut pas pour la peur de ce que les gens pourraient dire. Il cache ses propres sentiments malgré lui («quell'uomo [...] che cerca di non fingere / davanti a quel segreto / che mi unisce a te»), et il garde le secret absolu sur cet amour («serve il silenzio»).

Dans les poésies *cancioneriles*, le secret est également gardé, bien que cela soit difficile à cause des peines d'amour (C 19.1.2.3.4 [Cartagena]: «Nunca pudo la passion / ser secreta siendo larga / por quen los ojos descarga / sus nublos el coraçon»; V 1.4.5 [Juan de Estúñiga]: «Que mi secreta tristura / con sello de fe sellada»).

7. Le rôle des couleurs

Dans la chanson inédite *Semplice* de Walter Fontana il y a deux autres éléments très intéressants: le rôle des couleurs pour décrire les sentiments et le double plan du récit, typique de quelques *romances* espagnols.

Dans les textes du *Cancionero General* on mentionne le noir, le blanc, le jaune et le vert.

Le jaune exprime le désespoir (R 16trob.21.22 [don Juan Manuel]: «duna madera amarilla / que llaman desespearar»); le noir, la mort et le péché (R 17trob.49.50 [Comendador de Avila]: «de letras negras escritas / aqui yaze sepultado»); Sant 7.8: «por nuestros negros pecados»); le blanc, la pureté et une fois encore le désespoir, tandis que le vert exprime l'espoir (R 16trob.49.50 [don Juan Manuel]: «y de muy blanco alabastro / hizo labrau vn altar»; C 49.5.6 [Nicolás Núñez]: «Lo verde me dio esperanza / lo blanco me la nego»). Dans Mena 13.16.17.18.19.20, avec le blanc et le *prieto*, c'est-à-dire le noir, le poète se réfère aux secrets entre lui et la femme aimée:

Por lo qual tan sin defecto
adios le plugo cobrasse
que jamas blanco ni prieto
se supo ningun secreto
quentre mi y vos passasse.

Comme quoi aussi sans défaut
à Dieu plut qu'il agit
que jamais ni blanc ni noir
se sut aucun secret
qu'entre moi et vous il y avait.

Dans la chanson *Semplice* de Walter Fontana on cite deux couleurs: le rose et le noir. Quand on parle du rose, on pense toujours à la romantique chanson *La vie en rose*⁵⁰ d'Édith Piaf. En effet, dans l'inédit de Walter Fontana le rose a la même fonction que la chanson française, celle de décrire le bonheur de l'amant dans les bras de la personne aimée (*La vie en rose*: «Quand il me prend dans ses bras / il me parle tout bas / je vois la vie en rose»; *Semplice*: «se un giorno tutto è rosa / domani può andar nero, / ma lei per abbracciarlo non c'è»), tandis que le noir est considéré le contraire du rose, parce qu'il indique la tristesse et le désespoir comme dans le *Cancionero General*.

Walter Fontana mentionne les couleurs même dans *Tutto in una notte* où le vers «Prendiamo il cielo e coloriamo tutta la città» indique le drapeau tricolore italien.

8. Le plan du récit et le pathos

Dans *Semplice* il y a un double plan du récit parce que la chanson commence en racontant à la troisième personne du singulier l'histoire d'un garçon qui cherche l'amour:

Storia di un ragazzo confuso come tanti
che il suo destino lo fa da sé.
Sognava ad occhi aperti

viveva la giornata
chiedendosi l'amore cos'è

et elle continue par un refrain où l'on emploie la deuxième personne du singulier, en s'adressant directement à la femme aimée à laquelle le même refrain est dédié, et à la première personne du singulier («Ma baby, raccontami il tuo nome / baby, sussurra un'emozione semplice / domani ancora io ti cercherò, ti sfiorerò»). Dans *Semplice* il y a aussi une probable double inspiration car à côté de phrases assez banales («Storia di un ragazzo confuso come tanti»; «ma una sera cena in compagnia») la chanson contient des moments lyriques très intéressants («Ma baby, raccontami il tuo nome / baby, sussurra un'emozione semplice / domani ancora io ti cercherò, ti sfiorerò»; «se un giorno tutto è rosa / domani può andar nero, / ma lei per abbracciarlo non c'è»; «Scene di una storia a distanza raccontata / da chiamate e baci via mail»).

On trouve une double technique de narration comme celle de *Semplice* dans R 19a, un *romance* de don Alonso de Cardona, qui commence en racontant à la troisième personne singulière la condition d'un chevalier triste, et qui continue le récit à la première personne singulière, en se dirigeant directement à la femme aimée:

Triste estaua el cauallero
triste esta sin alegría
con lagrimas y sospiros
agrandes bozes dezia
que fuerça pudo apartarme
de veros señora mia.⁵¹

Le chevalier était triste
il est triste sans bonheur
avec des larmes et des soupirs
à cor et à cri il disait
quelle force put m'éloigner
de vous voir ma dame.

Le pathos de cette *romance* m'a fait penser aux mots «Senza te senza te senza te», qui sont le final d'une chanson de Walter Fontana qu'on peut écouter dans son clip du studio d'enregistrement n° 1⁵², et que le chanteur prononce avec la même intensité dramatique. Ces trois mots me rappellent aussi le *mote* anonyme M 3 («Yo sin vos sin mi sin dios») et la *glosa* GM 3 de Cartagena, où le poète exprime sa tristesse et son désespoir pour l'indifférence de la femme aimée, son aliénation (*enajenación*) et, toutefois, sa confiance dans l'amour:

Sin vos por nunca os vencer
con los seruicios que muestro
y sin mi por que soy vuestro
y sin dios por que creer
quiero en vos por mi querer.⁵³

Sans vous pour jamais vous vaincre
avec les services que je montre
et sans moi parce que je suis vôtre
et sans Dieu parce que je veux
croire en vous pour mon amour.

9. Le galardón

Malgré l'indifférence de la femme aimée, l'amant médiéval a souvent le désir d'être accepté par elle pour obtenir un *galardón*, même la *gloria*, c'est-

à-dire une récompense qui, selon les théories de Whinnom, pourrait être aussi de nature sexuelle⁵⁴ (Manr 8.60.61: «Si mi servir de sus penas / algun galardón espera»); Manr 2.52.53.54: «por mas merescer la gloria / delas altas alegrias / de cupido»⁵⁵). Dans *Vieni con me* des Lost l'amant demande expressément un acte sexuel à sa femme («prendimi che / io ti sento vivere dentro me / dentro me / vieni con me»). Mais le *galardón* ou la *gloria*, selon le *topos* de la *religio amoris*, est considéré une vraie religion avec ses commandements, ses enfers (V 8.8.9.10 [don Juan Manuel]: «O pena sin redempcion / que pena el triste amador / enlos infiernos de amor»), ses martyres (Manr 1.96.97: «Mas despues datormentado / con cien mil agros martirios») et un lexique typique de la religion (*Dios, fe, firmeza, gloria, pasión, siervo, sacrificio*). Le jeu courtois de l'amour, donc, admet des registres linguistiques différents, à l'occasion codés, pour les différentes exigences de communication. En outre, l'amour courtois exige l'ascèse de l'amant qui doit surmonter des épreuves très dures pour démontrer sa fidélité ainsi, quelquefois, le seul *galardón* est simplement le service amoureux, c'est-à-dire la vassalité comme on a dit auparavant.

10. Le baiser et l'amour de Iohn

Pour les Troubadours le baiser est très important, mais dans les poésies du *Cancionero General* et les chansons des Lost il n'est jamais mentionné. Cependant, le baiser est le protagoniste de la romantique poésie *Istanti...* de Walter Fontana, et on le trouve même dans *Semplice*.

ISTANTI ...

È nel tempo che ci creiamo,
nelle follie di mezzanotte
mentre la luna ci guarda
che il nostro respiro diventa reale.
È nel vento che ci muove i capelli
ed il bacio che si poggia sulle nostre labbra
quando tutto intorno è solo polvere
e noi diventiamo una cosa sola.
(Publiée sur son site officiel le 10.01.11)

INSTANTS ...

C'est dans le temps que nous nous créons,
dans les folies de minuit
pendant que la lune nous regarde
que notre souffle devient réel.
C'est dans le vent qui nous agite les cheveux
et le baiser qui se pose sur nos lèvres
quand tout autour il y a seulement de la poussière
et nous devenons une seule chose.
(Traduzione dell'autrice)

Dans cette poésie Walter Fontana décrit la scène très romantique d'un baiser entre deux amoureux. Les vers «È nel tempo che ci creiamo [...] che il nostro respiro diventa reale» nous font comprendre qu'elle se passe dans la fantaisie des amoureux et non dans une situation réelle, car les amants «créent» dans leur esprit un temps pour être ensemble, où ils deviennent réels comme leur souffle. Dans la seconde strophe:

È nel vento che ci muove i capelli
ed il bacio che si poggia sulle nostre labbra
quando tutto intorno è solo polvere
e noi diventiamo una cosa sola

on décrit un baiser très romantique, que j'ai appelé *métabaiser* pour être une fiction dans la fiction, un baiser qui se passe dans la poésie, pure fiction, et même dans l'esprit et l'imagination des amants.

On retrouve le baiser dans la chanson *Semplice*, mais cette fois on le donne sur Internet, à travers un moyen de communication courant, le mail («Scene di una storia a distanza raccontata / da chiamate e baci via mail»); cependant, même dans cette occasion, le romantisme est assuré.

Dans *Semplice* on vit une histoire d'amour de loin, ce qui nous fait penser tout de suite à Jaufré Rudel et à son *Amour de lohn*, où le poète chante ses peines d'amour pour la femme aimée qui n'est pas avec lui. Il l'aime plus que chaque créature au monde entier, il jouit beaucoup pour cet amour, mais il souffre énormément pour la distance qui le sépare de sa femme⁵⁶.

II. Les figures rhétoriques⁵⁷

Maintenant on analyse quelques figures rhétoriques du *corpus*, en particulier l'anaphore et le parallélisme.

Dans les *canciones* et les *romances* du *Cancionero General* il y a beaucoup de cas d'anaphore avec la répétition de l'adverbe de temps *quando* (C 153.7.8 [Anónimo]: «quando triste quando leda / quando abaxo quando arriba»⁵⁸). Même dans le refrain de la chanson *Un segreto* des *Lost* il y a l'anaphore de cet adverbe:

Quando il mio pianto è stato anche il tuo
quando hai messo il cuore al posto del mio
quando all'improvviso sono cresciuto
tutto per colpa di quel segreto

et le polyptote suivant: «Io non ti perdo / non mi perderai», où le verbe «perdere» (perdre) indique l'amour éternel.

Un autre cas d'anaphore est celui de l'adverbe de négation *no* (ne ... pas) qui est le mot le plus répété dans beaucoup de textes du *Cancionero General* (C 52.1.3 [don Jorge Manrique]: «No se por que me fatigo [...] no siendo nadie conmigo»⁵⁹). Dans les chansons des *Lost* il y a deux cas semblables d'anaphore: «Non devi scappare / non devi lasciarmi mai mai mai / non devi scappare» (*Standby*)⁶⁰ et «Non ti lascerò / non ti perderò» (*Di fronte a te*).

Dans la *glosa de mote* GM 4.1.2.3 de Jorge Manrique on répète le pronom *Yo* (Je) («Yo soy quien libre me vi / yo quien pudiera olvidaros / yo so el que por amaros»⁶¹). On trouve un cas similaire d'anaphore dans le refrain de *Come in un quadro di Chagall* des *Lost* («Io insieme a te onde in volo sopra la città / Io insieme a te come in un quadro di Chagall»; «Io insieme a te quante volte ci ritornerai / io insieme a te a volare, a sentire»). Avec la répétition du pronom personnel *Yo* Jorge Manrique remarque la triste condition de l'amant, pendant que dans *Come in un quadro di Chagall* la répétition de *Io insieme a te* a la fonction de remarquer le désir de l'amoureux de voler dans le ciel avec la femme aimée comme dans un tableau des amoureux de Chagall.

Dans les textes du *Cancionero General* il y a aussi plusieurs cas d'anaphore avec le verbe *dire*. On cite les exemples d'une *pregunta* anonyme et de *Tutto in una notte* de Walter Fontana (P-R 54a.6.24 [Anónimo]: «Dizen que cosa tan buena [...] dizen que no ay vuestro par»; *Tutto in una notte*: «Dicono che c'è un tempo per sognare [...] Dicono che sta tutto in una notte»).

Pour ce qui concerne le parallélisme, dans la chanson *Tra pioggia e nuvole* on emploie le parallélisme syntaxique («E mi inventerò, poi disegnerò e colorerò parole») pour décrire un amour qui réussit à embellir même les mots qui, dans l'esprit de l'amoureux, deviennent de merveilleux dessins colorés. Dans *Sopra il mondo* il y a deux cas de parallélisme antithétique:

Per tutto quello che farò
per tutto quello che già ho
la voglia di mandarti via
la voglia di vederti qui

dans lesquels l'amoureux décrit une situation future et une présente et son sentiment contrastant envers la femme aimée, typique de beaucoup d'amants de la lyrique *cancioneril* (C 119.14 [Comendador Escrivá]: «que si vo no puedo yrme»⁶²). Dans *Sulla mia pelle* les vers «Io ti strapperò / io mi libererò di te», à l'intérieur d'un parallélisme syntaxique, déchirer de sa peau la femme aimée devient la seule solution aux peines d'amour de l'amant parce qu'il aime tellement sa femme qu'il devrait quitter une partie de son corps, sa propre peau justement, pour l'oublier complètement. Même dans le refrain de *Semplice* on trouve un cas de parallélisme syntaxique, cette fois pour indiquer le désir de l'amant de chercher et de trouver encore sa femme le lendemain («domani ancora io ti cercherò, ti sfiorerò»). Enfin, dans le clip de la chanson des Lost, *Il cantante*⁶³, il y a une intéressante référence mythologique à 'la pomme de discorde' que Pâris a donné à Vénus⁶⁴. Selon mon interprétation, la femme avec la pomme qui regarde le ciel, où il y a une Miss, pourrait symboliser la femme élue par le chanteur, réellement et secrètement aimée par lui. Dans *Mena 7.56* on exprime le même concept car le poète dit que si Pâris avait connu la femme à laquelle il a dédié son poème, il aurait conservé la pomme pour elle et non pour la déesse:

Mas si paris conosciera
que tan fermosa señora
por nacer aun estouiera
para vos si lo supiera
la guardara fasta agora.⁶⁵

Mais si Pâris connusse
qu'une femme si belle
devait encore naître
pour vous s'il le savait
l'aurait gardait jusque maintenant.

12. Conclusions

Selon mon étude on peut déduire qu'entre les poésies d'amour médiévales et les textes écrits par Walter Fontana il y a plusieurs éléments en commun, qui concernent surtout des thèmes et des figures rhétoriques.

Dans la lyrique des Troubadours la femme aimée est appelée *domina* ou *domna*, et par les poètes du *Cancionero General*, *señora* ou *dama*. Walter Fontana emploie seulement le substantif *baby*. Les poètes du *Cancionero General* expriment l'amour avec les mots *amar*, *amor*, *querer* et *corazón*, et de la femme aimée ils flattent la douceur avec l'adjectif *dulce* et le substantif *dulçor*. Dans les chansons des Lost on emploie *amore*, *cuore* et *verità*, c'est-à-dire le vrai amour, et la femme aimée est appelée *dolce essenza*, car encore aujourd'hui la douceur est l'une de ses qualités les plus appréciées.

Pour les poètes de la *Scuola Siciliana* la femme aimée est vue comme un modèle de vertu et de perfection qui doit être adorée de loin. Pour les *stilnovisti* elle est une créature angélique, gentille et pleine de qualités morales, capable d'élever l'homme vers Dieu. Même dans *Un segreto* la femme aimée possède des irréprochables qualités morales, et dans *Semplice* elle est aimée de loin, exactement comme dans la *Scuola Siciliana* et comme par Jaufré Rudel.

Les thèmes principaux des poésies d'amour médiévales sont le 'feu d'amour', la fonction des yeux, les larmes, les *lauzengiers*, la *vassalité*, la *senhal*, le rôle des couleurs et le baiser, presque tous typiques de beaucoup de poésies d'amour *cancioneriles* que A. van Beysterveldt ne considère pas seulement un ensemble de *conceptismos* et *sutilezas*, mais aussi l'atelier littéraire d'une dialectique amoureuse qu'on retrouve dans le lexique d'amour du théâtre, de la littérature mystique et de la lyrique des XVIe et XVIIe siècles en Espagne⁶⁶. Dans les poésies du *Cancionero General* le 'feu d'amour' est exprimé avec les mots *encendido*, *quemado* et *fuego*. Dans la chanson *Sopra il mondo* des Lost les deux amants brûlent ensemble pour leur grande passion. Pour les poètes médiévaux les yeux ont une fonction très importante, comme dans les chansons *Blu* et *Un segreto* des Lost, où les deux amants pleurent pour leur amour impossible à cause du jugement des gens, qui ont presque le même rôle des *lauzengiers* de la lyrique des Troubadours. Dans beaucoup de poésies d'amour médiévales on trouve aussi la vassalité amoureuse et on peut dire que l'amant de *Tra pioggia e nuvole* des Lost est complètement dévoué à sa femme dans une condition très semblable à celle d'un vassal. Même aujourd'hui, donc, un homme qui aime vraiment est disposé à faire n'importe quoi pour la femme aimée exactement comme au Moyen Âge. Les Troubadours et les poètes du *Cancionero General* ne citent presque jamais le nom de la femme aimée. Dans les chansons des Lost il n'y a pas de noms, et *Un segreto* nous raconte d'un amour vécu en secret. Pour décrire les sentiments les poètes médiévaux emploient les couleurs, en particulier le noir, le blanc, le jaune et le vert; Walter Fontana dans *Semplice* cite le rose et le noir et dans *Tutto in una notte* il indique le drapeau tricolore italien. Dans la lyrique des Troubadours on trouve souvent le baiser, qui dans les chansons des Lost n'est jamais mentionné. Cependant, c'est le protagoniste de la romantique poésie de Walter Fontana *Istanti...*, et on le retrouve même dans *Semplice*, mais cette fois à travers un moyen de communication courant, le mail.

Pour ce qui concerne les figures rhétoriques, j'ai analysé surtout l'anaphore (avec l'adverbe *quando* ou *quando*, le pronoms *yo* ou *io*, les formes

verbales *soy* ou *sono* et *dizen* ou *dicono*), le parallélisme syntaxique et antithétique et la métaphore (avec le ‘feu d’amour’). Enfin, dans un texte du *Cancionero General* et dans le clip *Il cantante* des Lost on trouve la même référence mythologique de ‘la pomme de discorde’.

Après avoir exposé les ressemblances entre les poésies d’amour médiévales en musique et les textes écrits par Walter Fontana, on peut déduire qu’au cours des siècles la société a changée, la langue aussi, mais la façon de chanter l’Amour et les émotions est toujours la même!

Notes

¹ Le *Glossario del Cancionero de Castillo (Cancionero General, recopilado por Hernando del Castillo (Valencia, 1511). Introducción, bibliografía, índices y apéndices por Antonio Rodríguez Moñino, R.A.E., Madrid 1958. Ed. facsimile)*, dans les *Glossari di Ispanistica* dirigés par Patrizia Botta, a été publié par la la Faculté de Lettres et Philosophie de l’Université de Rome La Sapienza le 22 novembre 2004, cfr. <<http://cisadu2.let.uniroma1.it/glosarios/cancionero/index.html>> (09/2011). Ce *Glossario* contient les poésies de Santillana, les *Canciones*, les *Romances*, les *Invençiones y letras de justadores*, les *Glosas de Motes*, les *Preguntas y respuestas*, les *Villancicos* et les poésies de Jorge Manrique qui se trouvent dans le même *Cancionero*, avec les *Coplas por la muerte de su padre* du même poète. Prochainement le *Glossario* sera mis à jour avec les poésies de Juan de Mena et de Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, et avec le *Triunfo del Marqués* de Diego de Burgos. Dans l’*Indice progressivo dei testi* du *Glossario*, à côté de ma propre numération, il y a le numéro de B. Dutton, *El Cancionero del siglo XV c. 1360-1520*, 7 vols., Universidad de Salamanca, Biblioteca Española del siglo XV, Salamanca 1990-1991. Les sigles, qui se trouvent devant les textes cités, sont les mêmes qui ont été employées dans mon *Glossario del Cancionero di Castillo* (Cfr. F. Compagno, *Glossario* cit.). Elles sont suivies du numéro du texte correspondant et elles indiquent: Mena = Juan de Mena; C = *Canciones*; R = *Romances*; GM = *Glosas de Motes*; Inv = *Invençiones y letras de justadores*; V = *Villancicos*; P-R = *Preguntas y respuestas*; Manr = Jorge Manrique.

² Cfr. F. Compagno, *La lírica amorosa de Jorge Manrique: tópicos y lenguaje*, «eHumanista», 11, 2008, pp. 121-135.

³ Cfr. F. Compagno, *Poesie della letteratura medievale e canzoni dei Lost: cantare l’Amore allo stesso modo*, communication inédite lue au 14e Congrès annuel de la “Mediterranean Studies Association”, Ionian University, Corfu 25-28 mai 2011.

⁴ Les Lost, <<http://www.myspace.com/lostrock>> (09/2011), <<http://www.facebook.com/walterfontana#!/lostofficial?fref=ts>> (09/2011), <<http://www.youtube.com/user/lostitalia?feature=watch>> (09/2011), étaient un groupe pop-rock né à Vicence en 2003 et composé par: Walter Fontana, chanteur et auteur des textes (<<http://www.walterfontanaofficial.com>>, 09/2011; <<http://twitter.com/WalterFontanaof>>, 09/2011; <<http://www.facebook.com/walterfontana/>>, 09/2011; <<http://www.youtube.com/user/walterfontanaof>>, 09/2011; <<http://www.myspace.com/walterlost>>, 09/2011); Roberto Visentin, guitariste (<<http://www.facebook.com/walterfontana#!/robertovisentinmusic?fref=ts>>, 09/2011); Luca Donazzan, le bas du groupe (<<http://www.facebook.com/walterfontana#!/LucaDonazzanufficiale?fref=ts>>, 09/2011); et Filippo Spezzapria, batteur (<<http://www.myspace.com/filippospezzapria>>, 09/2011). Ils ont commencé leur carrière en 2006 sur Myspace et ils ont gagné beaucoup de prix, tels que *The Best Italian Act* aux EMA de Berlin et la *Summer Song* au Coca-Cola Live de Rome en 2009, le *Best Fan Club* aux TRL Awards de Gène et le prix comme meilleur clip à la 67e Mostra del Cinema de Vénise et au *Roma Videoclip* pour *Il cantante* en 2010.

⁵ Les chansons *L’applauso del cielo*, *Il cantante* et *Un segreto* ont été écrites par Walter Fontana et Nicola Agliardi ensemble.

⁶ Cfr. <http://www.facebook.com/walterfontana/notes!_dyn=798aD5z5CF#!/notes/walter-fontana/semplce/175091389218518> (09/2011).

⁷ Cfr. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1sTOc7PQByo>> (06/2012).

⁸ Cfr. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CEg5dXeY_zk> (09/2011), <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQKM4SBSyM0>> (09/2011) et <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKza8JTt_I> (10/2011).

- ⁹ Cfr. A. Jeanroy, *La poésie lyrique des troubadours*, Édouard Privat, Paris-Toulouse 1934, vols. I-II; H. Green, *Courtly Love in Spanish Cancioneros*, «Publications of the Modern Language Association of America», 64, 1949, pp. 247-301; E. Asensio, *Poética y realidad en el cancionero peninsular de la Edad Media*, Gredos, Madrid 1957; P. Salinas, *Jorge Manrique o tradición y originalidad*, Ed. Sudamericana, Buenos Aires 1962; R.R. Bezzola, *Les origines et la formation de la littérature courtoise en Occident (500-1200)*, Champion, Paris 1958-1967; C.S. Lewis, *La alegoría del amor. Estudio de la tradición medieval*, Eudeba, Buenos Aires 1969; A. van Beysterveldt, *La poesía amoriosa del siglo XV y el teatro profano de Juan del Encina*, Ínsula, Madrid 1972; M. De Riquer, *Los trovadores*, Ariel, Barcelona 1975, vol. III; P. Le Gentil, *La poésie lyrique espagnole et portugaise à la fin du Moyen Âge (1949-1953)*, Slatkine, Genève-Paris 1981 et A.M. Rodado Ruiz, «*Tristura conmigo va*»: *Fundamentos de Amor Cortés*, Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, Cuenca 2000.
- ¹⁰ Cfr. A.J. Denomy, *The Heresy of Courtly Love*, D.X. McMullen & Co., New York (NY) 1947, p. 20.
- ¹¹ Cfr. A.M. Rodado Ruiz, «*Tristura conmigo va*»..., cit., pp. 16-23.
- ¹² Cfr. P. Salinas, *Jorge Manrique*, cit., p. 25.
- ¹³ Cfr. R. Antonelli, *Le origini*, La Nuova Italia, Firenze 1978, p. 188.
- ¹⁴ Cfr. A.M. Rodado Ruiz, «*Tristura conmigo va*»..., cit., p. 42.
- ¹⁵ Cfr. A. van Beysterveldt, *La poesía amoriosa*, cit., p. 69.
- ¹⁶ Cfr. M. De Riquer, *Los trovadores*, cit., p. 86.
- ¹⁷ Cfr. A.M. Rodado Ruiz, «*Tristura conmigo va*»..., cit., p. 110.
- ¹⁸ Cfr. F. Compagno, *Glossario*, cit., pour les exemples de tous les mots des textes du *Cancionero General* cités dans cet étude, même pour ce qui concerne les figures rhétoriques.
- ¹⁹ Cfr. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFK9An2XBHM>> (09/2011).
- ²⁰ Cfr. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xnfd88eyPy0>> (09/2011).
- ²¹ Cfr. C. Alvar, V. Beltrán, *Antología de la poesía gallego-portuguesa*, Alhambra, Madrid 1989, p. 31.
- ²² Cfr. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zdlU4-4k2pk>> (09/2011).
- ²³ Cfr. C. Alvar, *El dulce stil novo: 47 sonetos y 3 canciones*. *Antología*, Visor, Madrid 1984, p. 8.
- ²⁴ Cfr. A.M. Rodado Ruiz, «*Tristura conmigo va*»..., cit., p.116.
- ²⁵ Cfr. V.A. Burrus, *Poets at Play: Love Poetry in the Spanish Cancioneros*, PhD Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison (WI) 1985, p. 182.
- ²⁶ Cfr. A.M. Rodado Ruiz, «*Tristura conmigo va*»..., cit., p. 139.
- ²⁷ Cfr. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzO1jbhlziw>> (09/2011).
- ²⁸ Cfr. <<http://www.ibs.it/code/9788804572459/volo-fabio/giorno-piu.html>> (09/2011).
- ²⁹ Cfr. J. Battesti-Pelegrin, *Lope de Stúñiga. Recherches sur la poésie espagnole au XVème siècle*, Service des Publications, Aix-en-Provence 1980, pp. 95-113.
- ³⁰ Cfr. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6rHMg_QkbI> (09/2011).
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- ³² Cfr. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcj9381QTG4>> (09/2011).
- ³³ Cfr. A.M. Rodado Ruiz, «*Tristura conmigo va*»..., cit., p. 48.
- ³⁴ Ivi, p. 121.
- ³⁵ Cfr. P. Le Gentil, *La poésie lyrique*, cit., p. 75.
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- ⁴⁵ Cfr. F. Compagno, *Glossario*, cit., s.v.
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- ⁴⁷ Cfr. F. Compagno, *Glossario*, cit., s.v.

- ⁴⁸ Cfr. H. Ciocchini, *Hipótesis de un realismo mítico-alégorico en algunos catálogos de amantes* (Juan R. del Padrón, Garcí Sánchez de Badajoz, Diego de San Pedro, Cervantes), «Revista de Filología Española», 50, 1967, pp. 299-306.
- ⁴⁹ Cfr. M. de Riquer, *Los trovadores*, cit., pp. 93-95.
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- ⁶⁰ Cfr. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InSAKi6Q9v4>> (09/2011).
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Simona
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Canon/Canons. Mutations and Alternative Speeches: *Rap Music*

... to conclude means to renounce to certain possibilities.¹
Franco Moretti, *Modern Epic*, 1996

The controversy regarding the literary canon emerged and developed during the Eighties generating a fertile debate in very different parts of the world. First it spread predominantly through the Anglophone countries, but soon opened up to ideas coming from a wider arena. It had the merit of stimulating reflections on the status of the canon, interrogating scholars on what the canon was, on how it should have been constructed, on the functions it should have had, and, more specifically, on the necessity of creating a canon, with all the responsibilities, duties and risks that its action was to have in literary and cultural systems.

As a premise, it is important to underline the fact that the concept of canon relates to every art form, i.e. not only to the literary field, but also to other cultural areas. It is thus possible to talk of a canon in the fields of painting, music, and so forth. Secondly, it is important to keep in mind that canons refer, by convention, to a selection of works that are seen as fundamental and exemplary in the realm of a given culture: for example the Western canon. But they can also refer to a specific period, such as the Mediaeval canon, or the Renaissance canon, etc.; or to a geographical area, like American canon, Italian canon, French canon, and so on. A Canon has normative functions and exemplifies modes and ways of providing models. It sets standards and offers examples perceived as good to follow and emulate, thus influencing society. However, being a quintessential list of elements (texts, poems, songs, authors) that should be saved over time, and at the same time functioning as a reverse image of what one would eliminate from the cultural heritage, it becomes 'memory', a collective cultural memory that has important tasks: its main purpose is in fact to act as a



repository of values, a summing-up of History and heritage. It aims at prescribing prototypes and models whose influence one may see in the field of education as well as cultural and social life.

One of the main achievements of the debate carried on over the last years has been to question the very concept of canon and its validity. Starting from its definition the canon has been deconstructed and contested. Most scholars have lately agreed on the fact that the hypothesis of a universal canon posited years ago can never work, since the canon is the result of a precise ideology that cannot be universally valid and widely accepted, and that reflects the principles and interests of those who make it up. Moreover, the canon mirrors specific values that may be valid only in a given space and time. A canon reflects the identity of a specific social, ethnic and linguistic group, so that, in modern times, in an era of relativism and multiculturalism, a rapid and prolific multiplication of different canons is governing the current scenario. This new trend is due to the fact that today the world is inhabited by thousands of different social, ethnic and linguistic groups that are extremely heterogeneous. In addition to this, it is also important to stress the fact that canons have to do with value judgments, expressed according to different parameters, by complex, stratified and multi-faceted societies, and are thus very far from being unique and monolithic models.

Whilst the debate on the issue of the canon was being carried on, scholars progressively came to acknowledge that a canon, understood as universal and hegemonic, would never exist. Canon is in fact epochal, ideological and tied to classifications operated in different cultural atmospheres, and therefore, it varies. Once having questioned the essence and form of the canon, its necessary revision has eventually taken place. Today, due to the wealth and diversity of social groups, many different canons have emerged. The idea of a common identity gave place to the proposal of new models such as the American melting pot, made up of multiple identities, or the Canadian mosaic in which every social group creates its own canon, trying, sometimes succeeding sometimes not, to establish a system of co-existence, if not acceptance. Moreover, the era of globalization and multiculturalism has led to a fragmentation of identities, and, since the canon is strictly linked to the idea of identity, if the societies today are multicultural, the canon also necessarily has to be the same. So, a unique and hegemonic canon can no longer exist, what now exists is the idea of fragmentation. Therefore the canon, as it has been traditionally understood, has disappeared.

In such a frame, the concept of hierarchy that the canon, as it was conceived in the past, entailed, has also vanished. Today the axis of the system has rotated, from being a vertical and hierarchical one it has become a horizontal one, where different canons simultaneously develop side by side. These new emerging multiple canons do not necessarily have to acknowledge each other; every social, ethnic, linguistic group creates its own can-

on, in which it reflects ideas, values and principles that respond to its own specific requirements. Hybridization is wished for, and may occur among different canons and arts, however intersection and contact are not fundamental for their life. So, every canon develops independently.

As for schooling and the issue of education, a field where selection is required for obvious reasons of time, and where therefore it is important to give priority to certain forms and works of art, every country and society makes subjective choices, even though with variants, so that one can argue that an Italian canon may exist, and be different from an English one, and so forth. Canons may change over time and according to the social backgrounds they are exposed to.

Because of the fact that today's reality is so diverse, new canons, mutations and alternative discourses have developed as a natural consequence of a world of multiple manifestations and, instead of being only a given order governing the cultural panorama, there is co-existence among alternative forms and canons. This mood of opening up and revision has also encouraged the re-reading and re-interpretation of 'canonical' contents, re-viewing them in the light of new perspectives and positions, bringing forth new possible interpretations².

The spontaneous emergence of these new canons questions the world of high arts and tradition. The contours of what has been understood as high, low, and mass culture are being redesigned and their boundaries weakened. In this way, modern and innovative 'street art' also becomes culture, creating its own canon. Graffiti, in figurative arts, for example, are beginning to be part of the collective heritage through the improvisation of the Writers, as are the performances of the Breakers, by means of rap music. So, 'emceeing' (standing for Masters of Ceremonies), rapping, and djing become all forms of expression of a culture 'other', that creates a specific status, different indeed, that chooses to express itself through a particular language made up of colours, sounds, movements, corporality, and that produces performances as common as a concert of classical music in a theatre or of a Shakespearian tragedy in any school anthology. In addition to this, it is sufficient to switch on the radio or look up on the Internet under the heading 'rap music' or watch certain TV channels created *ad hoc* for transmitting these contents to be overwhelmed with many examples.

It is possible to claim, then, that the setting up of new canons today no longer seems to be due to academic decisions made by restricted elitist groups but, on the contrary, it is becoming clearer and clearer that these canons are emerging according to the contingencies of reality. The powerful machine of marketing is also an important instrument to decide which cultural products must be placed in the world economy and which must not. This mechanism functions in the literary system, in which, for example, new fields of study (Postcolonial Studies, Black Studies, Women Studies, Gay and Lesbian Studies, etc.) and consequently new canons have

appeared in which one may find artists and authors that for a long time were seen as non-canonical and whose novels today are widely available in any bookshop. In such a way it is evident that only certain products are encouraged to enter, or are deliberately placed on the market, sometimes because they respond to the taste of the public, sometimes because they are more in tune with the time, and are able to embody new sensibilities, and represent new identities, and progressively substitute old models. Such phenomena are happening in different fields: music, painting, cinema are a natural consequence of the 'Cultural Revolution' that took place in the last part of the twentieth century, when in the very moment of definition of what is canonical and non-canonical, new tensions arose in the world scenario; they were called 'culture wars'; the core of their debate gravitated around the fact that the canon in arts and culture is dictated by History. It is History that makes the canon. Such a statement had already been questioned by the postmodern mood³, which had in fact proclaimed the death of Master Fiction, of the *Grand Récit*, in the words of Lyotard⁴, claiming that History, as a form of narration, is a hegemonic strategy of discourse and, moreover, is illusive. Hegemonic discourse, hegemonic culture, subaltern culture became the centre of the debate and the relationship among these forces has been changing and also reversing over time; notwithstanding this, the truth is that «history is a tool able to dominate Time, past, present and thus also future»⁵. What creates new cultural products and makes them enter the canon of History are ideas, or better, ideologies. Indeed, globalization and the formation of multiethnic and multicultural communities through migration have contributed to re-assetting the reality of the various communities.

In the light of all these massive changes underlined so far, today's reality has led to a prolific diffusion of different canons, alternative, parallel, or of resistance, that disturb the mainstream canon interacting energetically with it, using multiple means, visible and auditory. The world of arts is therefore constantly questioned by everyday reality and the market demand, according to which it expels, includes, and hybridizes itself with new forms.

One piece of evidence of all this is the modern phenomenon of rapping. A form of poetry, music, body performance, that is sung and danced. It is born in the metropolis and street life feeds it. It uses all the powerful elements of the urban atmosphere: rhythm, vibration, polyphony. It consciously uses its linguistic colloquial modes and slang. It conveys messages, often polemical ones. Rap music gives voice to the street, the inner city, territories which are 'other' and unexplored. Rappers claim their ethnic identity but especially room within the world cultural panorama. Liminality characterises these voices, which are coming from the outskirts to tell, through their songs and lyrics, a different truth, a truth that for a long time hasn't been given space by the official, traditional channels.

Rap music first appeared on the outskirts of the metropolis on the East Coast of the USA during the Seventies. It was born in the context of hip

hop: a culture, a way of life; whoever follows it has to respect specific characteristics and adhere to the hip hop lifestyle, be it the way of wearing clothes, using a specific body language, showing symbols to wear with pride, or using a typical slang. It is a sort of confraternity, a school, a community whose members come from the most diverse parts of the world, and who share ideas and principles and interpret them with homogeneity. Even if hip hop culture and its subgenres, such as rap music, have not emerged from the inner city, they have recently attracted the attention of the academic world by which they have been studied and monitored. One of the many achievements has been the creation of an anthology, entitled *The Anthology of Rap*⁵ (2010), by Adam Bradley and Andrew Dubois, two young scholars and researchers, both of them PhDs at Harvard. The book came out in 2009 and had the purpose of enquiring into the genesis and history of rap music and culture. It is divided into several sections whose goal is to describe comprehensively its development from the very first days, from the so-called 'Old School', to the Golden Age, until the present-day reality analyzed in the chapters entitled: *Rap Goes Mainstream* and *New Millennium Rap*. The two co-authors were invited to participate in radio programs, such as *The Strand*⁷, broadcasted by the BBC, and describe their fruitful research programmes in lectures and conferences like the one held at Harvard (*Hip-Hop's Global Reach*), whose transcription can be found on the web page of the «Harvard Gazette»⁸. Fundamental help, source of information and premise to the book was the *Hip Hop Archive*, previously created by the same university, which came out in 2003 in collaboration with the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research. These are just a few of the many examples of books published and research activities on this topic, but they are indeed meaningful to understand the emergence of such a culture and the importance of this field of study. So, rap and hip hop today are at the centre of a fertile debate whose aim is to 'visualize' these apparently non-canonical expressions and read them in the light of the texts produced and context created. Rap music generates a text whose content is strictly linked to the context in which it develops. The knowledge and awareness of it is fundamental for a correct interpretation of the phenomenon. The debate created wishes to draw people's attention to the issue, to keep it always up-to-date and interesting, and especially create consensus on a *genre* that has been for a long time considered inferior in value, wrong in content, and guilty of alimentering counter-culture.

The relationship between different forms of culture is one of the topics dealt with by Adam Haupt in his book *Stealing Empire: P2P, Intellectual Property and Hip Hop Subversion* (2008). The book discusses an important network of links between high culture and mass culture, claiming that one is fundamental for the other; and moreover that in between them, there is frequent hybridization; this process leads to the creation of new fertile combinations and possibilities. These dynamics are seen by the author as «cross-cultural exchanges»:

Popular culture in order to generate meanings and representations tends to assimilate as much from elsewhere as possible; hence its symbiotic and quietly antagonistic relationship with more marginal cultures and political positions. Essentially we are talking about relations between dominant/mainstream and subordinate/marginal cultures in which mainstream cultures 'borrow' elements from the marginal cultures in order to renew themselves.⁹

Haupt also deals with many other aspects related to hip hop culture such as: censorship, copyright, as well as class, gender and identity clashes dealt with by the rappers throughout their discourse. Much emphasis is also given to the important role of mass media, especially the Internet, for a freer and more equalitarian access to information. The study eventually focuses on the rappers themselves and defines them as «active, creative agents», who use everyday reality and life and make them the core of their discourse; they deal with topics such as poverty, non-success, failure, weakness, and many other issues. Rap music includes a discourse of revolt, «future is encrypted in my troubled lyrics», says Lowkey, as well as subversion against a hegemonic system of privileges, no longer bearable. It is not by chance, in fact, that the majority of rap lyrics were generated in the ghettos of the early black communities in contact with mainstream culture, which has tended to minimize and criticize the culture of rap in its forms and essence. Moreover, Haupt wishes to explore «the conscious hip hop», and by this, he intends:

[...] the belief that you need to engage in a serious amount of critical introspection before you can make a meaningful contribution to your political and social context as a hip-hop artist, intellectual or activist. In this respect, the phrase *knowledge of self* has often been used by hip hop artists to refer to this form of self-reflexive consciousness, which has often been associated with the ideals of black consciousness.¹⁰

The lyricism of rap is then one of self-consciousness and self-awareness, its rhythm is based on the 'beat'; this unity creates the discourse of subversion against the situation in which the rapper is immersed, the purpose is often the same: «ask me what I do this for / Put the world in its place before it puts you in yours / What happens under darkness shall come to light / can't silence us even though you try / You can try to avoid us but it's pointless / You can never avoid the voices of the voiceless [...]»¹¹. This frame of revolt is well exemplified by the symptomatic titles given to the lyrics. For example Lowkey, one of the major rappers of the international scenario, entitles some of his lyrics: *Everything Must Change* (2008), *Voice of the Voiceless* (2009), *Rise and Fall* (2008); Beastie Boys sing *Sabotage* (1994), *For Tomorrow* (1993), and moreover *Mr. President* (2008) by New York rapper LL Cool J and *My Last Try* (2010) by Tinchy Stryder¹². What emerges from the songs is an absolute need for rapid change, the will to act for this, talk and express words for a better tomorrow, so, the voice of the rapper goes:

Everything must change [...]

I'm not some kinda superman

I'm just tryna find who I am

And get my future plan

Don't know where I'm from

Don't know what my aim is

Don't know where I'm going

Don't wanna be famous

Don't wanna be that guy

[...]

Seems for years I have been wearing this mask

One to myself, another to the multitude

Now I'm confused with which one of those is true

[...]

I just wanna change

Everything

[...]

I'm tortured, the pain's tormenting my soul

[...]

Doctors warned him, he'll die if he fights again

Sometimes it feels like the weight of the world is on my shoulders [...].¹³

The rapper often finds himself/herself alone fighting against a reality he/she really wants to change. The message conveyed is a personal, subjective one; the rapper tells his or her own story, experience and life. Rap is thus a highly emotional *genre*. The language and the slang used are based on onomatopoeias. The sounds dress the words, wrapping them up, embracing them. The references are multiple: God, money, power, illness, politics, drugs, war, slavery, racism, and are deeply linked with reality. The voices of the rappers are polemical and aim at generating long lyrics, as if they were never enough to make the change happen. Lowkey says:

I'm tryna do more than just be real

In order to rebuild

Everything must change...

All around me my people's dying

All being controlled by evil tyrants

Lives lost due to needless violence.

And then he concludes:

See... Just gotta hold on

Hope for the best

Prepare for the worst...'Cause nothing is

promised

All I know is

Everything must change ...¹⁴

No survey of the genre would be complete without mentioning that rap music is soft and flexible, able to generate different results according to the context. It is extremely fertile, ready to blend with local proposals, to be played with local instruments, autochthonous rhythms, local phenomena appropriate to rap culture and music mixing them with tradition. Moreover rap is a common language, shared by artists coming from the most different parts of the world, with different traditions, though rap music is predominantly performed by young artists whose target are the younger generations. The phenomenon is then global, from the USA of the 'Occupy Wall Street Movement', to the suburbs of London and Paris, from the capture of Gheddafi to the death of Steve Jobs, there is always an epochal moment of everyday reality that rap music will capture and describe. In it, different social, political and historical contexts are interwoven among themselves; besides reflecting reality, rap music, as shown by the lecture delivered at Harvard, can also be used as a teaching tool to provide students with new keys for the comprehension of everyday reality.

So, if to make a canon means, for a given form of art, to be analyzed, selected, organized, put into anthologies, published in books and journals, transmitted by multi-media channels (TV, radio, cinema, movies, PC games, the Internet), taught in school, and given attention by the academic world, for all these reasons it is possible to claim that rap culture creates its own canon, the canon of rap music, be it the British canon of rap or the American one, and so on. Its global diffusion has been achieved thanks to modern technology, the market then has validated rap as a real *genre* and as an item that is easy to sell.

Such an 'alternative' canon develops and co-exists with the mainstream tradition in music, the troubled issue of co-presence of multiple canons thus being solved by supposing an accumulation rather than elimination. The interaction of multiple canons gives rise to new values, forms of art and discourses that in the past were pushed towards the periphery of cultural production, giving, in such a way, new shape to centre-periphery dynamics:

These artists use the very strategies of Empire (music production, music performance, music videos, the Internet and digital technology), to issue challenges to Empire's use of the media to develop "its own language and self-validation" [...]. Communication does not merely express the direction that globalization is taking, but also has the power to organize it, to establish communicative networks. These communicative networks, offer marginal subjects the opportunity to issue challenges to the iniquities and imbalances produced by corporate globalization.¹⁵

So, in the light of all this, today many scholars agree on the fact that a unique, rigid and inflexible canon is non-sense. It is advisable to create and aliment the debate around this issue so that it may constantly be renegotiated and up-to-date. The solution would be to acknowledge 'open' canons, canons to be seen as relations, constantly re-fashioning themselves and act-

ing under the pressure of many forces: past and present, centre and periphery, mainstream and subaltern. However these canons should always be renegotiated forms of co-existence, because, in the end, mainstream and subaltern are traversed by constant relations of inclusion and exclusion, derivation and production. Canons should be seen as possibilities, dynamic organisms open to modifications, new entries and old ones.

The history of canon is in conclusion a history of continuity and fracture, of a constant re-making and re-fashioning. While the two opponents in the debate, the pro-canon and the anti-canon, were fighting each other and respectively contesting their positions, new canons were independently and spontaneously coming about. In the past, some had suggested the creation of a counter-canon to resist the mainstream, other voices had advised the emergence of a 'minor canon' to mix with and weaken the hegemonic one. The answer eventually was a self-made one, under the pressure of all the changes of current days, willingly or not willingly, new canons have emerged and others will keep emerging in the future.

Far from belonging to the «school of resentment»¹⁶, as Harold Bloom has defined it, the trend in research is today oriented towards openness and multiple options. What is sure, is that despite the different opinions the debate has to go on, constantly acting as an engine to strengthen dialogue and confrontation and, in them, look for a relationship with diversity. Rethinking the canon/s, since it is them that make History, also means to re-write History, or better, histories, from a different point of view. To do so, means to contemplate a wider system of thought, whose epicentre becomes possibility, and in this way to be able to substitute the old dual system (centre-periphery, beautiful-ugly, right-wrong) that for centuries has characterized Western culture with a new one, that replaces the particle 'or' with the conjunction 'and', in order to acknowledge the *in-between*, the 'c' version, a third possibility, in other words, Diversity.

Notes

¹ F. Moretti, *Modern Epic: The World-System from Goethe to García Márquez*, trans. by Q. Hoare, Verso, London-New York (NY) 1996, p. 114.

² See U.M. Olivieri (a cura di), *Un canone per il terzo millennio. Testi e problemi per lo studio del Novecento tra teoria della letteratura, antropologia e storia*, Mondadori, Milano 2001, p. XV.

³ See R. Ceserani, *Raccontare il postmoderno*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 1997, and M. Domenichelli, *Il Canone letterario occidentale al tempo della globalizzazione: mutazioni, ibridazioni, proliferazioni*, «Moderna», 1, 2010, pp. 15-47.

⁴ See J.-F. Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne*, Éditions de Minuit, Paris 1979.

⁵ M. Domenichelli, cit., p. 17. Translation by the author.

⁶ A. Bradley, A. DuBois, *The Anthology of Rap*, Yale UP, New Haven (CT) 2010.

⁷ Accessible online at: <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00dcc4d>> (09/2011).

⁸ The title is *Hip-Hop's Global Reach*, by Colleen Walsh, (03/03/2010), available online at: <<http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2010/05/hip-hop%E2%80%99s-global-reach/>> (09/2011).

⁹ A. Haupt, *Stealing Empire, P2P Intellectual Property and Hip Hop Subversion*, HRSC Press, Cape Town 2008, also online at: <<http://www.hsrbpress.ac.za/product.php?productid=2219&freedownload=1>> (09/2011).

¹⁰ Ivi, p. 144.

¹¹ Lowkey (stage name of Kareem Dennis), *Voice of the Voiceless*, from the album *Soundtrack to the Struggle* (2009).

¹² Full texts are available online at: <<http://www.testimania.com>> (09/2011).

¹³ Lowkey, *Everything Must Change*, from the album *Dear Listener* (2009).

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ A. Haupt, *Stealing Empire, P2P Intellectual Property and Hip Hop Subversion*, cit., p. 143.

¹⁶ See H. Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*, Harcourt Brace, New York (NY) 1994, p. 4 and *passim*.

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Gábor Dobó

Quarant'anni d'avanguardia: quattro lettere inedite di Tristan Tzara e Lajos Kassák

Questo saggio si occupa di quattro lettere inedite, scambiate tra il dadaista Tristan Tzara (1896-1963) e l'artista d'avanguardia ungherese Lajos Kassák (1887-1967)¹. Le lettere in questione hanno innanzitutto un valore documentario: la prima di esse risale agli anni eroici delle avanguardie storiche e ci consente di ricavare alcune informazioni a proposito dell'editoria d'avanguardia, mentre le altre tre ci forniscono notizie relative alle dinamiche della vita culturale francese ed ungherese degli anni Cinquanta.

Nel 1990 Georges Baal ed Henri Béhar pubblicarono 19 lettere inviate dagli artisti d'avanguardia ungheresi a Tzara negli anni '20 e '30 (tra i mittenti troviamo lo stesso Kassák, il traduttore Aladár Tamás e Gyula Illyés, che all'epoca frequentavano il gruppo surrealista appena fondato a Parigi), considerando questa corrispondenza la testimonianza di una fitta rete di vie di comunicazione, paragonabile a quella degli umanisti rinascimentali.

I. La lettera di Tzara, Arp e Taeuber a Kassák del 14 agosto 1922

La lettera inviata da Tristan Tzara, Hans Arp e Sophie Taeuber a Lajos Kassák il 14 agosto 1922 ha come tema principale le questioni pratiche inerenti ai volumi di Arp, Tzara e Kassák, che stavano per uscire in quei mesi. Per una contestualizzazione della lettera vale la pena ripercorrere brevemente alcune tappe della storia del movimento dadaista² e quelle della carriera di Kassák dei primi anni Venti, utilizzando i riferimenti della lettera come filo conduttore.

Una volta terminata la Prima Guerra Mondiale, molti artisti ed intellettuali che avevano soggiornato come profughi a Zurigo in quegli anni abbandonarono la Svizzera; tra questi, anche Tzara, Arp e gli altri dadaisti. Di conseguenza, l'attività dadaista europea del dopoguerra smise di essere concentrata in una sola città e si diffuse in vari paesi: Tzara stesso si stabilì a Parigi nel 1919, mentre Arp da Zurigo si recò prima a Colonia, poi tornò in Svizzera e nei primi



anni Venti si stabilì anch'egli a Parigi. L'influenza del dadaismo giunse presto fino a Vienna, dove Tzara ed Arp presero contatto con Kassák.

La lettera di cui ci occupiamo fu scritta nel 1922, durante le vacanze estive che Tzara, Arp e Taeuber trascorsero in Tirolo in compagnia di altri dadaisti come Max Ernst e Paul Éluard. In quei mesi, Tzara ed Arp stavano compilando un volume, pubblicato l'anno dopo, contenente le poesie del primo e le illustrazioni del secondo. È quindi molto probabile che il «libro mio e di Tzara» a cui si riferisce Arp nella lettera sia proprio la raccolta *De nos oiseaux* (1923), frutto della collaborazione dei due artisti. Nella lettera, Tzara ed Arp chiedono aiuto a Kassák per trovare un «tipografo di sua fiducia», presumibilmente per questo volume. Nella sua risposta Kassák fornisce informazioni relative al prezzo dei lavori tipografici, ma non disponiamo di alcun dato che confermi che il *De nos oiseaux* sia stato effettivamente stampato a Vienna. Di certo la raccolta non fu pubblicata presso le Éditions de La Sirène, come scrisse Arp nella lettera, ma nel 1923 presso la casa editrice Stock in pochissimi esemplari, e alcuni anni dopo, nel 1929, presso la casa editrice Kra con una più vasta distribuzione³.

Come già accennato, Kassák (redattore della rivista «Ma» (Oggi), un periodico d'avanguardia dal respiro internazionale) prese contatto con i maggiori esponenti dell'arte moderna, come il già citato Tzara nel 1920. La testata di Kassák fu fondata a Budapest nel 1916, dando vita alla corrente attivista ungherese, ma nel 1919 cambiò sede dopo il fallimento della Repubblica dei Consigli (regime di tipo sovietico nella cui organizzazione furono coinvolti tanti intellettuali, tra cui lo stesso Kassák e altri redattori della rivista) e in seguito venne pubblicata a Vienna. I profughi ungheresi giunti a Vienna, sebbene non avessero abbandonato l'Ungheria per libera scelta, ebbero però la fortuna di trovarsi in uno dei centri culturali europei più vivi dell'epoca, un contesto a cui anche la rivista «Ma» attinse a piene mani: ne sono testimonianza i «numeri speciali» della testata, dedicati nei primi anni Venti ai vari esponenti e diversi movimenti delle avanguardie⁴.

Nel marzo 1922 fu pubblicato anche un «numero speciale» su Arp. È probabile che il ringraziamento particolare dal tono dadaista della lettera si riferisca a questo contributo, secondo il quale (come scrive Arp a Kassák) «il nostro sangue scorre più velocemente e le nostre arance maturano sulle punte dei campanili». Possiamo infatti considerare la rivista «Ma» come l'impresa principale di Kassák nel suo periodo viennese, ma non è certo l'unica: parallelamente l'artista pubblicò anche raccolte di poesie proprie e di altri autori della testata, periodici (come il «2×2», numero unico), traduzioni (ad esempio *Le coeur à gaz* di Tzara, in ungherese: *Gáz-szív*, che viene menzionata anche nella lettera) e il volume *Buch neuer Künstler* (Il libro dei nuovi artisti)⁵.

Quest'ultimo libro (o «antologia» come la definisce Arp nella lettera) era un progetto piuttosto grandioso di Kassák e László Moholy-Nagy, in quanto avrebbe raccolto le varie correnti d'avanguardia, rappresentate in oltre 250 pagine di poesie, riproduzioni, manifesti e scritti teorici. Sia la

corrispondenza Tzara–Kassák, che il contratto firmato nel 1921 tra Kassák e la casa editrice Hellas, riportano che il progetto originale del *Buch neuer Künstler* prevedeva di includere anche il pezzo teatrale *La Première Aventure céleste de Monsieur Antipyrine* di Tzara e tre riproduzioni delle opere di Arp⁶. Alla fine l'antologia venne pubblicata nel 1922 in formato ridotto rispetto alla suddetta versione originale, vale a dire senza alcune opere letterarie e con meno riproduzioni del previsto: di Arp troviamo solo *La deposizione degli uccelli e delle farfalle, ritratto di Tristan Tzara* (1916-1917). Con tutta probabilità, Arp fa riferimento a quest'opera nella lettera: seguendo la prassi tipica delle avanguardie, fu lo stesso artista a fornire all'editore Kassák la matrice (uno strumento tipografico che permette la duplicazione dei disegni) del ritratto di Tzara, altro dettaglio della lettera che conferma l'impostazione 'familiare' delle avanguardie storiche.

1.1 Lettera originale

Reutte i. Tirol 14 Aug. 1922

Lieber Herr Kassak,

Fraulein Taeuber und ich haben mit grosser zufriedenheit ihren erhabenen seggen empfangen, wir merken schon jetzt seine wirkung, unser blut fliesst schneller und unesere ornagen reifen auf der kirchturmspitzen, die locher in unseren sohlen wachsen wieder zusammen und die faulen stellen in unseren zähnen schliessen sich, wir warten mit grosser spannung auf ihre anthologie, wir fugen ihnen in diesem brife 100000 Tausend Kronen bei, wir bitten sie davon die 5 franken fuer das cliché davon abzuziehen und uns fuer den rest antologien zu schicken, ausserdem werden wir uns alle muehe geben ihnen in der schweiz welche zu verkaufen, selbstvertandlich schicken wir ihnen dann schweizer geld, ich bitte sie mir einige zeilen über den verkauspreis der anthologie zu schreiben.

Jetzt komme ich zur hauptsache unseres briefes, Tzara sitzt nämlich auf der schreibmaschine und ich singe, 2 Männer klein und stark wie pfefer.

Im verlag der Sirène soll von Tzara und mir in 1000 exemplaren ein buch erscheinen. Wir bitten sie freundlich uns zu helfen, der beigefuegte brief soll mit den sorgfältig aufzuhebende maschinoskripten einem von ihnen wuerdig erkannten Drucker zur *genauen* berechnung uebergeben werden. Die antwort soll so schnell wie möglich an Tzara geschickt werden. Wir legen ihnen 10000 kronen bei zur telegraphischen antwort\beibei dit monsieur Aa. Wir hoffen sie mit dieser sache nicht zu belestigen und werden ihnen gerne auch einmal behilflich sein.

Mon cher monsieur kassak, si notre livre peut être imprimé à vienne, je viendrai là-bas aec les secondes épreuves et l'amour au coeur pour vous voir. Je n'ai pas encore reçu le coeur à gaz, écrivez-moi combien ça coûte, je vous enverrai l'argent. Ne soyez pas fâché pour les incommodités que nous vous faisons avec notre livre, et je vous envoie un choix parfait de mes plus choisis sentiments.

Telegraphieren Sie uns also bitte den ungefähren Preis den der Drucker für unser Buch verlangt.

Herzliche grusse von den zwei pfefermannern

Tzara
Arp

Das Geld (100.000 Kr) folgt als Geldbrief. | Herzliche Grüsse auch an Ihre Frau S H Taeuber | Herzliche Grüsse auch für Ihre Frau Gemahlin L. L. Maass | Bitte die Exemplare für Arp u[nd] Taeuber | nach Zürich, [...] strasse 10 schicken.⁷

1.2 Traduzione italiana della lettera

Reutte, Tirolo, 14 agosto 1922

Caro signor Kassak,
grande è stata la soddisfazione con cui la signorina Taeuber ed io abbiamo accolto la sua sublime benedizione. Ne avvertiamo già ora l'effetto. Il nostro sangue scorre più velocemente e le nostre arance maturano sulle punte dei campanili. I buchi nelle nostre suole si richiudono e le parti marcite dei nostri denti guariscono. Con grande impazienza attendiamo la sua antologia. Con la presente le alleghiamo 100000 mila corone. La preghiamo di detrarne 5 franchi per la matrice e di utilizzare il resto per le antologie da spedirci. Inoltre ci impegneremo molto a venderne anche in Svizzera. Ovviamente poi le invieremo danaro svizzero. La prego di scrivermi qualche riga sul prezzo di vendita dell'antologia.

Ma ora vengo al nocciolo della nostra lettera. Tzara infatti siede sulla macchina da scrivere ed io canto. 2 uomini piccoli e forti come il pepe.

Presso l'editore Sirène deve uscire in mille esemplari un libro mio e di Tzara. Le chiediamo cortesemente di aiutarci. Per un accurato conteggio, la lettera acclusa va consegnata, insieme ai dattiloscritti da conservare con cura, ad un tipografo di sua fiducia. La risposta va inviata quanto prima possibile a Tzara. Le aggiungiamo anche 10000 corone per la risposta telegrafica al monsieur Aa. Sperando di non importunarla troppo con questa faccenda, saremo lieti, all'occorrenza, di ricambiare il favore.

Caro signor kassak, se il nostro libro potrà essere stampato a vienna, arriverò senz'altro con un esemplare del volume e il cuore pieno d'affetto per la gioia di rivedervi. Non ho ancora ricevuto il coeur à gaz, mi scriva pure quanto viene ed io le manderò i soldi. Mi dispiace per l'inconveniente che le creiamo con il nostro libro e la ringrazio tanto per il suo aiuto.

Ci telegrafi quindi per favore il prezzo approssimativo richiesto dal tipografo per il nostro libro.

Cordiali saluti da due uomini di pepe

Tzara
Arp

Alla presente lettera è allegata la somma di 100.000 Corone.

Cordiali saluti anche a Sua moglie S H Taeuber

Cordiali saluti anche a Sua moglie, la signora L. L. Maass

La prego di inviare gli esemplari per Arp e Taeuber a Zurigo, [...] strasse 10.

(Traduzione dal tedesco di Alberto Ricci. Traduzione dal francese di Marta Russo)

2. La lettera di Kassák a Tzara del 2 ottobre 1956

Questa strana lettera di saluto fu mandata da Kassák a Tzara, che nei primi giorni di ottobre del 1956 si trovava in visita a Budapest su invito dell'Unione degli scrittori (Farkas s.d.²).

Kassák, come tanti letterati che tra le due guerre avevano raggiunto una certa importanza nella vita culturale ungherese, fu isolato dal regime stalinista instauratosi nel paese a partire dal 1948. La logica e l'ipocrisia stalinista portarono all'emarginazione di gran parte degli intellettuali, senza che fossero mai accusati o condannati ufficialmente. Anzi, nel 1948 lo stesso Kassák diventò paradossalmente membro dello stato-partito, nato in seguito alla fusione del Partito Socialdemocratico – in cui Kassák aveva già militato – con il Partito Ungherese dei Lavoratori, di corrente stalinista. Ciò nonostante, nell'arco di quegli anni – dal 1948 al 1956 – Kassák non ebbe alcuna possibilità di pubblicare i suoi volumi né di allestire una mostra dei suoi quadri. Questo portò Kassák a scegliere di non perseguire una carriera da scrittore all'interno del realismo ždanoviano: per mantenere la sua integrità, Kassák decise di sottrarsi all'obbligo delle campagne e dichiarazioni filosovietiche che erano andate a sostituire le discussioni culturali nella Repubblica Popolare d'Ungheria. Per descrivere questo suo autoisolamento, Kassák utilizzò la metafora «emigrazione interna»⁸.

L'autore fa riferimento alla sua «emigrazione interna» anche nella lettera in cui si scusò per non aver potuto partecipare, a causa della sua salute, al ricevimento di Tzara organizzato dall'Unione degli scrittori che «per la prima volta in otto anni» aveva esteso l'invito anche a Kassák. L'affermazione dell'artista pone l'accento solamente sul fatto di essere stato ignorato dall'Unione per otto anni, a partire dall'instaurazione del regime stalinista nel 1948. In realtà fu lo stesso Kassák che rinunciò al tira e molla della politica culturale del sistema: una nota del suo diario (scritto in quegli anni ma pubblicato solo alcuni decenni dopo) rivela che egli rifiutò di andare al ricevimento di Tzara, secondo l'atteggiamento proprio di colui che si è ritirato in una dimensione di «emigrazione interna».

Alla fine l'incontro tra i due artisti avvenne in un contesto informale. Tzara fece visita a Kassák a casa sua in compagnia del poeta Tibor Tardos, il quale faceva da interprete durante il soggiorno ungherese di Tzara. Anche Tardos ricorda questo incontro nella sua poesia *kasi körtér* (piazzale kassák) pubblicata nel 1987. Secondo il diario di Kassák, la visita di Tzara si svolse in un'atmosfera amichevole in quanto fu caratterizzata dalla nostalgia con cui i due poeti ricordarono gli anni eroici delle avanguardie storiche. I due si trovarono molto meno d'accordo sui temi d'attualità, come la condizione degli intellettuali nella Repubblica Popolare d'Ungheria. Infatti, Kassák mise in imbarazzo il poeta francese invitandolo a riflettere sulle maggiori possibilità delle correnti moderniste francesi rispetto a quelle ungheresi. In quell'occasione Tzara rinunciò a prendere le distanze nei confronti del regime stalinista d'Ungheria, che attuò una repressione anche culturale nel paese e di cui fu vittima lo stesso Kassák.

Durante quell'incontro Tzara non espresse la sua reale opinione sull'argomento, presumibilmente perché non ritenne opportuno contestare la politica culturale ungherese, essendo stato invitato dall'Unione degli scrittori d'Ungheria e in quanto membro del Partito Comunista Francese. Infatti, in

alcuni suoi interventi apparsi sulla stampa magiara e francese durante e dopo il suo soggiorno ungherese, Tzara criticò il PCF ed espresse simpatia verso le iniziative riformiste d'Ungheria; questo a testimonianza del fatto che gli incontri di quei giorni con gli intellettuali ungheresi lo resero più sensibile circa i problemi creati dalla dittatura stalinista⁹.

L'opinione di Tzara assunse un'importanza particolare in quel periodo. Il poeta lasciò l'Ungheria qualche giorno prima dello scoppio della rivoluzione antistalinista (Tzara soggiornò in Ungheria fino alla metà di ottobre del 1956, mentre gli atti rivoluzionari cominciarono il 23 ottobre). La rivoluzione ungherese attirò l'attenzione dell'opinione pubblica di numerosi paesi europei, tra l'altro anche della Francia, dove i resoconti di Tzara sulla situazione del paese si rivelarono di grande interesse. Come è noto, la rivoluzione antistalinista in Ungheria e il suo fallimento per opera dei carri armati sovietici mise in crisi molti partiti comunisti occidentali (tra cui anche quello francese): la valutazione negativa di un membro del PCF come Tzara sul regime stalinista d'Ungheria ebbe evidentemente un'eco notevole¹⁰.

2.1 Lettera originale

Budapest, 1956 október 2.-án

Kedves TRISTANTZARA

kollégám és barátom,

Nyolc év óta Szövetségünk most először hívott meg idegen író fogadására. Boldogan jelentem volna meg, hogy Önt őszinte örömmel üdvözöljem. De sajnos beteg vagyok s így csak e néhány sorban köszöntöm nálunk.

Tudom, hogy dolgozik, de legnagyobb sajnálatomra és nem az én hibámból nem ismerem újabb műveit. Ha teheti, küldjön egyet-kettőt megjelent könyveiből.

Olvastam a Szabad Népek adott nyilatkozatát és örülök, hogy nem intézi el egy gesztussal régi küzdelmeinket. Bár Ön is és én is sok mindenen túljutottunk, úgy gondolom, ma sem csak a jelent kell szolgálnunk, de múltunkhoz is hűnek kell maradnunk. Amint nyilatkozatából kiolvastam, Ön is így vélekedik. Örülök, hogy továbbra is egymás oldalán egy cél felé haladhatunk.

Fogadja őszinte üdvözlétemet és baráti kézszorításomat

Kassák Lajos¹¹

2.2 Traduzione italiana della lettera

2 ottobre 1956, Budapest

Caro Tristan Tzara, mio amico e collega,

per la prima volta in otto anni la nostra Unione degli scrittori mi ha invitato al ricevimento di uno scrittore straniero. Mi sarei presentato molto volentieri per salutarLa con sincero affetto, ma purtroppo sono ammalato per cui La accolgo nel nostro paese solo tramite questa breve lettera.

So che scrive ancora ma non conosco le Sue opere più recenti per motivi estranei alla mia volontà. Se è possibile mi mandi questi Suoi volumi.

Ho letto l'intervista che ha rilasciato al giornale «Szabad Nép» (Popolo libero) e sono contento che in questa occasione non abbia sottovalutato le nostre vecchie lotte, rivelandosi indifferente ad esse. Se è vero che abbiamo supe-

rato tante cose, a mio parere non ci basta pensare al futuro, ma dobbiamo mantenerci fedeli pure al nostro passato. Per quanto ho capito dalla Sua intervista è d'accordo anche Lei. Sono contento che noi due procediamo nella stessa direzione, verso gli stessi obiettivi.

Le porgo i miei più cordiali saluti. Con amicizia

Lajos Kassák

(Traduzione nostra dall'originale ungherese)

3. La lettera di Kassák a Tzara del 6 settembre 1959 e la risposta di Tzara del 12 novembre 1959

Kassák riprende i contatti con Tzara nel 1959, tre anni dopo il loro incontro precedente. In questa lettera chiede a Tzara una cosiddetta «lettera di invito» per la Francia per poter assistere all'inaugurazione della propria mostra a Parigi, prevista nei primi mesi del 1960. Tzara inviò la lettera di invito (vedi testo in fondo) e la mostra di Kassák a Parigi fu effettivamente realizzata; ma al suo autore non fu concesso di recarsi in Francia per l'inaugurazione¹².

Nel 1959 Kassák ebbe la possibilità di allestire una mostra dei suoi dipinti dopo oltre un decennio di isolamento¹³. La mostra, dopo gli anni dell'emarginazione, fu organizzata nella Galerie Denise René a Parigi. Come è noto, la galleria (tuttora in attività¹⁴) fu una delle più importanti roccaforti dell'astrattismo geometrico e dell'arte cinetica dopo la Seconda guerra mondiale. Il co-curatore e organizzatore effettivo dell'esposizione di Kassák fu Victor Vasarely (artista ungherese tra gli esponenti del movimento Op art, dagli anni Trenta attivo in Francia). Vasarely, che conosceva bene le preferenze dei critici e le dinamiche del mercato dell'arte francese, propose a Kassák di esporre in prevalenza quadri realizzati negli anni Venti, invece di quelli degli anni Cinquanta, ossia del secondo periodo del Kassák pittore. Si trattava dei cosiddetti *Bildarchitektur* (in ungherese: *képarchitektúra*), opere che rientrarono nelle ricerche artistiche degli astrattismi delle avanguardie storiche¹⁵. Alla fine, all'esposizione vennero presentati sia i quadri di Kassák, sia quelli di Vasarely per sottolineare la continuità delle avanguardie storiche con quelle degli anni Cinquanta. Nonostante ciò, la mostra di Kassák suscitò poco interesse a Parigi, sia da parte dei critici, sia da parte degli *art dealer*¹⁶.

D'altra parte, Kassák aveva a che fare non solo con il pubblico francese ma anche con le autorità ungheresi. Come già detto in precedenza, Kassák chiese a Tzara una lettera di invito per avere vitto e alloggio, uno dei tanti requisiti per ottenere il passaporto (i cittadini della Repubblica Popolare d'Ungheria potevano viaggiare all'estero solo molto limitatamente). Allo stesso modo, Kassák invita Tzara a partecipare al «comitato della mostra» non semplicemente per rendere più prestigiosa la sua esposizione, ma anche per convincere la burocrazia della Repubblica Popolare.

Alcuni articoli, recentemente pubblicati e basati su documenti segreti (finora solo parzialmente accessibili), e lettere di Kassák, rivelano la complessità di questa vicenda: il 22 ottobre 1959 Kassák ricevette la lettera di invito di

Denise René; a metà novembre dello stesso anno ottenne la licenza di esportazione per i suoi quadri; a metà dicembre fu stampato il catalogo della mostra; ai primi di gennaio 1960 ricevette il visto per la Francia, ma fino all'ultimo momento aspettò – invano – il passaporto necessario per poter andare a Parigi e partecipare all'inaugurazione della mostra¹⁷.

Perché le autorità ungheresi ostacolarono il viaggio di Kassák in Francia se precedentemente avevano autorizzato sia la mostra che la stampa del catalogo? Si sono ipotizzate diverse spiegazioni. Secondo quella più plausibile, si tratta di un errore del meccanismo burocratico¹⁸. La politica culturale era infatti gestita da numerosi enti e comitati: nel caso di Kassák, la Galleria nazionale ungherese (Magyar Nemzeti Galéria) diede il permesso per il trasferimento dei quadri di Kassák prima di venire a conoscenza della decisione della Sezione delle Belle Arti del Ministero per i Beni Culturali (Művelődési Minisztérium Képzőművészeti Osztálya) che, seguendo la linea politica ufficiale, non approvò il viaggio di Kassák «per motivi relativi alla politica culturale»¹⁹.

Infatti, il regime in quel periodo rifiutò l'arte astratta considerandola «puro formalismo artistico», poiché non aveva niente a che fare con il concetto «socialista» dell'arte, ovvero politicamente impegnata, comprensibile a tutti²⁰.

Va aggiunto che Kassák poté recarsi a Parigi nel dicembre dello stesso anno e che nel 1963 fu allestita un'altra mostra nella Galerie Denise René, alla cui inaugurazione riuscì stavolta a partecipare anche l'autore. L'arte d'avanguardia rimase però marginale fino al fallimento del socialismo reale avvenuto nel 1989.

3.1 Lettera originale

Budapest 1959 IX.6.

Kedves Barátom,

néhány hónap óta párisi művészbárátaimmal egy párisi kiállításról tárgyalok. Úgy látszik, e kiállítás feltételei nagyjából biztosítva vannak. A kiállítás remélhetőleg Denise Renénél lesz. Szeretném Önt – régi barátságunkra emlékezve – felkérni arra, vállalja a patronáló bizottságban való részvételt. A többi tagok előreláthatólag: Victor Vasarely, Etienne Hajdu, Hans Arp, Michel Seuphor – mint látja, ez utóbbi kettő kor- és harcostársunk, az előbbi kettő pedig kiváló magyar művész. – Szeretném remélni, hogy Ön nem utasítja vissza kérésemet s ha Denise René felkéri Önt, beleegyezését fogja adni.

A kiállításra szeretnék feleségemmel együtt 3-4 hétre Párisba utazni. Emlékezem arra, amikor Ön nálam járt s amikor címét itthagya [sic] biztosított arról, ha még egyszer az életben Párisba akarok menni, segítségemre lesz – most szeretném ezt a segítséget igénybe venni. Ismeri körülményeinket s tudja, hogy csak úgy lehet az utazást megoldani, ha valamiféle meghívást kapunk kosztra és lakásra. Van lehetőség arra, hogy a Pen Club meghívását megszerezzük, Párisból itt járt franca-magyar fordító közbenjárásával egyrészt és magyar, Párisba utazó barátaink közbenjárásával másrészt. Úgy érzem azonban, az Ön közbenjárása hatásosabb lenne e téren. Kérem legyen a segítségemre abban, hogy a Pen Club ott tartózkodásunk idejére vendégül lásson bennünket, mert szeretném ezt a kiállítást a saját szememmel is látni, s szeretném Párist is viszontlátni. Arra kérem,

ha segíteni tud ebben az ügyben, a meghívást a magam és a feleségem részére küldesse, mert hiszen koromnál és egészségi állapotomnál fogva nélküle nem utazhatom. Ha ez keresztülvihető, kérem küldesse el ezt a meghívást mielőbb, hogy az útlevélnék és vízumnak utánajárhassunk. Az utazás *decemberre* van tervezve, de az iratokat már most be kell nyújtani.

Kedves Barátom, sokszor és örömmel gondolok vissza pesti találkozásunkra. Szép órákat töltöttünk együtt. Az elmúlt idők kissé megviseltek bennünket, de látnom kellett, a lélek még nem haldokol bennünk, az elmúlt zajos ifjúság még tükröződik. Boldog lennék, ha még egyszer Párisban is kezét szoríthatnánk. Sok szeretettel üdvözlöli.²¹

3.2 Traduzione italiana della lettera

6 settembre 1959, Budapest

Caro amico mio,

da alcuni mesi sto organizzando una mostra a Parigi con alcuni miei amici di lì. Sembra che le condizioni di questa mostra siano più o meno garantite. Speriamo che la mostra sarà allestita nella galleria di Denise René. In virtù della nostra amicizia pluridecennale, vorrei invitarLa a partecipare al comitato della mostra. Gli altri membri prevedibilmente saranno: Victor Vasarely, Etienne Hajdu, Hans Arp, Michel Seuphor; come saprà, i primi due sono artisti ungheresi di eccellenza, gli altri due invece sono artisti e compagni di armi della nostra generazione. Spero che Lei non rifiuti questa mia richiesta e quando Denise René La inviterà a far parte del comitato, Lei accetti di partecipare.

Vorrei andare a Parigi con mia moglie per 3-4 settimane per l'inaugurazione della mostra. L'ultima volta che Lei mi venne a trovare, mi assicurò che mi avrebbe aiutato nel caso fossi mai voluto andare a Parigi, lasciandomi anche il Suo indirizzo di casa. Ora approfitterei del suo aiuto. Lei conosce le nostre condizioni: per organizzare un viaggio c'è bisogno di una lettera di invito per vitto e alloggio. C'è una possibilità di avere l'invito del Pen Club tramite un traduttore franco-ungherese residente a Parigi, oppure tramite alcuni amici ungheresi che frequentano Parigi. Penso però che il Suo intervento sia più efficace in questa vicenda. La prego di aiutarmi a far sì che il Pen Club ci accolga perché vorrei visitare la mostra personalmente e mi farebbe piacere rivedere anche Parigi. In più, La prego di far preparare l'invito sia per me sia per mia moglie, dato che per le mie condizioni di salute non mi è possibile viaggiare da solo. Se tutto ciò è possibile, La prego di farmi inviare l'invito il più presto possibile, in modo da avere il tempo di procurarci il passaporto e il visto. Il viaggio è previsto per dicembre, ma i documenti vanno consegnati prima alle autorità ungheresi.

Caro amico, penso spesso e con affetto al nostro incontro a Budapest. Passammo una bella giornata insieme. Gli ultimi tempi ci hanno torturati ma anche rivelato che la nostra anima è tutt'altro che morente, anzi, ci si rispecchia ancora la gioventù ribelle. Sarei contento se potessimo stringerci la mano ancora una volta a Parigi.

Cari saluti

(Traduzione nostra dall'originale ungherese)

3.3 Lettera originale

Paris le 12 Novembre 59
5 Rue de Lille (7^e)
BAB.18.64

Mon cher Ludwig Kassak,
Bien entendu, si vous venez à Paris avec votre femme, vous pourrez être hébergé [sic] chez moi...
Dans l'espoir de vous voir bientôt,
Je vous envoie mes plus chaleureux souvenirs

Tristan TZARA²²

3.4 Traduzione italiana della lettera

12 novembre 1959, Parigi
5 Rue de Lille (7^e)
BAB.18.64

Mio caro Ludwig Kassak,
è ovvio, se viene a Parigi con sua moglie, sarete i benvenuti a casa mia...
Sperando di vedervi presto, vi mando i miei più cari saluti

Tristan TZARA

(Traduzione dal francese di Marta Russo)

Note

¹ Per maggiori dettagli circa la corrispondenza Tzara–Kassák si rimanda a: G. Somlyó (éd.), *Kassák: 1887-1967*, «Arion», 16, 1988, pp. 214-221; G. Baal, H. Béhar, *La correspondance entre les activistes hongrois et Tzara: 1920-1932*, «Cahier d'études hongroises», 2, 1990, pp. 117-133; F. Csaplár (ed.), *Kassák az európai avantgárd mozgalmakban: 1916-1928* (Il contributo di Kassák alle correnti d'avanguardia europea: 1916-1928), Kassák Múzeum és Archivum, Budapest 1994; G. Baal, *Introduction*, in Id. (éd.), *Ombre portée: Le surréalisme en Hongrie*, avec la collab. de M. Martin, «Mélusine», 15, 1995, pp. 9-41; J. Farkas, *Tristan Tzara és a magyarok* (Tristan Tzara e gli ungheresi), in Id., *Vígjátéktól az avantgárdig* (Dalla commedia all'avanguardia), Palamart, Budapest 2010, pp. 127-158; J. Farkas (s.d.), *Tristan Tzara et les Hongrois*, <<http://www.palamart.hu/fr/publications/en-francais/57-tristan-tzara-et-les-hongrois.html>> (11/2012); E. Sasvári, F. Zólyom, K. Schulcz (Hrsgg.), *Lajos Kassák: Botschafter der Avantgarde 1915-1927*, Literaturmuseum Petöfi, Budapest 2011.

² Si veda tra l'altro H. Béhar, M. Carassou, *Dada: Histoire d'une subversion*, Fayard, Paris 1990.

³ H. Béhar Henri, *Chronologie de Tristan Tzara*, in Id. (éd.), *Tristan Tzara: Oeuvres Complètes, Tome I. (1912-1924)*, Flammarion, Paris 1975, p. 19.

⁴ E. Levinger, *The Theory of Hungarian Constructivism*, «The Art Bulletin», 3, 1987, pp. 455-466; K. Passuth, *Les avant-gardes de l'Europe centrale: 1907-1927*, Flammarion, Paris 1988; G. Baal, *Introduction*, in Id. (éd.), *Ombre portée: Le surréalisme en Hongrie*, avec la collab. de M. Martin, «Mélusine», 15, 1995, pp. 9-41; T.O. Benson, *Exchange and Transformation: The Internationalization of the Avant-Garde(s) in Central Europe*, in Id. (ed.), *Central European Avant-Gardes: Exchange and Transformation 1910-1930*, MIT Press, Cambridge (MA) 2002, pp. 34-68; É. Forgács, *Between Cultures: Hungarian Concepts of Constructivism*, in T.O. Benson (ed.), *Central European Avant-Gardes: ...*, cit., pp. 146-165; C. Lodder, *Art into Life: International Constructivism in Central and Eastern Europe*, in T.O. Benson

(ed.), *Central European Avant-Gardes: ..., cit.*, pp. 172-199; E. Sasvári, F. Zólyom, K. Schulcz (Hrsgg.), *Lajos Kassák: Botschafter der Avantgarde 1915-1927*, Literaturmuseum Petőfi, Budapest 2011.

⁵ L. Kassák, I. Pán, *A Ma története II* (1972) (La storia della rivista «Ma», capitolo II), in Id., *Az izmusok* (Gli «ismi»), Napvilág, Budapest 2003, pp. 211-234; P. Weibel, *Az idő vasfüggönye?* (La cortina di ferro del tempo?), in J. R. Juhász, P.H. Nagy (eds), *A Kassák-kód* (Il codice Kassák), Szlovákiai Magyar Írók Társasága, Pozsony 2008, pp. 84-108; É. Forgács, *Du gibst uns zu essen und deswegen kämpfen wir gegen dich*, in E. Sasvári, F. Zólyom, K. Schulcz (Hrsgg.), *Lajos Kassák: ..., cit.*, pp. 22-41.

⁶ F. Csaplár, *A «Karaván»-tól az «Új művészek könyvé»-ig* (Dall'antologia *Karaván* al *Libro dei nuovi artisti*), in Id. (ed.), *Kassák körei* (Le cerchie di Kassák), Szépirodalmi, Budapest 1987, pp. 7-13.

⁷ La lettera dattiloscritta (475×190 mm, una pagina), con firma originale, è custodita in collezione privata e qui riprodotta con l'autorizzazione del proprietario. Per il facsimile della lettera si rinvia a E. Sasvári, F. Zólyom, K. Schulcz (Hrsgg.), *Lajos Kassák: ..., cit.*, p. 85. Va inoltre notato che questa lettera, oltre ad essere un documento dell'editoria d'avanguardia, è interessante anche da un punto di vista estetico, in quanto caratterizzata sia da uno stile 'tecnico-commerciale' che da quello 'dadaista'. Da un lato contiene informazioni di carattere pratico ed economico, espresse in un linguaggio formale, dall'altro invece è ricca di iperboli, metafore inconsuete, si avvale di un'ortografia particolare (qui riprodotta senza modifiche) e contiene perfino un disegno dall'aspetto biomorfo, presumibilmente attribuibile a Sophie Tauber. Ringrazio la dottoressa Katalin Schulcz per il suo aiuto nella trascrizione della lettera.

⁸ F. Botka, *Előszó* (Prefazione), in L. Kassák, *Szénaboglya* (Covone), Kassák Emlékmúzeum, Budapest 1988, pp. 5-17; L. Kassák, *Szénaboglya* (Covone), Kassák Emlékmúzeum, Budapest 19, pp. 419-421; G. Aczél, *A második – belső – emigráció* (La seconda emigrazione di Kassák – quella interna), in G. Aczél, *Lajos Kassák*, Akadémiai, Budapest 1999, pp. 339-373; É. Ständeisky, *A belső emigráns* (L'esilio interno), in É. Ständeisky, *Kassák, az ember és a közszereplő* (Kassák, uomo e personaggio pubblico), Gondolat, Budapest 2007, pp. 211-245.

⁹ E. Bajomi Lázár, *Beszélgetés Tristan Tzarával* (L'intervista con Tristan Tzara), «Szabad Nép» (Popolo libero), 4, 1956, p. 4; L. Lontay, *A párizsi vendég* (Il visitatore parigino), «Magyar Nemzet» (La nazione ungherese), 7, 1956, p. 7; J. Farkas, *Tristan Tzara és a magyarok* (Tristan Tzara e gli ungheresi), in Id., *Vigjátéktól az avantgárdig* (Dalla commedia all'avanguardia), Palamart, Budapest 2010, pp. 127-158.

¹⁰ Ringrazio la dottoressa Edit Sasvári per avermi messo a disposizione il materiale della sua ricerca sull'argomento.

¹¹ La lettera dattiloscritta (285×205 mm, una pagina), con firma originale, è custodita presso l'Archivio e Museo Kassák di Budapest, e qui riprodotta con l'autorizzazione del proprietario. Collocazione: KM-lev. 1477. Per quanto riguarda l'uso delle vocali accentate (ú, í, ű), la trascrizione della lettera è adattata alle regole attuali dell'ortografia ungherese.

¹² L. Hervé, *Souvenirs et correspondance*, in Gy. Somlyó (éd.), *Kassák: 1887-1967*, «Arion», 16, 1988, pp. 214-221; J. Cserba, *Denise, a rettenthetetlen: Denise Renével Cserba Júlia beszélget* (L'intrepida Denise. Júlia Cserba a colloquio con René Denise), «Balkon» (Balcone), 4, 2001, pp. 32-35; P. Nagy, *Journal in-time, él(e)tem* (Journal in-time, la mia vita), 3 vols., Kortárs, Budapest 2002, vol. I, pp. 160-161; G. Imre, *Meghitt idegenek: Kassák Párizsban, 1960-as és 1963-as kiállításai, képzőművészeti kapcsolatainak újrafelvétele és a Magyar Műhely Kassák-száma* (Estranei intimi: Kassák a Parigi, le mostre del 1960 e del 1963, la ripresa dei rapporti con il mondo dell'arte, il numero speciale di «Magyar Műhely» su Kassák), in G. András (ed.), *...fejükből töröljük ki a regulákat»: Kassák Lajos az író, képzőművész, szerkesztő és közszereplő* («... Cancelliamo le regole delle nostre menti»: il Kassák scrittore, pittore, redattore e personaggio pubblico), Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum, Kassák Alapítvány, Budapest 2010, pp. 109-141; E. Sasvári, *A mi kultúránk nem lehet más itthon, mint külföldön»: Kassák 1960-as párizsi kiállítása* («La nostra cultura non può essere rappresentata in modo diverso in Ungheria e all'estero»: la mostra di Kassák a Parigi nel 1960), in G. András (ed.), *...fejükből töröljük ki a regulákat»: Kassák Lajos az író, képzőművész, szerkesztő és közszereplő* («... Cancelliamo le regole delle nostre menti»: il Kassák scrittore, pittore, redattore e personaggio pubblico), Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum, Kassák Alapítvány, Budapest 2010, pp. 89-108; T. Szőnyi, *Párizsra vigyázó szemete(k): Kassák Lajos, Kormos István és a Magyar Műhely* (Parigi sotto controllo: Lajos Kassák, István Kormos e la rivista «Magyar Műhely»), in Id., *Titkos írás: Állambiztonsági szolgálat és irodalmi élet 1956-1990* (Crittografia: gli organi di sicurezza dello stato e i letterati nel 1956-1990), 2 vols., Noran, Budapest 2012, vol. I, pp. 961-1014.

¹³ Nei mesi consecutivi allo scoppio della rivoluzione antistalinista, avvenuta nell'ottobre del 1956, l'Ungheria assistette infatti a una fase di transizione prima che si instaurasse definitivamente il regime di János Kádár (ancora una volta imposto dall'URSS). In questo breve periodo poterono ancora aver luogo iniziative che non sarebbero mai state concesse né dal regime precedente né da quello successivo, come le tre mostre dove furono esposti anche i quadri di Kassák. Cf. F. Csaplár, *Tiltott-túrt avantgárd: Kassák képzőművészete az 1960-as években* (Avanguardia tollerata e proibita: l'arte di Kassák negli anni Sessanta), Kassák Múzeum és Archivum, Budapest 2006.

¹⁴ Il sito ufficiale della galleria di Denise René: <<http://www.deniserene.com>> (11/2012).

¹⁵ G. András, *Látvány és konstrukció: Kassák Lajos festészete 1950-1967 között* (Visione e costruzione: la pittura di Lajos Kassák dal 1950 al 1967), in M. Gergely, P. György, G. Pataki, F. Csaplár (eds), *Lajos Kassák 1887-1987*, Magyar Nemzeti Galéria – Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum, Budapest 1987, pp. 115-117; E. Sasvári, «*A mi kultúránk nem lehet más itthon, mint külföldön*»: ..., cit., pp. 91, 106-108; G. Imre, *Meghitt idegenek*: ..., cit., pp. 109-116; G. András, *Képköltő és képtervező: Kassák a festő, a grafikus és a tipográfus* (Poeta visivo e costruttore di immagini: il Kassák pittore, grafico e tipografo), in E. Sasvári, J. Csatlós (eds), *Kassák! A Kassák Múzeum állandó kiállítása* (Kassák! L'esposizione permanente del Museo Kassák), Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum, Kassák Múzeum, Budapest 2011, pp. 8-19.

¹⁶ Sasvári, «*A mi kultúránk nem lehet más itthon, mint külföldön*»: ..., cit., pp. 106-108.

¹⁷ G. Imre, *Meghitt idegenek*: ..., cit., pp. 118-120.

¹⁸ E. Sasvári, «*A mi kultúránk nem lehet más itthon, mint külföldön*»: ..., cit., pp. 98-104; G. Imre, *Meghitt idegenek*: ..., cit., pp. 120-124, 136-138.

¹⁹ É. Ständeisky, *Kassák, az ember és a közszereplő*, cit., pp. 252-253.

²⁰ Cf. F. Csaplár, *Tiltott-túrt avantgárd: Kassák képzőművészete az 1960-as években*, cit.

²¹ La lettera dattiloscritta (290×205 mm, una pagina) è custodita presso l'Archivio e Museo Kassák (Budapest), e qui riprodotta con l'autorizzazione del proprietario. Collocazione: KM-lev. 513. Per quanto riguarda l'uso delle vocali accentate (ú, í, ű), la trascrizione della lettera è adattata alle regole attuali dell'ortografia ungherese.

²² La lettera manoscritta (213×135 mm, una pagina) è custodita presso l'Archivio e Museo Kassák di Budapest, e qui riprodotta con l'autorizzazione del proprietario. Collocazione: KM-lev. 328.

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How to Write a Comparative History of Romanian Literature. On the Effects of the Foreign Gaze upon the Image of a 'Very' National Literature*

I. Theoretical Preliminaries

For several decades now, literary historiography has given up the understanding of literature as a natural reality, a *datum*, and has underlined instead the socio-political and cultural contexts that had shaped this 'object' and, at the same time, the historical discourse since their very beginnings. It is generally accepted that the new literary history focuses less and less on national literatures. Actually this concept has become very problematic over the past twenty years. The present historical approaches to literature usually conceive of it in broader contexts: for instance, the literary history of a certain region (the Balkans, Central and/or Eastern Europe, etc.), of European or even world literature. Contemporary theorists have emphasized the image of a global literary field (see Damrosch 2003; Moretti 2005; Petersson 2006).

The recent shift towards *Weltliteratur* and its study owes a lot to the revival of comparative literature. Obviously Goethe's view on world literature has undergone substantial reworking mainly through the removal of its Eurocentric presuppositions. This phenomenon has known an extraordinary development in the aftermath of 9/11 – an event that has revealed the profound, rhizomatic interconnectivity between different political, economical and cultural systems around the world.

Both these disciplines – literary history and comparative literature – are facing this new object of study and are looking for new tools and methodologies to approach it. One of the main issues that literary research has come across lately is certainly the relationship between national literatures and broader literary spaces (European, world, or global literature). These latter additions to the research field are not to be seen as mere collections of national literatures. They question the very relevance of this concept (of national literature), and consequently provoke it to reinvent itself.

The traditional models and attitudes that literary history has employed are no longer valid. I am obviously referring to the totalizing view over the object, to the prevailing nationalist stakes of literary historical discourse, to the glorification of the literary heritage in a conservative vein. The comparative principles of this discourse were more often than not oriented towards the description of the influence of a certain school or movement over different literary spaces, and pictured the literary space as a fixed planetary system where the centre was well-established and could not be displaced.

The new models put forward since the emergence of cultural studies display a political and multicultural agenda (see Hutcheon and Valdés 2002). The canonizing objective of literary history loses its importance in favour of the revaluation of 'the secondary', 'the marginal', or the literary periphery, whatever it may mean.

What defines most of the recent (that is, post-1989) literary histories is their programmatic relativism that avoids sweeping generalizations or predefined axiological perspectives. By exercising a distant reading (as theorized by Moretti 2005 or Perkins 1993), by focusing on differences rather than similarities (Pettersson 2006), the historical discourse on literature also distances itself from traditional comparativism and its legitimating strategies. This is also a sign of the methodological caveats that obsess the literary historian's theoretical conscience.

Thus we are more likely to find thematic and generic approaches instead of strictly chronological ones. The mere figure of literary evolution that has been constitutive for literary history is no longer trustworthy; what took its place is rather a picture of the literary space that rejects any canonical privilege (Damrosch 2008). What happens to this framework when it is applied to a specific case (Romanian literature under Western eyes) is the main concern of the following analysis.

2. Romanian Literature in a Nutshell. A Few Case Studies

In order to see how the foreign gaze has shaped the image of a minor literature, one that is also hard to locate on the European map, I have chosen several recent literary histories or literature dictionaries authored by Western academics. Their stakes are transnational and comparative. They are all published after 1990 in French, English, or Italian. I have considered three main categories that include chapters or entries on Romanian literature: regional histories (of Eastern or Central Europe), European literary histories or dictionaries, and world literature histories or dictionaries.

3. Romanian Literature in a Regional Context

Most relevant for this group is definitely Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer's *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe* (2004-2010).

An ambitious project in four volumes that encompasses almost two centuries and more than ten literary spaces, this *History* certainly allots more space for Romanian literature than scientific works in the other two categories. The advantages of the 'multiple scanning' structure are clear: the same literary phenomenon is looked upon from different angles and situated in different contexts that illuminate its functioning. Moreover, the key concept of the 'cultural node' allows a multi-level comparative analysis that illuminates spatial or temporal junctures between the cultures of the region.

Thus any historical aspect of Romanian literature that falls under the scope of a certain thematic grouping can be taken into account (for instance, cities, borders, literary institutions, national authors, etc.). The foreign readers can find out details of the literary debate that opposed modernism and traditionalism in the 1920s and 1930s, they can get a comprehensive account of the voices and narrative techniques employed in the Romanian novel, or on the Romanian diaspora in Paris to name but a few points of interest. The contributors to the essays on Romanian literary culture are academics based in Romanian universities (such as Mircea Angheliescu, Monica Spiridon, Otilia Hedeșan) or exile scholars (Marcel Cornis-Pope, Călin-Andrei Mihăilescu, Letiția Guran, Florin Berindeanu). This regional literary history, innovative in structure and wide-ranging in its choice of subjects, allows for an in-depth knowledge of Romanian literature and its interconnections to the region. Obviously this kind of rhizomatic historical structure makes way for peculiarities and boundaries rather than firm canonical positions. Its main advantages are, in my opinion, the analytical passion and the overcoming of the traditional east-west opposition in interpreting literary issues in the region. In spite of its much discussed shortcomings, Cornis-Pope and Neubauer's *History* is definitely a model of a distant but careful, comprehensive but also insightful, reading of a complex literary space.

4. Romanian Literature in a European Context

Very different from this accurate description (in the limits of its general model) is *Lettres Européennes. Histoire de la littérature européenne* (1992), published under the coordination of Annick Benoit-Dusauso and Guy Fontaine¹. On the first page one reads the following proud inscription: «Ouvrage réalisé par une équipe de cent cinquante universitaires de toute l'Europe géographique». Yet the person responsible for the articles on Romanian literature and the one on E.M. Cioran (the only Romanian writer to be treated separately in this work) is a certain Titus Barbulesco. The general editors have placed (rather unexpectedly) Romania in Central Europe, which is distinct from *Europe balkanique* that contains only Serbian and Croatian literatures. The volume attempts a very large panoramic view on European literature (or on the literatures of Europe) starting from the Greek and Latin heritage up to 2000, when the debate over European

literature was massively refueled. Although the composition of the chapters try to consider each particular, i.e. national contribution to the development of a school/movement/literary technique or form, the place allocated to Romanian (or Bulgarian) literature is very limited. Usually the edges of Europe – Portugal and the Balkans – are exiled to the final phrase of a chapter. The references to major figures often miss their original points and discuss instead minor issues. For instance, Ion Luca Caragiale undergoes only a brief thematic treatment that omits even the comical dominant of his writings: his works, we are told, display

[...] les deux facettes de la réalité roumaine: le villageois – dont la vie et les relations sociales se conforment à la loi chrétienne d'une civilisation populaire profondément attachée à la terre (*Napasta*, 1889) – et la lutte interne d'une société qui essaie de s'eupéaniser en adoptant des habitudes et des idées occidentales. (*De-ale carnavalului* [Aventures carnavalesques], 1885)²

I will not draw attention to the errors pertaining to the literary historical accuracy of the text, but I will instead focus on some misrepresentations and axiological mistakes. When discussing the evolution of the novel in the first decades of the 20th century, the only author to be cited is Ionel Teodoreanu, as a dominant figure of the period with his *La Medeleni* (1925-1927, qualified as a «frescă prodigioasă», a prodigious saga of the times³). The terminology is used inconsistently: the chapter on European postmodernism does not employ the notions of Central or Balkan Europe anymore, but of Eastern Europe. For the contemporary period, we come across the notion of 'Southern Europe'. Many important aspects of Romanian literature or canonical authors are not mentioned at all. The literatures of Portugal, Hungary, Scandinavia, or Belgium enjoy a much larger space than Romania's.

Even though this history of European literature could have done better in many ways, at least it tries to offer a comparative, relational perspective on the various literatures of the continent. As to the insignificant place that Romanian literature occupies within it, not only are the editors to be blamed, but so are the lack of good translations and the consequent limited circulation in other cultural spaces.

I will not discuss here *Mémoires d'Europe. Anthologie des littératures européennes* (1993), because, being an anthology, it offers only an indirect perspective on the place of Romanian literature in a European context.

5. Romanian Literature in World Literature Dictionaries and Encyclopedias

Both Béatrice Didier, as coordinator of the *Dictionnaire universel des littératures* (3 vols., 1994), and Lucio Felice and Tiziano Rossi, editors of *La Nuova Enciclopedia della letteratura Garzanti* (1993), cover too large a field (both historically and geographically) for the reader to expect a coherent image of Romanian literature from these works. In the French dictionary,

Ecaterina Cleynen-Serghiev (a Romanian academic who became a French citizen in 1967 by marriage) is responsible for the Romanian section. A specialist in Romanian literature can gladly note here the impressive number of separate entries dedicated to Romanian writers. When she offers an overview on the history of Romanian literature, Cleynen-Serghiev provides enough information and adequate commentary. Her comparative reference point is of course French literature. The bibliography for this section is rather conservative but generally relevant.

What strikes us when reading the contents of *La Nuova Enciclopedia della letteratura Garzanti* is the recent inclusion of Romanian literature. This massive work of more than 1.000 pages considers it only in the 1993 edition. Obviously the space allotted to a certain writer differs according to canonical and circulation criteria. To give just an example, the entry 'Eminescu Mihai' is three times smaller than that reserved to the American-English writer T.S. Eliot, and twenty times smaller than to Shakespeare. Eminescu's place of birth is misspelled (Botomani instead of Botoșani). The biographical presentation shows an appetite for sensational details (such as the controversy over the cause of his death).

The section devoted to the canonical core of world literature does not discuss any Romanian work (it was quite unlikely for it to do that, anyway). Nevertheless, the historical profile of Romanian literature is accurate and comprehensive, despite small typographical errors. The most prominent personalities that stand out in this presentation (which is about the same size as that of Portuguese literature) are Mihail Sadoveanu, Tristan Tzara, and Eugène Ionesco/ Eugen Ionescu. Unfortunately the references are not updated and this is a (perhaps 'the') major shortcoming of this encyclopedia.

6. Concluding Remarks. The Europeanness of Romanian Literature – an Open Issue

To summarize this review of historical works I want to briefly assess the relevance of a hot issue – that of the Europeanness of Romanian literature. Its hesitation between synchronizing itself with European trends and movements and preserving its traditions is too well known (perhaps it is its very cultural mark) to be necessary to re-present it here. The image that all these literary histories and literature dictionaries construct of Romanian literature is that of a European literature, albeit a minor one. The canonical selection is not the same as in most Romanian literary histories, but this is perfectly acceptable. Obviously the specific features of Romanian literature are not taken into account in this comparative context that mostly values influences and exchanges between various cultural-literary spaces.

I think that an interesting opening of Romanian literature in our multicultural and global literary field would be to assume the very attractive status (under foreign eyes) of an emergent literature. I am definitely refer-

ring here to the recent theories of literary emergence that were put forward in our Central-Eastern European region. In addition, the postcolonial (and post-communist, I would add) interest in redefining the concept of synchronization as hybridization – as Homi Bhabha does⁴ – would also prove rewarding for our present view over the literary tradition.

We can only regret that Romania-based literary historians, with few exceptions, have shown little interest in contextualizing their object in such a manner, beyond the traditional study of influences. Not to mention that such images produced by ‘the foreign gaze’ are generally missing from the references of the recent ‘national’ histories of literature published in Romania.

Notes

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¹ A. Benoit-Dusausoy, G. Fontaine (éds), *Lettres Européennes. Histoire de la littérature européenne*, De Boeck, Bruxelles 1992, p. 1024.

² Ivi, p. 642.

³ Ivi, p. 770.

⁴ H.K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, London 1994.

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Rhétorique de l'anthologie: méthodes critiques de canonisation de la poésie italienne contemporaine

I. La double face du genre de l'anthologie

Il est fort possible que, à travers les introductions des anthologies qui ont été publiées au fil du temps et qui sont encore publiées en nombre, à propos de la poésie italienne du moins, on puisse comprendre quelque chose de plus sur l'élaboration, souvent artificielle, du canon contemporain, sinon du canon tout court. Je veux discuter en particulier des méthodes critiques énoncées dans les introductions de certaines anthologies poétiques afin de souligner une tendance historique croissante: celles d'isoler des excellences, les exemplarités du vague panorama d'une époque, mais en cachant les soutiens idéologiques ou institutionnelles propres de l'anthologie.

Par ailleurs, l'agrégation des différents auteurs dans un seul corpus bien défini a toujours été une des méthodes classiques utilisées par la critique pour élaborer un répertoire littéraire, que ce soit pour le transmettre à la postérité, ou pour l'approfondir en tant que nouveauté contemporaine. La poésie du XXe siècle, poésie lyrique pour la plus grande partie, est peut-être, parmi tous les genres littéraires, celui qui se laisse manipuler le plus facilement par l'opération anthologiste. En effet, les livres de poésie lyrique peuvent être découpés avec aisance, poésie par poésie, morceau par morceau, bien plus que d'autres œuvres littéraires manifestement organiques, dont le discours procède plutôt de façon continue. La poésie du XXe siècle reste, en somme, un sujet facilement à segmenter, à morceler, et assujetti à un genre parallèle à elle: son anthologie.

C'est pour ces raisons-là qu'Alfonso Berardinelli a écrit, en se référant à la dernière phase de la poésie italienne, que «l'antologia resta il principale strumento critico per avvicinarsi alla poesia di un certo periodo: cioè alla poesia come situazione d'insieme, come genere e stile culturale»¹. D'une part, l'anthologie et la poésie, lyrique en particulier, semblent être intime-



ment liées, d'autre part, Berardinelli énonce ce qui se définit comme l'intention normative de l'anthologie. Dans un premier temps, celle-ci permet de distinguer certaines œuvres 'classiques' d'autres qui pourront être reléguées à un ensemble plus vaste, inconnu et indifférencié. Le terme «anthologie» provient du mot grec qui signifie «choix des fleurs». Ce sens mérite d'être souligné. L'anthologie a le but de transmettre le fruit d'une sélection choisie à la postérité; pour cette cause elle se veut prédictive.

C'est à partir des anthologies que le jugement sur la valeur des œuvres d'une époque se fortifie en raison de la double nature qui en surplombe la création. Cette constitution 'double' se caractérise par deux opérations critiques, liées aux nécessités de sélection et de justification: la condensation d'une partie mineure de l'œuvre complète d'un auteur et, par conséquent, la mise en valeur par rapport à un plus vaste ensemble historique, géographique, culturel, etc. La norme peut agir seulement à travers un rigide processus de limitation de la matière poétique, alors que sa valorisation voudrait permettre à cette poésie découpée et délimitée en un morceau de la meilleure qualité de résister avec le temps. Cette valorisation d'œuvres poétiques dans une anthologie se réalise, évidemment, à travers une réduction soit quantitative soit qualitative des œuvres choisies, notamment en fonctions de la représentativité des poétiques de l'époque en question et de l'identification des réalisations les plus excellentes produites par les écrivains. D'une façon claire l'opération de l'anthologie est inversement proportionnelle à la dimension de sa matière de construction; ainsi, en réduisant de plus en plus la 'quantité' de la poésie, l'anthologie même arrive à en sauvegarder la 'qualité'.

Pour ce qui concerne la notion du canon, je ne veux pas discuter de la force représentative du canon total, plus ou moins élargi, de toute la littérature occidentale et qui devrait être mètre et règle, d'après Harold Bloom notamment, de tout discours littéraire². C'est une autre rhétorique que je veux aborder: la rhétorique qui conduit à formaliser un groupe choisi d'auteurs en un canon littéraire bien déterminé, résistant et compact. Pour continuer sur ce chemin, nous devons considérer l'anthologie comme un genre littéraire autonome et distinct, avec ses propres caractéristiques. On doit insister sur le fait qu'elle vient à comprendre les œuvres poétiques qui en font l'objet dans un nouveau système de relations et de discours. Ce dernier est souvent prévisible dès la lecture des introductions, qui veulent éclairer les principes soutenant les choix de l'anthologie, même s'ils cherchent quelquefois à suggérer des fausses pistes.

Étymologiquement, le mot «canon» vient du latin *canon*: bâton ou roseau qui devait servir à réduire tous au même mètre et à la même règle. À ce propos, il ne faut pas oublier le double principe régulateur introduit par la *Poétique* et la *Rhétorique* de Aristote et qui vient à créer le concept même du 'bâton' qui servira de norme à toute esthétique littéraire future. D'une part, la classification hiérarchique des genres littéraires (tragédie et épique

en haut, comédie en bas et toutes les autres formes en positions intermédiaires), d'autre part l'individuation (et l'invention aussi) de la part d'Aristote d'un canon littéraire bien précis qui doit être individualisé: une mesure technique et formelle identifiée dans un auteur ou dans une œuvre exemplaire (comme dans le cas de Sophocle). C'est à ce second élément qu'on se réfère directement lorsque l'on fait ici référence à la notion du canon. La situation des récentes publications d'anthologies poétiques en Italie offre quelques intérêts pour mieux comprendre comment passer d'une collection personnelle d'auteurs à un canon qui, dès qu'il s'énonce, amène avec soi des implications institutionnelles. Car l'anthologie se trouve elle aussi compromise avec l'exercice d'un pouvoir³.

2. L'anthologie d'auteur

On a défini certaines anthologies de poésie italienne contemporaine «anthologies d'auteurs», où l'auteur en question est le critique, évidemment. Tout comme certaines œuvres artistiques devraient, simplement grâce à leur statut officiel de création d'artiste, être reçues sans distinction par le public, certaines anthologies voudraient l'être de la même manière, pour le simple fait que c'est un critique qui en est à l'origine. Dans les introductions de beaucoup d'entre elles, l'explication des principes que l'anthologiste appliqua, sans évoquer son seul goût personnel, ne semble plus nécessaire. À la fin du XXe siècle, on a assisté à une véritable prolifération de ce genre d'anthologie.

Le volume qui a lancé cette mode fut *Poeti italiani del Novecento*, édité en 1978 par Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo⁴. Sa principale nouveauté consiste à mettre en évidence dans les textes l'hétérogénéité des poétiques, qui avaient, dans les précédentes histoires de la littérature italienne, été considérés comme des groupes renfermés et autosuffisants. Je n'ai pas assez de temps pour approfondir ce point, mais la capacité de Mengaldo à nuancer certaines différences de poétique, en reconnaissant pourtant leur inclusion dans un même groupe, a au moins une conséquence de taille: le regroupement des poètes et des œuvres déjà reconnues classiques avec des poètes des dernières générations. Ce que Mengaldo réalise ainsi est un agrandissement du canon préexistant. Cette réalisation illumine aussi sur une possibilité de auto-génération du canon même, comme si ce dernier pouvait se renouveler et se transmettre d'époque en époque grâce à une puissance qui le soutient et qui le alimente intérieurement. Le canon vit de son agrandissement. Son extension par l'assimilation des nouvelles œuvres lui permet de persister, de survivre dans la mémoire des nouvelles générations.

Cependant, s'il est vrai qu'à partir d'un canon d'autres canons peuvent se générer, cette modalité d'assimilation, vaguement osmotique, du canon, comporte d'évidentes limites. Si l'on doit parler d'une limite au sujet de l'anthologie de Mengaldo, celle-ci se trouve précisément au sein d'une

piste de lecture qui accorde trop de prédominance à une idée de continuité historique de son objet d'étude, aussi à la suite du respect de la chronologie dans la disposition des textes⁵. Par exemple, on pourrait reprocher à Mengaldo le peu d'égard qu'il accorde aux femmes écrivains. En effet, le seul poète de sexe féminin, au XXe siècle sur les 51 poètes qui composent sa liste, a été Amelia Rosselli, alors que d'autres noms pouvaient être proposés pour être mêlés à la continuité, un peu trop 'masculine', d'un répertoire qui semble cacher quelques préjugés⁶. À l'inverse, l'attention de Mengaldo pour la poésie en langue vernaculaire et pour les auteurs utilisant les dialectes des différentes régions d'Italie a contribué, entre autres, à accorder l'entrée dans les anthologies à ce type de poésie, qui connaît un nouveau souffle ces dernières années. D'une considération à l'autre, la recherche d'une continuité historique est caractéristique du canon de Mengaldo. Il s'agit soit de sauvegarder le côté traditionaliste du *gender*, soit de favoriser l'innovation linguistique et formelle du dialecte. Il n'importe pas que cette continuité soit avec le passé ou qu'elle soit une prémonition pour le futur. Une ligne infinie qui, d'un point de départ temporel, se propage dans les deux directions, sans solution de discontinuité, est l'utopique vision d'un canon en tant qu'idéal mental tout-court et, peut-être, précisément pour cela fidèle à l'essence secrète d'une idée historique à propos de la poésie.

Pour en venir à des périodes plus récentes de la poésie italienne contemporaine, l'utilisation de principes très personnels dans la construction des anthologies d'auteurs a connu une véritable dérive. Celle-ci pourrait être appelée dérive herméneutique, si l'on voulait souligner la perte de valeur de l'interprétation critique en tant que principe fondamental des anthologies. Une des anthologies notoires de ces dernières années, *Poeti italiani del secondo Novecento* (1996) de Maurizio Cucchi et Stefano Giovanardi⁷ semble, elle, remplacer le principe d'auto-génération du canon qui réglait l'anthologie de Mengaldo, par un autre type de canonisation, qui pourrait être défini, non sans humour, canonisation d'entreprise. Ces critiques-éditeurs défendent la prévalence dans leur anthologie de poètes édités par les mêmes éditions où l'anthologie est publiée. Le canon qui est ainsi proposé devient immédiatement un canon institutionnel, parce qu'il est sponsorisé par un pouvoir économique comme, pour ce qui se passe dans ce cas, les éditions Mondadori, appartenant à la famille Berlusconi. Dans cette anthologie, même si le principe de valorisation est déféré à la compétence des critiques, le principe de condensation qui décide ce que devra être soumis à la valorisation critique répond déjà à d'autres critères extérieurs aux règles du canon.

3. Les anthologies générationnelles

L'anthologie d'auteur n'est pas le seul type à avoir connu une dérive. Même destin pour les anthologies de tendances ou de courants, qui, nées

comme expressions d'une idéologie poétique, sont dernièrement devenues, en Italie, des regroupements générationnels, des anthologies qui insistent pour présenter les nouvelles générations poétiques comme des nouveautés, comme l'expression d'une évolution à inscrire dans la poésie contemporaine. Ce type de tendance trouve son point de départ le plus éclatant avec l'anthologie *Lirici nuovi*, publiée par Luciano Anceschi⁸, qui, déjà dans son titre, indiquait au lecteur le principe de nouveauté de la poésie comme raison de la préparation et de l'urgence de son anthologie. Cependant, l'identification de la nouveauté poétique d'une époque avec la jeunesse de ses poètes n'était pas encore devenue, pour Anceschi, ce mécanisme automatique qui agira ensuite dans l'élaboration éditoriale des futures anthologies de poésie. En revanche, l'anthologie *I novissimi* (1965)⁹ unissait manifestement à un critère militant – consacrer la néo avant-garde italienne – un critère temporel en manière beaucoup plus décisive. La totalité des cinq poètes cités étaient nés entre 1924 et 1935 et appartenaient donc à la même génération: une appartenance qui a aussi été une revendication de la jeune poésie italienne. En effet, si l'on voulait faire un peu de mathématique, au moment de la publication de *I novissimi* les poètes représentés avaient presque trente ans et pas plus de quarante¹⁰.

Les anthologies *Il pubblico della poesia* (1975) de Alfonso Berardinelli et Franco Cordelli¹¹ ou celle de Roberto Galaverni, *Nuovi poeti italiani contemporanei* (1996)¹² représentent une autre typologie. Elles se posent comme un bon modèle de coordination entre la critique-anthologiste et la génération à laquelle il appartient. Les deux anthologies sont ainsi le fruit de jeunes critiques qui se préoccupent de raisonner sur la poésie des poètes de leur âge, sans pour autant identifier leur génération avec la nouveauté poétique de leur époque. Galaverni, par exemple, insiste sur la capacité de régénération de la poésie d'âge en âge; surtout, le critique explique comment les poètes choisis par lui et qui lui sont contemporains créent des liens et de nouvelles filiations avec les poètes des trois générations précédentes¹³. En cela, Galaverni cherche, suivant la piste de Mengaldo, à illustrer une idée complexe du canon, qui se compose autant de continuité historique et littéraire, que de moments d'arrêts, de sauts, de mouvements de recul et d'audacieux élans vers une nouvelle tradition à bâtir.

Un cas curieux d'amalgame des critères d'organisation est la récente anthologie *Poeti degli anni zero* (2010)¹⁴. Ses principes de présentation, qui n'auraient point posé problème s'ils avaient été clairement énoncés, provoquent bien souvent une certaine confusion: alors qu'ils sont présentés dans l'introduction, ils se font très peu reconnaissables. Toute critique – on le sait – avance par procès artificieux. Le problème n'est tant pas l'artifice d'une recreation critique comme celle de l'anthologie, mais qu'elle soit légitimée d'une stratégie discursive qui refuse directement de la concevoir comme artificielle. Ce comportement peut être aussi un élément de distinction pour les dernières anthologies.

L'éditeur de l'anthologie dont nous parlons, Vincenzo Ostuni, expose d'abord un critère de sélection des auteurs selon des contraintes biographiques et éditoriales et, dans un second temps, un critère nettement critique qui agit à fil de son travail¹⁵. La succession du critère bio-éditorial et, par la suite, du critère herméneutique crée l'illusion dangereuse que ce soit le critère de type éditorial et biographique à déterminer le corpus des poètes sur lequel le principe critique agira ensuite. Ici nous sommes face à un véritable cas de *post-hoc-ergo-propter-hoc*. En réalité, l'anthologiste a voulu défendre son idée de poésie, encore néo-avant-gardiste, et l'a accrochée à un critère plus objectif, qui aurait donné l'impression d'être copartagé par plusieurs, par la décision des maisons d'éditions de publier tel auteur plutôt qu'un autre, et d'être une imposition immuable, tel que l'âge des poètes. Sur cette nécessité de mélanger ses propres critères, dès que leur définition préoccupe de moins en moins le critique, il faut conduire une réflexion, qui essaie de comprendre la mode de plus en plus répandue des anthologies de poésie à l'intérieur d'une perspective culturelle.

4. Canon privé et canon publique

La constitution en canon d'un groupe d'auteurs passe par la convocation de prétextes, d'excuses, de *captationes benevolentiae* que le critique met souvent en scène pour renforcer son propre discours. Le canon privé se trouve comme surveillé par un canon public. L'anthologiste cherche en soutien à sa propre anthologie des appuis: supports souvent institutionnels, comme les choix éditoriaux, les traditions élaborées par les Académies et les Universités, les nouvelles forces idéologiques concrétisées dans des groupes émergents de poètes et d'intellectuels, congrégations anthropologiquement artificielles, comme des unités supposées de jeunes écrivains. Une peur face à son propre canon privé semble se cacher dans ces indices et aller à l'encontre de l'idée de liberté légitime en fait de canons, à laquelle l'époque contemporaine nous a désormais habitués.

En revanche, Mengaldo, en reconnaissant expressément la limite de tout principe critique, avait délimité en même temps la validité tant des canons privés, tant d'un canon quelconque qui voudrait s'imposer sur d'autres canons possibles: «Ancor più che alla complessità dei processi storici compiuti, il pluralismo in critica è un necessario omaggio alla complessità di quelli in corso, e alla speranza di un futuro meno totalitario del passato e del presente»¹⁶. En outre, il émerge ici, plus que l'angoisse dont Harold Bloom parle¹⁷, un plaisir de l'influence, celle des auteurs précédents sur les auteurs plus récents. Il est certainement possible que l'angoisse pétrifie les écrivains et qu'il soit difficile de se libérer de toutes confrontations avec un modèle classique. En même temps, il est également possible qu'un écrivain soit incité à réagir à la tradition et au canon

préexistant par un désir d'émulation des écrivains déjà canoniques, au point qu'il arrive à créer des nouvelles œuvres qui, un jour, seront reconstruites classiques à leur tour. En effet, une angoisse de l'influence ne semble pas agir sur les écrivains contemporains ni les paralyser. Au contraire, les directions et les ramifications de toute littérature comme de la seule poésie se multiplient dans le plaisir de se créer ses propres canons privés, qui pourtant cherchent intimement à se relier à une plus large justification d'existence: un canon public dont la division en microparticules est la seule illusion d'un plus démocratique mouvement pluraliste.

Notes

¹ A. Berardinelli, *La poesia verso la prosa. Controversie sulla lirica moderna*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 1994, p. 180.

² H. Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*, Harcourt Brace & Company, New York (NY) 1994.

³ «The anthology is one of the instruments through which these institutions (critical and academic) preserve themselves and the socio-economic order upon which they depend while at the same time mediating between the producers and the consumers of literature» (L. Re, *(De)constructing the Canon: The Agon of the Anthologies on the Scene of Modern Italian Poetry*, «The Modern Language Review», 87, 3, 1992, p. 585).

⁴ P.V. Mengaldo (a cura di), *Poeti italiani del Novecento*, Mondadori, Milano 1978.

⁵ Cf. le compte rendu que M. Pieri a écrit, intitulé *Inverno del Novecento*, «Nuovi Argomenti», 62, 1979, pp. 187-209.

⁶ À propos du problème de la discrimination sexuelle dans les anthologies de poésie italienne, cf. de nouveau L. Re, *(De)constructing the Canon*, cit., pp. 588 et 602.

⁷ M. Cucchi, S. Giovanardi (a cura di), *Poeti italiani del secondo Novecento: 1945-1995*, Mondadori, Milano 1996.

⁸ L. Anceschi (a cura di), *Lirici nuovi: antologia di poesia contemporanea*, Hoepli, Milano 1943.

⁹ A. Giuliani (a cura di), *I novissimi: poesie per gli anni '60*, Rusconi e Paolazzi, Milano 1961.

¹⁰ Il faut souligner qu'en Italie il semble qu'on est considéré un jeune poète jusqu'à cinquante ans. Un titre plus récent se rallie clairement à la tendance générationnelle, une autre anthologie éditée par Maurizio Cucchi en collaboration avec Antonio Riccardi: M. Cucchi, A. Riccardi (a cura di), *Nuovissima poesia italiana*, Mondadori, Milano 2004.

¹¹ A. Berardinelli, F. Cordelli (a cura di), *Il pubblico della poesia*, Lerici, Cosenza 1975.

¹² R. Galaverni (a cura di), *Nuovi poeti italiani contemporanei*, Guaraldi, Rimini 1996.

¹³ «Il dato più significativo risiede nel fatto che, dal punto di vista dei cosiddetti maestri, avvenga un salto di almeno due generazioni» (R. Galaverni, a cura di, *Nuovi poeti italiani contemporanei*, cit., p. 14).

¹⁴ V. Ostuni (a cura di), *Poeti degli Anni Zero*, «L'illuminista», 10, 30, 2010, n.m.

¹⁵ Ostuni choisit des poètes «compiutamente emersi negli anni Duemila e non prima: autori che nel decennio appena trascorso siano stati oggetto per la prima volta di un'attenzione critica relativamente diffusa e abbiano pubblicato i loro primi libri importanti»; mais «data questa prima soglia d'agnizione, sono però intervenute scelte di poetica» et ces choix suivent la lutte de Ostuni contre le «epigonismo lirico» (V. Ostuni, a cura di, *Poeti degli Anni Zero*, cit., pp. 17-19). En italique dans l'original.

¹⁶ P.V. Mengaldo, *Poeti italiani del Novecento*, cit., p. lxxvii.

¹⁷ H. Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, Oxford UP, London-Oxford-New York 1973; Id., *The Anatomy of Influence: Literature as a Way of Life*, Yale UP, New Haven (CT) 2011.

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Sulla sindrome dell'accento straniero*

La sindrome dell'accento straniero (SAS) è una condizione molto rara, che si presenta successivamente ad un insulto vascolare o ad un trauma encefalico. Tale disturbo – attestato fin dagli anni quaranta del secolo scorso ma scarsamente documentato – è caratterizzato da una variazione dell'accento della lingua madre, il quale appare agli ascoltatori come quello di una lingua straniera. Il tipo di accento che il soggetto sviluppa non è legato al precedente apprendimento della lingua straniera, ma dipende piuttosto dalla combinazione di alcuni fattori, come la variazione della lunghezza delle sillabe o suoni mal pronunciati, che fanno ricordare un accento straniero, e talvolta può essere associato ad agrammatismo. La persona interessata non ha consapevolezza dell'avvenuto mutamento ed il giudizio di eccentricità è dato da parlanti nativi, anche privi di competenze meta-linguistiche di appartenenza. Inoltre, la prima lingua e quella di attribuzione possono appartenere a classi ritmiche differenti.

Usualmente la sindrome regredisce con il miglioramento della situazione neurologica del paziente. Sono state descritte lesioni di vario tipo in varie sedi motorie, ma la comprensione della fisiopatologia non è completa, anche se sono stati effettuati paragoni con le varie forme di afasia.

La SAS è stata ben documentata in pazienti adulti con etiologie eterogenee, per lo più vascolari, lesioni cerebrali interessanti la rete motoria del parlato nell'emisfero dominante per il linguaggio, raramente in soggetti affetti da malattie psichiatriche.

Recentemente tale sindrome è stata rilevata anche in bambini, ma tale condizione risulta più rara e scarsamente indagata sul piano linguistico. Mariën, Verhoeven, Wackenier (2009) descrivono per la prima volta due casi di SAS dello sviluppo in assenza sia di una documentata storia di malattia psichiatrica che di danno cerebrale in due bambini nelle prime fasi dello sviluppo linguistico. I pazienti, entrambi parlanti nativi della varietà belga della lingua

olandese, sono stati identificati come soggetti di madrelingua francese. Il primo paziente mostrava risultati disarmonici nei test neurocognitivi, indici di un leggero sottosviluppo delle abilità visuo-spaziali e di memoria, mentre il secondo paziente mostrava SAS associata a disturbo specifico del linguaggio.

Per quel che riguarda i sostrati neurali coinvolti, talvolta le lesioni riscontrate in soggetti SAS hanno sede nelle regioni frontoparietali dell'emisfero sinistro, anche se sono attestati i casi di due pazienti SAS che, a seguito di ictus interessanti l'emisfero sinistro, mostravano anche ipoperfusione dell'emisfero destro del cervelletto (Munson, Heilman 2005).

Il quadro diagnostico della SAS è ulteriormente complicato da studi che identificano tale sindrome non tanto come un elemento del quadro clinico in presenza di un danno cerebrale rilevabile, bensì come un primo indicatore di disturbi non ancora evidenti a carattere neurodegenerativo. In particolare, la SAS è stata identificata da Chanson, Kremer, Blanc (2009) come un sintomo precursore della sclerosi multipla, e da Luzzi, Viticchi, Piccirilli (2007) come il segno iniziale della afasia progressiva primaria. In questo caso, nella paziente, una donna italiana di 64 anni, all'esame Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) è stata osservata una atrofia cerebrale asimmetrica che coinvolgeva la corteccia temporale sinistra e quella frontale opercolo-insulare; la Positron Emission Tomography (PET) ha mostrato una riduzione del metabolismo. Tali alterazioni non sono comparse precocemente, ma lentamente nel tempo, consentendo di ipotizzare che si trattasse di una atipica modalità di presentazione della demenza fronto-temporale, ed in particolare della sua variante con afasia progressiva primaria.

Benché tale studio affermi che la donna presentava un accento straniero spagnolo, esso in realtà non si addentra in un'analisi linguistica sistematica. I soli dati riportati relativi al parlato evidenziano che il parlato spontaneo era ben articolato, grammaticalmente corretto e privo di errori fonologici o semantici, nonostante un prolungamento delle pause tra le parole; il modo in cui la paziente legava le parole tra loro presentava delle alterazioni a livello di suoni vocalici (all'interno dell'articolo determinativo «il» avveniva la sostituzione tra [i] ed [e], mentre il suono consonantico [t] sembrava sonorizzato e somigliante a [d]; non si evidenziavano errori relativi alla distribuzione dell'accento).

Dunque, dato che la paziente non riusciva a produrre con successo movimenti articolatori precisi e perfettamente integrati e che inizialmente non presentava anomalie a livello organico, fino al delatentizzarsi dell'afasia progressiva primaria, la SAS era stata interpretata come una forma di aprassia del parlato.

Talvolta l'etiologia della SAS può risultare sconosciuta, come nel caso studiato da Katz, Garst, Briggs (2011) benché la risonanza magnetica funzionale mostrasse un'atrofia dei lobi frontali. Il soggetto – di madrelingua inglese americana e individuato come svedese o dell'Europa dell'est – sottoposto ad ulteriori approfondimenti relativi al coinvolgimento della rete del controllo motorio del linguaggio attraverso un compito di nominazio-

ne di immagini, svolto sotto *imaging* di risonanza magnetica funzionale, mostrava un predominante coinvolgimento dell'emisfero sinistro, che includeva l'attivazione delle strutture temporali superiori e frontali mediane, strutture sottocorticali bilaterali e talamo, emisfero sinistro del cervelletto.

Tomasino, Marin, Maieron (2011) ipotizzano invece che la SAS possa essere considerata come un disturbo della programmazione degli elementi del controllo del parlato, in particolare quegli aspetti legati alla velocità di esecuzione che sembrano implicare il ruolo della porzione caudoventrale del giro precentrale.

In Trumper, Maddalon, Romito (1993) e in Romito, Molinari, Sprovieri (1999) vengono eseguite delle analisi acustiche sul parlato di una donna italiana di 29 anni al momento della diagnosi SAS associata alla contusione bilaterale dei lobi frontali e ad emorragia subaracnoideale come conseguenza di un incidente alpinistico. In particolare la paziente, nativa dell'Emilia, presentava un accento inglese riscontrabile, tra le altre, nelle seguenti alterazioni: una variazione a livello della F_0 ma non nel modo e nel luogo di articolazione; una iperarticolazione nella realizzazione di ogni singolo segmento; qualche difficoltà nella coarticolazione e nella realizzazione dei nessi consonantici; il *Voice Onset Time* (VOT) si manifesta prima delle consonanti sonore; il mancato contatto tra articolatori comporta la lenizione delle occlusive sorde e delle sonore; la riduzione della durata e la graduale eliminazione delle vocali atone (come nelle lingue ad isocronismo accentuale); la risillabificazione come effetto della semplificazione della struttura sillabica e dello spostamento dell'accento tonico. Da tale studio emerge che sia la SAS a provocare un'alterazione nella competenza della struttura prosodica della lingua italiana, con una conseguente difficoltà nella pianificazione della frase.

Secondo Moen (1990, p. 298; 2000, p. 13; 2006, p. 415) alla base della sindrome dell'accento straniero vi sarebbe un disturbo motorio del parlato, la teoria linguistica che può meglio descriverne le dinamiche è la *gestural phonology* (GP). Essa vede alla base della rappresentazione fonologica i movimenti degli organi vocali, o gesti (Browman, Goldstein 1989, p. 201; 1993, p. 157), dunque una simile struttura di analisi potrebbe rendere conto delle alterazioni fonologiche e delle caratteristiche fonetiche riscontrabili nella SAS.

La GP è un modello fonologico dinamico basato sul *task dynamic model* della produzione del linguaggio¹. Gli elementi distintivi al centro della *gestural phonology* possono essere maggiormente compresi confrontando la struttura dei modelli dinamici con la struttura dei modelli fonologici basati sui segmenti. Nei modelli segmentali le unità fonologiche sono discrete e gerarchicamente organizzate e si combinano per produrre differenti messaggi, ma senza tenere in considerazione il dominio temporale. Il calcolo del tempo fisico è lasciato alla fonetica o ai modelli di controllo motorio. Nei modelli fonologici dinamici risultano centrali i movimenti articolatori

del parlato: poiché questi variano nel corso del tempo, il dominio temporale è necessariamente implicato. Dal momento che i modelli dinamici sono basati sull'articolazione, ne consegue che le unità in questi modelli non possono essere descritte come discrete, visto che una caratteristica saliente del parlato è articolatoriamente sovrapposta. Le unità, quindi, cambiano secondo il contesto.

La GP assume i gesti sottostanti, o fasci di gesti, come particelle, unità fondamentali del parlato. Un gesto è definito come una classe di modelli di movimenti funzionalmente equivalenti, chiamati variabili del tratto vocale, che sono regolati al fine di raggiungere un particolare obiettivo articolatorio. Un gesto è specificato utilizzando un insieme di tratti variabili collegati. In un enunciato i vari gesti sono coordinati in strutture più ampie, lo spartito gestuale (*gestural score*), in accordo con dei principi generali, i quali colgono gli aspetti sintagmatici della struttura fonologica del linguaggio, mentre l'inventario di gesti che possono partecipare a queste organizzazioni ne catturano l'aspetto paradigmatico.

Nella *gestural phonology*, gli elementi strutturali sono le variabili del tratto vocale, i gesti e lo spartito gestuale. Lo spartito gestuale può essere plasmato come un insieme di gesti che si sovrappongono specificati su diversi livelli, come nella fonologia autosegmentale. Questi livelli rappresentano le variabili del tratto vocale. Sono presenti tre livelli articolatori relativamente indipendenti: glottico, velare e orale. Il livello orale ha tre sottosistemi: labbra, lingua, punta della lingua e corpo della lingua. I livelli articolatori possono essere completati da altri livelli per offrire una rappresentazione fonologica migliore. Ad esempio, il livello ritmico che assegna i livelli di accento lessicale a costellazioni gestuali delle dimensioni di una sillaba ed un livello funzionale che esegue una sovrapposizione articolatoria tra vocali e consonanti.

Moen ritiene che il *task dynamic model* possa applicarsi al caso di SAS di una donna di 61 anni, nata vicino ad Oslo e ivi sempre vissuta. La donna, probabilmente in seguito ad un ictus, era stata colpita da emiparesi destra e manifestava delle alterazioni del parlato che potevano far pensare ad una parlante di madrelingua inglese (2006, p. 410). La pronuncia della donna non mostrava effetti di disartria, la sua pronuncia risultava chiara e fluente con un normale andamento del parlato, benché sia stata riscontrata qualche alterazione a livello prosodico e a livello segmentale sia per le vocali che per le consonanti. Non erano presenti chiare tracce di agrammatismo e/o anomia. In particolare, le consonanti /r/, /l/ e /k/ mostrano caratteristiche articolatorie alterate. Nel dialetto di Oslo ci sono due laterali, /l/ laminale e /l/ apicale. La distribuzione fonemica è soggetta a variazione individuale, ma la distribuzione più comune presenta /l/ e /l/ in opposizione distintiva solo dopo le vocali /a:a ɔ:ɔ/. Negli altri contesti troviamo solo /l/. Per qualche parlante la distribuzione sembra comportare che /l/ sia presente dopo /a:a ɔ:ɔ/ e /l/ in tutte le altre opposizioni. Per questi parlanti [l] e [l]

non sono mai in opposizione e pertanto l'opposizione fonemica non esiste. L'allofono più comune per /l/ è apico-alveolare, mentre quello più comune per /l/ è lamino-alveolare. La paziente usa una laterale lamino-alveolare con una seconda articolazione velare in tutte le posizioni. Nel dialetto di Oslo /r/ è una vibrata, polivibrante o fricativa. L'allofono più comune è una vibrata apico-alveolare /r/. La paziente utilizza una vibrata apico-alveolare con una seconda articolazione velare in tutte le posizioni. In alcune posizioni la normale pronuncia di /r/ è una vibrata con emissione di sonorità ridotta, mentre la paziente produce vibrata sempre a piena sonorità. Infine, al posto dell'occlusiva sorda [k] la donna produce inoltre, occasionalmente, l'occlusiva sonora [g] in posizione intervocalica.

Il sistema vocalico nel dialetto di Oslo ha nove coppie di vocali lunghe e brevi. Le vocali lunghe hanno un'articolazione leggermente più chiusa rispetto a quelle brevi. Cinque di queste coppie sono pronunciate con arrotondamento delle labbra. Le alterazioni vocaliche della paziente presentano tre caratteristiche: alterazione della durata delle vocali (ma riduzione maggiormente evidente in sillaba chiusa), questo porta quasi alla perdita di coppie minime come [fɔr] (perché) e [fɔ:r] (guadagnare, ind. 3ª p. sing.); è inoltre presente anche una tendenza ad allungare le vocali, lunghe e brevi, in sillaba aperta in posizione finale all'interno dell'enunciato, siano esse lunghe o brevi. La donna pronuncia tutte le vocali arrotondate con un ridotto arrotondamento delle labbra, modificando così le caratteristiche distintive delle vocali anteriori chiuse e delle vocali anteriori medie. Infine, la paziente tende ad abbassare tutte le vocali chiuse medie lunghe, specialmente in corrispondenza di [e:].

A livello prosodico vi sono delle alterazioni negli schemi di F_0 delle sillabe accentate: discesa troppo ripida, mancanza di ascesa e un disallineamento dei contorni di F_0 con il livello segmentale.

Come in molti dei casi SAS, le alterazioni segmentali e soprasedimentali sono fluttuanti.

I disturbi motori del linguaggio spesso rimangono fuori del dominio della maggior parte delle teorie fonologiche perché queste escludono questioni legate al controllo motorio, mentre la *gestural phonology*, ponendo al centro l'organizzazione articolatoria e il modello *task dynamic*, può dare conto di tutto l'insieme di questi disturbi. Nel soggetto in questione le alterazioni presentate possono essere ricondotte ad una anormale gradazione dei gesti articolatori e ad una sfasatura delle alteranze dei gesti. Per Moen le alterazioni del parlato della paziente sia a livello segmentale che prosodico possono essere viste come il risultato di un'incorretta messa in fase dei gesti. A livello segmentale l'inappropriata sonorizzazione di [k] in posizione media e la mancata riduzione di sonorità di [r] possono essere il risultato di un'incorretta alternanza di fase del gesto glottico relativo al gesto orale. In entrambi i casi c'è un perdurare del gesto glottico oltre il punto nel tempo in cui, relativamente al gesto orale, esso avrebbe dovuto essere completato.

A livello prosodico ci sono casi di errori nell'allineamento del contorno tonale relativo al livello segmentale. Anche questo può essere attribuito a un'incorretta messa in fase del gesto glottico rispetto al gesto orale. La caduta della frequenza fondamentale nel gesto glottico raggiunge il suo livello più basso troppo presto rispetto al gesto orale.

Il difetto nel controllo del tempo del movimento del parlato della paziente, la riduzione delle vocali lunghe in sillaba chiusa e l'incremento della durata delle vocali al termine dell'enunciato possono essere attribuiti all'inadeguatezza della coordinazione in fase dei gesti relativi al bersaglio gestuale. Il ritmo staccato, l'irregolarità del tempo dei picchi di intensità relativi alle caratteristiche articolatorie possono essere considerati il risultato del mancato allineamento dei gesti sul piano ritmico, con i gesti orali.

Gli studi concernenti la SAS hanno spesso identificato alterazioni nel parlato a livello prosodico quali ritmo ed intonazione come responsabili della percezione di un accento straniero (Blumstein, Alexander, Ryalls 1987; Kurowsky, Blumstein, Alexander 1996). Lo studio di Kuschmann, Lowit, Miller (2012) prende in considerazione l'analisi dell'intonazione nei suoi quattro aspetti legati alla metrica autosegmentale, ovvero dell'inventario dell'andamento melodico, della distribuzione, della realizzazione e della funzione all'interno di brevi enunciati prodotti da quattro parlanti con diagnosi SAS. Da tale indagine risulta che tra il gruppo di controllo e i pazienti vi sono differenze nella distribuzione, nell'implementazione e nelle funzioni degli accenti tonali e dei contorni intonativi.

Dal quadro presentato emerge che, benché l'analisi acustica del parlato dei pazienti SAS possa fornire un ruolo nella definizione delle anomalie riscontrabili a livello segmentale e sovrasegmentale indipendentemente dalla scelta della metodologia di indagine linguistica, la variabilità della sintomatologia e della etiologia riscontrabile tra i pazienti necessita ulteriori indagini al fine di determinare se tale sindrome possa costituire un sottotipo di disturbo del linguaggio associato ad un evento di riorganizzazione cerebrale, che a sua volta può determinare, anche solo tangenzialmente, una modificazione del controllo dell'attività motoria del parlato.

Note

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¹ Si rimanda a C.P. Browman, L. Golstein, *Articulatory Gestures as Phonological Units*, «Phonology», 6, 1989, pp. 201-251. Data la tecnicità dell'argomento, ci riferiamo fedelmente alle argomentazioni di Inge Moen 2006.

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The Ideologies of Rewriting*

In recent decades, the internal dynamics of literary studies were dictated by a strong concern towards the approaches that emphasize the social, historical and most of all political importance of literary works. Such a shift involves not only a change in the coordinates of literary analysis, but also a re-examination of the axiomatic dimension of an entire set of concepts. Losing their intrinsic truth value, matters such as the trans-historical dimension of literature, aesthetic autonomy, irrelevance of the context and the author's intention are being reconsidered as simple assumptions that are no longer characterized by certainty. If such notions have been sent to the conceptual purgatory of literary theory, others have gained their redemption and are now being reinvested with major importance. For instance, the author's biography, after having been exiled from the area of textual interpretation, has regained its position in the forefront of critical approaches, returning with the same force with which it had been repressed. It seems that the nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs or sexual orientation of an author never mattered before in the interpretations of his/her artistic work, as they do matter nowadays. Such circumstantial data are reconsidered and appreciated as being relevant again for literary studies. The importance of the context (be it a biographical, social, historical, cultural or political one) oscillated from prevalence in the mid-nineteenth century to minimization under the action of Formalism and New Criticism, only to regain a central position in a number of recent movements like New Historicism, Feminism or Post-colonialism. A similar variation marked the evolution of the author, whose demiurgic intangibility was suppressed by his/her famous death sentence only to be later revived and reinvested with meaning.

It seems that the oscillation that a theory undergoes in literary debates, between a major and a minor position, is determined not by its relation

to its object of investigation, but rather is the result of a confrontation, in the conceptual arena, with other theories. Theoretical perspectives are in a state of conflict, influencing each other and bringing amendments to their own argumentation according to the answer received from the opponent. The very existence of a theory is due to refusal to accept the principles that, at some point, represent the current rule. This polemical and even subversive dialogue that is established between literary theories is responsible, in our opinion, for the periodical change of the truth value of the fundamental concepts of literary studies.

The fact that theory is polemical by nature seems to be the only fixed point in a field characterized by an almost Brownian motion. Antoine Compagnon, in a book about literature and common sense, claimed that «theory comes about when the premises of ordinary discourse on literature are no longer accepted as self-evident, when they are questioned, exposed as historical constructions, as conventions»¹. Considering it as a real start in overcoming naivety, Compagnon identifies literary theory with a polemical reaction which contradicts or discredits the practice of others. Denying a set of concepts means, implicitly, the denial of those practices in which such notions were operational. The subversion that the French professor identifies in any theoretical act leads him to equate theory with a critique of ideology.

In a similar vein, Terry Eagleton stated, in a trenchant way, the political dimension of literary theory. Defining politics as the way in which social life is organized and the power relations that this organization involves, Eagleton considers that the modern history of literary theory is a part of the political and ideological history of the contemporary period. For Eagleton, the shift from conceiving theory as an object of intellectual research to that of projecting it into a perspective that attempts to understand contingent reality, comes in a natural way because

[...] any body of theory concerned with human meaning, value, language, feeling and experience will inevitably engage with broader, deeper beliefs about the nature of human individuals and societies, problems of power and sexuality, interpretations of past history, versions of the present and hopes for the future.²

Literary theory is political, says Eagleton, because it cannot be otherwise and claiming for a purity of theoretical approaches is not able anymore to overcome the status of an academic myth. The opposition between an ideologically uncontaminated theory and one characterized by militancy is dissolved and reduced to the recording of different degrees in which the political dimension is hidden or displayed by various theories.

Although they are determined by a series of extra-literary factors, theoretical discourses claim a neutral and objective position by posing as autonomous and self-sufficient and creating the impression that they merely

express the real state of things. But this objectivity is a constructed one and, in this point, both Compagnon and Eagleton identify the ideological and political dimension of literary theory:

[...] theories [...] are nowhere more clearly ideological than in their attempts to ignore history and politics altogether. Literary theories are not to be upbraided for being political, but for being on the whole covertly or unconsciously so – for the blindness with which they offer as a supposedly ‘technical’, ‘self-evident’, ‘scientific’ or ‘universal’ truth doctrines which with a little reflection can be seen to relate to and reinforce the particular interests of particular groups of people at particular times.³

Once the apolitical claim of literary theories is removed, the antithetical relationships of different theoretical approaches reveal the scene of a confrontation between several forms of politics. The difference between a traditionalist perspective and a feminist, post-colonial or neo-marxist one is, essentially, the difference between distinct and alternative values regarding the world. Moreover, Eagleton continues, they are distinguished from one another by developing various strategies to achieve these values, beliefs or goals.

The conflictual state characterizing literary theories and their dispute for dominance over the literary field is motivated by the power that theoretical discourse holds. This power becomes visible not only in the ability to dictate what it is acceptable to say about a literary work, and what it is not, but most of all in delimiting the literary from the non-literary, in determining the value of a literary work and thus making the difference between canonization and oblivion. Going beyond the literary field, such a power can legitimize or discredit a discourse, a practice, or a group of individuals, entering into a network of power relations

[...] between the literary-academic institution, where all of this occurs, and the ruling power-interests of society at large, whose ideological needs will be served and whose personnel will be reproduced by the preservation and controlled extension of the discourse in question.⁴

This constant state of ideological conflict determines a polarization of the literary field into a dominant order and several subversive movements. The efforts to maintain an authority, as well as the attempts to undermine it, can find in the practice of rewriting a very useful tool. Rewriting, in all of its forms, can be seen, as André Lefevere suggests, «as a weapon in the struggle for supremacy of the different ideologies and different poetics»⁵. For Lefevere, the concept of rewriting includes interpretation, criticism and translation, in other words those discourses that have the power to determine not only the literary canon, but also the way in which a particular literature will evolve and develop.

If we turn our attention towards those rewritings that can be subsumed under the label of 'literature in the second degree', we can observe that the same ideological dimension is still at work. The remarkable struggle that a literary theory engages for obtaining a privileged position in the cultural debates becomes visible even in the relationship between the two approaches concerned with the dialogue between texts. The assault led in recent decades on literary influence has resulted in transforming it from a fundamental concept for literary studies into a marginal one, whose explanatory model is not able to be convincing anymore. After dominating the literary field for centuries (the notion of literary influence emerges in the mid of the 18th century) the notion of literary influence began, in a relatively short period of time, to be considered outdated, if not obsolete, and to lose ground in favour of intertextuality. The few moments in which literary influence still appears as the protagonist of a theoretical discourse are conditioned by a strong and radical revision of its initial operating formula. The borrowings and assimilations of previous works are perceived, as Harold Bloom suggests, in a psychological dimension of fear and anxiety that an author, belated on the literary scene, feels towards his/her predecessors. Rather than establishing a complementary relationship, literary influence and intertextuality are placed in a state of tension. Leaving aside the different positions they take on technical issues such as practice and method, it becomes clear that their incompatibility is, in fact, of an ideological nature. Having different agendas, these two theories are placed in opposite positions not only in the literary, but also in the socio-political field, and even a quick glance at the ideational core of these two theories will highlight this aspect.

Notions such as author, genius and originality were essential for the study of literary influence, but after a recent critical examination these concepts have lost the major credit with which they had been invested. The catalyst of this process of devaluation was represented by the revolutionary moment of 1968 that aimed to undermine all forms of hierarchy and hegemony, whether political, social, or cultural. In such a context of attempting «to dislocate the mainstays of the bourgeois world»⁶ the study of literary influence recalled «elitism, the old boys networks of Major Authors and their sleek entourages»⁷. The evaluative, hierarchical and legitimizing criteria with which the study of influence operated, by distinguishing between minor and major works and establishing artistic genealogies, became incongruent with this subversive moment «that denounced the social function of academic (*bourgeois*) criticism as complicit with a social system of real injustices»⁸.

Under the action of intertextuality, the cardinal elements of literary influence began to show signs of weakness and, read from an ideological perspective, they were reduced to a biased and subordinate view of the dominant order. Aiming to be more than just a critique of the conservative dimension and transcendental status given to literary sources, intertextuality functioned similarly to a chemical reactive by highlighting in each essential notion for the

study of literary influence an ideologically contaminated site. Therefore, as Marko Juvan clearly points out⁹, the closed and harmonious structure of the literary work became a commercial marker that indicated a product ready to enter a series of economical relations such as buying, selling or consumption; the work's richness of meanings was related to capitalist accumulation; the author, as the initial point of the artistic creation, and the authorial intention, as the correct way of understanding, started to evoke a vision of the work of art in terms of private property over which no one could intervene; moreover, the epistemological simplicity of literary influence became inadequate for an epoch placed under the sign of Einstein's relativism.

Compared with the authority and oppressiveness of literary influence – the power of certain literary models outlined in advance the coordinates on which the artistic imaginary of the newcomers should unfold – intertextuality seemed to represent a real democratization of all the relations within the literary field. A very interesting turn of events takes place when we analyze intertextuality not in its contesting and conflicting dimension of the dominant order, but from the perspective of a theory that, by winning the conceptual battle, becomes itself the current rule and the official discourse. Once invested as the new orthodoxy, the profile of intertextuality will begin to acquire the same features that were previously blamed: its programmatic plurality will take the form of monologism and its democracy will turn into confinement and exclusion.

Such an effect of exclusion was generated by the so-called democratization installed after the removal of the authorial figure. For a number of movements such as Feminism, Post-colonialism, or sexual minorities, replacing the notion of the author with the anonymous network of quotations represented a cancellation of their particular note. In a society considered to be dominated by patriarchy, Eurocentrism and heterosexuality, it becomes very relevant if the auctorial voice is the product of the centre or of the periphery. In other words, who is speaking and, especially, in whose name is not at all negligible. But the death of the author proclaimed by Roland Barthes changed the centre of gravity in literary studies and cancelled the authorial subject as the place where these discourses are being produced. From the point of view of the above mentioned movements, the removal of the author acquires the features of a conservative, rather than subversive act. Nancy K. Miller, a feminist critic, considers that

[...] the removal of the Author has not so much made room for a revision of the concept of authorship as it has, through a variety of rethorical moves, repressed and inhibited discussion of any writing identity in favor of the (new) monolith of anonymous textuality, or, in Foucault's phrase, «transcendental anonymity».¹⁰

Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein emphasized precisely the biased dimension that such a theory may represent towards various minorities. Taking

as an example the case of feminism, they observed that an intertextual treatment of feminist subversion towards patriarchal authority would devalue the entire movement, reducing it to the status of being the product of an anonymous cultural text, of that always-already known:

[...] for the majority of interested readers, we suspect, the method would also produce an unsatisfying story about the women as writers, in that it would attenuate their currently positive image as freedom fighters by casting them as role-players in a social dynamic that permitted, perhaps even caused, their rebellion, a rebellion that would turn out to be another, not necessarily bourgeois, illusion.¹¹

If the theories dealing with rewriting have a strong ideological dimension, the same proves true for the literary works that enter the category of literature in the second degree. Rewritings are not neutral or innocent in relation with the texts that they rework. On the contrary, they prolong the conflict between a dominant order and the attempts to undermine it. On these coordinates of an ideological struggle, hypertextual practices can be classified in two categories: one that conserves a literary model and another that tries to subvert it. In the first category we can include imitation, adaptation, *pastiche*, allusion and quotation, while in the second category we can place all those textual transformations made in a playful, polemical, satirical or ironic manner. This second type of rewriting shapes itself as being more than just a re-interpretation and critique of the work rewritten: it expresses the fact that each literary text stands for a certain socio-political and cultural code, and when rewriting occurs, it signals that a mutation took place in the way that particular code is now perceived.

The rewriting of canonical texts is characterized by a strong political and ideological dimension. Using the terminology of Christian Moraru¹², we can say that rewriting is both intensive, in the programmatic way in which it enters into a dialogue with a canonical text, as well as extensive, by transgressing the literary field, involving a critical remark on the socio-cultural context in which this new text is produced. Therefore, such a rewriting sets in motion «literary and trans-literary [...] permutations»¹³, by refurbishing those «identity narratives» or «grand narratives» around which a community or a society is organized. Such narratives acquire, in time, the features of a super-text, functioning as a quintessence for the mentality of an entire epoch. For example, *The Tempest* (1610-1611), by Shakespeare is illustrative for the 17th century, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) for the 18th century, *Jane Eyre* (1847) for the 19th century, and *Heart of Darkness* (1899; 1902) for the turn of the 20th century. It is not a coincidence that most of the feminist and post-colonial rewritings chose these particular works as pre-texts when aiming to disarticulate and reconfigure the internal logic of a dominant order. Such rewritings represent alternatives to the official discourses, counter-discourses that have the power to influence the official ones. For instance, Jane Rhys's

novel, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), has changed forever the way we now read and understand *Jane Eyre*. The same happened with Michel Tournier or J.M. Coetzee who, by rewriting *Robinson Crusoe*, have managed to highlight, in a convincing manner, the blind spots and the biased feature of this novel.

Rewriting is more than just re-polishing old texts, it becomes a strategy to subvert, undermine and jam a discourse. To initiate a process of rewriting cannot be considered a random act, but rather a manifesto, charged with a strong motivation which aims, undoubtedly, to produce an effect among the readers, the literary hierarchies, etc. From this point of view, Sven Rank¹⁴ considered that any rewriting of a canonical work is a strategic one, representing a deliberate investment of social energy in the creation of a new discursive space for negotiating the future from the textual residues of the past. In a similar vein, Linda Hutcheon stated¹⁵ that as long as artistic works are created and received by people, this human context should become the object of an investigation from the perspective of the politics that governs these hypertextual relationships.

Being invested with such a social significance, such a derivational text becomes a true 'black box', a place that preserves the memory of all the transformations that social, political and cultural codes have undergone. Therefore, literature in the second degree, in spite of its subordinate feature, becomes the initial point from which any attempt to reconstruct the *Zeitgeist* that produced those mutations should start.

Notes

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Carmen
Muntean

The National Language: A European Ideological Construct*

Before tackling the subject of the national language, I would like to consider a few aspects regarding the methodology of the studies on nation and nationalism. Like any academic field, this too has been subject to different approaches, and one of them is significant to the matter at hand, namely the divide between the 'modernists' and the 'ethno-symbolists'. The criterion of this divide is first and foremost a temporal one. The modernists see the nation as consubstantial to modernity, as Eric Hobsbawm sets out to prove with a journey through the history of the concept of 'nation'. The first level of his demonstration is a lexicographic one and has as its starting point the successive editions of the dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy. Thus, in its 1726 edition, the aforementioned dictionary described the motherland as «the place, township or land where one is born, or any region, province or district of any lordship or state»¹. In 1884 however, a nation is «a state or political body which recognizes a supreme centre of common government» and also «the territory constituted by that state and its individual inhabitants, considered as a whole»².

Once the historical novelty of the nation is unequivocally established, Hobsbawm sets out to investigate the paradox according to which «modern nations and all their impedimenta generally claim to be the opposite of novel, namely rooted in the remotest antiquity»³. His introductory text to the collected essays *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) is a perfect example for the way in which the nation, once it became a political and administrative given, needs arguments in its favour and these arguments will unavoidably include constructs of the cultural imagery meant to add cohesion. Hobsbawm identifies three great instances of inventing tradition, i.e. the primary educational system – the secular equivalent of religious indoctrination –, public ceremonies – glorifying moments of the national Pantheon – and, last but not least, the mass production of official monu-



ments – the most relevant example here is the proliferation of Marianne’s busts in France during the Third Republic.

Thus, the most appropriate conclusion for these considerations are the words of Massimo d’Azeglio, one of the representatives present at the first meeting of the Italian parliament, quoted by Hobsbawm: «We have made Italy, now we have to make Italians»⁴.

On the opposite side, the ethno-symbolists interpret the nation from the perspective of what the French Annales School has called ‘*la longue durée*’, namely an understanding of the nation through the community ties which are pre-modern, to say the least. In the words of A.D. Smith, probably the best known representative of this line of study, the modernist perspective is limitative through its clear-cut temporal boundaries as opposed to researching longer periods of time, as well as through focusing on the actions of the *élites*, neglecting the beliefs of the larger mass, but mostly through the little importance given to the affective factor in the spread of nationalism⁵.

Smith tries to overcome these shortcomings through the concept of *la longue durée*, which allows him to set the main elements of the ethno-symbolist approach, namely the ties of modern nations and their past, the way in which they are given legitimacy through the recurrence of myths and symbols, all meant to prove the main point of Smith’s theory, namely the existence of the national feeling before modernity.

If *la longue durée* was the answer given to the modernists on a temporal axis, ethnicity is Smith’s counterargument in regard to the *invented* nature of the national feeling. In his opinion, ethnic communities can be defined by the following attributes:

1. an identifying name or emblem; 2. a *myth* of common ancestry; 3. shared historical memories and traditions; 4. one or more elements of common culture; 5. a link with an historic territory or ‘homeland’; 6. a measure of solidarity, at least among the elites.⁶

Here, just like in older studies⁷, Smith pleads for understanding ‘nationality’ through the perspective of community ties which are pre-modern, to say the least – his inquiry on the first occurrences of what will become ‘nationalism’ carries him up to Antiquity⁸ – ties which will then evolve into nationalism, as we know it today.

I insist upon the distinction between the modernists and the ethno-symbolists for two reasons: the first one is that in order to understand accurately the long and strenuous process of ideologising the national language we have to go back farther than the dawn of modernity and to examine the role played by the language as an ‘ethnic’ binder, before it was a national one. The second reason is that whereas the modernist approach regards the forging of national languages on a pragmatic level, together with the development of the educational system, for example, the ethno-symbolist

approach is more open to an interpretation regarding the importance of this process seen as a 'grand narrative' of its own.

In this paper I have tried to use a *mélange* of the two approaches in order to be able to follow, as accurately as possible, the long process of forging the national language in the European nationalist pantheon.

I shall start the enumeration of significant moments in this process by briefly mentioning the Middle Ages, when language was already a strong factor in forging the sense of ethnic belonging, so that Isidore of Seville could write in the 10th century that «Races arose from different languages, not languages from different races»⁹, thus placing himself in the trail of a biblical belief based on the common descent of mankind and finding it natural to see the post-Babel differentiation of languages as the first step in the formation of races or peoples.

Another important moment in the process of forging a European ideology of the national language takes place at the dawn of modernity, with Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* (1303-1305). Even if Dante's treatise appears long before the idea of nationhood was a political reality in Europe, his writing is truly «a compendium of contemporary historical linguistics»¹⁰, as it has been called. Here, Dante talks about the Adamic language, deplores the artificiality of grammar, but, most importantly, frequently utters judgements on the various Italian dialects of his time, with the clear purpose of finding the one which «enjoys and confers the greatest honour» («honorabilius atque honorificentius breviter seligamus»)¹¹. Thus, Dante criticizes most of the dialects from a phonetic, poetic or plainly aesthetic point of view, sometimes resorting to almost-narrations to support the argument «One of them» – says Dante – «is so womanish, because of the softness of its vocabulary and pronunciation, that a man who speaks it, even if in a suitably virile manner, still ends up being mistaken for a woman» («Quorum unum in tantum muliebre videtur propter vocabulorum et prolationis mollitiem, quod virum, etiam si viriliter sonet, feminam tamen facit esse credendum»)¹². Dante's treatise is the starting point of a European tradition which will dedicate a huge amount of writings to the attempt to describe the musicality of one language versus the roughness of another, to demonstrate the pre-eminence – be it artistic, historic or aesthetic – of one language over another. As Marina Yaguello, a French researcher, puts it, the sole end of such a process is to demonstrate that «the language is to a certain extent constitutive of a race, a cultural race, with a stronger cohesion than the race in the proper sense, proven by modern genetics to be highly difficult to define»¹³.

The next moment in the European history of language ideology is to be found in 1808, when Johann Gottlieb Fichte publishes his *Addresses to the German Nation* (1807-1808), comprising the collected conferences given by Fichte in French-occupied Berlin. But before addressing the main points of Fichte's essays, we must first establish a background. Fichte was a great

believer in the French Revolution and its ideals, but the Napoleonic occupation of Berlin puts him in the difficult position of having to choose between his past admiration for France and its current status of occupying force. The intensity of these contradictory feelings is reflected in the gritty, apocalyptic tone of Fichte's *Addresses*,

[...] it is the general purpose of these addresses to bring courage and hope to the despondent, to proclaim joy amidst deep sorrow, to guide us softly and gently through our hour of greatest need. The age seems to me a shade that stands grieving over its corpse, from which it has just been driven out by a host of diseases.¹⁴

Within this interpretative frame, Fichte's work can be seen as one of the first solid political articulations of linguistic ethno-nationalism.

The first argument for this resides in the very title of Fichte's work. To appeal to the German nation at the beginning of the 19th century, when there was no unitary German state, nor was it by any means clear whether there was such a thing as a 'German nation'. The questions that Fichte sets out to answer are what did it mean to be 'German' and how would one define its properties? The answer to these questions is obvious for Fichte: the depository of a nation's soul, of its most particular traits, is the 'language'. Fichte gives a clear nationalistic turn to this hypothesis and sets out to build a hierarchy of various people, according to their languages. The basic assumption of Fichte's argument is that the Teutonic tribes are the foundation of Europe's ethnic map, that some of them (the Franks, the Lombards or the Burgundians), when reaching the Roman territory, have conquered the peoples already there and were thus exposed to the Latin semantic universe which absorbed them, and have therefore lost their vital connection with the spiritual universe: «Just as the neo-Latin peoples have no mother tongue, so they have no fatherland: they are orphans of the spirit»¹⁵.

Another stop in this journey through the building blocks of language ideology is post-revolutionary France. After Francois I's famous ordinance of Villers-Cotterêts, French became the official language and the so-called 'Latin threat' had been averted. Two centuries later, French revolutionaries are faced with another threat to linguistic unity – and implicitly, to the ethnic cohesion built on it –, namely the regional dialects. Thus came into being the famous inquiry of Abbé Henri Gregoire, *Report on the Necessity and Means to Annihilate the Patois and to Universalise the Use of the French Language* (1794). With a methodical approach, Henri Gregoire drafts a questionnaire comprising 43 questions, aimed at mapping as clearly as possible the situation of the dialects, and, implicitly, to find the most efficient ways of eradicating them. The 43 items in this questionnaire reflect an intimate knowledge of all the effects, implications and consequences the usage of a national language has. There are questions aimed at establishing if the dialects are a threat to the supremacy of French as national language

(«Does the writing of the patois have traits and characteristics different from French? Do the peasants know how to express themselves in French as well?»), questions which reflect an intimate knowledge of the way in which language is interwoven in the life of the speaker («What would be the religious and political importance of the total annihilation of the patois? What is the influence of the patois on the morals and of the latter on your dialect? Does your dialect have many indecent words?»¹⁶) and so on. The inquiry of Abbé Gregoire provides our research with an example of how far back in European history the ideologising of the national language goes. Henri Gregoire's effort to eradicate the dialects has a double purpose: on the one hand, defining the French as the language of schools, churches and the institutions of the state and on the other hand, using French as an instrument to transform – subconsciously and to a certain extent forcibly – the speakers of the dialects into French citizens.

It is already striking how far the attributes of the language have coalesced with those of the nation in European modernity. But perhaps the most striking example of how a language becomes 'national' is the Norwegian case.

At the beginning of the 15th century there came into being what was later called 'the union of the three crowns', namely those of Norway, Sweden and Denmark. The union ended at the end of the 16th century, when Denmark declared Norway a Danish province, but allowed it to have its own institutions of the state and law system¹⁷. Thus, before the Reformation, Norway was practically incorporated by Denmark from a linguistic point of view, with Danish becoming the language of the church and the chancery. The revival of Norwegian starts with the spread of Lutheranism and continues in the Romantic period. The problem faced by this linguistic revival is the fact that

[...] in 1814, Danish still heavily influenced the speech of the Norwegian upper classes and was still used for written purposes and administrative functions [...] and so it was apparent that the Norwegians regarded having a distinctive standard language as a central attribute of national identity.¹⁸

In order to create a language which would serve as exponent and argument of national independence, the Norwegian intellectuals, seduced by the ideas of German Romanticism, begin to look for the true Norwegian language in the rural areas. In 1851, Jorgen Moe and Peter Christian Asbjornsen edit – inspired by the Grimm brothers – a book of folk legends and fairy-tales, written in a language which purposefully privileges the regional and dialectal language forms, in order to differentiate itself from Danish¹⁹.

This movement begins to be truly nationalist when Ivar Aasen starts to compile a language aimed at being «purely Norwegian». Aasen made an extensive study of the rural dialects of Norway and produced a gram-

mar and dictionary of the Norwegian folk language. This was actually an artificial amalgamation of a variety of dialectal usages, which he called *Landsmål*, and which today is known as *Nynorsk*. Presented as a true and pure Norwegian language, without any foreign influence, it was accepted and used as a literary language with considerable enthusiasm by many Norwegians, particularly by many of the most respected writers²⁰. The old language of the *élites* remained in usage, under the name *Bokmal*, so that today the two language variants coexist, but until this peaceful cohabitation was reached, the fight between the two variants was also a political fight. The leftists took up to Aasen's variant, considered to be the true expression of the national psyche, whereas *Bokmal* was seen as 'reactionary', a corruption by a foreign element of the one true national language²¹.

Even after this long journey through the various stages in the evolution of the national language, the present day situation regarding language as a means of legitimising oneself can only point to the fact that from all the arguments in favour of nationalism that European thought has produced, language remains the most persistent one. Because, if the idea of the national state, remnant of modernity, is seriously questioned in the age of 'new tribalism' and globalization, language remains one of the most powerful defining elements of ethnicity. In fact, atomizing the nation-state only led in this respect to atomizing the national language. The long process of dialectal unification, undergone by all European states finds now its counterpart in ethno-regionalism, whose principal argument is a linguistic one, namely the opposition between a dialect considered to be 'authentic' and the national language, seen as oppressive. In these cases, the linguistic policy is radically changed, generating an upside-down shift of the modern nation-state, through an educational and cultural decentralization, a situation which only brings into question even more challenges for the study of the language from the viewpoint of an ideological construct.

Notes

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- ¹⁷ T.K. Derry, *A History of Scandinavia: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis (MN) 1979, pp. 64-86.
- ¹⁸ J. Myhill, *Language, Religion and National Identity in Europe and the Middle East*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam 2006, p. 86.
- ¹⁹ T.K. Derry, *A Short History of Norway*, Allen & Unwin, London 1957, pp. 166-170.
- ²⁰ J. Myhill, *Language, Religion and National Identity*, cit., p. 86.
- ²¹ A.M. Thiesse, *La création des identités nationales. Europe XVIIIe-XXe siècle*, Seuil, Paris 1999, pp. 73-76.

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Marginality in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century English Poetry: Three 'Mad' Writers

Human fascination with the idea of madness has crossed many cultural boundaries, finding its expression in art and literature since earliest times. Indeed, the motif of madness in literature, in its broad sense, is capable of reminding us of a wide corpus of texts from different backgrounds. These include most of the works that were considered models for the Western tradition, and authors like Sophocles, Shakespeare, Tasso, Goethe, Cervantes, Kafka, or Gogol.

However, the apparent richness of the canon is revealed as being merely illusionary when we consider that literary madness can be employed as a critical device in different ways. In terms of works that represent insane characters, or authors who adopt 'deviant' voices as a fictional expedient, un-reason is a major protagonist of the literary tradition. In these cases, the text creates the impression of madness, which can be regarded as a rhetorical figure, as Shoshana Felman has convincingly demonstrated¹.

When we take the insanity of the writer as the starting point of the analysis, the available corpus appears considerably reduced; while social marginality was often represented in literature, it is more questionable whether actual members of social minorities could make their way into literary memory.

It might be worth emphasizing that there is a common denominator between studying the work of 'insane' artists and that of 'sane' artists depicting insanity: in both cases, we are looking at 'representations' of madness². Yet, the question of «the mad writer», as Allan Ingram puts it³, presents us with a set of different theoretical and methodological issues. For one thing, it touches a traditional association between 'folly and genius', or a view that madness is somehow generally connected to artistic creativity⁴. The purely speculative nature of the idea that «the lunatic, the lover, and the poet / Are of imagination all compact» is often addressed in recent stud-

ies⁵; scholars are trying to draw a thin line between some sort of 'factual' or 'concrete' madness and a wider aesthetic-philosophical discourse. This attempt is evident, for instance, in Branimir Rieger's statement: «there is no denying that many writers experienced mental problems of true insanity»⁶. The expression «true insanity» can be puzzling, since its meaning is not provided: the issue of what standards can be adopted to identify deviance as a 'matter-of fact' property of the mind cannot be easily resolved.

The critical debate on «true insanity» appears to merely demonstrate our inability to find a definition for the varying meanings and ranges of madness as a concept⁷. From Michel Foucault's *History of Madness* onwards (*Histoire de la Folie à l'âge classique*, 1961), critical focus has been on the risks of falling into what Ingram defines as «the insanity trap»⁸: scholars must tackle not only a spontaneous tendency towards considering their cultural, historical or even individual conception of deviance as reliable and valid, but also the implications of adopting the standpoint of 'sane' individuals who are reading 'mad' writing.

Recent approaches have tried to evade at least the semantic problems of madness by viewing it as a phenomenon which consists of interrelated scientific, cultural and social processes, while also solidly grounding the discourse in a specific historical context. Scholars like Porter, Ingram, MacDonald and Richardson do not attempt to identify possible 'symptoms' or 'signs' of authorial deviance in the literary text, but to investigate its imagery and language in an intertextual and interdisciplinary way⁹.

In line with this critical orientation, I intend to analyze the work of three English poets who were officially acknowledged or imputed as being insane, and who suffered isolation, internment and removal. The category of authors considered here might be thought to bring us closer to what Rieger called «true insanity», or, in Foucault's terms, «madness itself»¹⁰. James Carkesse, Anne Finch and Christopher Smart were well aware of being considered deviant, whatever their own opinion about their mental state, and offer a precious testimony of how the 'stigma' of mental illness could variously influence writing in the 17th and 18th centuries. Their voices represent a specific and often neglected sub-canon in the history of literary madness: the following remarks are intended to be a small contribution to this history.

1. James Carkesse (1634?-1711?)

James Carkesse is today a largely unknown writer, who has received little critical attention. Yet, he represents a key-figure for the study of 'mad writer's' literature, since his collection, *Lucida Interoalla*, is the first documented testimony of poetry written during internment. In 1678, while confined in the Finsbury and Bedlam madhouses, Carkesse composed fifty-three poems characterized by a «Satyr brisk»¹¹. In 1679, the texts were

published in London under the title *Lucida Intervalla: Containing divers Miscellaneous Poems Written at Finsbury and Bethlem by the Doctors Patient. Extraordinary*; the only subsequent edition of this collection is a 1979 facsimile reprint of the original text¹².

Lucida Intervalla is especially revealing of the effects that social marginalization of deviance had on individuals, because the madhouse experience itself, Carkesse says, «makes me poet» and urges him to write «where his Pen and Ink, it was Chalk; / Boards, Paper»¹³. Indeed, there is no documentation attesting Carkesse might have been active as a writer during the rest of his life.

Not much is known, though, about Carkesse's life and person as a whole; most of the extant information is derived from Samuel Pepys's *Diary*, where the «distracted» Navy Office clerk «James Carcasse» is said to have undergone a trial for corruption¹⁴. Various textual correspondences connect the texts of *Lucida Intervalla* to Pepys's diary; the latter, for example, is mentioned by Carkesse as his «Rival [...] / For the Dukes favour, more than years thirteen»¹⁵.

If Pepys had been his «Rival» for about thirteen years, we might suppose that Carkesse started working at the Navy Office around 1665. My search for new sources has revealed a possible reference to the poet's life before that date; a «James Carkesse» appears in the *Registers of the Saint Mary Magdalene College* as a Master in 1663 and an Usher in 1665. Seemingly, he held both positions very briefly: it is suggested that he had instilled 'inappropriate' religious opinions in the young people¹⁶. This behaviour would fit in with an important tendency of the author in *Lucida Intervalla*, who repeatedly claims he is a «Parson», «Seized for a madman, only for having endeavoured to reduce dissenters unto the [Protestant] CHURCH»¹⁷. Although the evidence is far from being conclusive, several coincidences suggest that Carkesse might have been a teacher at Magdalene College.

Actually, the «Parson», or defender of the Protestant Church is only one of Carkesse's various identities in his poems: he also professes to be a «Poet», «Jack Straw», an «Arch-lunatick», a «sound» person and, above all, an actor playing «Madness in Mascarade»¹⁸, a role that would account for all the others. As I have suggested elsewhere¹⁹, role-playing is a central feature of the collection, since it apparently questions the human ability to distinguish reality from appearance, and reason from insanity. Ingram has linked Carkesse's drawing «upon an established range of [...] stereotypes for insanity» to the satirical and exuberant playfulness of his language, which deconstructs most standards and conventions, in «a textbook case of what his readers might expect mad poetry to be like»²⁰. Yet, Carkesse's 'non-conformism' does not merely consist of a generalized parody of common assumptions; in some poems, the «Patient» discusses and attacks specific aspects of the confinement system.

Lucida Intervalla is full of scorn and derision for Thomas Allen, the «Patient's Doctor» of the title, who is otherwise mentioned as «Doctor Mad-Quack», «Hellish Physick Quack», or «Fool»²¹. Carkesse goes in detail

through the «Purges, Vomits and Bleeding» which «Are his methods of Cure»²². Since «To observe, was the Patient's sport / How little the Doctor had»²³, criticism of Doctor Allen's methods is thorough and informed: in particular, when commenting on the therapy, Carkesse shows he is familiar with contemporary medical discourse, and repeatedly reminds his physician of «*Religio Medici* (do you mind?)»²⁴.

Doctor Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* (1642) essentially suggests the primacy of a higher principle of understanding over the 'materialism' of scientific knowledge²⁵. Dr. Allen, for whom, according to Carkesse, Browne's ideas are foreign, believes in the Paracelsian notion that mental affections proceed from the body, and acts accordingly²⁶. The doctor, says Carkesse, cannot understand that his patient is not a «Lunatick», but «one of the Small Prophets» gifted with divine revelation, with Apollo «on [his] side» to «inspire/ [his] breast with breath of a diviner fire»²⁷.

In order to illustrate why Allen's cure «works with me the clean contrary way»²⁸, Carkesse offers an additional explanation. The doctor believes that his patient should «defie the Moon»²⁹, while Carkesse claims that «My Brains not rul'd by the pale Moon / Nor keeps the Sphears my Soul in Tune»³⁰. The poet thinks that the moon can only cause morbid temperament, and his raging disposition should rather be ascribed to the «influence of Apollo»³¹. Allen makes no distinction between the aetiology of 'melancholy' and 'mania', and treats both afflictions in the same way; thus, the poet tells him, «You that should Fury cure, and Poet save, / are sending Post your Patient to the Grave»³².

Misunderstood at different levels, Carkesse reacts by assuming a new role, which is never overtly mentioned in the poems: in addition to being «Parson», «Poet» and «Actor», he also becomes a medical doctor. When claiming that his «Brains well fixt condition / Apollo better knows, than this Physitian»³³, Apollo's mythological station as god of medicine is also tacitly exploited. The «Self-curing poet», who grows «Sober» venting «his rage by words in open air»³⁴, elaborates his own medical and philosophical theory; he apparently draws inspiration from different sources simultaneously, as his ideas have no specific relation to any available scientific text of the time.

Carkesse's opposition to Doctor Allen and the whole madhouse system is often conveyed through war imagery. When addressing his lines «To the DUKE», he asks:

Summon me to Your Tent; I'm Sober, Sound;
Call me from Finnes-burrough to th' Artillery Ground; [...]
Better be Kill'd, than Slavery endure.³⁵

For the inmate, warfare is the ultimate means of freedom. Portraying himself as strong and indomitable, Carkesse simultaneously embodies both a mythical hero and the seventeenth-century cliché of the 'rag-

ing fool', characterized by uncontrollable strength; «Physick is lost in [his] veins», chains become «But straw / To the sinews of his Armes», and to «let his same Gown-man blood / A Sword was more fit than a Lance»³⁶.

2. Anne Finch, Countess of Winchelsea (1661–1720)

It has been suggested that some of Anne Finch's poetry was written in order to «prevent claims of 'hysteria' against her»³⁷ and thus the consequent internment: indeed, Finch suffered from frequent episodes of what nowadays we might loosely term depression and, though she never experienced the madhouse, she spent some periods in Tunbridge Wells and Astrop in order to be treated³⁸. Her social position might also have helped her avoid internment: a member of the highest social class, Finch was also on friendly terms with some of the most renowned writers of her age.

Although her literary activity started as early as the 1680s, it was only in 1713 that Finch published her first collection, *Miscellany Poems*. She dealt with her experience of interior suffering in various poems, including *Ardelia to Melancholy*, *The Spleen*, *An Invocation to Sleep*, *To Death*, *The Loss*, *On Affliction* and *The Song of Griefe*. Finch has always enjoyed some fame as a poet, but her work has only recently obtained renewed critical attention; she was subject to the pattern of appearance and disappearance that Greer describes as distinctive of women's writing since the mid-seventeenth century³⁹. In his exhaustive book on her work, Charles Hinnant insists on the precariousness of Finch's «place in the canon», as she is «often seen as a typical minor poet»⁴⁰.

The year 1688 was pivotal to Anne Finch's life. Until then, she had been at court with her husband, Heneage Finch; after James II's abdication, they refused to take the oath to the new king and were forced to retire in poverty. Finch's marginality consists, therefore, of different and inseparable layers which touch various aspects of her public and private figure; she was secluded as a melancholic person, as a Jacobite who lived during the Glorious Revolution, and as a woman writer, who «may already be considered to be [an exile] from the mainstream of late seventeenth-century culture»⁴¹. Several scholars have emphasized how her works challenge male-constructed patterns, but less attention has been paid to her attitude towards the specific standards of mental (in)sanity.

The poems devoted to melancholy and spleen usually conjure up the idea of defeat and resignation in the face of mood disorders. In *Ardelia to Melancholy*, Finch's poetic persona addresses these lines to her affliction:

All, that cou'd ere thy ill gott rule, invade,
Their uselesse arms, before thy feet have laid;
The Fort is thine, now ruin'd, all within,
Whilst by decays without, thy Conquest too, is seen.⁴²

An imaginary battlefield is the typical space of Finch's poetry, the theatre of the fight where unreason is in combat with reason; the speaker heroically opposes her grief's «fantastic Harms»⁴³, but eventually must «resign of the contested Field»⁴⁴. In this meeting of interior forces, the destructive power of melancholy deprives her of the strength to react, so that, «At last, my old inveterate foe, / No opposition shalt thou know»⁴⁵.

Finch mentions only one victorious fight, in the *Introduction to Miscellany Poems*, where both literary ambition and retired life are exalted⁴⁶. Similar themes recur in *On Affliction*, even though, in this case, the speaker emphasizes the negative aspects of social isolation:

Welcome, what e're my tender flesh may say,
Welcome Affliction [...]
Welcome the rod that does adoption shew [...]
The cup whose wholesome dregs are giv'n me here;⁴⁷

Commentators have shown that the symbolic elements in these lines are open to various readings⁴⁸. In my opinion, the «rod» might suggest a need to be accepted in the community through redemption, which would also imply that «affliction» and social fault are interconnected⁴⁹. The cup's «dregs» could hint at the speaker's perceived role in society as an outcast; the modifier «wholesome» evokes medicines or drugs, common features in Finch's poetry. In addition, it might be noted that, at the time, the 'evaporating' human spirits were believed to leave behind «dregs of melancholy», or, in David Irish's words, «muddy dregs»⁵⁰.

Finch often discusses possible causes of and remedies for interior sufferings in her poems: they are therefore scattered with a stream of references to contemporary scientific discourse on behavioural alterations. Especially in *The Spleen* and *Ardelia to Melancholy*, Finch shows a detailed medical knowledge of her state; for example, she lists a number of treatments that also appear in Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), where «many pleasant sports, objects, sweet smells, delightful tastes, music, meats, herbs, flowers» are advised to «recreate [the] senses»⁵¹. Besides this, Finch also includes intertextual references to what is nowadays a largely unknown text by Irish, who suggests using «the Ellebores of Anticera, [...] Colycinth of Spain, together with the Rhubarb of Alexandria»⁵². Yet, her poetic persona *Ardelia* objects,

[...] I by struggling, can obtain
Nothing, but encrease of pain, [...]
Tho' I confesse, I have apply'd
Sweet mirth, and musick, and have try'd
A thousand other arts beside, [...]
Unable they, and far too weak, to save;⁵³

Neither Burton's nor Irish's treatises seem to provide patients with helpful cures; the speakers of Finch's poems claim they have derived no relief or betterment from the doctors' advice, and «In vain all Remedies apply, / In vain the Indian Leaf infuse, / Or the parch'd Eastern Berry bruise»⁵⁴. Finch's discrediting of medical science is further supported through mention of «skilful [Richard] Lower», who not only failed to identify the origins of melancholy, but was himself a victim of this condition, «And sunk beneath [its] Chain to a lamented Grave»⁵⁵. According to Finch, the doctors' main error was probably to ascribe melancholy to bodily issues, blaming «the mortal part [...] / Of our depressed and pond'rous frame»⁵⁶.

The Spleen, which is perhaps Finch's most exhaustive treatment of interior suffering, is constructed around the dichotomy between appearance and reality, in all its manifold implications. Indeed, spleen's «delusions» can «cheat the eyes» and «airy phantoms rise»⁵⁷; not only does this condition deceive the senses, but it also brings about personality changes, depriving its victims of their own ego. «The Coquette», for instance, «changing hastily the Scene / From Light, Impertinent, and Vain, / Assumes a soft, a melancholy Air»⁵⁸. At a different level, Finch also condemns the idea that melancholy can be mere posturing, or a sort of 'fashionable acting' in which «The Fool, to imitate the Wits, / Complains of [its] pretended Fits»⁵⁹.

The gulf between appearance and reality that underlies Finch's 'melancholic' poems can be considered a structural element of the whole collection, since, as Hinnant says, it establishes «a network of relation with other abstractions»⁶⁰, and characterizes most of the representations of states of mind in *Miscellany Poems*.

3. Christopher Smart (1722-1771)

Christopher Smart was a high church Anglican who underwent the experience of both the madhouse and prison. Apparently, he was first suspected of being insane in 1756 and, in the following year, was interned in St Luke Hospital. Regarded as an incurable patient, he was later re-institutionalized in Bethnal Green, where he wrote most of his poem *Jubilate Agno*⁶¹.

Smart's *Jubilate Agno* is a highly experimental text, which consists of a formulaic collection of lines without rhyme, and all beginning with the words «Let» and «For»⁶². Its thirty-two manuscript pages remained unpublished during Smart's lifetime and only appeared in print in 1939, when William Stead discovered the documents in a private library. Thus, scholarly interest in *Jubilate Agno* is quite recent, and most critical studies on this work date back to the late 1970s.

Critical speculation on *Jubilate Agno* has primarily focused on the question of its form; Knight and Mason define this text as a sort of alternative liturgy, and Fitzgerald puts forward a connection with Smart's translations

on the *Psalms*⁶³. Yet, what seems to have particularly attracted scholars is the fact that *Jubilate Agno* appears a meeting point of various branches of scientific thought. The poem treats different subjects in an almost encyclopaedic way and, among others, tackles questions of astronomy, gravity, magnetism, electricity and light. Smart also lists almost all existing sea creatures, from the «Whale» to the «Holothuria»⁶⁴, as well as most other animals, while humans are listed by nationality or geographical area.

These 'catalogues' remind us of two kinds of Eighteenth century texts: firstly, the scales of creatures, such as William Petty's, in which living beings were listed from the highest to the lowest forms of life⁶⁵. Secondly, Smart's text makes us think of the scientific *historiae*, or encyclopaedic dictionaries, that are comprised of information on all known plants, animals and minerals⁶⁶.

Critical debate has focused on whether Smart's attitude can be considered «truly scientific», with a «deep regard for logic and a minute knowledge of facts», or whether his «habit of mind, in fact, was *fundamentally* unscientific»⁶⁷. Actually, both lines of thought find support in *Jubilate Agno*, since the author's attitude noticeably changes in the different sections.

The «Let» lines, which are especially devoted to listing God's creation, organize species according to morphological and physiological similarities, in what might be considered a «truly scientific» perspective. In particular, a mention of an animal is often followed by explanatory descriptions about its nature or features⁶⁸. Significantly, most of these descriptions focus on the animals' defence mechanisms:

Let Ithiel bless with the Baboon, [...] who defendeth himself with a staff
against the assailant.
Let James rejoice with the Skuttle-Fish, who foils his foe by the effusion of
his ink.⁶⁹

Throughout the «Let» sections, reference to wild, destructive and venomous creatures seems to express Smart's «bitterness toward the world for its ill will against him»⁷⁰. In some cases, the poet apparently exploits animal images in order to allude to aspects of his own predicament:

Let Lud bless with the Elk, the strenuous asserter of his liberty, and the
maintainer of his ground.
Let Bedan rejoice with Ossifrage – the bird of prey and the man of prayer.⁷¹

More detailed information about the speaker's view of himself is provided in the «For» sections of *Jubilate Agno* and, in particular, in Fragment B1:

For I am not without authority in my jeopardy [...].
For I am ready for the trumpet and alarm to fight, to die and to rise again.
For CHRISTOPHER must slay the Dragon with a PHEON's head.⁷²

The overall image of the self that emerges from *Jubilate Agno* is that of a hero at arms, or a warrior martyr, equipped with «God's sword» and his «whole armour», «intitled to the great mess» by Heaven, and «willing to be called a fool for the sake of Christ»⁷³.

The «For» lines deal with scientific subjects in a different way from the «Let» lines, putting them in a particularly «unscientific» religious frame. In the «For» sections, Smart also includes extensive criticism of, among others, Newton and Locke. For reasons of space, here Smart's complex and multifaceted discourse about the «philosophy of the times» can only be generally outlined:

Let Silas rejoice with the Cabot – the philosophy of the times ev'n now is
vain deceit.
For I am inquisitive in the Lord, and defend the philosophy of the scripture
against vain deceit.
For Newton nevertheless is more of error than of the truth, but I am of the
WORD of GOD.
[...] Newton is ignorant for if a man consult not the WORD how should he
understand the WORK? –⁷⁴

Smart reinterprets contemporary scientific discourse through a new perspective: he does not merely discuss its metaphysical assumptions, but also its understanding of how the constitutive elements of creation («WORD») join together in the whole architecture of forms («WORK»). In addition, empirical studies are «of error» because they create false images of animated and natural entities, thus implying the same sort of treachery that Smart finds in the 'copies' proposed by mimetic arts⁷⁵. The idea of both «philosophy» and mimesis as «vain deceit[s]» is part of a wider discourse about appearance and substance that pervades all the sections of *Jubilate Agno*, and which finds a compendium in the ontological principle of «sincerity», «a jewel which is pure and transparent, eternal and inestimable»⁷⁶.

4. Threading through 'Madness'

What is first noticed on reading *Lucida Intervalla*, *Miscellany Poems* and *Jubilate Agno* is their difference in terms of poetical form and style, as well as in the attitudes of the speakers. Yet, an analysis of Carkesse, Finch and Smart's works has shed new light on at least three common threads, or shared textual features, which could be related to their experience as 'imputed-mad' subjects.

The first of these features concerns imagery, and consists of recurring references to fighting, or war scenarios. One inevitably thinks that the consistent use of battle imagery in 'mad' poetry might be an expression of the multiple contrasts these writers were experiencing both in their interior lives and in their relationship with the society which had 'rejected'

them. On the one hand, marginalization seems to have roused impulses of self-assertion and, sometimes, aggressive modes of response; on the other hand, Carkesse, Finch and Smart seem to be struggling to control what they identify as 'extreme' passions. More or less overtly, war imagery also insinuates that the speaker is a sort of hero, battling for his or her life and ideas, and standing out against manifold antagonists.

The theme of appearance and reality is the second feature that connects the 'mad' poems considered here. As is well known, madness has traditionally been connected to the clash between appearance and reality, a question that was treated, among others, by Hegel and Foucault: the insane subject is commonly thought of being unable to find any reconciliation between substance and show, because of his or her de-centred and convoluted view of reality⁷⁷. Perhaps, Carkesse, Finch and Smart also bore this discourse in mind; it is certain that the account of their speakers' subjectivity includes alternative selves, selves constructed, reflected and distorted. The ideas of acting, pretending, or imitating, although variously welcomed or condemned by the authors, pervade their body of works. It might be assumed that *Lucida Intervalla*, *Miscellany Poems* and *Jubilate Agno* question the human ability to distinguish unreason from the 'appearance' of it; after all, Ingram notes, «being mad is subject only to the eye of the spectator», and «appearance is at the heart of the therapy, the heart of being or not being mad»⁷⁸.

The third and most remarkable feature connecting these authors is their common familiarity with essays concerning both specific issues on mental alterations and general notions of natural science. Scientific and medical discourse is criticized through mention of canonical texts of the time, or their reception in the institutions: Carkesse ridicules Doctor Allen's theories by mentioning Browne's *Religio Medici*, Finch discredits the works of Burton, Irish and Lower on melancholy, and Smart does not only rewrite natural histories through a new perspective, but also deconstructs the views of the most renowned scientists of his time.

Carkesse, Finch and Smart attack the contemporary understanding of the mind's mechanisms, in particular the belief that mental «Distemper» has its origin in «some Disorder in the Body»⁷⁹. They present new sources of authority, shift disciplinary boundaries, and illustrate different concerns taken variously to be superior to science, such as religion, or equivalent to it, such as other branches of philosophy. When questioning the epistemic value of scientific knowledge, Carkesse, Finch and Smart also discuss the assumptions of that field in the official culture that was primarily responsible for their social exclusion. By proving institutional behaviour erroneous, medical speculation incomplete and scientific categorization unstable, these writers show the unreliability of a mainstream or canonical discourse that can stall, falter or even collapse.

Our discussion has so far suggested that 'mad', or 'imputed-mad' writers have found little space in the literary tradition. As a conclusive remark, I would

like to add that works like those of Carkesse, Finch and Smart can help re-examine the 17th-18th century canons of medical-scientific thought, as well as fill a long-standing gap between the aesthetics that often surrounds 'mad' literature and the 'real' consequences of being considered deviant, which is traditionally considered the domain of social sciences and the history of medicine.

Notes

¹ S. Felman, *Writing and Madness*, Stanford UP, Palo Alto (CA) 2003.

² As Allan Ingram notes, «as soon as the mad writer enters literary language then madness becomes transformed into 'madness', a reality, of sorts, into a representation and with it all those social and cultural norms and transgressions which are the burden and glory of working within a tradition» (A. Ingram, *Cultural Constructions of Madness*, Palgrave, New York, NY 2003, p. 4).

³ Cfr. *Ibidem*.

⁴ The authority of this long-standing belief proceeds from Plato's writings and found renewed support with Lombroso, in the 19th century. Cfr. Plato, *Republic*, ed. by C.D.C. Reeve, Hackett, Indianapolis (IN)-Cambridge 1992; C. Lombroso, *Genio e follia*, Tipografia Chiusi, Milano 1864 and *L'uomo di genio*, Bocca, Torino 1894.

⁵ The quotation is from W. Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, RCS Macmillan, Basingstoke 2008, p. 69 (Act I, Scene I, 7-8). In agreement with many others, Martin S. Lindauer claims that «if there is a link between writers and pathology, it has not been proven. And even if there were a link, it might reflect a bias that leads people (including writers) to hold a stereotyped view of their mental health» (M.S. Lindauer, *Are Creative Writers Mad? An Empirical Perspective*, in B.M. Rieger, ed., *Dionysus in Literature: Essays on Literary Madness*, Bowling Green State University Popular Press, Bowling Green, OH 1994, p. 42).

⁶ B.M. Rieger, *Introduction*, in Id., *Dionysus in Literature*, cit., p. 6.

⁷ As Andrew Scull notes, «what constitutes madness strikes me as fluctuating and ambiguous, indeed theoretically indeterminate, making its boundaries the subject of endless dispute and anxiety» (A.T. Scull, *Social Order/Mental Disorder: Anglo-American Psychiatry in Historical Perspective*, Routledge, London 1989, p. 8).

⁸ M. Foucault, *History of Madness*, ed. by J. Khalfa, Routledge, London 2006 (*Histoire de la Folie à l'âge classique*, Gallimard, Paris 1961); A. Ingram, *Cultural Constructions*, cit., pp. 4, 10, 208.

⁹ Cfr. R. Porter, *Mind Forged Manacles: A History of Madness in England from the Restoration to the Regency*, Athlone, London 1987; A. Ingram, *Cultural Constructions*, cit., and *The Madhouse of Language*, Routledge, London 1991; M. MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, Cambridge UP, Cambridge 1981; A. Richardson, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind*, Cambridge UP, Cambridge 2001.

¹⁰ B.M. Rieger, *Introduction*, cit., p. 6; M. Foucault, *History of Madness*, cit., p. 180.

¹¹ J. Carkesse, *Lucida Intervalla, Containing divers Miscellaneous Poems, Written at Finsbury and Bethlem by the Doctors Patient Extraordinary*, London 1679, p. 28 (*The New Distinction*, line 12). All quotations from *Lucida Intervalla* are from the original 1679 edition, available on the *Early English Books Online Database (EEBO)*, <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com>> (02/2013).

¹² J. Carkesse, *Lucida Intervalla*, with an Introduction by M.V. Deporte, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California Press, Los Angeles (CA) 1979.

¹³ J. Carkesse, *Lucida Intervalla*, cit., pp. 32 and 8 (*The Riddle*, line 4; *Presented to the DUKE ON NEW-YEARS-DAY*, lines 31-32).

¹⁴ On August 17, 1667, Samuel Pepys records that during the trial «Carcasse» had chosen his witnesses «without distinction», collecting both friends and opponents; later entries also describe «Carcasse's» threats to Pepys and other officers (S. Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys. Transcribed from the Shorthand Manuscript in the Pepysian Library Magdalene College Cambridge*, ed. by H.B. Wheatley, George Bell & Sons, London 1893, vol. XIII, pp. 65, 69).

¹⁵ J. Carkesse, *Lucida Intervalla*, cit., p. 5 (*To His Royal Highness*, lines 14-15).

- ¹⁶ J.R. Bloxam, *A Register of the Presidents, Fellows, Demies, Instructors in Grammar [...] of Saint Mary Magdalen College*, John Henry, Oxford 1863, vol. III, p. 176.
- ¹⁷ J. Carkesse, *Lucida Intervalla*, cit., p. 17.
- ¹⁸ Ivi, pp. 4, 5, 10, 21 and *passim*.
- ¹⁹ I. Natali, *James Carkesse and the Lucidity of Madness: A 'Minor Poet' in Seventeenth-century Bedlam*, «The International Journal of the Humanities», 5, 2012, pp. 285-298.
- ²⁰ A. Ingram, *Cultural Constructions*, cit., pp. 4, 206.
- ²¹ J. Carkesse, *Lucida Intervalla*, cit., pp. 42, 23, 31 and *passim*. Carkesse also specifies: «A Chirurgeon's Son he is, pray, understand» (*The Cross Match*, line 29, p. 20).
- ²² Ivi, p. 9 (*The Poetical History of Finnesbury Mad-House*, lines 7-8).
- ²³ Ivi, p. 10 (lines 31-32).
- ²⁴ Ivi, p. 39 (*The Patient's Advice to the Doctor*, line 5).
- ²⁵ Cfr. T. Browne, *Religio Medici*, Printed for Andrew Crooke, London 1642.
- ²⁶ However, Allen is deemed incapable of diagnosing even the body: Carkesse assumes the doctor's voice to emphasize, «To feel his Pulse, I never thought; / in a Month, I see him but once» (J. Carkesse, *Lucida Intervalla*, cit., p. 14 (*The Poetical History of Finnesbury Mad-House*, lines 105-106)). Pulse had been regarded as an essential part of any diagnosis since Galen; on this topic Cfr. R. French, *Medicine before Science: The Business of Medicine from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment*, Cambridge UP, Cambridge 2003.
- ²⁷ J. Carkesse, *Lucida Intervalla*, cit., pp. 45, 30, 35 (*Pronounc'd at the taking of a Vomit*, line 3; *Poet No Lunatick*, lines 1-2).
- ²⁸ Ivi, p. 32 (*The Riddle*, line 3).
- ²⁹ Ivi, p. 27 (*The Doctors Advice*, line 2).
- ³⁰ Ivi, p. 34 (*His Rule of Behaviour*, lines 7-8).
- ³¹ Ivi, p. 28 (*The New Distinction*, line 10). On Apollo's function in *Lucida Intervalla* see also G. MacLennan, *Lucid Interval: Subjective Writing and Madness in History*, Leicester UP, Leicester-London 1992, pp. 40-41.
- ³² J. Carkesse, *Lucida Intervalla*, cit., p. 28 (*The New Distinction*, lines 13-14).
- ³³ Ivi, p. 32 (*The Riddle*, lines 5-6).
- ³⁴ Ivi, p. 36 (*Poet no Lunatick*, line 11).
- ³⁵ Ivi, pp. 3-4 (*To the Duke General of the Artillery Ground*, lines 9-13).
- ³⁶ Ivi, pp. 12, 15 (*The Poetical History of Finnesbury Mad-House*, lines 60, 65-66, 115-116).
- ³⁷ V. Brackett, *The Facts On File Companion to British Poetry: 17th and 18th Centuries*, Facts on File, New York (NY) 2008, p. 379.
- ³⁸ All information about Anne Finch's life is based on: B. McGovern, *Anne Finch and her Poetry: A Critical Biography*, University of Georgia Press, Athens (GA) 1992; C.H. Hinnant, *The Poetry of Anne Finch*, University of Delaware Press and Associated University Presses, Newark (DW)-London-Toronto 1994; A. Ingram (ed.), *Patterns of Madness in Eighteenth Century. A Reader*, Liverpool UP, Liverpool 1998, p. 54.
- ³⁹ G. Greer, «Times Literary Supplement», 26, 1974, quoted in C.H. Hinnant, *The Poetry of Anne Finch*, cit., p. 15.
- ⁴⁰ Ivi, p. 17.
- ⁴¹ Ivi, p. 33.
- ⁴² A. Finch, *The Poems of Anne, Countess of Winchilsea*. From the Original Edition of 1713 and from Unpublished MS. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Myra Reynolds, University of Chicago Press, Chicago (IL) 1903, p. 15 (*Ardelia to Melancholy*, lines 39-42).
- ⁴³ Ivi, p. 94 (*The Spleen*, line 112).
- ⁴⁴ Ivi, p. 91 (*The Spleen*, line 60).
- ⁴⁵ Ivi, p. 15 (*Ardelia to Melancholy*, lines 1-2).
- ⁴⁶ «A Woman here, leads fainting Israel on, / She fights, she wins, she tryumphs with a song, / Devout, Majestick, for the subject fitt. / And far above her arms, exalts her witt», lines 1-4 (Ivi, p. 6).

⁴⁷ Ivi, p. 19 (*On Affliction*, lines 1-8).

⁴⁸ See C.H. Hinnant, *The Poetry of Anne Finch*, cit., p. 213; P.R. Backsheider, *Eighteenth-century Women Poets and their Poetry*, Johns Hopkins UP, Baltimore (MD) 2005, pp. 145-146.

⁴⁹ Transgression was considered one of the major causes of melancholy. Richard Baxter (1615-91), for example, says: «ANOTHER great Cause [of Melancholy] is the Guilt of some great and wilful Sin, when Conscience is convinced, and yet the soul is not converted» (R. Baxter, *The Signs and Causes of Melancholy. With Directions Suited to the Case of Those who are Afflicted with it. Collected out of the Works of Richard Baxter, For the Sake of Those, who are Wounded in the Spirit* (1716), in A. Ingram (ed.), *Patterns of Madness*, cit., p. 45).

⁵⁰ D. Irish, *Levamen Infirmi or, Cordial Counsel to the Sick and Diseased*, Printed for the Author, London 1700, pp. 42-43. «Vapours» were believed to arise from overheated passions and cloud the brain.

⁵¹ R. Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), Digireads, Stilwell 2010, vol. II, p. 126.

⁵² D. Irish, *Levamen Infirmi*, cit., p. 42.

⁵³ A. Finch, *The Poems of Anne*, cit., p. 15 (*Ardelia to Melancholy*, lines 6-12).

⁵⁴ Ivi, p. 95 (*The Spleen*, lines 128-131).

⁵⁵ The physician Richard Lower (1631-1691) was renowned in the 17th century. Ivi, p. 96 (*The Spleen*, lines 142, 150).

⁵⁶ Ivi, p. 89 (*The Spleen*, lines 26-27).

⁵⁷ *Ibidem.* (*The Spleen*, lines 16, 19).

⁵⁸ Ivi, p. 93 (*The Spleen*, lines 99-103).

⁵⁹ Ivi, p. 91 (*The Spleen*, lines 64-65).

⁶⁰ C.H. Hinnant, *The Poetry of Anne Finch*, cit., p. 43.

⁶¹ See C. Mounsey, *Christopher Smart: Clown of God*, Bucknell UP, Lewisburg (PA) 2001, pp. 203-205.

⁶² The manuscript of *Jubilate Agno* consists of seven fragments (A, B1, B2, B3, B4, C and D); fragments A and D include only «Let» lines, fragments B3 and B4 only «For» lines; B1, B2 and C comprise both a «Let» and a «For» set of lines. When talking about the different «sections» of the manuscript, I am referring to the groups of «Let» and «For» lines throughout the fragments.

⁶³ See M. Knight and E. Mason, *Nineteenth-Century Religion and Literature*, Oxford UP, Oxford-New York (NY) 2006, p. 28; R.P. Fitzgerald, *The Form of Christopher Smart's Jubilate Agno*, «Studies in English Literature 1500-1900», 8, 3, 1968, p. 487.

⁶⁴ C. Smart, *Jubilate Agno*, Fragment B2, lines 2 and 127. The transcription of Smart's manuscripts has been made public on the Internet, in *Jubilate Agno by Christopher Smart*, <<http://www.pseudopodium.org/repress/jubilate/index.html>> (02/2013), since, as the editor Ray Davis explains, most printed editions of the poem are out of print, and no paperback has ever been available. Smart's text can also be consulted in C. Smart, *Poetical Works of Christopher Smart: Jubilate Agno*, ed. by K. Williamson, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1980, vol. I. All subsequent references to *Jubilate Agno* will include indication of the fragment followed by the line number, as in R. David's electronic edition.

⁶⁵ See Marquis of Lansdowne (ed.), *The Petty Papers: Some Unpublished Papers of Sir William Petty*, Constable and Company Ltd., London 1927, vol. II. The 'scales of creatures' had also overt racial implications, as Smart's *Jubilate Agno*, where «the Blacks are the children of Cain» (B3.72).

⁶⁶ Among the possible sources for the lists of animals and plants, Greene mentions «Albin's History of Birds and Miller's Gardener's Dictionary» (D.J. Greene, *Smart, Berkeley, the Scientists and the Poets: A Note on Eighteenth-Century Anti-Newtonianism*, «Journal of the History of Ideas», 14, 3, 1953, p. 333). Although Smart repeatedly suggests he is relying on classical texts, such as Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, it seems that his main source might have been more recent. In fact, he mentions the «Rackoon» (A.87): this term was introduced in the seventeenth century, during the early colonization of North America, and the animal was first classified by Linnaeus in the second edition of his *Systema Naturae*, dated 1740. The latter text, in my opinion, might thus be considered one of Smart's key sources. For the history of the term «Rackoon», see S. Romaine, *Contact with Other Languages*, in J. Algeo (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the English Language, English in North America*, Cambridge UP, Cambridge 2001, vol. VI, p. 164.

⁶⁷ D.J. Greene, *Smart, Berkeley, the Scientists and the Poets*, cit., p. 332; K. Williamson, *Smart's Principia: Science and Anti-Science in Jubilate Agno*, «The Review of English Studies», 30, 120, 1979, p. 411.

⁶⁸ Mentions of animals are also followed by free associations, and connections established in a train of thought, or through plays on words, as in: «Let Jorim rejoice with the Roach – God bless my throat and keep me from things stranggled» (B2.57); «Let Sergius Paulus rejoice with Dentex – Blessed be the name Jesus for my teeth» (B2.96).

⁶⁹ C. Smart, *Jubilate Agno*, cit., A.74, B2.3.

⁷⁰ A.J. Kuhn, *Christopher Smart: The Poet as Patriot of the Lord*, «ELH», 2, 1963, p. 130.

⁷¹ C. Smart, *Jubilate Agno*, cit., A.71, B1.54.

⁷² Ivi, cit., B1.123, 160, 180; See also B1.125, 141, 161, 171, 190, 202, 217. Direct references to life in the madhouse are only two: «FOR I pray the Lord JESUS that cured the LUNATICK to be merciful to all my brethren and sisters in these houses»; «For they work me with their harping-irons, which is a barbarous instrument, because I am more unguarded than others» (B2.174-175).

⁷³ Ivi, B1.142, 217, 167, 173. David Kuhn maintains that Smart «sees himself as a new Dav- idic patriot of the Lord, descended from great warriors and martyrs» (A.J. Kuhn, *Christopher Smart*, cit., p. 122).

⁷⁴ C. Smart, *Jubilate Agno*, cit., B2.97, 181, 246, 98. The last quotation seems to be 'completed' in B3.68: «For ignorance is a sin because illumination is to be obtained by prayer». For what concerns Locke, see: «For Lock supposes that an [sic] human creature, at a given time may be an atheist i.e. without God, by the folly of his doctrine concerning innate ideas» (B3.43).

⁷⁵ Ivi, B2.359, C.255. On this topic, see F. Easton, *Mary's Key and the Poet's Conception: the Orphic versus the Mimetic Artist in Jubilate Agno*, in C. Hawes (ed.), *Christopher Smart and the Enlightenment*, St Martin's, New York (NY) 1999, pp. 161-163.

⁷⁶ C. Smart, *Jubilate Agno*, cit., B1.162.

⁷⁷ See G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, ed. by J.N. Findlay, Oxford UP, Oxford, 1977, pp. 225-227; M. Foucault, *History of Madness*, cit., pp. 30, 41-42 and *passim*.

⁷⁸ A. Ingram, *Cultural Constructions*, cit., pp. 88, 185.

⁷⁹ P. Shaw, *The Juice of the Grape: or, Wine Preferable to Water* (1724), in A. Ingram (ed.), *Patterns of Madness*, cit., pp. 69-70.

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L'avenir c'est le présent (parfait). Les commencements du protochronisme littéraire roumain *

La plus importante polémique littéraire roumaine de la dernière décennie communiste s'avère particulièrement riche pour l'analyse de prises de position à l'intérieur d'un espace littéraire fortement idéologisé. Les deux moments choisis pour un regard de près sont les textes qui commencent la lutte (intense, très politisée, dramatique pour certains) entre le groupe des partisans du protochronisme et le groupe des autonomistes, défenseurs des valeurs spécifiques de la littérature et de l'*illusio* fondatrice¹, la croyance dans l'art pour l'art.

Le premier groupe est assez peu connu en dehors de la culture roumaine. Il se constitue, à la fin des années 1970, comme une idée forte de la primauté roumaine dans quelques domaines de la culture universelle. Ce qui nous intéresse ici n'est pas un jugement de valeur sur la pertinence de cette idée, mais une tentative d'explication de son fonctionnement polémique (et de ses défaillances) dans ce moment spécial de la culture roumaine.

L'idée centrale du mouvement protochrone est que, dans son cheminement, la culture roumaine (par ses représentants de choix) a devancé quelques grands courants littéraires universels. On voit, par exemple, des baroquistes et des baroquistes au début du XVIIe, avant que le courant baroque même s'impose comme tel dans l'Occident; on fait du psychologisme naturaliste avant Zola et son école, du réalisme dans la manière de Flaubert avant 1848 etc. Les exemples sont tirés du livre de chevet des protochrones, *Din clasicii nostri* (De nos classiques, 1977), écrit par un lettré reconnu et estimé du temps, comparatiste, spécialiste de la littérature italienne et du Moyen Âge et, en tout, scientifiquement sans reproche: Edgar Papu. Ancien disciple d'un grand nom de l'esthétique de l'entre-deux-guerres, Tudor Vianu, il fait de la prison politique à cause de ses convictions religieuses (il est catholique); après la libération, il deviendra lecteur à l'Université Populaire de Bucarest.

Ses leçons de littérature roumaine, données chaque semaine devant un public assez composite, font la substance de ce petit livre qui, dès le moment de sa parution, devient l'oriflamme du nouveau courant. Edgar Papu est celui qui donne le nom de «proto-chronisme» (dans un article de 1974²) et montre, sans économie d'épithètes, comment les grands écrivains roumains ont devancé les moments littéraires occidentaux. Il identifie dans l'œuvre d'un écrivain du Moyen Âge roumain, parue en 1705, des éléments qui renvoient à la 'sombre mélancolie' des romantiques. Il voit dans les *Enseignements* de Neagoe Basarab, un ouvrage *ad usum delphini* dans la bonne tradition des cours princières de partout l'Europe, une œuvre baroque. La plus large intervention (à part les pages consacrées au poète national) est dédié à un écrivain du début du XIXe, Costache Negruzzi, dont une nouvelle, *Alexandru Lăpușneanu* (1922), est qualifiée comme «exceptionnelle, un merveilleux accomplissement flaubertien»³, ce qui est, comme on le sait tous, au moins une question de goût esthétique. Ce qui nous intéresse est dans les lignes qui suivent:

[Voilà] un détail, pour nous, d'une importance capitale [...]. Il ne se situe seulement parmi les premiers réalistes roumains, mais il est le premier dans le monde qui applique, radicalement, le réalisme dans un récit historique. Flaubert vient après Negruzzi. Ce fait doit se faire souligner en toutes lettres.⁴

Comment lire ce paragraphe? Comment trouver l'importance de cet accent si fort mis sur le devancement, vu comme la plus importante – et la plus ignorée – caractéristique de la création de cet écrivain? On essaie d'avancer quelques hypothèses.

Premièrement, on est devant la reprise d'un lieu commun du modèle de grandes histoires littéraires (y compris roumaines) de l'entre-deux-guerres. Pour les historiens littéraires roumains, nés comparatistes et avec des vastes lectures européennes, auteurs de synthèses historiques et de traités d'esthétique, le comparatisme 'primaire' (trouver l'air de famille, pour ainsi dire) est une manière habituelle de placer un écrivain dans son époque. Qui plus est, ce comparatisme primaire donne un schéma axiologique en soi: Ion Creangă est, pour George Călinescu, notre Rabelais; Mihai Eminescu se présente, successivement, sous les traits de Novalis ou de Hölderlin; telle prose pourrait devenir célèbre comme Hamlet et ainsi de suite.

Mais ce qui peut être lu comme une marque de reprise d'un modèle traditionnel et légitimant dans la logique interne de l'historiographie littéraire se verra rapidement dépassé par l'appropriation du noyau idéologique de la thèse d'Edgar Papu. Le dépassement vient d'une nouvelle direction. Pour les partisans du nouvel courant, il s'agit d'un primat culturel indiscutable, mis sous le signe du 'retour revendicatif': voilà, on a été les premiers, c'est chez nous que toute la culture est née; mais l'Occident nous a ignoré et nous ignore encore, dans sa superbe autosuffisante. Maintenant c'est notre tour, c'est le retour de l'ignoré, du refoulé; et c'est ici toute la véhémence du

protochronisme. C'est une idée politisée dès le début, culturellement politisée. On reprit le refrain de la Roumanie comme terre élue (en rejetant – et pour cause – ses lectures religieuses de l'entre-deux-guerres) en la transférant au début dans la littérature, puis dans l'historiographie⁵.

Cette originalité (primordiale, si on se permet le pléonasme) est, dans les exposés mêmes de Papu, fulgurante, douteuse, ludique si on le veut bien. C'est un jeu de style, de faire-semblant, d'éclaboussures de tonalités communes. Inconsciemment, un nouvelliste roumain du début du XIXe a (dans une seule scène d'une seule prose) l'œil et le plumeau qui renvoient au style flaubertien. Ce style est à reconnaître partout chez Flaubert, et on emploie 'reconnaître' dans le sens que Michel Foucault développe dans *Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?*⁶: la reconnaissance de l'unité stylistique, l'évolution, l'appropriation etc. Negruzzi, de son côté, écrit également des proses historiques, des petites et délicieuses physionomies, des morceaux épistolaires etc. Pour garder le vocabulaire soutenu et célèbre, Flaubert fait de toute force fonction d'auteur, Negruzzi, assez peu.

La ligne d'argumentation de Papu se déploie devant un public habitué au spectacle fulgurant d'un maître, et non pas à la scientificité d'un discours soutenu. Ces nouvelles 'leçons populaires' manquent, par principe et par nécessité, de rigueur du système. Ce sont des invitations à la lecture, des séductions didactiquement habiles, de trouvailles développées devant des néophytes. Le spectaculaire et l'audace de la présentation dépassent la nécessité de fonder le discours sur des 'vérités' scientifiquement prouvables.

I. La main anonyme et l'œil du spectateur

Pour des nécessités didactiques, à l'occasion d'une relecture de Papu, on a eu la chance de tomber sur un exemplaire (emprunté de la bibliothèque des Lettres de l'Université de Bucarest) annoté. Une main anonyme, un(e) étudiant(e) aux passions médiévistes ou un(e) prof excédé(e), avait inscrit sur les marges de l'article portant sur Neagoe Basarab des remarques sur cette primordialité baroque du livre des *Enseignements*. Le lecteur anonyme est un modèle de bon sens et de modération, que le comparatiste aveuglé qui est Papu échoue systématiquement à atteindre: pour le lecteur anonyme, c'est la sagesse biblique qui nous parle dans les pages de Neagoe; c'est la voix du vieux sage des Écritures, et pas du tout Baltásar Gracián, Erasme ou quelqu'un d'autre. La plus sincère et la plus raisonnée annotation de ce lecteur/cette lectrice anonyme se trouve inscrite à la page 25, à propos de la grande conquête anticipatrice supposée par Papu: «aucune anticipation, mais une source commune».

Si le camp des écrivains idéologisés s'approprie rapidement l'hypothèse de la primauté roumaine et en fait presque immédiatement son oriflamme, la réaction du groupe des autonomistes jouera, dans la réception

immédiate, sur la carte de la modération. C'est une lecture modérée et modératrice, centrée autour des valeurs autonomistes, qui s'impose comme dominante dans les principales répliques au livre de Papu. L'un de premiers articles après la parution du livre est signé Nicolae Manolescu, chroniqueur en titre de la revue «România literară» (Roumanie Littéraire) et chef de file de la critique non-engagée. Sa chronique joue l'équilibre entre la méfiance pure («quelle que soit ma bienveillance, je ne vois aucun rapport entre le conte de Creangă et la littérature occidentale de l'absurde» ou «établir des primautés dans la critique littéraire est d'une parfaite inutilité») et l'admiration envers les subtilités interprétatives de Papu («le charme de cette critique naît de son déploiement culturel, des associations et comparaisons»⁷). Manolescu fait l'effort d'une lecture esthétisante et historique du livre de Papu, en applaudissant – en connaisseur – les analyses de texte minutieuses et précises, mais jamais manquant de ponctuer son étonnement devant ce qui est de trop:

C'est surprenant qu'un homme de lettres savant et plein de précautions comme Edgar Papu puisse mettre si rapidement l'égalité entre le synchronisme et «le vouloir qui nourrit une conscience retardataire».⁸

Dans l'effort de préciser les côtés et les armes de cette confrontation, on peut y ajouter, comme simple observation, que le penché esthétisant du plus connu critique littéraire du moment reste, en fin de compte, dominant. Papu a un chapitre sur un poète qui essaie, à la moitié du XIXe, de faire quelques poésies picturales sous le nom de *Pastels chinois* et que la critique protochrone gratifie avec le titre de «premier poète impressionniste»⁹, qui aurait subi – avant les peintres de ce courant – l'influence de la poésie chinoise médiévale. Et voilà Papu déployer une longue analyse comparative sur Alecsandri et Du Fu, grand poète chinois du VIIIe. Ce chapitre est sanctionné par Manolescu avec un expéditif «Alecsandri n'aurait jamais pu lire Du Fu»¹⁰, mais salué par le même Manolescu avec un adjectif au moins surprenant: «Il ne s'agit pas d'influence, mais d'affinité [...] Papu trouve ces affinités à la fin d'une démonstration *éclatante*»¹¹. La grille de lecture est celle de la gratuité toute-puissante, de l'insolite, des rapprochements spectaculaires. On est dans la transposition en acte de la gratuité artistique pure: les propos de Papu sont simultanément rejetés et applaudis pour la même chose, en tant que jeux de fiction. C'est un effet de lecture qui dévoile la forme dominante de la critique du moment: la croyance dans le jeu gratuit et libre de la littérature.

2. L'avenir, le présent, le parfait

Évidemment, dans une société totalitaire, la croyance dans la liberté et la gratuité de l'art n'est qu'une autre manière de détourner les pressions du politique. Dans les premières années de la dernière décennie communiste,

la confrontation précise ses côtés: les autonomistes gardent la lecture interne comme principe tout-puissant et font des hiérarchies qui légitiment selon les critères immanentes des valeurs spécifiques, tandis que les protochrones utilisent les thèses de Papu pour édifier l'image d'une injustice primordiale subie par l'esprit roumain.

On peut lire dans l'idée de la primauté ignorée une forte résolution nationaliste, certes, mais également une expression d'urgence: l'urgence de se faire reconnaître, de vivre pleinement son droit de commencement, de *primus*. Notre avis est que, au premier moment (la fin des années 70 et le début des années 80), c'est ici, dans ce sentiment d'urgence du moment présent, que le protochronisme a trouvé le terrain commun avec l'idéologie nationale-communiste roumaine. L'idée du présent comme temps singulier et unique dans sa perfection, comme seule (et dernière) conjoncture favorable vient se joindre au noyau dur de l'idéologie nationale-communiste, qui est le culte du dirigeant Ceausescu. Les dérapages vers le nationalisme sont un lieu commun de la dernière période des régimes communistes partout en Europe de l'Est; Leszek Kołakowski identifie le nationalisme communiste comme la dernière possibilité des leaders de communiquer avec leurs sujets, étant donné que le marxisme-léninisme était déjà devenu une «doctrine grotesque»¹². Mais le nationalisme roumain des années 80 se développe d'une manière assez particulière, selon un mécanisme de type synecdoque: l'image de ce peuple glorieux et pacifiste, qui plus est fondateur de culture, est réduite synthétiquement à l'image de son dirigeant, le 'fils' mais également le 'père' de la patrie. Le présent est l'aboutissement (et la vengeance) d'une longue période de victoires (minimalisées) et de commencements (ignorés). C'est 'l'Époque d'or', le nom utilisé unanimement dans les années 80 pour désigner la période de règne de Ceausescu. On y assiste à un assez significatif éloignement du noyau de la doctrine communiste classique, qui postulait l'avenir comme 'Âge d'or de l'humanité'. Pour le national-communisme roumain, l'avenir glorieux n'est plus une projection, mais un fait du présent. On garde l'esprit d'urgence et la véhémence du refoulé, mais, dans un deuxième temps, on célèbre l'aboutissement de tout ce lignage de grands esprits de la culture roumaine dans l'image d'un seul caractère, celui de son dirigeant.

3. Deux rappels à l'ordre

La confrontation entre les deux définitions de la littérature (Hétéronome vs. Autonome) semble, dans les conditions idéologiques de la Roumanie totalitaire, assez injuste et prévisible: les protochrones ont l'appui de l'appareil politique, ce qui entraîne d'un coup l'accès privilégié aux ressources institutionnels (circuits de diffusion plus accessibles, censure moins scrupuleuse), tandis que les autonomistes, dépourvus de ces avantages, ont comme seule arme la position forte dans l'espace de la critique littéraire.

Cette distribution de pouvoir imprime une nouvelle dynamique à l'espace littéraire: les autonomistes font de leur mieux pour refuser aux protochronistes l'accès à la légitimité littéraire, en leur refusant le statut même d'écrivain et en rejetant leur production littéraire comme non-conforme aux lois spécifiques du jeu littéraire.

Dans une réponse à une enquête de revue, un critique assez connu pour ses prises de positions proches du pôle des esthètes, Alex Ștefănescu, fait l'une de plus claires démarcations entre la littérature des protochrones et leur idéologie:

A travers une gravité directement affichée et par une solidarité complète et énergique des militants, les traditionnalistes [transforment] la littérature en mission. Ils déconsidèrent le style, qui n'est pour eux qu'une sorte de bureaucratie de l'écriture, incapable d'exprimer un contenu idéologique ou sentimental tumultueux. Ils présentent beaucoup de complexes et un inlassable désir de faire preuve de culture. Ils utilisent comme arme polémique (incorrecte, mais toujours efficace) le ton agressif, l'insinuation, l'accuse sans preuves, l'insistance poussée jusqu'aux dernières limites. Ils dominent notre temps, puisque leur présence humaine arrive à estomper la présence littéraire des autres et même leur propre présence littéraire.¹³

Regardé de près, ce fragment d'article esquisse assez clairement les attributs de deux camps: le rejet du style, la violence polémique entretenue par les privilèges politiques, la «présence humaine» et non pas littéraire font du protochronisme un mouvement hétéronome parfait; en revanche, le camp autonome est figuré dans la réponse de Ștefănescu par une seule instance, mais une instance essentielle: «la présence littéraire des autres»¹⁴. Littéraire, et non pas humaine, dans la logique dominante de l'œuvre qui dépasse l'auteur et qui est la substance de l'*illusio* dont parle Pierre Bourdieu.

Dans cet espace où les croyants dans les règles du jeu littéraire se trouvent dominés par la véhémence des protochrones, mais gardent le pouvoir institutionnel pour distribuer les lettres de noblesse du métier (ils comptent parmi eux des membres des jurys pour les prix littéraires nationaux et ils dirigent les conseils de l'Union des Écrivains), les efforts pour minimiser l'influence du politique vont du rejet des romans historiques à thèse protochrone¹⁵ jusqu'à la dénonciation d'un plagiat (acte qui contredit la valeur essentielle de quelqu'un qui se veut écrivain, c'est-à-dire l'originalité¹⁶). Ce sont des manifestations logiques pour ce qui porte le nom de «rappel à l'ordre» dans la terminologie bourdieusienne¹⁷, ce qui veut dire la forte action des esthètes pour rappeler aux acteurs proches du pôle de grande production leur défaillance par rapport aux normes internes de l'espace dans lequel ils évoluent.

Mais, simultanément, le camp des protochrones agit dans sa propre logique de rappel à l'ordre: ses membres les plus actifs arrivent à employer,

à l'intérieur d'une polémique très dure, les mêmes dénominations des valeurs spécifiques autonomes (originalité, liberté de création, valeur littéraire immanente), mises au service de leur propre définition de la littérature. Ils proclament, au nom même de la liberté de l'écrivain, leur droit d'appartenir complètement à l'espace de la création littéraire, et dénoncent comme trop étroite et même comme idéologisée la définition des autonomistes:

La tendance de se douter de la valeur ou de l'opportunité de la thèse du protochronisme roumain [...] s'est transformée dans une véritable méthode d'exalter l'originalité (surtout dans le sens de performance et de valeur) opposée au protochronisme. Comme si l'originalité n'était justement la condition *sine qua non* et la prémisse du courant protochrone. [...] En fin de compte, ce que les adversaires de ce nouveau courant rejettent c'est la légitimité même d'une nouvelle démarche d'histoire et de critique littéraire, destinée à conférer au peuple roumain une autre idée sur son identité même.¹⁸

Dans la ligne d'argumentation du camp protochrone, autonomie et hétéronomie s'entremêlent, pour signaler aux ennemis leur position proche du nationalisme politique et, simultanément, leur principale enjeu de lutte, imposer leur définition hétéronome comme définition forte du champ. En s'appropriant le vocabulaire des esthètes et en détournant leurs usages, ils essaient de bloquer tout rappel à l'ordre de ces derniers, comme manquant d'objet et de pertinence. Jusqu'à la fin des années 80, ils continuent à promouvoir leur définition hétéronome, avec l'appui de plus en plus visible de l'appareil politique.

Notes

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¹ Voir P. Bourdieu, *Les règles de l'art. Genèse et structure du champ littéraire*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris 1992, surtout la première partie, *Trois états du champ*, pp. 75-243.

² E. Papu, *Protocronismul românesc* (Le protochronisme roumain), «Secolul 20», 5-6, 1974, pp. 8-11. Traductions de l'auteur.

³ E. Papu, *Din clasicii nostri* (De nos classiques), Eminescu, București 1977, p. 54.

⁴ *Ivi*, p. 55.

⁵ Un seul exemple: la révolte paysanne menée par trois héros très chers aux Transylvains, Horea, Cloșca et Crisan, devient, dans les nouveaux livres d'histoire de la dernière décennie communiste, la Première Révolution Moderne. Pour ne pas s'abuser, l'événement a eu lieu en 1784, cinq ans avant la Révolution française.

⁶ M. Foucault, *Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?*, dans *Id.*, *Dits et écrits*, Gallimard, Paris 1994, tome I, pp. 789-821.

⁷ N. Manolescu, *Din clasicii noștri* (De nos classiques), reproduit dans *Id.*, *Lista lui Manolescu* (La liste de Manolescu), Aula, Brasov 2001, pp. 55 e 58. Traduction de l'auteur.

⁸ *Ivi*, p. 59.

⁹ E. Papu, *Din clasicii noștri* (De nos classiques), *cit.*, p. 75.

¹⁰ *Ibidem.*

¹¹ *Ibidem.* C'est moi qui souligne.

¹² L. Kołakowski, *L'histoire du marxisme. Les fondateurs. Marx, Engels et leurs prédécesseurs*, trad. de O. Masson, Fayard, Paris 1987, p. 29 (ed. orig. *Glównie nurty marksizmu: powstanie, rozwój, rozkład*, Instytut Literacki, Paryż 1976-1978).

¹³ Al. Ștefănescu, *Un raft de bibliotecă* (Une rangée de bibliothèque), réponse à l'enquête *Une rétrospective (provisoire) de la littérature de la 8^{ème} décennie*, «Convorbiri literare» (Entretiens littéraires), 143, 1981, pp. 2-3. Traduction de l'auteur.

¹⁴ *Ibidem.*

¹⁵ Voir, sur la réception d'un roman historique protochrone, la chronique (exemplaire dans son autonomisme sans faille) de Nicolae Manolescu pour le roman de Paul Anghel, *Istoria și romanul* (L'Histoire et le roman), «România literară», 44, 1981, p. 9.

¹⁶ Dans un article de la revue «România literară» (2), Nicolae Manolescu dévoile le multiple plagiat d'Eugen Barbu, directeur de la revue «Săptămâna» (La Semaine), la plus connue tribune des protochrones. Dans le roman *Incognito*, Eugen Barbu avait utilisé, sans citation, amples fragments des mémoires de Konstantin Georgiyevich Paustovski *Temps de jadis*, d'Ilya Ehrenbourg (le IV^e volume de *Les gens, les années, la vie*), des souvenirs de Mikhaïl Koltsov et quelques fragments de romans d'André Malraux et Ernest Hemingway. Le procédé et l'écrivain sont publiquement désavoués par l'Union des Écrivains Roumains.

¹⁷ Voir P. Bourdieu, *Les règles de l'art*, cit., pp. 103-107.

¹⁸ D. Zamfirescu, *La nouvelle conscience de soi de la culture roumaine*, «Săptămâna» (La Semaine), nouvelle série, 501, 1980, pp. 2-3. Traduction de l'auteur.

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«... cierta malicia ... por el rabillo del ojo ...» Régression du *fin amour* dans *La cajera*

La cajera, œuvre de l'auteur José Ángel González Sainz, né à Soria, est le second des neuf contes contenus dans le recueil *Los encuentros*. Ce premier écrit fut publié en 1989 par la maison d'édition barcelonaise Anagrama. Le texte, tout comme les huit autres, illustre la tragédie existentielle de l'homme occidental contemporain¹.

Racontée à la troisième personne, l'histoire de *La cajera* aborde le sujet de l'amour d'une perspective différente de celle du modèle de l'amour courtois. Une analyse du conte par rapport au paradigme médiéval fait apparaître une relation ambiguë. En effet, malgré quelques analogies, il existe de nombreuses différences qu'il est nécessaire de souligner.

Aussi bien dans le paradigme du *fin amour* que dans la littérature post-moderne, nous pouvons remarquer qu'il est impossible pour l'homme et la femme de vivre leur sentiment. Dans le premier cas, la raison de ce phénomène réside dans la structure sociale du Moyen Âge. Le poète, qui incarne l'amoureux, ne peut pas assouvir son amour pour la dame aimée. Sa condition de mariée et son appartenance à un milieu social plus élevé que celui de son soupirant leur interdisent d'avoir une relation proprement-dite.

Dans le second cas, en revanche, c'est le drame du nihilisme contemporain qui fait obstacle à l'authenticité de l'amour. Dans *Sein und Zeit (Être et temps, 1927)*, Martin Heidegger soutient que la décadence de notre époque dérive de l'oubli de la vérité de l'être en faveur de 'ce qui est', pensé sans la notion de son essence². Donc, on observe une dépersonnalisation de la condition humaine et une robotisation des rapports interpersonnels. Le philosophe allemand croit, en effet, que le mode de penser moderne n'est pas correct puisque l'agir n'est pas conçu dans son essence, sinon dans l'utilité que son effet provoque³. Par conséquent, le matérialisme utilitariste de la société occidentale actuelle réduit l'être humain à sa réification. En d'autres termes, l'autre n'est pas considéré une personne, mais un instrument.

El resultado – igual hasta se podía llamar lectura – de esos meses de convivencia no había sido el menos esperado, el más alejado de cuanto ciertamente podían imaginar. Desafortunado a lo mejor sería poco decir, fatídico tal vez e incluso hasta recíprocamente destructivo. Pero quizá simple y llanamente realizado. Ella había regresado pocas semanas antes a Avignon y éste era el primer enlace desde entonces – tal vez más conmemorativo que otra cosa – de trenes hacia el sur. Una señal verde y sónica del aparato de lectura había atestado la realización final de la operación y daba acaso vía libre al próximo producto, después de que una luz roja sin duda con ausencia de sonido hubiera exigido ciertamente por más tiempo la reiteración del movimiento de frotación contra el cristal.⁴

Le résultat – ou bien la lecture – de ces mois de vie ensemble n'était autre que le moins attendu, le plus loin de tout ce que l'on pouvait imaginer. Malheureux était le meilleur adjectif avec lequel on le pouvait considérer, voulu par le Destin et encore mutuellement destructif. Mais peut-être était-ce simplement fait. Elle était rentrée depuis peu de semaines à Avignon et celui-ci était le premier voyage. – encore plus mémoratif que tout autre chose – vers le sud. Un signal vert et bruyant de la machine de lecture avait marqué la réalisation finale de l'opération et elle avait donné l'aval au prochain produit, après qu'une lumière rouge sans aucun doute silencieuse aurait voulu peut-être pour plus de temps la répétition du mouvement de contact contre la vitre.

Cet extrait de *La cajera* résume, d'un point de vue conceptuel, le contenu du conte. L'idée irréalisable d'un amour authentique entre les personnages anonymes de l'histoire est renforcée par cette scène. Il convient de se concentrer sur l'étroite relation entre les personnages et le caractère mécanique des opérations effectuées par la caisse du supermarché. L'homme et la femme de *La cajera* se rencontrent pour la première fois dans le centre commercial où l'héroïne travaille. Dans ce passage, la fin de cet amour, non sans hasard, est liée à son début. En effet, à travers l'emploi de la narration à la troisième personne, il est possible d'observer, d'une manière symbolique, que la réalité machinale du supermarché devient la métaphore de l'automatisme de cet amour.

Dans cet exemple, le champ sémantique des achats réduit le rapport interpersonnel à un phénomène typique de la société de consommation. Ce concept est mis en évidence grâce à l'analogie entre les produits du supermarché qui se suivent sur le tapis roulant de la caisse et les histoires d'amour vécues par l'individu postmoderne lesquelles, de façon semblable, défilent avec la même rapidité. De cette manière, l'accumulation de l'identique et la robotisation des relations humaines caractérisent les sentiments contemporains. Ce détail apparaît aussi dans *Historia y crítica de la literatura española* (2003) de Francisco Rico. En effet, le critique littéraire espagnol y explique que, dans la production d'aujourd'hui, de nombreux écrivains abordent le sujet de l'amour de cette façon puisque l'objectif de leurs œuvres consiste à décrire la crise de cette valeur⁵.

Selon Ernst Jünger, le nihilisme accélère son mouvement quand il y a une réduction⁶. Dans la désacralisation de l'amour, présentée dans *La cajera*, ce phénomène est à son comble car l'autre se transforme, d'une manière expressionniste, en un objet dont la personne peut se débarrasser quand il ne sert plus.

Dans ce passage, tout ce que les personnages vivent pendant leur relation coïncide avec la fin de leur histoire. Cette équation avive la conception du néant, exprimée par Jünger. Le philosophe, en effet, affaiblit le pessimisme de sa pensée car, au milieu du désert du nihilisme, il identifie, d'une façon métaphorique, des régions de fertilité. La mort, l'éros, l'amitié et l'art représentent, par conséquent, des oasis qui contrastent l'aridité du néant avec la puissance de leur fécondité⁷.

Dans *La cajera*, González Sainz montre une dimension plus sombre du nihilisme. Ce texte souligne, en effet, la domination du néant. Au contraire de Jünger, l'écrivain ne considère pas l'amour comme l'ancre de salut qui permet de s'éloigner de la 'terre sauvage' de l'absence de valeurs. L'éros incarne, ici, une des occasions où le pouvoir du nihilisme s'impose. L'individualisme qui caractérise la relation amoureuse des personnages de ce conte détruit, en effet, la possibilité d'une relation authentique.

Il n'est pas possible d'établir avec certitude l'existence d'une influence directe de Fiodor Dostoïevski sur la littérature de González Sainz. L'intellectuel russe, toutefois, anticipe les intuitions de l'auteur espagnol puisqu'il soutient que le nihilisme commence à agir lors de l'isolement de l'individu qui s'éloigne de la société⁸. Les personnages de *La cajera* vivent l'expérience du néant de cette façon. Même quand ils sont ensemble, ils symbolisent la solitude des couples contemporains puisqu'ils sont, en effet, seuls ou, tout au plus, en compagnie du vide de leurs vies.

Dans la littérature courtoise, l'amour commence par le regard: les yeux représentent, donc, son premier véhicule. Dans le modèle du *fin amour*, la pureté et l'idéalisation triomphent et la noblesse des sentiments prévaut, car le sentiment acquiert une dimension spirituelle. Le regard de la femme aimée, en outre, est le miroir de la perfection de son âme: la couleur bleue de ses yeux, de par la pureté de sa tonalité, met en évidence la nature immaculée de sa personnalité et transmet les valeurs les plus élevées de l'amour.

En ce qui concerne le conte de González Sainz, l'approche par le regard se manifeste de manière antithétique par rapport à celle de la littérature courtoise. En effet, les yeux de la femme cessent d'exprimer les idéaux raffinés puisqu'ils véhiculent la malice du clin d'œil:

Salió al poco con una botella de Bordeaux – de marca, a decir verdad, más que apreciada efectivamente codiciada – y una sonrisa llena, derramada, de malicia seguramente por el rabillo del ojo.⁹

Elle est sortie après peu de temps avec une bouteille de Bordeaux – d'une griffe très importante, à vrai dire, plus fameuse qu'appréciée – et avec un sourire plein de malice, atténué certainement par le clin d'œil.

Ici, quoique le narrateur à la troisième personne et l'utilisation du terme «seguramente» affaiblissent le discours de l'auteur, on remarque la mondanité malicieuse du regard féminin. L'emploi de ce type de narration donne au texte une plus grande crédibilité, parce que la troisième personne exprime un degré d'impartialité. De plus, dans le passage indiqué, il faut se

concentrer sur le mot-clé «malicia». La nuance négative de ce nom révèle l'ambiguïté des yeux de la femme. Ceux-ci transmettent, en effet, un regard d'intelligence complaisante, qui met en évidence le manque d'innocence du personnage. L'expression «sonrisa llena» se lie à la malice évoquée dans le texte d'une façon qui n'est pas le fruit du hasard. Contrairement à l'amour courtois, dans *La cajera*, la bouche ne représente pas la candeur de la femme. Son sourire devient le symbole de la vulgarité et de l'invitation charnelle, que l'on retrouve aussi dans ses yeux malicieux. Dans le passage analysé, il est aussi nécessaire d'examiner la relation entre le vin, suggéré par la métonymie «botella de Bordeaux», et le sourire. En effet, tous deux véhiculent l'idée de l'absence de modération. Ce rapprochement entre l'alcool et le sourire souligne, donc, le manque de sobriété de l'héroïne.

Dans la littérature courtoise, on observe une conception du temps différente de celle de *La cajera*. En général, elle est caractérisée par une structure linéaire de la chronologie puisque l'amour envers la dame angélisée représente un chemin de la croissance intérieure pour le 'moi' du poète. En d'autres termes, la noblesse de l'amour courtois contribue à établir une correspondance verticale entre l'écoulement du temps et l'édification morale de l'homme. Citons par exemple l'expérience de Dante Alighieri. Dans sa production, l'écrivain italien souligne que la pureté du sentiment envers Béatrice est un parcours qui, par le truchement de la 'femme ange', permet au poète de rejoindre la gloire de Dieu. Plus exactement, dans la troisième partie de la *Divine Comédie*, c'est grâce à l'intervention de la dame aimée que Dante peut connaître le royaume des cieux.

Dans *La cajera*, en revanche, le temps est circulaire et se répète sans variations de manière monotone. L'emploi de ce type de chronologie est fonctionnel pour souligner la répétition machinale des événements. Les personnages anonymes de l'histoire adoptent une attitude robotisée. Pour cette raison, la circularité chronologique reproduit la dépersonnalisation de leur condition de vie.

Desde entonces se vieron siempre cada dos meses. A la ida la recogía en el supermercado y compraba cada vez manzanas como el primer día; ella salía con su botella de Bordeaux y su sonrisa llena y respingona para él, y se precipitaban sin pérdida de un momento a cerrar por dentro un pomo blanco de una puerta azul – o verde o rosa – en un apartamento abuhardillado a la izquierda del carrusel de L'Horloge. A la vuelta, era ella quien le esperaba en la estación para un fin de semana entero tras una puerta verde – o rosa o malva –, le obsequiaba con manzanas y galletas bretonas para la continuación de un viaje al cogollo del tedio de su intimidad.¹⁰

De ce moment-là, ils se sont vus tous les deux mois. À l'aller, il allait la chercher au supermarché et toutes les fois il achetait des pommes tout comme le premier jour; elle sortait avec sa bouteille de Bordeaux et avec son sourire plein pour lui et ils se lançaient sans perdre du temps à fermer le rond blanc d'une porte bleue – ou bien verte ou bien rose – dans un appartement à gauche de l'Horloge. Au retour, elle l'attendait dans une gare pour un week-end tout entier derrière une porte verte – ou bien rose ou violet –, elle lui offrait des pommes et des biscuits bretons pour continuer un voyage avec l'ennui de leur intimité.

La narration à la troisième personne présente les caractéristiques des rencontres. Bien que le texte mette l'accent sur le début de la relation, son contenu exprime aussi la circularité du temps qui se répète chaque fois de la même manière. La répétition de l'identique ne permet pas une évolution de la conscience car le commencement coïncide avec la fin. La conception temporelle de ce conte met en évidence le pessimisme de cette histoire puisque l'identité entre l'introduction et la conclusion exprime le drame contemporain de l'impossibilité et de l'incapacité d'aimer. L'amertume du passage devient plus profonde au fur et à mesure que nous réfléchissons sur la perspective de la narration. Celle-ci augmente la tragédie postmoderne car, même si le temps passe, il s'écoule, en général, sans changements. La seule différence que nous remarquons dans ce texte réside dans la couleur de la porte qui, à l'intérieur de la circularité de la chronologie, transforme sa tonalité. Ce changement insignifiant est imperceptible car, dans son unicité, il marque le passage du temps circulaire.

Dans *Über die Linie* (1951), Jünger écrit que l'ordre appartient au nihilisme. Ainsi même dans les catastrophes, il est possible de remarquer la présence de composantes ordonnées. Le philosophe pense, en effet, que le chaos représente seulement une des conséquences du néant, et qui n'est même pas l'une des pires¹¹. Dans *La cajera*, on observe un discours semblable puisque le rythme saccadé et systématique des rencontres, souligné par le narrateur dans ce passage, établit une correspondance entre l'ordre et le nihilisme. Malgré le fait qu'il leur soit impossible de vivre une relation authentique, les personnages anonymes du conte vivent le néant dans l'ordre de la répétition de leurs actions.

Dans l'amour courtois, la puissance du langage se manifeste dans sa sublimité qui, avec son lyrisme caractéristique, chante la beauté physique de la femme et sa noblesse d'âme. Dans le contexte du *fin amour*, la communication atteint le sommet le plus élevé car elle exprime, de façon poétique, les idéaux les plus purs de la littérature chevaleresque.

Dans *La cajera*, par contre, le lecteur perçoit la crise du logos, car le conte représente une chronique du désamour où le nihilisme s'impose aussi au niveau du discours.

Era un piso pequeño, blanco y abuhardillado que compartía con dos estudiantes – más o menos amigas, más o menos hermosas – y llenaban de música a todas horas del día y de la noche. Una manilla blanca, de porcelana, cerraba imperfectamente por dentro la puerta que, pintada de un barniz de distinto color cada pocos meses, daba acceso a su cuarto. Él señaló las angosturas del tiempo y ella fue por un sacacorchos a la cocina; tras una

C'était un appartement petit, blanc et meublé, qu'elle partageait avec deux étudiantes – plus ou moins amies, plus ou moins belles – qu'elles remplissaient de musique à chaque heure du jour et de la nuit. Une poignée blanche, en porcelaine, fermait imparfaitement de l'intérieur la porte qui, d'une couleur différente tous les quelques mois, donnait sur sa chambre. Il lui a indiqué le temps trop court et elle est allée à la cuisine pour prendre un tire-bouchon; après une

leve incisión circular con la punta del mismo, desprendió el capuchón de plástico de la botella y ella trajo dos vasos; él se quitó la chaqueta y ella se sentó en el colchón extendido en el suelo; se aplicó concentrado a extraer el corcho de la botella y una blusa tirada al desgaire sobre una silla descubrió unos pechos llenos, respingones de alguna forma como su sonrisa; acabó colmando los vasos y los acercó al borde del lecho, fuera del alcance de donde había echado las ropas, antes de que ella lo besara primero en el cuello y él apremiara un brindis sobre su cuerpo de vino entre las sábanas.¹²

Todavía quedaba un fondo no apurado de botella en el suelo, cuando el asperjeo del agua de una ducha, entreverado de risas y medias frases en una lengua desigualmente pronunciada, precedió por breves instantes a un portazo apresurado y a un estrépito de tacones retumbando precipitadamente escaleras abajo hacia un andén.¹³

légère incision circulaire, elle a enlevé le bouchon en plastique de la bouteille et elle a apporté deux verres; il s'est enlevé la veste et elle s'est assise sur le matelas étendu par terre; il s'est appliqué à tirer le bouchon de la bouteille et une blouse accrochée en désordre par une chaise a découvert des seins tous pleins, retroussés d'une certaine manière comme son sourire; elle a rempli les verres et elle les a approchés au bord du lit, loin du lieu où elle avait jeté ses vêtements, avant qu'elle l'embrasse d'abord dans le cou et qu'il porte des toasts à son corps de vin entre les couvertures.

Il y avait encore un fond de bouteille qui n'avait pas été bu sur le sol, quand le bruit de l'eau d'une douche, voilé de rires et de demi-phrases dans une langue qui n'est pas prononcée de la même manière, a précédé pour de courts instants un coup à la porte pressé et un bruit de talons précipités dans l'escalier, vers une plate-forme.

Ces deux textes expriment l'incommunicabilité contemporaine car, à travers la littérature, González Sainz soulève le problème du langage. Dans le premier, par le truchement d'une narration à la troisième personne, l'auteur illustre la première rencontre des personnages. L'atmosphère décrite souligne, toutefois, l'absurdité de la situation qui accentue, de cette manière, la crise verbale de l'époque postmoderne. La musique omniprésente dans l'appartement met en évidence l'abus du *logos* qui, dans ses différentes expressions, est souvent utilisé mal à propos.

L'hospitalité acquiert, ici, une apparence grotesque puisque la convivialité est liée au sexe. Par un artifice littéraire, l'écrivain associe la passion charnelle à la façon dont l'homme est accueilli par la caissière. Le vin présente, ainsi, une connotation négative: il n'est pas la boisson qui remplit de bonheur la compagnie, au contraire il incarne le dérèglement des instincts. La cruauté des personnages augmente dans la mesure où le lecteur sait qu'ils viennent de se connaître. L'alcool contribue à aviver la turpitude de la scène qui, de cette manière, manifeste un aspect orgiaque.

Dans cet exemple, González Sainz mêle le vin et le corps; grâce à l'emploi d'une prose où les compléments se superposent, avec lyrisme, dans la dernière ligne de la première citation, l'auteur crée une confusion. Le lecteur, en effet, ne réussit pas à distinguer si l'expression «de vino» se réfère à «un brindis» ou à «su cuerpo». L'ambiguïté de la phrase acquiert une valeur artistique qui accentue l'absence de modération.

La scission entre le rapport sexuel et l'amour, la hâte du personnage masculin correspondent, en outre, à l'incommunicabilité de la société oc-

cidentale. L'incapacité des personnages à instaurer un dialogue révèle le caractère incomplet du langage. De plus, la musique qui est présente partout et à n'importe quelle heure, se lie aux rituels robotisés de l'hospitalité provoquant ainsi la paralysie du *logos* qui, surmonté par le néant, s'atrophie et révèle son aphasie. Dans ce texte, donc, les personnages montrent leur inaptitude à exprimer l'authenticité de l'amour car, dans leur horizon verbal, elle n'existe pas.

Dans la deuxième citation, la hâte, symbole de la frénésie contemporaine, continue à caractériser la scène. Par le truchement du langage, de plus, il est encore possible d'observer l'incommunicabilité de ce couple. L'allusion à une langue prononcée avec un accent différent présente, tout d'abord, une valeur métaphorique. Bien que les personnages n'aient pas la même nationalité, l'obstacle linguistique révèle les problèmes de leur manque de dialogue.

L'absence d'une communication authentique subvertit l'humanité de ces personnages. Malgré leur statut fictif, ils perdent leur identité parce qu'ils sont incapables d'utiliser la caractéristique la plus spécifique de la personne, c'est-à-dire le langage. Dans *Lettre sur l'Humanisme* (1947), Martin Heidegger soutient que le *logos* est la demeure de l'essence humaine. Selon le philosophe, l'homme doit, donc, vivre dans sa «maison naturelle» car, autrement, il n'existe pas¹⁴.

En ce qui concerne l'amour courtois, il vaut la peine de souligner la pureté des lieux qui distinguent la dame angélisée. À ce propos, il est convenable de réfléchir sur la troisième partie de la *Divine Comédie*: Dante choisit Béatrice comme guide dans le royaume du Paradis. Dans cette dimension sublime, le poète place sa muse inspiratrice car, ainsi, il désire accentuer ses vertus.

Dans *La cajera*, en revanche, la topographie du personnage féminin devient un espace infernal: le charme des endroits chantés dans le *fin amour* disparaît et, à sa place, une réalité hideuse triomphe:

[...] él se quitó la chaqueta y ella se sentó en el colchón extendido en el suelo; se aplicó concentrado a extraer el corcho de la botella y una blusa tirada al desgaire sobre una silla descubrió unos pechos llenos, [...].¹⁵

[...] il s'est enlevé la veste et elle s'est assise sur le matelas étendu par terre; il s'est appliqué à tirer le bouchon de la bouteille et une blouse accrochée en désordre par une chaise a découvert des seins tous pleins, [...].

Ici, González Sainz présente le lieu où la caissière vit. L'allusion au matelas étendu par terre synthétise l'aspect moral de l'endroit: la chambre de l'appartement de la femme se transforme, en effet, dans un lupanar du sexe. Le lit nuptial des anciens se réduit à la vulgarité d'une pièce où, suivant une régression primordiale, les personnages consomment leurs rapports sexuels. Dans le dérèglement de la répétition de ces derniers, le sauvage prédomine sur le civilisé. La chambre se transforme en un milieu douteux puisque, par le truchement de ce lieu, l'individu vit l'expérience de la perte liée au néant.

Malgré sa neutralité, la chambre devient un endroit sombre à cause de tout ce qui se passe à l'intérieur. Elle peut donc être associée à une caverne où le rythme vertigineux de la société industrialisée réifie l'être humain qui, dominé par la technique, ignore son prochain. Dans cette barbarisation de la personne, le fait de ne pas se connaître n'empêche pas les personnages de continuer à copuler à la manière des animaux.

Le supermarché où le personnage féminin travaille se présente, en outre, d'une façon semblable à un cosmos infernal.

Una mujer de edad a primera vista indescifrable, que lo mismo podía ser joven como muy vieja, hermosa como muy fea – por cuanto a la frondosidad de un cabello suelto de extraña plenitud que ocultaba sus facciones, unía unos ademanes recargados, parsimoniosos e inelegantes –, frotaba reconcentrada, mecánicamente, con una bayeta estropajosa que de tanto en tanto escurría en un cubo de agua negra, un suelo amplio y embaldosado a la entrada del establecimiento, cuya suciedad sin embargo no tanto suprimía cuanto uniformaba [...].¹⁶

Une femme tout d'abord d'un âge indéchiffable, jeune ou très vieille, belle ou très laide – à côté des cheveux de rare plénitude qui occultait son visage, elle ajoutait des façons très recherchées, parcimonieuses et inélegantes. Elle passait mécaniquement la brosse que, de temps en temps, elle mettait dans un seau d'eau noire et ensuite elle le posait sur le plancher grand en tuiles à l'entrée d'un édifice, dont elle ne contribuait pas à éliminer la saleté mais auquel elle donnait son uniformité [...].

La femme de ménage du supermarché se trouve toujours à proximité de la porte d'entrée et, par la mécanique de ses mouvements, elle incarne, en termes expressionnistes, une gardienne moderne du royaume de la perversion. La narration à la troisième personne montre que, par le truchement de cette femme, le personnage masculin entre dans un monde déshumanisé. L'opulence effrontée de cet univers offre à la portée de la main une grande gamme de produits. Le microcosme du centre commercial représente le symbole du postmoderne. Comme dans un supermarché, dans la réalité quotidienne, l'individu soumet tout à la logique de la société de consommation. Même l'amour ne se soustrait pas à ce mécanisme: *La cajera* est, par conséquent, le reflet de la société de masse actuelle, consacrée au plus matérialisme le plus déshumanisant.

La femme de ménage, alors, introduit le personnage masculin dans un espace sombre: la couleur noire de l'eau ne s'associe pas seulement à la saleté du plancher mais elle acquiert aussi une valeur symbolique. En effet, elle représente la négativité du supermarché, avec sa capacité malade de tout ramener à la mentalité plate de la société de consommation. La caissière, alors, est aux antipodes de la Béatrice dantesque car, au contraire de cette dernière, elle ne constitue pas l'instrument avec qui l'amoureux peut faire l'expérience du sublime.

Deux personnages féminins caractérisent le centre commercial. La femme de ménage, par son apparence contradictoire, a des affinités avec le monde de fées. La caissière, en revanche, a un aspect provocateur. En effet, elle est

réduite à une simple tentation érotique. Malgré son caractère attrayant, le supermarché représente un cauchemar. L'endroit où l'héroïne travaille devient, alors, un espace expressionniste. Par le truchement de la caissière, l'homme ne vit pas un parcours de rédemption puisqu'il est englouti dans un processus de damnation. Le personnage masculin vit, de cette façon, le paradoxe de la société occidentale contemporaine. En effet, bien qu'il se trouve dans une relation de couple, il est absorbé par la solitude:

[...] aunque incluso hasta se vayan ya [...] même si les ormes que l'on laisse
desvaneciendo las huellas que se dejan dans le plancher commencent à dispa-
en él al mismo tiempo en que se están raître dans le même temps où elles se
plasmando.¹⁷ forment.

Grâce à Béatrice, Dante vit l'expérience du Paradis d'une manière indélébile. Le poète visite ce royaume à travers sa femme angélisée et, au fur et à mesure qu'il le parcourt, il connaît une élévation morale. Dans le conte de González Sainz, par contre, l'attraction envers la caissière devient le symbole de l'aspect éphémère de notre société occidentale. Ainsi, cette citation, qui coïncide avec le dénouement de l'histoire, exprime, de façon lyrique, la métaphore du drame de l'amour contemporain. La rencontre se transforme, alors, en une trace de pas sur un plancher humide qui s'estompe au même moment où elle se forme.

Notes

¹ J. Goñi, *Los pecados de la ficción*, «El Urogallo», 2, 1989, pp. 67-70.

² M. Heidegger, *Être et temps*, trad. par F. Vezin, Gallimard, Paris 1986, p. 14 (*Sein und Zeit*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen 1927).

³ Ivi, p. 28.

⁴ J.Á. González Sainz, *Los encuentros*, Anagrama, Barcelona 1989, pp. 54-55. S'il n'est pas indiqué différemment, toutes les traductions sont de l'auteur.

⁵ F. Rico, *Historia y crítica de la literatura española*, vol. IX, Editorial Crítica, Barcelona 2003, p. 43.

⁶ E. Jünger, M. Heidegger, *Essai sur l'homme et le temps: tome III. Le Noeud Gordien. Passage de la ligne*, trad. par H. Plard, Éditions du Rocher, Monaco 1957-1958, p. 513 (*Über die Linie*, Klostermann, Frankfurt 1951).

⁷ Ivi, p. 529.

⁸ Ivi, p. 477.

⁹ J.Á. González Sainz, *Los encuentros*, cit., p. 45.

¹⁰ Ivi, p. 47.

¹¹ Ivi, p. 64.

¹² Ivi, p. 46.

¹³ Ivi, p. 46.

¹⁴ M. Heidegger, *Lettre sur l'Humanisme*, trad. par R. Munier, Éditions Aubier, Paris 1964, p. 51 (*Brief Über den «Humanismus»*, Klostermann, Frankfurt 1947).

¹⁵ J.Á. González Sainz, *Los encuentros*, cit., p. 46.

¹⁶ Ivi, p. 39.

¹⁷ Ivi, p. 56.

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Reflections upon the Italian Cultural and Literary Presences/Representations in Interwar Romania*

I. Preliminary remarks

Speaking about cultural relations and therefore about how cultural brands appear, are perceived and evolve is always challenging, because this is a subject that can be looked at from many different angles. This research aims to concentrate on some of the questions regarding Italy's image and influence over Romanian culture in the first half of the 20th century by emphasizing the twists and turns of academic and literary contacts established between these two countries. Although positioned outside the classic diplomatic instruments, universities and writers (be they poets or novelists) represent important and efficient channels for the dissemination of cultural notions and values to foreign areas, often stimulating progress in the intellectual and artistic life, both in the host countries and in the countries of their origin.

2. Methods, Stages, Obstacles and Facilitators for the Propagation of Italian Culture in Romania (1920-1939)

Amongst the first observations to consider when speaking about the Italian presences within the Romanian cultural space, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, is that Italy always had to face a powerful opponent in this area – namely France. It is a well known fact that Romania represents, linguistically and culturally, a Latin island in a geographical area which had been dominated for a long time by other civilizations, political and economical models – Turkish, Slavic, German or (Austro-)Hungarian. Therefore, in an effort to neutralize such a challenging state of affairs and preserve its specificity Latin heritage, the Romanian *élite* naturally gravitated towards the most important Latin countries of Europe – France and Italy

– and cultivated intense contacts with their cultures. There were many types of scholarly, artistic and cultural exchanges between Romanian and French and Italian intellectuals, and over time both Paris and Rome developed different strategies for their cultural propaganda in the region. The main difference between French and Italian authorities resided in the participation of their state institutions, and subsequently finance, in this process.

One of the most effective forms of imposing scientific, literary and artistic concepts, theoretical and practical notions is by providing academic training to young foreigners, who would later spread the acquired knowledge in their regional or national communities. In time, this approach became a formally authorized and encouraged policy by the French government, which desired to ensure the supremacy of the French mentality over the European continent and in particular over Central and Eastern Europe¹. The steady *peregrinatio academica* towards France started approximately around 1870 and continued until the beginning of the Second World War, with a pronounced official emphasis from the 1920s onwards and a statistical peak in the 1930s. As Christophe Charle explained in his well-documented study, the attractions of Paris resided not only in its specific political, cultural and intellectual atmosphere, but also in the devotion to the scientific spirit, the unlimited curiosity and the preoccupation for social issues which impregnated this city and its academic institutions².

In this respect, the Romanians demonstrated a significant tendency to go and study in the City of Light or other French universities, then return to their homeland in order to occupy high level positions in the public sphere. Indeed, Romanians were one of the privileged ethnic groups taking part in the phenomenon: in 1893-1894, 189 (namely 11,25%) of the total number of 1680 foreign students enrolled in French universities were Romanians, while in 1929-1930, there were 2255 Romanians studying in France, the second largest foreign group after the Polish youngsters³. By comparison, Italy turned into an attractive academic destination for the Romanian *élite* predominantly after 1918, as discourses regarding the common Latin heritage of these two nations penetrated wider cultural audiences. So, if from 1906 to 1910 there were only 20 Romanians enrolled in Italian universities, out of a total of 1206 foreigners, in 1926-1927, one could find 548 Romanian students (namely 25,4%) out of a total of 2157 foreigners studying in Italy⁴.

The competition between Italy and France also manifested itself within the Romanian borders. Both countries created many different structures in the first half of the 20th century, in order to propagate their cultural values towards the Romanian public.

In the case of Italy, there was a first phase, spanning from 1920 to approximately 1933, when cultural propaganda in Romania was carried out mainly through academic channels. During this time, the departments of Italian language and literature, functioning within the Faculties of Letters of Bucharest, Iași and, later, Cluj were the focal points for presenting the

accomplishments of Italian civilization to a Romanian audience. They also played a central role in initiating associations and publications dedicated to the transmission of Italian cultural ideas, values and achievements.

In the University of Bucharest, the chair of Italian language and literature was set up in 1913, under the guidance of Professor Ramiro Ortiz, with a moderate success. A short while later, in January 1921, the same Ramiro Ortiz decided to create a special journal named «Roma» after the Italian capital city. The aims of this new publication were to make a Rumenian audience aware of the Italian social, artistic and cultural context and to print translations from classic and modern Italian writers⁵, as well as to provide elements for understanding the Italian soul and the present problems of the Italian peninsula through different studies, books and press reviews, or biographical articles. A circle of Italian studies was connected to the «Roma» magazine, in order to intensify the Italian cultural propaganda amongst Romanians. These two structures generated sufficient interest and consequently motivated Ramiro Ortiz to establish and preside over an Institute of Italian Culture, whose activity started in 1924. More elaborate than the previous initiatives, this institution, concentrated on enabling cultural exchanges between Italy and Romania, provided an auspicious framework for regular courses and lectures dedicated to the Italian language and civilization. «Roma» became the official journal of the Institute of Italian Culture, methodically reflecting its modest, yet coherent and ongoing work⁶. This magazine also recorded, after an opinion poll, the increasing interest of Romanian professors for teaching and learning Italian⁷.

The unrelenting efforts of Ramiro Ortiz in spreading Italian culture in Romania gained him a lot of support from famous Romanian figures and led to even more organizations celebrating the close ties between Rome and Bucharest. Consequently, in 1929, the association *Cultura Italo-Romena* was set up, under the joint honorary presidency of the Italian ambassador in Romania and the famous Romanian historian Professor Nicolae Iorga. Ortiz took up the position of executive director, while another prominent *italianista*, Alexandru Marcu, was appointed general secretary⁸. Another sign for the rising penetration of Italian culture on the Romanian scene is the inauguration of the Libreria Italiana in 1931. Situated in the core of Bucharest, on the famous Calea Victoriei, at no. 89, this shop provided the Romanian audience with the latest books and periodicals from the Italian peninsula, and managed to have a rather significant clientele in a short period of time.

If the capital city of Romania concentrated the largest part of the Italian cultural propaganda efforts, it was not the only place where Italian civilization was presented to eager Romanians. Since 1921, in Transylvania, at the Romanian University of Cluj, Giandomenico Serra, who had trained at the University of Turin, took charge of the Seminar (or Lectureship) of Italian language, motivating many students to decipher its mysteries⁹. In 1926, Serra became permanent professor in Cluj, while in 1927 Italian lecturer

Alessandro Favolo joined Serra in Cluj, which enabled the Seminar to develop into the Chair of Italian Language and Literature¹⁰. This improved academic structure offered courses and seminars on the most famous Italian writers and artists, as well as Italy's geography and history. Meanwhile, in Iași, things developed more slowly. Italian became an academic discipline only in 1926 and started to be systematically studied at the University. The first professor was Iorgu Iordan, who taught a course on the history of Italian Literature for twenty years under the Chair of Romanic languages and literatures. Yet one had to wait until 1929 to see the first native speaker, Italian lecturer Augusto Garsia, join the teaching staff of Iași University and start thorough language and literature lessons, but a distinct Chair of Italian Language and Literature was created only in 1935-1936¹¹.

The gradual progress of Italian cultural propaganda in Romania, as well as the growing and more detailed interest of the Romanian public towards it are evident in the first decade after the end of the First World War. However, most of the activities were organized as individual, quasi-private initiatives, rather than official ones. Although cultural dissemination was mostly carried out through academic structures and cultural associations, which had the help of local scientific personalities such as Nicolae Iorga, it had neither the formal endorsement nor the powerful financial back-up of the Italian authorities. For example, the Italian government was involved only marginally in the comprehensive and varied plans of professor Ramiro Ortiz (who can be symbolically considered as the best propaganda agent for Italy in this phase and had many ambitious objectives) and did not offer funding for the activities of the Institute of Italian Culture.

Such an attitude affected both the cultural image of Italy within the Romanian space and its impact on the Romanian public. Generally speaking, Italy's image was mostly a traditional, classical one, which relied on tried and tested values.

Historically, Italy was perceived and promoted as the country of our ancestors, the Romans. This idea was conveyed, amongst other things, through the placement of many statues of the *Lupa Capitolina* in Romanian cities. Donated by a large group of Italian intellectuals who visited Romania in the summer of 1921, these sculptures were displayed in Bucharest, Iași, Cluj, Timișoara and Constanța, becoming an integrant part of the local public patrimony¹².

In literature, the most frequent references concentrated upon the works of Dante, Petrarca, Goldoni, Torquato Tasso or Gabriele d'Annunzio. The chairs of Italian Language and Literature at the Romanian universities mainly commented upon or worked with the texts of these consecrated authors, considered to have used or forged the purest literary and linguistic Italian terminology. On occasions, names such as Edmondo de Amicis or Giosuè Carducci also appeared in the academic curriculum, though they did not occupy an extensive space. Even journals of Italian cultural propaganda, such as «Roma», predominantly published the above men-

tioned classical Italian writers and poets and generally avoided references to more contemporary intellectuals of the Italian cultural scene, despite a proclaimed interest in both classic and modern literature¹³.

Unsurprisingly though, the 'almighty' Mussolini was a regular presence in the pages of «Roma», and associations such as Cultura Italo-Romena counted amongst its main objectives the translation into Romanian and the publication of Mussolini's speeches on Italian culture and civilization, even if *il Duce* was providing no money for all this¹⁴.

In striking contrast, the French authorities were supporting with generous sums and a lot of specialists the various activities and publications of the Institut Français de Hautes Études, which was founded in Bucharest in May 1924 and quickly became a respected presence amongst Romanians, attracting a substantial public¹⁵.

Taking into account the scarcity of financial means and the range of literary, artistic or public Italian personalities disseminated through the structures created in Romania since the 1920s, one can easily see that Italy's culture was enjoyed by a fairly limited audience – teachers, students, historians, philologists, sometimes diplomats or businessmen. Indeed, the admirers of Italy were primarily motivated by professional interests to acquaint themselves with it.

However, the Romanian *élite* was also familiar with the most up-to-date Italian cultural concepts and products of the 20th century, such as Futurism. What the established, institutional Italian channels in Romania were lacking or avoiding, was distributed through networking and personal contacts. The press also played an essential role in spreading the most recent tendencies of Italian art and literature.

Although the first Romanian mentions of Filippo Tommaso Marinetti can be traced back to as early as 1906, it is only from 1909 onwards, with the simultaneous publication of the *Manifesto del Futurismo* (1909) in France and other countries, Romania included, that a constant attention started to be given to this literary and artistic movement by Romanian intellectuals¹⁶. After the coagulation of *avant-garde* groups in Romania and the emergence of specialized periodicals, from 1924 onwards, Futurism occupied a significant place within these literary circles, bringing about a lot of theoretical debates and crucially influencing their members. The Romanian *avant-garde* artists were so impressed by Marinetti's concepts and achievements that they published a lot of futurist texts in the most important Romanian *avant-garde* journals – «Contimporanul», «Unu», and «Integral» – and also maintained a steady correspondence with him¹⁷. Furthermore, in the specific integrating manner which is the most typical characteristic of the Romanian *avant-garde*, Marinetti's name and persona became literary subjects in several texts. First, in April 1927, a whole poem written by Stephan Roll was dedicated to the founder of Futurism in the review «Integral», in a special issue which praised the innovations and impact of this *avant-garde*

movement¹⁸. Second, in April 1928, Marinetti is mentioned on a list alongside other world famous *avant-garde* poets and artists such as Tristan Tzara, André Breton or Theo van Doesburg, in the poem called *Manifest* (1928), written by Sașa Pană, which inaugurated the Romanian surrealist review «Unu»¹⁹.

This rather irreverent approach towards a living personality and one of the founding fathers of the *avant-garde* was an attempt of delimitating the members of «Unu» from the previous *avant-garde* movements, as well as a sign of the strong influence Marinetti had on these Romanian literary factions. At the same time, the swift transition from an admiring mind-set towards Marinetti to a rather reserved and judgmental one within just a year hints at the various stances of Romanian intellectuals towards Western *avant-garde* models, both in art and politics. Indeed, when Marinetti visits Bucharest, in May 1930, his futurist ideas will come under close scrutiny not only from a literary point of view. Romanian *avant-garde* representatives, admirers and opponents will jointly react to the presence of this distinguished guest amongst them, generating a lively public debate around the various meanings of Futurism.

Yet, before studying the pros and cons which this event created in Romanian cultural life, we must continue our short analysis of Italian cultural propaganda channels in interwar Romania.

As we have noted above, the 1920s and the 1930s represented a so called preliminary phase for the dissemination of Italy's cultural achievements towards the Romanians. During this interval there was a conscious and evident effort to create structures and organizations for the promotion of the Italian language and civilization to attract and form an interested public. Offering a similar, yet parallel, outlet, the Romanian media conveyed the latest Italian artistic and literary trends, which by their mere essence tended to disregard or avoid more conventional methods of propagation. Despite the variety of means that were employed and the different masterpieces or artefacts brought to the attention of the audience, Italy's cultural influence in Romania remained quite narrow. Futurism, as an expression of the modern Italian spirit, did not manage to generate a significantly wider impact than the classical Italian values, accessible through the academic institutions.

This *status quo* of Italian culture in Romania was however going to change in the 1930s, as a second diffusion period started, lasting approximately from 1933 until the beginning of the Second World War in 1939. Now the art, the literature, and all the other cultural forms of expression were incorporated into a coherent propagandistic plan, designed to glorify Mussolini's regime. Governmental money and the state authorities were directly involved in Italy's cultural activities abroad and strived to impose the Italian (usually meaning Fascist) brand in large regions of Europe.

Practically, it meant that the Institute of Italian Culture in Bucharest was placed, since April 1933, under the official patronage of the Italian state and consequently Mussolini's government agreed to finance its activities

with substantial sums. The new position of the Institute led to a diversification of its cultural actions, which were no longer limited to the Romanian capital city. More lectures and concerts were organized in Bucharest as well as in the rest of the province; language courses started all over Romania, the library of the Institute significantly improved its book collections. From 1936 to 1939 the Italian Institute opened branches in most of the Romanian cities and an impressive network of libraries was equally created in places such as Brăila, Braşov, Cluj, Constanţa, Galaţi, Iaşi, Sibiu, Târgovişte, etc.²⁰.

From 1934 onwards, «Roma», the official journal of the Italian Institute, changed its name and its profile, turning into «Studii Italiene» (Italian Studies). As the new title suggests, the focus was now placed on scientific studies:

[la rivista] doveva impegnarsi esclusivamente in lavori scientifici, riguardanti il passato della cultura italiana in Romania, ma anche in possibili contributi di scienziati romeni [destinati] alla chiarificazione di alcuni problemi di letteratura o filologia italiana.²¹

«Studii Italiene» addressed now a different, more limited, but at the same time more specialized audience, transforming itself into a setting of professional discussions and propaganda for Italian culture.

Alongside the structures and publications developed by the Italian Institute, several other associations were created in order to disseminate more efficiently Italy's values in Romania. While their appearance and activity were stimulated by the support provided by the Italian authorities, they were also greatly encouraged by the political landscape of Romania, as the fascination of King Charles II of Romania with the Fascist movement was intensifying in the late 1930s and Bucharest gradually gravitated more towards Rome and Berlin than towards Paris in terms of its foreign policy. Amongst the significant societies, we must mention *L'amicizia italo-romena*, a cultural organization founded in 1936 that assiduously worked for the propagation of Italian art, literature and science in Romania and counted as its members many of the former students of the Romanian School in Rome. One of the most significant achievements of *L'amicizia italo-romena* was an exhibition organized in March 1940, which presented to the Bucharest public a series of paintings reflecting the vision of Romanian artists towards Italy²². Another organism established in 1936 was the *Comitato romeno per l'universalità di Roma*, that aimed to put up a life-size copy of the Emperor Trajan's Column in one of the squares of Bucharest. In 1938, the members of the *Comitato* were able to make a cultural pilgrimage to Rome, Florence and Venice, and the Italian government gave them a block of marble from Trajan's Forum, due to serve as a foundation for their monument²³.

Mass media also played an increasingly important part in the propagation of Italian culture in late 1930s Romania. In 1935 Romanian radio introduced in its programme a regular show named *Attualità italiane*, where

the most interesting cultural events (books, art exhibitions, films, theatre plays, etc.) were brought to the attention of the public. A few years later, in February 1939, news bulletins in Italian started to be broadcasted daily, and since July, the *Ora romena per l'Italia* equally became a part of the weekly radio programme. Its first episode was in fact a lecture by Pellegrino Ghighi, the Italian ambassador to Bucharest, who analyzed the evolution of the Italo-Romanian cultural relationships in the first half of the 20th century²⁴.

Placed in this wider cultural and historical context, Marinetti's visit to Bucharest in May 1930 gains new significance. Chronologically, this journey of one of the most prominent personalities of contemporary Italian literature stands at the frontier line between the two stages of the inter-war Italo-Romanian cultural relationships. As such, on one hand, it illustrates how the Italian state evolved in its foreign policies and decided to use a provocative artist, who had a high capital of popularity and was widely spoken of in cultural circles all across Europe, in order to increase the interest of the Romanians for Italian values. Indeed, while the invitation was issued by the association *Cultura italo-romena*²⁵, we should bear in mind that Marinetti arrived in Romania as one of the first representatives of the Royal Italian Academy and the treatment he received during his stay was widely based on this official quality. Created in 1929, the Italian Academy aimed to determine and make in-depth studies of the most important problems of Italian sciences, letters and arts and Marinetti was appointed as one of its founding members by Mussolini's regime²⁶. Therefore, Marinetti's journey can be seen as a forerunner of the decision of the authorities in Rome to commit themselves financially and logistically to the area of cultural diplomacy in Romania, which widely happened between 1933 and 1939.

On the other hand, Marinetti's trip is an example of how the *avant-garde* turns classic, becomes part of the artistic establishment and implicitly loses some of the inner qualities and energy which had imposed it on the public scene.

Last, but not least, Marinetti's visit had not only aesthetic goals, but also political ones and provided the opportunity for a heated debate in the Romanian press, admirers and critics not hesitating to express their opinions.

3. The Pros and Cons around Marinetti's Visit to Bucharest – May 1930

The Italo-Romanian magazine «Roma», which represented the official position of the Institute of Italian Culture in Romania, reflected Marinetti's visit in a surprisingly sober, classic tone. Indeed, this event was announced in the cultural and scientific news pages using only a few short lines. The editors stated that Marinetti was the second high-profile visitor who honoured Bucharest in 1930, after the distinguished scholar Enrico Fermi. Even if Marinetti was presented by the magazine as the «well-known promoter of Futurist art», his schedule and activities, while in Romania, were described in a telegraphic style. «Roma» mentioned Marinetti's formal reception at the Romanian Academy on

the 16th May 1930 and simply listed the title of the three lectures he presented publicly in the *Aula* of the Commercial Academy, namely: *World Futurism*, *The Plastic Arts in Italy* and *The Beginnings of Italian Modern Literature*²⁷. There is no reference whatsoever in the pages of «Roma» to the other parts of Marinetti's official schedule – such as the ceremony organized by the Society of Romanian writers in his honour – or to his less formal activities – such as the meeting with the Romanian writer Smaranda Gheorghiu, known under the pen name of (Maica) Smara, one of the few women who gravitated in modernist circles and had previously published in the Italian pro-futurist review «Poesia»; the trip to Moreni to see the famous burning oil rig, to which Marinetti will later dedicate a poem; or to the exhibition of Romanian modern art organized in his honour²⁸. Furthermore, «Roma» does not comment in any way upon the atmosphere and the reactions prompted by Marinetti's visit to Bucharest, limiting itself to simply informing the readers about it.

This reserved presentation and all the omissions are significant, because, in our opinion, they reflect the limited popularity enjoyed by Marinetti's artistic vision in one of the most influential distribution channels of Italian cultural values in Romania, and consequently a perennial preference for traditional authors, belonging to the 'Golden Age' of Italian literature: Dante, Petrarca, etc. This also underlines the complex, even partial and biased way in which the futurist leader was used by the Italian authorities in his missions abroad.

In compensation, the Romanian cultural and literary press, especially the *avant-garde* journals such as «Facla» and «Contimporanul», dedicated large spaces to Marinetti's presence in Bucharest. The enthusiasm and interest generated by this event amongst the Romanian artistic community are obvious, even if, as Emilia Drogoreanu has demonstrated in recent studies, by the 1930s most of the Romanian *avant-garde* representatives had pronounced Leftist social and political sympathies and regarded with a critical eye the fact that Marinetti gravitated towards Fascism²⁹. Indeed, in the numerous articles and editorials dedicated to his stay in the Romanian capital city, Marinetti is generally portrayed in very flattering terms, as the 'founding father' of Futurism, the 'modernist poet *par excellence*', the artist who «ha reintegrato la vita nella poesia, l'azione nella bellezza. Marinetti è la saetta lirica che indica la direzione del futuro» ([Marinetti] reinserted life into poetry and action into beauty. Marinetti is the lyric arrow indicating the sense of the future³⁰). Meanwhile, his political stances were implicitly kept under wraps and ignored.

However, criticism and disapproving analyses regarding Marinetti's personality and the circumstances of his visit were not completely absent from the Romanian media. One of the lengthiest editorials on the subject is published by «Gândirea» (The Thinking), a leading, mainstream cultural magazine of interwar Romania, which by the 1930s had evolved from an initially modernist and expressionist publication into a much more traditional one. In the June 1930 issue of the review «Gândirea», we can read a nuanced text re-

flecting upon Marinetti's visit to Bucharest. The Italian guest is portrayed as a «vivacious, intelligent and entertaining person»³¹, whose lectures were attended with great interest. However, the entire event is not spared from significant, harsh criticism, because, according to the author of the article, Nichifor Crainic, only the prestigious title of academician that Marinetti had recently received from Mussolini could explain the fascination of Romanian intellectuals towards him. Crainic concentrates his disapproval upon the episode of Marinetti's reception at the Romanian Academy, going as far as to rhetorically ask whether a serious, traditional institution such as the Académie Française would have solemnly and formally greeted him and adulated Futurism³² (it should be noted here that the long-standing rivalry between the French and Italian cultural models in Romania is once again brought forward with this comment from «Gândirea», demonstrating the profound influence it held in shaping the Romanian interwar artistic and literary landscape).

Emphasizing the fact that the Academia was, by definition, an establishment dedicated to tradition and that Marinetti had publicly declared that he wanted to set fire to museums and similar traditional structures, «Gândirea» did not hesitate to accuse the Romanian cultural personalities and officials – such as the academician Ion Bianu or the writer Ion Minulescu, who had both greeted and welcomed Marinetti in Bucharest –, of being cowards because of this attitude³³. This was a very severe stance, yet Crainic went even farther. The chief editor of «Gândirea» not only rejected Marinetti's artistic model, but his political affiliations were also considered with a rather cautious eye. Mussolini's interest in Futurism and the support that *il Duce* provided to Marinetti was exclusively explained by the need to create a specific style for the Fascist state. According to Crainic, Fascism was a doctrine that amalgamated old and new values into an original formula and Futurism was able to survive and thrive only because it was incorporated into the former, not because of his own valuable artistic products³⁴. While this is a debatable opinion for literary historians and even for historians (that we will not address in this article), it certainly serves as an interesting example of the impact of the *avant-garde* across Europe and the complex relationships established between politics and modern art.

Another fascinating reaction to Marinetti's visit to Bucharest can be found in «Universul». Here the accent fell once more not on the artistic dimension, but on the political one. In an anonymous editorial published on 28th May 1930, a couple of weeks after Marinetti's journey to Romania, his presence is used as a starting point and pretext for polemic reflections on Romania's internal political life. Previous to this article – suggestively entitled *Futurismul politic* (Political Futurism) –, «Universul» had dedicated ample space to Marinetti's presence in Bucharest, detailing his schedule and the feedback it triggered from the Romanian public, and had even made a short biographical and artistic presentation of the Futurist leader before his arrival³⁵.

In *Futurismul politic* though, the tone is no longer deferential. The article starts by mentioning Marinetti's membership of the Italian Academy and does not hesitate to point out the contradictory impact that his art had, before it gained due acknowledgment:

[...] when he [Marinetti] appeared on the literary scene, his brightness enchanted a few, disorientated many and indisposed the rest. [...] All the classic authors and traditionalists rallied against him. In time, however, Futurism has pierced through and today it has branches almost everywhere, prosaic and poetic Cubisms successfully finding refuge under his welcoming mantle.³⁶

In the second part of the article, politics is given the centre stage while artistic values remain in the background. Romania's irregular public life and politics are compared to the unstructured, even ambiguous principles that Futurism proclaimed and consequently criticized in a harsh, yet indirect way. Furthermore, «Universul» makes a comparison between Marinetti and one of Romania's political leaders, Iuliu Maniu, who at the time was the acting Prime Minister: «if Marinetti remains the chief representative of literary Futurism in Italy, Mr. Maniu is the most successful embodiment of political Futurism in Romania»³⁷. This analogy was in fact meant as an unprecedented attack on the political situation in Bucharest, although it was cleverly disguised and presented as a tribute to a foreign personality. It documents the heated socio-political atmosphere of the spring and summer of 1930 in Romania, a period which saw the restoration of King Charles II to the Romanian throne with the strategic help of Iuliu Maniu. Actually, in the light of the historical events that followed very shortly after the publication of this editorial, it can even be considered premonitory – Charles II returned from exile and reclaimed the Romanian throne on 6th June 1930. As king, he gradually introduced an authoritarian regime and did not hesitate to use politicians such as Maniu, and others, in order to dominate the country, and impose his will in every domain. A great admirer of Mussolini, Romanian King Charles II used many of his Italian counterpart tactics in setting up a successful personality cult and sometimes even in his internal and foreign policies.

4. Conclusions

Marinetti's visit to Bucharest, the reactions it generated both within and outside the *avant-garde* circles and its different usage(s), illustrates beyond any doubt the complex and complicated links established between the cultural *élite* and the wider socio-political environment. It proves that the Romanian, as well as the international *avant-garde*, still has many aspects that need to be thoroughly investigated. This would not only provide fresh, new understanding of a phenomenon that deeply shaped and defined the European intellectual arena of the first half of the 20th century, but it would also allow a reassessment of its impact.

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² C. Charle, *Le champ universitaire parisien à la fin de 19^e siècle*, «Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales», 47-48, 1983, pp. 77-89.

³ L. Nastasă, *Itinerarii spre lumea savantă. Tineri din spațiul românesc la studii în străinătate 1864-1944* (Itineraries towards the Scholarly World. Youngsters from the Romanian Provinces studying abroad 1864-1944), Limes, Cluj-Napoca 2006, pp. 132-133.

⁴ Ivi, pp. 286-287.

⁵ Anonymous, *Ce vrem* (What do we want), «Roma, revistă de cultură italiană», 1, 1921, p. 1.

⁶ Anonymous, *Roma. După șase ani* (Rome. After Six Years), «Roma, revistă de cultură italiană», 1, 1927, p. 2.

⁷ Ivi, p. 43.

⁸ V. Turcuș, *Alexandru Marcu (1894-1955) și cultura italiană în România interbelică. Profil biobibliografic* (Alexandru Marcu (1894-1955) and the Italian Culture in Interwar Romania. A Biobibliographical Profile), Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca 1999, p. 122.

⁹ *Anuarul Universității Regele Ferdinand I din Cluj 1921-1922* (The Annual Book of the King Ferdinand I, University of Cluj 1921-1922), Institutul de Arte Grafice, Cluj 1923, pp. 16, 33, 187.

¹⁰ *Anuarul Universității Regele Ferdinand I din Cluj 1927-1928*, Ed. L. Cioflec, Cluj 1929, p. 144.

¹¹ E. Cărcăleanu, *80 anni di italianistica presso l'Università Al. I. Cuza Iași, Atti del Simposio Internazionale di Iași (12-13 maggio 2006)*, Editura Universității Al. I. Cuza, Iași 2006, pp. 9-15.

¹² Ș. Damian, *Raporturi culturale între Italia și România* (Cultural Relationships between Italy and Romania), in Id., *Privoirea reciprocă* (The Mutual View), IDC Press, Cluj-Napoca 2009, pp. 86-98.

¹³ See endnote 5 and the explanation given in this article at p. 167. The aims of this new publication were to «far conoscere al pubblico romeno il movimento sociale, artistico e culturale italiano» and to print «traduzioni di scrittori italiani classici e moderni».

¹⁴ V. Turcuș, *Alexandru Marcu (1894-1955) ...*, cit., p. 122.

¹⁵ For the creation and activities of the Institut Français between 1924 and 1939 see A. Godin, *Une passion roumaine, Histoire de l'Institut Français de Hautes Études en Roumanie 1924-1948*, L'Harmattan, Paris 1998, pp. 10-115.

¹⁶ The Romanian reception of Futurism in its first phase is described by E. Drogoreanu, *Influente ale futurismului italian asupra avangardei românești. Sincronie și specificitate* (Influences of the Italian Futurism on the Romanian Avant-garde. Synchronicity and Specificity), Paralela 45, Pitești-București 2004, pp. 27-31; Id., *Aesthetic Affinities and Political Divergences Between Italian and Romanian Futurism*, in G. Berghaus (ed.) «International Yearbook of Futurism Studies», de Gruyter, 1, 2011, pp. 178-188.

¹⁷ E. Drogoreanu, *Aesthetic Affinities and Political Divergences Between Italian and Romanian Futurism*, cit., pp. 188-191.

¹⁸ This poem, entitled *F.T. Marinetti*, was published in «Integral», 12, 1927, p. 5 (it is accessible online at <<http://www.poezie.ro/index.php/poetry/13897597/index.html>>, 11/2012). On this subject see also I. Pop, *Între Gheorghe Dinu și Stephan Roll* (Between Gheorghe Dinu and Stephan Roll), «România Literară», 20, 2004, pp. 16-17.

¹⁹ S. Pană, *Manifest*, «Unu», 1, 1928, p. 1.

²⁰ A.-M. Stan, *Rivalità culturali franco-italiane in Romania nei primi anni della seconda guerra mondiale*, in G. Mândrescu, G. Altarozzi (a cura di), *Guerra e società nel XX secolo*, Accent, Cluj-Napoca-Roma 2007, pp. 244-247.

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- ²³ V. Turcuș, *Alexandru Marcu (1894-1955) ...*, cit., p. 232; A. Balaci, *Cultura Italiană în România - 1936* (Italian Culture in Romania - 1936), «Studii Italiene», 3, 1936, pp. 251-252.
- ²⁴ A. Balaci, *Cultura Italiană în România - 1939* (Italian Culture in Romania - 1939), «Studii Italiene», 6, 1939, pp. 207-208.
- ²⁵ Anonymous, *F.T. Marinetti în București* (F.T. Marinetti in Bucharest), «Universul», 101, 1930, p. 8.
- ²⁶ See comments about the newly founded Italian Academy, its rules and members in Anonymous, *Însemnări* (Notes), «Roma», 2, 1929, pp. 55-56.
- ²⁷ Anonymous, *Însemnări* (Notes) «Roma», 2, 1930, p. 42.
- ²⁸ These other episodes of Marinetti's visit are mentioned in different Romanian journals such as «Unu», 26, 1930; «Universul», 110, 1930; «Facla», 358, 1930; etc.
- ²⁹ E. Drogoreanu, *Aesthetic Affinities and Political Divergences Between Italian and Romanian Futurism*, in G. Berghaus (ed.) «International Yearbook of Futurism Studies», de Gruyter, 1, 2011, pp. 191-195; E. David, *La visita di Filippo Tommaso Marinetti in Romania*, in G. Tomassucci, M. Tria (a cura di), *Gli altri futurismi: futurismi e movimenti d'avanguardia in Russia, Polonia, Cecoslovacchia, Bulgaria e Romania*, Pisa UP, Pisa 2010, pp. 59-64.
- ³⁰ Anonymous, 1908 - 1930, «Facla», 357, 1930, p. 1. This short article speaks about Marinetti's cultural impact in Europe. Italian translation by Emilia David. English translation by the author.
- ³¹ N. Crainic, *Cronica mărunță* (Little Cronic) «Gândirea», 6, 1930, p. 255. English Translation by the author.
- ³² Ivi, pp. 255-256.
- ³³ *Ibidem*.
- ³⁴ *Ibidem*.
- ³⁵ Anonymous, *Futurismul Politic* (Political Futurism), «Universul», 113, 1930, p. 1.
- ³⁶ *Ibidem*. Translation by the author.
- ³⁷ *Ibidem*.

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À la recherche ... de l'éditeur perdu. Sámuel Brassai and the First International Journal of Comparative Literary Studies*

For a long time methodological nationalism seems to have dominated the reconstruction of the history of the first international journal of comparative literary studies, «Összehasonlító Irodalomtörténelmi Lapok» (Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum, 1877-1888), published in Cluj/Kolozsvár, Romania¹. Many interpreters of the phenomenon invented the national self in and within the journal, where it could have been more proper to assume hybrid identities, or not to raise the questions in ethnic or national terms whatsoever². For instance, the collaborators of the very large network of the «ACLU» are often characterized along national and ethnic patterns, even though this hinders understanding their role in the life of the journal: the alleged 'Hungarian' Podhors(z)ky Lajos writes about Bulgarian, Albanian, and several Oriental languages and literatures; the 'Romanian' Dora d'Istria's interests go to Greece, Albania, the United States, Russia and their logic can hardly be perceived if linked exclusively to an ethnic group. Neither did the founders themselves of the polyglot journal succeed in escaping this narrow vision. One of them, Hugo von Meltzl, has usually been labelled either as a German or Hungarian depending on the ethnic status of the interpreter. Moreover, from an orientaling perspective the figure of 'the German' Meltzl has often been considered to be 'more foundational' and even exclusively important as compared with 'the Hungarian' Sámuel Brassai. There has been a tendency to tell the story of the review as a basically German or Western story, a 'West in the Easternmost parts of Europe', reducing the narrative to the personality and oeuvre of Meltzl and simply assuming that his alleged 'German-ness' was the sole key to the innovative idea of the journal and the large network around it. This hidden methodological nationalism has made Sámuel Brassai, the other founder and editor of the «ACLU», almost invisible in the histories of the journal³. Of course, this is partly due to the lack



of basic philological information on the 'share' Brassai took, from the financial background up to the conceptual work, in shaping the journal's long-term profile. Brassai (1797-1897) had already had an established scholarly career decades before the «ACLU» came out: a well-known preceptor in the 1820s, in the 1830s already a popular college professor and editor of the first specialized Hungarian weekly dedicated to the popularization of science, expert in a series of disciplines ranging from history and geology to mathematics, linguistics and pedagogy, he was elected corresponding (1837), then regular member (1864) of the Academy. In the 1860s he was the director of the Transylvanian Museum Society and in 1872, at the start of the Cluj/Kolozsvár University he was appointed professor of mathematics (later also of comparative linguistics and Sanskrit) and also became the first vice-rector of the new university. In 1877, when he consorted with Meltzl to found the «ACLU», he already had a huge publication record, not to speak about his past endeavours as an editor of several specialized journals. In spite of this, he is often considered to be the 'minor' founder of the «ACLU» and his role in the editing process of the review is often neglected.

There is also a philological mythology in the secondary literature that follows the decision of Brassai to secede from the «ACLU». In most cases even the correct year is missing, not to speak of the motivation and terms of this official breakup. Some have spoken of personal and irreconcilable differences, others commented upon an alleged minor role of Brassai in the publishing process. A cluster of important unpublished and still unknown archival documents from the Archives of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church could shed light not only on the exact date and reason for reorganization of the «ACLU», the interpersonal relationships within the journal at the beginning of the 1880s, but also the economic background of the publishing process which has always been a missing piece of the puzzle in the histories of the «ACLU». On November 2, 1883 Meltzl and Brassai signed a cluster of semi-official documents that put an end to the reorganization of the editorial office after Brassai decided to leave the «ACLU». The 'statement and acknowledgement' is at the same time both a reading of the state of affairs regarding the «ACLU» and also a tribute to Brassai. The specimen signed by Brassai is missing, but the Brassai collection preserved Meltzl's version also countersigned by a witness. According to this

[a]s is done in such cases, we have thoroughly examined the economic and administrative registers of the latest two years of the scholarly journal *Acta Comparationis* (Ö. I. L.) we used to publish together on our own charge from 1877, and the two series of our other venture, *Fontes* that we have been publishing from 1878 in parallel with our journal. Already on 24th October, at our sharing we assayed and divided our stock in hand, and I took my share from our issues left over from former years. Due to the lengthy ailment and absence of Meltzl⁴ this was the occasion when we could finally do our economic accounting and sharing of this last two-year period. Based on

all the receipts at hand and all the other editorial and publishing records I hereby state with a good conscience that I have no claim whatsoever from my former fellow editor, Dr. Brassai Sámuel. Let me notice as well that after our scholarly venture was set back due to the above reasons in 1883, I myself also took over half of our mutual editorial resources (i.e. unused papers, reference books and alike). Let me make clear that I wish to preserve as usual the name of Mr. Brassai, the best critic and aesthete of our country, on the front-page of both of our ventures that will go on from 1883 onwards, too. Preserving his name as a founder (*fundator*) is not just my great fortune, but also an amiable obligation. Of course, this does not imply any material or moral duty, liability or consequence for me or my fellow editor, at least till we decide otherwise in a contingent future contract to be signed later.⁵

There are few sources that might reveal what happened before this moment, how their relationship commenced and evolved. Meltzl came (back) to Cluj in 1872 when he was appointed professor of German studies at the local university, and in the half decade before the start of their common journal, the «Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum», the two had no common scholarly venture. Of course, this does not mean at all that they did not have any close contact. Brassai was the first vice-rector and the senior scholar of a university where his colleague began his university career as the youngest fellow of the academic faculty: the initial pool of appointed professors was so restrained that the relationships among them must have become personal almost from the first moment⁶. And as a former graduate and professor, permanent mentor and academic supervisor of the Unitarian College, Brassai surely noticed Meltzl, the former graduate of his beloved college. Nay, the two must have exchanged their ideas not only in matters of university administration and scholarship, but also regarding specific literary and linguistic issues, since Brassai came to be appointed also the (extraordinary) professor of Sanskrit at the same faculty Meltzl was working at. But it is not only the probable and very palpable meetings, discussions between the two future founders of «ACLU» that could be really interesting, but the possible common scholarly interests, presuppositions, beliefs that paved the way for the two to found their scholarly venture in 1872. These common denominators can be viewed as 'the probable scholarly interfaces, spaces of juncture, intermingled and overlapping scholarly knowledge' of the two prominent scholars. Many former discussions on the beginnings of the «ACLU» overemphasized the role of Meltzl exactly because they neglected these professional interfaces that offered an interpretive framework to explain the «ACLU» as a joint scholarly venture, and not just the creation of one or the other founder. Let me identify two major overlapping elements of these common denominators that emphasize the decisive scholarly contribution of Brassai to the founding and the initial years of the «ACLU»: the foregrounding of literary translation and the communicative view of foreign language acquisition.

I. Brassai perceiving translation as an essential part of literary life

There are only few nineteenth-century Hungarian (literary) scholars for whom translation played such a paramount and basic role as it did for Sámuel Brassai. While most of his literary contemporaries both in and outside Hungarian literature placed translation on the edges of literary life, Brassai portrayed it as a central, decisive, utmost communicational form of literary communication and the scholarly world in general. Certainly this somewhat peripheral nature of nineteenth-century literary translation was also a side effect of modern nation-building mechanisms that saw cross-national literary processes and practices (like ethnically hybrid literary forms and oeuvres etc.), dubious and even threatening the alleged 'autochthonous purity' and 'autonomy' of national literatures. From this perspective, translation was a kind of 'unwelcome necessity' of classic nineteenth-century literary nation-building. Therefore it is not surprising that translation and translators regularly attracted fear, criticism or, at least, acid comments from hard-line nation-builders. Translators have always been somewhat more 'invisibly' constructed in comparison with the other actors of the literary field⁷, but their in-between position made them even more suspicious in nation-building processes that preferred clear-cut ethnic identities. That is one of the main reasons why nineteenth-century literary thinkers and practitioners 'beware'd' of assigning literary translation a central role in national literary life. In such a framework Brassai seemed an odd-one-out figure when he made translation a key issue of literary life, and not only 'theoretized' literary and non-literary translation and translatability, but also experimented with translations from a relatively large range of languages.

For Brassai this central focus on translation made this practice equal any other type of literary practice. In a famous and much disputed series of essays in the early 1860s, entitled *Still a Few Things on Translation*⁸, he compared the seemingly divergent literary practices of everyday literary criticism and translation, and the comparison turned out to be in favour of the latter. It was not usual in the heydays of nineteenth-century Hungarian criticism to argue in a critical review that literary criticism itself had only a limited effect on the literary scene, and it could never change literary taste in such a paramount way as translation had always done⁹. This unorthodox vision and comparison was not entirely new for those who had known Brassai and his literary endeavours from earlier decades. He had always stressed the role of translation as a toolkit of conscious cultural policy that was able to level cultural differences both inside national and among international literary cultures. Already in the 1830s, when he was entrusted with editing «Vasárnapi Újság», the first Hungarian popular weekly, his main concern was to assure high-level qualitative reviews and translations. Many of these thematised a series of problems that would recur

even within the «Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum». For example, already in 1835 a series of his essays presented the Kirghiz Cossacks struggling in an uneven political and cultural environment and advanced solutions in order to alleviate the cumbersome burden of cultural inequalities¹⁰. In this context, Brassai saw the review essays themselves as forms of cultural translation that aimed at rehabilitating a suppressed culture in the Russian political framework.

Therefore literary translation was not a simple technical question for Brassai, but he envisaged it as a deeply political and cultural act already from the 1830s onwards (and not only in the late 1870s as a partner of Meltzl at the «Acta Comparationis»). This is why he was so convinced of his opinion that translation could be the only major chance for less fortunate literary cultures, like the Hungarian one, to reconstruct and reposition themselves in an international cultural scene:

cultivation and taste actually polishes our joys, they make our delights more and more noble and elevated. And while it is completely true that the masterpieces are not shut out from us, but translation makes them truly accessible for us.¹¹

The radical democrat who raised many eyebrows in the Unitarian College of Kolozsvár/Cluj during his professorship and directorate with his liberal attitude, and who had to flee after the failure of the 1848-1849 revolution actually reimagined the national and international literary scene along democratic values. From this perspective translation was the threshold of equal opportunity. On the one hand, it guaranteed genuine opportunities within the national culture that, in Brassai's vision, used to bar several social groups from the mere chance to cultivate taste through formal education and foreign language acquisition. For this reason translation was a 'revolutionary' act, a potentially subversive mechanism of social engineering that could make society better, less hierarchical and open to taste: «Why are translations important?» he asked himself rhetorically:

They are essential exactly for the reason why the philanthropist Lord Brougham invented the *penny magazines*, i.e. the budget-priced press, the rural libraries, the reading clubs of the workers, the popular public readings. It is exactly why the jealous, reserved and aristocratic Englishmen repudiated themselves, and opened the 'National Gallery', the 'Zoological Garden', the 'Adelaide Gallery', the museum in Southampton and in many other places also for the crowd in shirtsleeves and monkey-jackets. Why should I enumerate further examples when I can utter it in an emphatic sentence: the real and efficacious benefactor of the people is the one who helps and secures their unalienable rights, the rights that never become forfeited. And is there any right more beautiful and interesting for the people than to become cultivated according to their abilities? And there is no such impeccable part of cultivation as the nourishment of the noble taste.¹²

In Brassai's argumentation translation is the most natural and, at the same time, the most subversive part of national literature, since it is the most effective form of a social engineering that allows the literate to improve and to democratize society. On the other hand, it is the same type of balancing effect that had always made translation appealing in a global context for the co-founder and co-editor of the *Acta Comparationis*. From his perspective, in this supranational framework translation is able to become a modern solution for the huge cleavages and inequalities that separate from one another the various literary cultures¹³. For Brassai translation was thought to be a disruptive and challenging experience, the only one that would bring an awaited equality of chances for 'smaller' and 'less known' literatures, like Hungarian:

I am positive that this was a righteous *paupertatis testimonium* about the state of Hungarian literature. I hope you won't take it in bad part. Believe me, I acknowledge the degree Hungarian literature managed to get to in spite of so many adverse and rankling circumstances. [...] But if we do not feel for our aching parts, we might forget to remedy our misery. [...] I reckon I succeeded to demonstrate that all these numerous hardships, especially with us, can be solved only by translations.¹⁴

Due to this cross-cultural and supranational susceptibility that met with a social sensitiveness, translation became for Brassai a cultural artefact, mediating within and between cultures. That is why his interpretation of fidelity in matters of translation was a deeply cultural one. For him fidelity to the original stood in reinterpreting and reintegrating it into the new cultural context as if it had always been an essential part of it, without forcing the text to lose its ties to its original cultural framework. This double consideration of the original and the new cultural context, and the cultural transformation of the text made him affirm that only a tiny part of the so-called translations deserve their names, most of them being simple mechanic and less reflexive works¹⁵. This perspective and his theoretical linguistic beliefs ahead of his time made him reconsider the conventional basics also regarding the fundamental unity of translation. From the 1830s onwards, one of the major innovative ideas Brassai pleaded for was linked to the basic unity of translation. By emphasizing the crucial role of the wider cultural context and the culture-bound character of literary texts, he shifted the focus unit of translation from the word to the larger dynamics of the sentence. Certainly this was not only an issue of translation theory for him, but also a vision deriving from his contextual linguistic theory emphasizing the role of the pragmatic context when understanding words. To his mind words were always elusive when they were discussed and viewed isolated from their position in the sentence, the paragraph and the text¹⁶. This surprisingly modern linguistic philosophy returned in an applied form in his views on the basic item of the literary and other types of

texts to be translated. And he certainly also tried his principle out in practice from the 1830s till the 1890s translating from a series of languages.

But was this vision and focus on translation as a central mechanism of literary life, and a culturally embedded pursuit independent from the way Brassai perceived foreign languages, their acquisition and usage? Or, was it exactly the well-known easiness with which he learned foreign languages, his deep interest in the learning and teaching of foreign languages, his commitment to the comparative linguistic method and discipline, through which translation could become so crucial for him?

2. Sámuel Brassai and the revolutionizing of the teaching and learning of foreign languages

Most of the literature on the «Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum» has highlighted the figure of Hugo von Meltzl/Meltz Hugó as the bilingual, polyglot and cosmopolitan figure, connoisseur of several languages, professor of not only German studies, but later also of Italian and French ones. It was again him who has been portrayed as the ideal think tank figure behind the «ACLU», the one who graduated from a Western university, obtained his doctorate with a thesis on the philosophy of language acquisition¹⁷, and built an impressive scholarly network around the «ACLU» based on these polyglot abilities and meritocratic past. Archival documents that have recently turned up showed that this image was an accurate one even on a smaller scale: for instance, in order to be able to teach his students the *Edda* and Norse mythology, he started learning Icelandic, and taught the *Edda* along with a crash course in Icelandic language and culture¹⁸. And this is only one sample of the rich material that shows an expert of a multiple of local and foreign languages and literatures, from the Romanian to the Roman one¹⁹.

Though he is hardly ever remarked in the international literature focusing on the «ACLU», for the Hungarian contemporaries of Meltzl and Brassai, it was Brassai who embodied the ideal polyglot scholar. He spoke Latin, German, French, Romanian and English. He was one of the first Transylvanian scholars to emphasize the knowledge of the latter, certainly, due to his confessional background: as a member of the Unitarian Church he had thorough connections with the international (especially Northern European and American) Unitarian community. After returning to Cluj from Pest in 1859, he became professor of Greek and Hebrew in the Unitarian College, and held down this position till 1862. But the list of the languages he spoke, understood or/and read, did not come to an end: he also came to read Russian and Turkish. A letter written in 1870 to the famous literary historian and university professor, Ferenc Toldy can shed light not only on another language he knew, but also on the way this figure, often overstated as the 'last polyhistor' of his century, approached foreign language acquisition:

In the 1850s, for the sake of comparing languages with one another, I learned the Sanskrit language to a certain extent. Since for me the value of any language in itself is worthless, the moment I reached a certain level, I tried to learn more about the literature of this language. Since at that time there were only few resources I could use in Pest, I had to purchase most of them at my own expense. Thanks to this circumstance and as a gift of Pulszky, even at this moment my library is so rich that it supplements the ones in Pest. Being fixed in such a manner for Sanskrit studies, I have read in the original four voluminous chrestomathies, the separately edited episodes of *Mahabharata*, out of which two (the *Nalus* and the *Bhagavadgita*) are fair-sized books themselves. I also succeeded in reading three books of the other sizeable epic, the *Ramayana*, the most important five dramas, but also the *Hitopadesha* and the *Lilavati*. *I am positive that, based on these, I master this language more than any member of my nation.*²⁰

This richness of the languages spoken could explain why one of his first main publications targeted an issue that became a touchy question in the Hungarian nation-building process of the early nineteenth century: the much contested and debated relationship of the ‘national language’ with ‘the foreign’ ones. Brassai was a thorn in many of his contemporaries’ flesh when already in 1837, in the first year of his professorship at the famous Unitarian College of Kolozsvár/Cluj, he published a pioneering and provocative study on the acquisition of foreign languages²¹. Unlike many of his colleagues, he did not circumvent national language against foreign ones in an age that offered a novel sociolinguistic balance among ethnic identity and the languages spoken. He chose the harder way: to argue for the multiple utility of foreign language acquisition also in the cultivation of national languages. The theoretical argumentation was not against ‘national’ or ‘foreign’, but against the ideal of the universal language. This, he thought, would be useless, trivial, boring, and dangerous for the variety of languages that generate cultural and literary value. From this perspective, conscious, theoretically prepared and modern practical foreign language acquisition would be the perfect interface that enables the productive criss-crossing of different literary cultures. Moreover, there were a series of direct literary consequences of this early methodological stance. According to the most important of these, he thought that there was no local/national literary criticism without a wide-ranging global literary orientation. This attitude was not met with general enthusiasm in a period when the new, emerging, canonical-to-be genre of literary criticism still aimed at the position of the most representative genre of Hungarian national literature.

Brassai did return to the issue of foreign language acquisition, not only theoretically, but also with a solid, ever-growing palette of methodologically innovative course books. Among others, highly successful titles like *French Language Master for Free*²², *Learn German with a Logical Leader*²³, *Neue Unterrichtsmethode der lateinischen Konjugation mit Tafel und Katheketik*²⁴ [New Teaching Methods of the Latin Conjugation with Tables, Questions

and Answers], *How to Teach Latin Declination in a Logical, Fast and Successful Way?*²⁵ show the sources we should turn to when looking for the methodological-theoretical formulations of Brassai's surprisingly modern vision on language acquisition.

But the «ACLU» proved to be a focal point for Brassai in matters of language teaching and learning since he resumed his core ideas in a longer German essay simply entitled *Vom Sprachunterricht* [On Language Acquisition] in 1881. He must have found his publication especially important, because shortly after the essay was published again under the title *Die Reform des Sprachunterrichts in Europa. Ein Beitrag zur Sprachwissenschaft* [The Reform of Language Teaching in Europe. A Contribution to Linguistics] in the accompanying series of the «ACLU», entitled *Fontes*²⁶. There is no possibility to analyse the work in detail here, but it should be stated that it offers a ground breaking comparative perspective for language acquisition. Instead of the dominant (structural) method of his age that focused on grammar acquisition, Brassai went hand in hand with or even anticipated the later 'theoretical boom' of Henry Sweet, Otto Jespersen and others who began to advance the role of practice and interaction in second/foreign language acquisition. His vision and practice that emphasized the role of communicative language teaching and learning was a truly revolutionary idea in his time. Even if it could have been a remarkable proof of Brassai's international presence and influence through the «ACLU», it is hardly known that the 1881 publication of *Die Reform* seems to have triggered much of the famous German debate of 1882 that denounced the 'obsolescent methods' of language teaching. In his well-known 1882 *Der Sprachunterricht muss umkehren!* (Language Teaching Should be Reformed), Wilhelm Viëtor, the famous initiator of the reform movement in matters of language teaching, recalled Brassai's recently published essay²⁷. Quoting him approvingly, he spotted a core metaphor of the Transylvanian scholar: «Gesetzt, ein Tischlermeister wollte einen Lehrjungen sein Handwerk lehren; wie würde er nach des Donatus System verfahren?» (Let's suppose, a carpenter would try to teach his apprentice his handicraft. How would he proceed along the system of Donatus?)²⁸. The emblematic figure of the German language teaching reform then went on to argue in favour of one of his central theses, i.e. the sentence as the basic context of language teaching and learning, a thesis Brassai had already been advocating five decades earlier. All in all, it seems that for Viëtor Brassai's booklet was one of the major 'magnetos' through which he came to articulate his position, also giving us a chance to retrospectively rehabilitate Brassai's modern view on language teaching and learning.

The emphasis on translation as a central literary mechanism and the communicative view of foreign language acquisition are two main focal points that could serve both as master examples of innovative scholarly interfaces of Brassai and Meltzl, the two founders of «ACLU», and, at the same time, the

obvious, key role Brassai played in the formation of the profile and beginnings of the «ACLU». From this point of view «ACLU» seems not the heroic venture of a single scholar, but a real *joint venture* of both of the founders and editors, Sámuel Brassai and Hugo von Meltzl.

Notes

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¹ The most important literature on the topic: S. Kerekes, *Lomnitz Meltzl Hugó 1846-1908* (Hugo von Meltzl from Lomnitz, 1846-1908), Minerva Társaság, Budapest 1937; Gy. Gaál (ed.), *Összehasonlító Irodalomtörténelmi Lapok* (Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum), Kriterion, Kolozsvár 1975; A. Berczik, *Lés débuts hongrois de l'histoire littéraire comparée*, «Acta Litteraria Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae», 2, 1959, pp. 215-249; H. Fassel (Hrsg.), *Hugo Meltzl und die Anfänge der Komparatistik* (Hugo von Meltzl and the Birth of Comparative Literary Studies), Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 2005; D. Damrosch, *Rebirth of a Discipline: The Global Origins of Comparative Studies*, «Comparative Critical Studies», 3, 1-2, 2006, pp. 99-112.

² For a deeper and wider analysis regarding methodological nationalism and its consequences, see: J. Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History*, Amsterdam UP, Amsterdam 2006; J. Leerssen, *Viral Nationalism: Romantic Intellectuals on the Move in 19th-Century Europe*, «Nations and Nationalism», 17, 2, 2011, pp. 257-271.

³ Before one would think that this is an exclusively non-Hungarian or Western peculiarity of research, let me stress that even the best Hungarian research papers of the latest years focused exclusively on Meltzl: see for instance the excellent overview of I. Fried, *Az Összehasonlító Irodalomtörténelmi Lapok nyomában* (Tracking the Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum), «Tiszatáj», 3, 2007, pp. 95-107. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the author.

⁴ Meltzl is speaking of himself in the third person singular.

⁵ Archives of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church, Sámuel Brassai's Collection. Miscellaneous MSS. Miscellaneous correspondence.

⁶ There is no philological evidence whether the two had ever met before 1872. Meltzl graduated from the Unitarian College in a period when Brassai had to flee from Cluj, due to his role in the local events of the 1849 revolution, and survived the 1850s partly in Pest.

⁷ See J. Delisle, J. Woodsworth (eds), *Les Traducteurs dans l'histoire*, Presses de l'Université de l'Ottawa, Ottawa 2007.

⁸ S. Brassai, *Mégis valamit a fordításról* (Still Some Ideas on translation), «Szépirodalmi Figyelő», 1, 19-20, 27-28, 30-33, 48-50, 1861, pp. 289-291, 305-307, 417-419, 433-436, 465-468, 481-485, 497-501, 513-515, 753-757, 769-771, 785-788.

⁹ S. Brassai, *Mégis valamit a fordításról*, cit., 1, 48-50, 1861, pp. 787-788.

¹⁰ See S. Brassai, *A kirgiz kozákokról* (About the Cossacks of Kyrgyzstan), «Vasárnapi Újság», 2, 85-87, 1835, pp. 731-750.

¹¹ S. Brassai, *Mégis valamit a fordításról*, cit., 1, 20, p. 307.

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ This was an issue that preoccupied also Meltzl in his essay reflecting not only on the first international literary congress, but also on the international mechanisms and cleavages of global literary life.

¹⁴ S. Brassai, *Mégis valamit a fordításról*, cit., 1, 19-20, pp. 291 and 307.

¹⁵ Cf. Ivi, p. 289; H. Meltzl, *La réforme littéraire en Europe. Quelques observations a propos de l'ouverture du Congrès littéraire international a Paris en Juin 1878*, «Journal de Littérature Comparée», 31, 2009, pp. 38-48; 32, 2009, pp. 12-20.

¹⁶ See J. Péntek (ed.), *A nyelvész Brassai élő öröksége* (The Living Heritage of Brassai, the Linguist), Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, Kolozsvár 2005.

¹⁷ H. Meltzl, *Stellung, Maas und Methode der Philosophie in der Gymnasial-Pädagogik* (The Perspective and Method of Philosophy in the Pedagogy of the Grammar School), Kollmann, Leipzig 1872.

¹⁸ The Romanian Archives (Cluj), Archives of the Cluj University, Faculty of Letters, 352/1875.

¹⁹ The history of the university of Cluj, and especially that of the nineteenth century Faculty of Letters, has not been thoroughly researched. We have recently come across the latent official sources of the institution that have never been systematically processed, reviewed and interpreted. A forthcoming monography will treat these sources in depth: T.L. Szabó, M. Zabán, *The History of the Faculty of Letters of Kolozsvár/Cluj (1872-1892)*. For a selections of these sources: T.L. Szabó, M. Zabán (eds), *Dokumentumok a kolozsvári Bölcsész-, Nyelv- és Történettudományi Kar történetéhez* (Archival Documents of the Faculty of Philosophy, Languages and History from Kolozsvár / Cluj, 1872-1892), Kolozsvári Egyetemi Kiadó–Presa Universitară Clujană, Kolozsvár 2012.

²⁰ Brassai aspired to the newly established department of Oriental languages and literatures of Pest University, and was unpleasantly surprised when he came to know that the vacancy was filled. The letter was written in this peculiar context to his influential fellow scholar who was university professor of Hungarian language and literature at that time. The original of the letter is to be found at the Archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences: MTA K Kt. Irod. Lev. 4r. 105. Italics in the original. Translation by the author.

²¹ S. Brassai, *Nyelvtanulás* (Language Learning), «Nemzeti Társalkodó», 7, 6-8, 1837, pp. 81-91, 97-105, 113-124.

²² S. Brassai, *Ingyen tanító francia nyelvmester* (French Language Master for Free), Stein, Kolozsvár 1863.

²³ *Okszerű vezér a német nyelv tanulásában* (A Logical Guide in Learning German). As a telltale sign of its success, in 1864 the textbook appeared for the seventh time.

²⁴ This was edited in Leipzig in 1881 by Johannes Minckwitz, one of the important collaborators of the *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*.

²⁵ S. Brassai, *Hogyan kelljen a latin hajtogatást ésszerűen, gyorsan és sikeresen tanítani* (How to Teach Latin Declination in a Most Logical, Quick and Successful Way), Stein, Kolozsvár 1872.

²⁶ S. Brassai, *Die Reform des Sprachunterrichts in Europa. Ein Beitrag zur Sprachwissenschaft* (The Reform of Language Teaching in Europe. A Contribution to Linguistics), Sumptibus Editorum Actorum Comparationis Litterarum Universarum, Trübner & Co., Kolozsvár-London 1881.

²⁷ W. Viëtor, *Der Sprachunterricht muss umkehren! Ein Beitrag zur Überbürdungsfrage von Quousque Tandem* (Language Teaching Should be Reformed), Gebr. Henninger, Heilbronn 1882. Translation by the author.

²⁸ Ivi, p. 67 (translation by the author). The original position of the passage and the metaphor in Brassai's booklet: S. Brassai, *Die Reform*, cit., p. 9.

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Le nationalisme des avant-gardes: les contextes mineurs*

I. Posture juive et avant-garde en Roumanie

Le mouvement roumain d'avant-garde a été animé par des Juifs. C'est un fait généralement connu, qui est d'ailleurs valable pour d'autres avant-gardes européennes aussi. En effet, c'est là plus qu'un fait d'histoire littéraire. Il ne s'agit pas seulement d'une contribution accidentelle d'une communauté ethnique, mais d'un cliché mental, une association stéréotypée entre la condition juive et l'avant-garde. Cette présence a toujours été marquée comme un sceau indélébile, immédiatement reconnaissable. En 1920, André Gide, qui prenait contact avec le dadaïsme à Paris soulignait sa première impression après la rencontre de Tristan Tzara: «On me dit qu'il est étranger. – Je m'en persuade facilement. Juif – J'allais le dire»¹. La judaïté se voit et c'est à cette évidence que je voudrais dédier ma réflexion. Évidemment, il n'est pas question d'explorer la diversité des régimes de visibilité raciale mobilisés par la condition juive. En prenant comme point de départ l'évidence du lien entre la judaïté et l'avant-garde, mon interrogation concerne la possibilité d'une manipulation volontaire de cette stéréotypie. Et si les écrivains d'avant-garde *voulaient* être reconnus en tant qu'écrivains juifs? Il faut se demander en effet s'il n'y a pas un effort de mise en scène qui corresponde au cliché de la judaïté.

À cet égard, l'appropriation de l'avant-garde en Roumanie est particulièrement significative. La première publication roumaine d'avant-garde, la revue «Contimporanul», paraissait au mois de juin 1922. Il faut attacher une grande importance à cette date parce qu'elle marque non pas seulement l'histoire de l'avant-garde, mais aussi l'histoire de la communauté juive. Au mois de mars 1922², les Juifs avaient réussi à élire les premiers représentants dans le parlement roumain. L'événement n'est pas du tout anodine. Jusqu'à la fin de la première guerre mondiale, les Juifs étaient consi-

dérés par la Constitution roumaine comme des étrangers³; c'est à peine en 1919, après la signature du Traité des Minorités, qu'ils ont reçu la citoyenneté. Trois ans plus tard, les élections de 1922 étaient pour la communauté juive la première occasion d'exposer avec succès une stratégie de représentation publique. Le changement était de taille: une communauté de sang et de culture occupait pour la première fois un positionnement public. La judaïté devenait tout d'un coup image, mise en scène et elle s'associait à un ensemble de pratiques codifiées. Il s'agissait du passage d'un phénomène ethnographique, à une posture politique.

La parution de «Contimporanul» portait encore les traces du triomphe politique de la communauté juive. En guise de programme, la revue publiait dans son premier numéro le salut d'un homme politique roumain, Dr. Nicolae Lupu (1876-1946). Figure bien connue de la vie politique entre les deux guerres, il était un des promoteurs de la réconciliation avec la communauté juive, qui insistait dans ses interventions publiques sur la fraternité entre les Juifs et les Roumains et qui avait signé, comme représentant du parti roumain, le protocole de collaboration électorale avec l'Union des Juifs. Autrement dit, il était l'architecte du projet politique qui avait permis à la communauté juive de gagner sa représentativité parlementaire. Sa présence au moment même du lancement du «Contimporanul» avait ainsi le rôle de rappeler un événement politique et, en même temps, de marquer l'attachement de la revue par rapport à l'agenda' de la communauté juive. D'ailleurs, pour presque un an, du juin 1922 jusqu'au mois d'avril 1923, la publication, dont la fréquence était initialement hebdomadaire, s'engagera explicitement dans le commentaire des événements politiques qui concernaient le statut public de la judaïté. On peut citer en guise d'exemple, quelques titres, affichés souvent à la une: *Culture et antisémitisme*, *Les Juifs dans la culture roumaine*, *Les Juifs et les houligans*, *Les mineurs et les minorités* etc. Un contexte politique avait rendu cet engagement 'juif' de la revue encore plus visible. À partir du mois d'octobre 1922, à la suite d'une série d'événements, en Roumanie s'est déclenchée une forte campagne antisémite⁴ avec des violences, des mouvements populaires et des combats politiques. «Contimporanul» s'est situé au cœur du débat public en prenant position à la défense de la communauté juive; mais – nuance importante – il l'a fait au nom d'une identité, d'une mission et d'une place dans la société roumaine telles qu'elles s'étaient définies au cours du processus électoral de 1922.

En raison d'une telle volonté d'engagement, dès ses premières actions en Roumanie, l'avant-garde a été identifiée à la judaïté et elle a dû subir la propagande antisémite. Elle a fourni de bon gré la munition à ses adversaires. La réception officielle de l'avant-garde n'a pas tardé de marquer sa couleur identitaire: «le fait que la plupart des promoteurs de cette littérature sont des Juifs, notait en 1927 le critique le plus important du pays, ne doit pas nous empêcher d'envisager leur art»⁵. Ce qu'il faut surtout remarquer est le fait qu'à cette perception ethnique stéréotype et malveillante avaient large-

ment contribué les avant-gardistes eux-mêmes. Si l'avant-garde roumaine a été 'juive', elle ne l'était d'emblée ni par une détermination sanguine, ni par une expressivité ethnographique, mais par une politique de la judaïté. Synchronisé à l'événement par lequel une communauté 'prenait la parole', l'avènement de l'avant-garde en Roumanie paraît ainsi profiter des avantages d'une posture qui devrait, par quelque comptabilité mystérieuse, compenser les risques d'attirer la haine de l'espace public.

2. Trois stratégies de représentation publique de la judaïté

Comment cerner les 'avantages' de la posture juive? Pour éclaircir les choix qui étaient à la disposition des avant-gardistes roumains, le moyen le plus simple est de passer en revue les possibilités de représentation politique explorées par la communauté juive à la veille des élections parlementaires de 1922. Il y avait en fait trois solutions de mise en scène de la présence juive dans l'espace public roumain: la première était de s'intégrer sans reste dans les rangs d'un parti roumain; la deuxième était de constituer un cartel électoral avec un parti roumain; la troisième était de proposer un parti juif⁶. Entre ces trois options, on perçoit des différences de positionnement très importantes. Je commence par les extrêmes. La première solution, était en fait une renonciation: la communauté acceptait de fondre dans la majorité roumaine. Ce qu'on proposait aux Juifs était tout simplement d'effacer leur identité et de se faire passer pour des Roumains. La dernière, en revanche, impliquait, tout au contraire, l'accentuation de la particularité ethnique, de la mémoire et du patrimoine communautaires.

Donc, aux extrêmes, il fallait choisir entre le statut de 'majoritaire' et le statut de 'minoritaire'. Il faut dire que de point de vue politique aucune de ces deux options n'a pas réussi à gagner des fauteuils parlementaires pour la communauté juive. Il n'y avait guère des bénéfices en termes posturaux. La chose mérite d'être soulignée surtout dans le cas du statut 'minoritaire': la position d'une communauté étrangère légitimée uniquement par ses valeurs culturelles n'était pas dans la Roumanie entre les deux guerres une position avantageuse. Il faut rappeler à ce titre le cas de la communauté hongroise de la Transylvanie qui, après l'union avec la Roumanie en 1918, devenait la minorité la plus nombreuse du pays. Ce qui est notable est la recherche d'une solution de représentation qui évitait le conditionnement minoritaire: par le concept d'une «éthique minoritaire»⁷, les Hongrois avaient essayé de légitimer une présence publique justifiée par les valeurs universelles, sur-nationales, de la morale. Ils évacuaient de la sorte, de la définition de leur posture, toute connotation culturelle particulière, qu'elle soit hongroise ou roumaine.

Pour résoudre les difficultés de la posture minoritaire, la communauté juive adoptera une autre solution: la collaboration avec un parti roumain. La posture concernée n'était ni celle d'une minorité, ni celle d'une majo-

rité – mais celle d’une minorité sous contrat avec la majorité. Il s’agit d’affirmer une solidarité, de se trouver «à côté de la majorité du peuple roumain»⁸. En tant que codification d’un positionnement public, c’était le choix le plus complexe. La précondition de la collaboration était la redéfinition du statut de minoritaire. Les Juifs vont ainsi insister sur l’absence d’une patrie de rattachement⁹, ils vont supprimer du syntagme «minorité nationale» l’adjectif «national»¹⁰ et encore, ils vont refuser systématiquement toute association avec les deux autres minorités importantes du pays. Ces opérations politiques avaient un seul but: vider la minorité de son contenu national étranger.

Il est indispensable d’évoquer dans ce contexte l’essai célèbre de Gilles Deleuze sur la littérature mineure¹¹. Rappelons que son intérêt réside dans la définition d’une minorité qui n’est plus conditionnée par son origine. Caractérisée par la précarité de ses moyens et par sa disponibilité, elle est apparentée à l’immigration et au nomadisme. Ce qui définit cette posture n’est pas la pratique des valeurs de la patrie d’origine, mais celle des valeurs de la culture d’accueil. Autrement dit, elle désigne l’action neutre, amnésique et disponible d’un étranger au sein d’une culture qui n’est pas la sienne. Il ne s’agit pourtant pas d’une fusion identitaire. Le mineur qui s’attèle à un héritage culturel qui ne lui appartient pas engage une manière particulière de parler la langue étrangère, une façon irrégulière de disposer de ses valeurs, une altération de sa norme. C’est un usage contre-projet qui réinvente en quelque sorte l’objet identitaire. De ce point de vue, l’action de la minorité juive qui se tourne vers la majorité roumaine, qui se recommande par la ‘collaboration’ avec celle-ci, devient du coup moins relevant pour la condition de la judaïté que pour la pratique de la ‘roumanité’.

3. Réinventer le nationalisme

La stratégie de la représentation politique de la communauté juive trouvera un appui (et une source légitimante) dans une occasion historique. À la fin de la Première Guerre Mondiale, une substantielle augmentation territoriale avait entraîné la redéfinition de l’État roumain. Deux provinces historiques, la Transylvanie et la Bessarabie, ont été ajoutées aux deux autres qui formaient déjà la Roumanie. C’était cette inauguration d’une entité politique qui justifiait la «collaboration» entre une minorité et la majorité: «La minorité juive est persécutée au lieu d’être engagée dans l’œuvre difficile de consolidation de notre État nouveau»¹². Concrètement, les Juifs se concevaient eux-mêmes comme agents de colonisation, censés représenter les intérêts roumains dans les territoires nouveaux: «Nos Juifs deviennent l’agent de liaison, d’attraction et de dénationalisation des Juifs hongrois au-delà des anciennes frontières [celles qui démarquaient la Transylvanie de la Roumanie avant 1918]»¹³. Ironiquement, l’exemple qui fait figure d’autorité comme modèle de cette alliance entre une minorité et la majorité est la Hongrie: «Au moment où les nationalités de la Hongrie commencent leur

mouvement d'émancipation, l'antisémitisme cesse brusquement. Les Juifs sont chéris et deviennent des alliés pour les Hongrois qui luttent contre les populations d'autre langue»¹⁴.

Donc, c'est une nation en crise de formation, une patrie en danger qui justifie la solidarité entre les Juifs et les Roumains. L'avant-garde sera particulièrement sensible à cette précarité identitaire de la nouvelle Roumanie:

Qui est l'idiot qui, dans la Roumanie des quatre patois qui ne se sont pas encore harmonisés, a osé séparer, douloureusement, la jeunesse de même langue roumaine [les Juifs et les Roumains] en deux camps? Un Roumain, pourrait-il répudier son camarade qui met ses espoirs dans le futur de la même culture? Pourrait-il affronter tout seul la force formidable de la propagande allemande et hongroise? [...] Ce n'est que la solidarité des deux éléments de la même langue, pourvus de propriétés qui se complètent mutuellement, qui soutiendra cette greffe qui, autrement, peut altérer la souche roumaine.¹⁵

Qu'est-ce que cela signifie? Ce n'est pas une «souche», mais une «greffe» qu'on veut comprendre. Ce qu'on essaie de penser n'est pas la rencontre des deux populations à l'intérieur d'une unité nationale donnée, mais l'exploration commune d'une nouvelle entité territoriale. Ce pays augmenté est tout aussi nouveau pour les Juifs que pour les Roumains. Paradoxalement, pour initier sa 'collaboration' avec la majorité, la communauté juive passe par une remise en question de la norme identitaire de celle-ci.

Cette difficulté particulière resurgira à l'occasion d'un commentaire publié par «Contimporanul» en marge d'un article célèbre de Renan sur le nationalisme. Le philosophe français avait évacué du nationalisme toute composante dispensable – langue, race, géographie – pour garder seulement l'héritage spirituel et son émulation. C'est ce qu'il appelle la 'tradition'. Néanmoins, pour adapter cette notion au cas roumain, Ion Vinea constate qu'il faut aller encore plus loin dans la négation: «pour nous, les Roumains, [...] l'idéal de Renan est intangible»¹⁶. Autrement dit, il faut renoncer à la tradition aussi; son argument, qui est historique (le destin des Roumains a été trop souvent interrompu pour offrir une continuité d'action et de pensée), s'exprime pourtant par une métaphore géographique: «On est dans cette situation comme les américains, c'est-à-dire qu'on a la condition des émigrés sur les terres de nos ancêtres»¹⁷. Cette image de l'inauguration d'une patrie, qui paraît évoquer obliquement la récente extension territoriale de la Roumanie, cache une morale optimiste. La figure de l'émigrant ne souligne pas l'histoire qu'il a perdue, mais le territoire qu'il a gagné. La conclusion n'est pas l'abandon du nationalisme, mais sa refonte: «notre patriotisme n'est pas *garder* mais *construire*»¹⁸. Mais, évidemment, ce nationalisme tourné vers le futur n'est pas comme l'autre, tourné vers le passé. Il est justifié par un territoire qui n'est pas maîtrisé et encore, il est dépourvu de tradition, c'est-à-dire – de norme. Force est de reconnaître que

ce «patriotisme des émigrants» implique une remise en question de l'idée nationale. Si la judaïté revendique un message nationaliste, ce n'est pas par une adaptation à la norme officielle sinon par une réinvention de celle-ci.

Le problème est de faire accepter une telle stratégie. Certes, ce n'est pas du donné. Comment articuler ensemble ces deux versions du nationalisme, une majoritaire, l'autre minoritaire? Cette interrogation s'est très vite formulée au début des années '20. Je retiens l'opinion d'un critique antisémite, Mihail Dragomirescu, qui, tout en s'appuyant sur le concept de conscience nationale, distingue la possibilité d'une bonne et d'une mauvaise conscience. La première hypostase inscrit le «nationalisme de la majorité», tandis que la deuxième concerne le «nationalisme de la minorité». La qualification de la différence est d'emblée morale: «les minorités permanentes sont censées jouer le même rôle dans la vie d'un état que les états d'âme mesquins dans la conscience d'un homme»¹⁹. Mais, derrière cette métaphore, il faut distinguer la volonté de noter la passion pour le détail, l'incapacité de synthèse, l'inappétence pour les idéaux, ou tout simplement l'errance. Si le «nationalisme des majoritaires» s'attache aux idées et aux normes, le «nationalisme des minoritaires» concerne les individus en dérive et les groupements qui ne sont pas alignés:

[...] ces journaux tendent à pervertir l'opinion publique roumaine, d'une part, par leur influence sur les consciences majoritaires irréfléchies (les roumains intéressés, faiblards ou passionnés), de l'autre par leur influence sur la jeunesse, les enfants et les femmes pour lesquelles ils ont fait même des rubriques et des pages spéciales. Ce sont les organes délétères de la culture roumaine, les représentants mesquins de notre conscience culturelle.²⁰

La minorité propose un nationalisme quantitatif, des chiffres grands qui n'ont pas trouvé une expression normative. On se rappelle la lamentation d'un avant-gardiste roumain: «c'est exaspérant que toutes ces foules ne se rencontrent, ne s'unissent et ne s'expriment pas»²¹. C'est un nationalisme qui s'est découplé de l'expression officielle de l'intérêt national. Ce qu'on lui reproche est d'avoir abandonné le drapeau, les emblèmes de la nation, tout en revendiquant une représentation du pays au niveau des régions, des provinces et des démunis. Le jeu qui oppose les deux nationalismes situe d'une part une logique du symbole et de l'autre une logique de la statistique: «le peuple proprement-dit, les millions de paysans, les centaines de milliers de travailleurs et les milliers d'intellectuels»²².

4. Le 'nationalisme minoritaire', entre politique et poétique

Quelles sont-elles les conséquences d'une telle idée nationaliste? Tout ce que j'ai présenté pourrait laisser l'impression que la posture juive qui avait autorisé la prise de parole de l'avant-garde roumaine n'était qu'une question de stratégie. En réalité, cette posture n'est pas seulement un positionnement avantageux dans l'espace public, elle sert encore comme dispositif

régulateur du rapport avec la langue et avec le patrimoine de la littérature roumaine. C'est-à-dire que la politique, par l'intermédiaire de la posture qu'elle assure, agit directement sur le projet littéraire de l'avant-garde. Entre politique, posture et poétique il y a ici une forte détermination.

Au niveau le plus superficiel, on trouve une extension métaphorique de ce «nationalisme minoritaire». En guise d'exemple, il faut rappeler que l'avant-garde justifiera par une figure de la régionalisation la récupération du poète national. C'est au nom d'un territoire qui vient de découvrir son hétérogénéité, ses «marges», que l'avant-garde essaie de penser les thèmes obsédants de la littérature roumaine: «Eminescu n'est pas un poète roumain, il est toute une province roumaine»²³. Mais c'est surtout le rapport à la langue qui sera réfléchi à travers cette logique régionale mobilisée par l'idée du «nationalisme minoritaire». Ce que les avant-gardistes roumains cherchent est une langue roumaine qui fonctionne comme un espéranto. Un article de janvier 1923²⁴, qui commente la présence roumaine dans les provinces nouvelles, déplore cette absence d'une langue offerte – sans restriction normative – à l'usage. Le roumain-espéranto serait ainsi une langue des régions, adaptée à l'usage des minorités et, encore, adaptée à cette nation statistique concernée par le «nationalisme minoritaire». C'est par rapport à cette mission politique que la première génération de l'avant-garde roumaine a cerné l'infraction linguistique. Il y a, sans doute, un engagement contre la grammaire: néanmoins, ce geste ne peut pas être compris seulement dans le cadre d'une poétique de la rupture. Il n'est pas question d'une violence gratuite infligée aux lois de la langue. Le roumain «incorrecte» est la langue générée par la diversité des usages, qui s'exprime par la pluralité de la syntaxe: «La syntaxe commence lorsqu'on accuse quelqu'un de ne pas connaître le roumain»²⁵. Ce n'était point une entreprise de négation. L'avant-garde jouait une langue syntaxique contre une langue grammaticale sans pour autant renoncer à clamer l'amour de la langue. Aussi, en dépit d'un désaccord explicité avec la grammaire, ce rapport à la langue continue-t-il de transmettre un message nationaliste. Car transformer la langue nationale dans une collection d'usages également légitimes – une série de jargons – était une opération censée approfondir une vérité de la langue. Tout en militant pour la conversion du roumain dans un nomenclateur sans norme, ils croiront toujours au 'génie' de la langue roumaine. Et peut-être ils ont eu raison car, comme Giorgio Agamben le rappelle, «tous les peuples sont bandes et coquilles, toutes les langues sont jargons et argots»²⁶.

Notes

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¹ A. Gide, *Dada*, dans W. Asholt, *Entre nationalisme et internationalisme: une conscience européenne des avant-gardes françaises?*, «Cahiers de l'Association internationale des études françaises», 54, 2002, p. 240.

- ² Cfr. I. Scurtu et al., *Enciclopedia Partidelor Politice din România 1859-2003* (L'Encyclopédie des Partis Politiques de la Roumanie 1859-2003), Meronie, București 2003, p. 304.
- ³ L'histoire de l'antisémitisme moderne en Roumanie remonte vers 1860 (il a reçu son expression légale dans la Constitution de 1866, confirmée par la révision de 1881) et, selon V. Neumann, *Istoria evreilor din România. Studii documentare și teoretice* (Histoire des Juifs en Roumanie), Editura Amarcord, Timisoara 1996, p. 161 sqq.), marque le passage d'un nationalisme 'ouvert' et tolérant, propre à l'esprit révolutionnaire du 1848, vers un nationalisme 'fermé', xénophobe.
- ⁴ C. Iancu, *Evreii din România în secolul XX. 1900-1920* (Les Juifs en Roumanie au XXe siècle. 1900-1920), Hasefer, București 2000, pp. 177-188.
- ⁵ E. Lovinescu, *Istoria literaturii române contemporane* (L'Histoire de la littérature roumaine contemporaine), Ancora, București 1927, vol. III, p. 439. S'il n'est pas indiqué différemment, toutes les traductions sont de l'auteur.
- ⁶ C. Iancu, *Evreii din România în secolul XX*, cit., pp. 208-217.
- ⁷ L. Nastasă, L. Salat (eds), *Maghiarii din România și etica minoritară (1920-1940)* (Les Hongrois de Roumanie et l'éthique minoritaire (1920-1940)), Fundatia CRDE, Cluj-Napoca 2003, pp. 19-20.
- ⁸ Ș. Antim, *Minorii și minoritățile* (Les Mineurs et les minorités), «Contemporanul», 32, 1923, p. 1.
- ⁹ On trouve même dans les pages de la revue d'avant-garde l'évocation de ce statut particulier: «le million de Juifs occupe une situation spéciale parmi les autres minorités. Tandis que celles-ci ont, chacune, une patrie d'origine dont elles ont été séparées [...] les Juifs seuls ne présentent pas pour l'Etat roumain une telle préoccupation» (*ibidem*).
- ¹⁰ Cfr. C. Iancu, *Evreii din România în secolul XX*, cit., pp. 208-217.
- ¹¹ G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *Kafka: pour une littérature mineure*, Minuit, Paris 1972.
- ¹² Ș. Antim, *Minorii și minoritățile*, cit., p. 1.
- ¹³ Aladin, *Evreii și Huliganii* (Les Juifs et les Houligans), «Contemporanul», 33, 1923, p. 1.
- ¹⁴ Ș. Antim, *Minorii și minoritățile*, cit., p. 1.
- ¹⁵ I. Vinea, *Cultură și antisemitism* (Culture et antisémitisme), «Contemporanul», 30, 1923, p. 2.
- ¹⁶ I. Vinea, *Naționalism, rasă, tradiție* (1924; Nationalisme, race, tradition), in Id., *Opere*, V, Academia Română, București 2003, pp. 209-210.
- ¹⁷ Ivi, p. 210.
- ¹⁸ *Ibidem*. Cursive dans la version original.
- ¹⁹ M. Dragomirescu, *O mică răfuială* (Un petit règlement de compte), in Id., *De la misticism la raționalism* (De mysticisme au rationalisme), Tip. Române Unite, București 1924, p. 167.
- ²⁰ M. Dragomirescu, *Opinia minoritară și partidele politice* (L'Opinion minoritaire et les partis politiques), in Id., *De la misticism la raționalism*, cit., p. 175.
- ²¹ I. Vinea, *Comedia declassaților* (La Comédie des déclassés), in Id., *Opere*, cit., p. 306.
- ²² *Ibidem*.
- ²³ B. Fundoianu, *Eminescu*, «Contemporanul», 29, 1923, p. 3. On peut ajouter à cela une extrapolation de la même logique régionale – en guise de filtre interprétant – à l'histoire de la littérature roumaine, en son entier: la succession des époques est définie par l'avant-garde comme une succession des jargons. I. Vinea, *Premegătorii* (Les Précurseurs), in Id., *Opere*, cit., p. 207.
- ²⁴ Diodem, *În lipsa unui esperanto* (Faute d'un esperanto), «Contemporanul», 26, 1923, p. 3.
- ²⁵ B. Fundoianu, *Sintaxa III* (1921; La Syntaxe III), in Id., *Imagini și cărți*, Minerva, București 1980, p. 145.
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La cohésion des groupes littéraires. Une sociologie de l'intimité*

Nous avons la tendance d'envisager le groupement littéraire comme une association d'écrivains qui ont en commun soit un programme littéraire, soit un engagement politique. Les avant-gardes historiques en sont peut-être le modèle le plus familier. Mais il existe aussi des communautés littéraires qui fonctionnent grâce à l'amitié. Ce que je me propose c'est de définir la particularité d'une telle sociabilité littéraire fondée sur une pratique et un imaginaire de l'amitié, afin de convaincre que, dans une morphologie des groupes littéraires, elle doit être distinguée comme une catégorie à part.

J'ai conçu ma recherche sur une stratégie comparatiste. J'ai choisi quatre groupes, pour en dégager les ressemblances. Mais, je dois avouer que dans cette démarche comparatiste, j'ai poussé volontairement la méthode à son extrême, à ses limites de fonctionnement. J'ai opéré à dessein des comparaisons qui ne sont pas justifiées d'un point de vue historique. Aussi, la logique des rapprochements semblera-t-elle tout à fait arbitraire, car il s'agit de groupements littéraires appartenant à des espaces géographiques distincts, pourvus d'une mémoire et d'une configuration culturelle particulières. Par la force d'une hétérogénéité recherchée, j'ai impliqué des cultures mineures et majeures, ainsi que des contextes historiques qui se prêtent difficilement à une comparaison.

J'ai appuyé mes remarques sur quatre groupes littéraires. Premièrement, il s'agit du groupe cosmopolite constitué au début du XIXe siècle à Coppet autour de Germaine de Staël dans l'intervalle mouvementé entre la Révolution française et la Restauration; deuxièmement, il s'agit du groupe russe d'avant-garde connu sous le nom de 'Frères Sérapion', qui a pris naissance à Petersburg en 1921; enfin, j'ai choisi deux cas de figures empruntées à la littérature roumaine – le cénacle de Sburătorul, qui fonctionne à Bucarest après la Première Guerre Mondiale, entre 1919 et 1943, sous la direction de Eugen Lovinescu et le Cercle littéraire de Sibiu, créé au début des années 40 par Radu Stanca et Ion Negoitescu.

Ce qui m'intéresse dans ce rassemblement invraisemblable de groupes littéraires empruntés à des contextes culturels hétérogènes est une circulation de thèmes, d'objets et de préoccupations. De voir que les écrivains définissent de la même manière leur rapport collectif aux œuvres, peu importe qu'ils soient les contemporains de Napoléon ou de Hitler, cela me semble prêter à une réflexion quant à l'importance des pratiques collectives de la littérature. Si je pouvais, j'utiliserais un terme comme 'coïncidence' pour qualifier ce que ces quatre groupements ont en commun; malheureusement, la coïncidence n'est pas un instrument scientifique. Je tiens pourtant à souligner ce qui relie ces écrivains au-delà des histoires qui les séparent, car, à mon avis, cela informe sur une expérience récurrente de la littérature.

Il faut constater dès le début que ce qui caractérise les écrivains de tous ces groupes est le fait qu'ils passent beaucoup de temps ensemble. Il ne s'agit pas de simples rencontres pour des lectures, une fois par semaine, mais de tout un vécu partagé. Dans le château de Germaine de Staël, à Coppet, les lectures font partie d'un rituel qui comprend des promenades, des déjeuners, des dîners, des soirées dansantes, des soirées de théâtre et d'autres. La plupart des écrivains ont des appartements réservés au château et ils s'y installent pour de longs séjours. Les écrivains de Sburătorul se laissent pris, eux aussi, dans un programme journalier commun, organisé, cette fois-ci, autour du critique Lovinescu. Celui-ci va chaque jour, à midi, à la librairie Alcalay où des écrivains l'attendent pour des discussions; chaque après-midi entre quatre et huit heures, il reçoit à la maison tous ceux qui lui frappent à la porte, sans rendez-vous; ces rencontres se prolongent le soir avec des promenades en groupe dans le parc à côté. Les impressions, telles qu'elles s'expriment dans les interviews de l'époque déjà, sont uniformes: si dans la librairie, les discussions ont l'air de «cénacles improvisés», dans le bureau du critique, en après-midi, on fait des «lectures en petit-comité»¹. Tout ce quotidien partagé prend ainsi l'aspect bien caractéristique d'un «cénacle» élargi, qui englobe le vécu. Une ritualisation du manger ensemble existe chez Sburătorul, aussi. Les dimanches soir vers neuf heures, quand le cénacle finit, Lovinescu fait cinq invitations pour un dîner qui est servi dans le salon à côté. Le groupe des Sérapiens donne une idée encore plus précise de ce que peut être le partage à l'intérieur d'un groupe littéraire. Il se constitue dans la Maison des Arts, une des bizarres institutions postrévolutionnaires qui, créée et financée par Maksim Gorkij, développe des activités culturelles et universitaires dans une atmosphère de pension de famille. L'immeuble est un ancien hôtel privé. Dans le nouveau climat de pénurie après la révolution, Gorki y rassemble douze écrivains jeunes et sans moyens de vie, pour les loger, les nourrir et leur offrir, en même temps, la possibilité de suivre sur place des cours de formation. Une fois par semaine, ces jeunes hommes de moins de vingt-cinq ans se rencontrent pour des lectures dans une ancienne chambre des domestiques, habitée à ce moment-là par Mikhaïl Slonimskij. Quant au

Cercle littéraire de Sibiu, sa composition est aussi très jeune, comme celle des Sérapiens. Les membres du groupe sont en 1945 au moment de leurs études. Le partage de vie est, dans leur cas, presque typiquement celui des gens de leur âge: les journées de cours à l'université avec une nourriture furtive se suivent par des nuitées de vagabondage ensemble dans les rues de Sibiu. On peut donc voir, comme une constante, que dans ces groupes la vie littéraire devient l'espace d'une vie commune où on discute, on lit, on mange et parfois même on dort ensemble.

Dans tous ces cas, l'espace qui acquiert le groupe est très marqué par l'intimité. Dans la chambre de Slonimsky, les lectures des Sérapiens se font autour d'un lit, assis au milieu. Les positions se disposent en fonction de ce centre. En 1929, Vladimir Pozner se souvient de l'entrée dans cette chambre, où il distinguait, «étendu sur le lit, les pieds en l'air, un jeune homme brun en veston d'uniforme auquel il manque un bouton»; c'est Slonimsky lui-même; «autour de lui, par terre, sur la table, sur le lit même, sont installés les autres Sérapiens»². Un correspondant de ce lit se retrouve dans le bureau de Lovinescu. Si on visitait le critique en après-midi, on le trouverait en chemise sans veste, écrivant «allongé sur le divan, un divan très bas, plein de coussins multicolores, où, pour reposer sa tête, il se servait, en guise d'oreiller, d'une sorte de rouleau»³. Le dimanche du cénacle, ce même divan devient 'l'endroit des dames'. Bebs Delavrancea, Mme Alice Voinescu, Ticu Archip y avaient leur place réservée. Ce qui me paraît évident c'est que le partage se transcrit ici comme un partage d'intimité. Il ne s'agit pas, tout simplement, d'avoir accès à un espace commun. C'est un espace privé, qui appartient à quelqu'un, et qui est intimement marqué par cette appartenance. Arrivées dans le salon de Lovinescu pour participer aux discussions du groupe, ces femmes viennent occuper la place auparavant occupée par le corps de leur hôte. Et même si ce corps masculin n'est plus là, elles lui perçoivent, de manière physique, concrète, la trace. Cette pratique de lectures qui amène les écrivains, comme des invités, dans un espace qui, dans leur absence, est intensément habité par l'un d'entre eux, fait que dans les relations à l'intérieur du groupe soit impliqué un côté corporel. Les participants à la réunion se perçoivent l'un l'autre comme des présences physiques, deviennent les objets d'une approche sensible; au point qu'on pourrait dire qu'il y ait une synchronisation du débat littéraire avec le touché corporel. Les biographes de Germaine de Staël notent une habitude de celle-ci qu'ils avaient de la peine à comprendre: de temps en temps, elle désignait publiquement les écrivains qui devraient partager la même chambre par deux ou par plusieurs⁴; en faisant ces annonces, elle y mettait, paraît-il, une certaine fierté.

De manière en quelque sorte prévisible, pour une communauté qui, habitant une même maison, se sent en même temps traversée par des courants d'affection, les relations à l'intérieur du groupe se définissent selon le prototype de la 'fraternité'. Si chez les romantiques cosmopolites de Coppet on

a affaire à des 'frères' qui manifestent leur solidarité en ignorant les frontières géographiques et les différences de langue, chez les Sérapions la fraternisation fait l'objet-même du manifeste. Définie contre la camaraderie bolchevique, elle est conçue selon le modèle d'un ordre religieux.

Il y a cet amour fraternel. Nous ne sommes pas membres d'un club, nous ne sommes pas des collègues et pas des camarades; nous sommes des *frères*. Chacun de nous est précieux pour l'autre, comme écrivain et comme personne. Mon sang m'a parlé: Voici ton *frère!* Et ton sang t'a soupiré: Voici, c'est ton *frère!* Il n'y a pas dans le monde de force qui puisse rompre la liaison de sang, qui puisse désunir les *frères* du même sang.⁵

Le nom de 'Frères Sérapion' est d'ailleurs pris d'après un roman de E.T.A. Hoffmann où l'ermite Sérapion, qui avait vécu dans le désert au I^{er} siècle, est pris en modèle par un aristocrate qui quitte le monde, se retire dans un forêt et s'y fait des 'frères' spirituels. Chez Sburătorul, la fraternité se vit par couples: Ion Barbu parle de son «amour fraternel» à Tudor Vianu, Mihail Sebastian se déclare 'frère' avec Camil Petrescu, Pompiliu Constantinescu avec Șerban Cioculescu, Vladimir Streinu avec Ion Barbu, Felix Aderca avec Lovinescu, Lovinescu avec Isac Peltz. Détail significatif, qui donne une idée sur la spécificité de cette relation, dans ce dernier cas, la fraternisation est ressentie par Peltz déjà au moment de sa première visite dans l'appartement de Lovinescu. Elle vient remplacer, au départ, la terreur éprouvée à l'entrée. Les lignes de cette déclaration laissent percevoir combien fraterniser mobilise ici un rapprochement corporel: «Quand je voulais partir», dit Peltz, «j'ai senti près de moi la respiration d'un frère plus âgé, la présence d'un ami»⁶.

Mais pourtant, malgré l'imaginaire abondant qui la représente, l'amitié ne suffit pas à la caractérisation du groupement littéraire. Il s'agit en effet presque d'une amitié paradoxale, qui, poussée à ses limites, appelle son contraire. Car il arrive que ces écrivains, qui vivent si proche l'un de l'autre, au lieu de fusionner, veulent, à tout prix, se conserver comme des singularités et surtout ne pas se confondre, ne pas se ressembler. Tout contrairement au précepte baudelairien, «mon frère» ne doit pas devenir pour eux «mon semblable». Dans le manifeste des 'Frères Sérapions', on peut lire ces phrases:

nous ne voulons pas écrire tous de la même manière; chacun de nous a son propre visage et ses propres gestes [...] les six frères hofmanniens n'étaient pas, eux non plus, des frères jumeaux, une seule lignée de soldats assis dans l'ordre de leur hauteur.⁷

Dans un cours donné au Collège de France en 1976-1977⁸, dédié aux formes de vie communautaires, Roland Barthes part de l'exemple inédit que lui offrent, parmi les communautés religieuses, quelques ordres orien-

tales, certains moines du mont Athos. À la différence du monachisme occidental, ceux-ci sortent de leur solitude et s'orientent vers un monastère non pas afin de renoncer à leur singularité – dans les termes de Barthes, à leur 'rythme' propre – mais tout au contraire, pour la renforcer. Ils se nourrissent de la conviction que le groupe puisse encore mieux leur bâtir la singularité que ne l'aurait pas fait leur solitude. Il se passe de même, il me semble, dans les groupes littéraires dont je m'occupe. L'établissement d'une distance à l'autre, d'une intervalle de séparation et de différence y est tout aussi fréquent que l'appel à la fraternité. Le phantasme d'une telle distance prend les formes les plus diverses. Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu figure le groupe de Sburătorul comme une «chaîne interminable» dans laquelle se prennent «des adeptes sans distorsion, conservant leur individualité»⁹ – pour Ticu Archip, Sburătorul est «un temple qui n'a ni murs, ni toit, ni plancher, liés et séparés par de souples colonnes en pierre»¹⁰. Parallèles, ces «colonnes souples» entretiennent une 'relation' et restent, en même temps, séparées, autonomes. Leur action commune (soutenir le temple) est due au fait même de leurs existences individuelles et distancées. L'agrammaticalité de l'expression («liés et séparés») laisse transparaître le paradoxe de cette différence entre une instance unique, abstraite et son essence plurielle, disséminée. Vouloir vivre ensemble signifie en fait vouloir vivre seul. C'est toujours cette éthique de la distance qui fait que l'amitié soit nécessairement accompagnée par l'inimitié. Les Sérapiens expliquent que c'est là, justement, la raison pour laquelle ils ont pris comme terme de rapport la communauté des personnages imaginée par Hoffmann: «Ils se chamaillent et sont constamment en désaccord, c'est pourquoi nous avons pris le nom de *Frères Sérapiens*»¹¹. Un autre exemple, à valeur typique. Vladimir Streinu (Sburătorul) décrit sa relation avec Ion Barbu:

nos relations étaient quand très chaleureuses, quand très froides; quand amicales quand hostiles. Cela fait que mon amitié avec lui, comme mon hostilité pour lui étaient des phénomènes récurrents [...]. Nous avons donc été incessamment amis et perpétuellement ennemis.¹²

Cette éthique de la distance implique pour tous les groupements fondés sur l'amitié un caractère saillant: l'absence de toute idéologie commune aux membres du groupement. Par préoccupation de conserver la solitude des individus, la communauté refuse d'imposer une doctrine. Cela veut dire, tout d'abord, l'inexistence d'un projet littéraire commun. Dans le groupe des Sérapiens, Konstantin Féline cultive le roman traditionnel, dans la tradition du XIXe siècle, Vsevolod Ivanov écrit une prose ornée, qui illustre l'école régionale asiatique, Nikolaj Tikhonov choisit l'exotisme, Mikhail Zoščenko écrit une prose satirique, etc. Chez Sburătorul, Lovinescu constate: «Dans mon cénacle, il y a des traditionalistes, des modernistes et jusqu'à la branche la plus avancée des intégralistes»¹³. Deuxièmement, il faut noter l'inexistence d'un engagement politique cohérent. Le cercle

littéraire fondé sur l'amitié évitera volontairement toute homogénéisation des opinions politiques de ses membres. Bien que souvent situés sur des positions modérées, loin des extrêmes, au milieu du champ politique, le groupement acceptera toute la gamme des engagements politiques, même les plus radicales. Ici, on tolère tout. Benjamin Constant imagine dans *l'Esprit de conquête* une sorte de fédéralisme, qui totaliserait en acte un faisceau de tendances diverses, où la diversité pourrait s'exprimer librement. A une gauche représentée par Constant et Simonde de Sismondi s'oppose, dans le groupe de Coppet, une droite mystique et nationaliste, représentée par Friedrich Schelling et Karl Schlegel; il y en a aussi qui sont au centre, 'fidèles' à Bonaparte, comme Prosper de Barante. Parmi les Sérapiens, qui définissent leur fraternité contre la camaraderie bolchevique, il y a des bolcheviques. «Chacun des nous soutient son idéologie propre, ses propres convictions politiques», écrit Lev Lunz dans le manifeste, «un frère prie Dieu, un autre prie le diable»¹⁴.

À la fin de ma réflexion, je tiens à souligner le côté utopique de ce projet collectif fondé sur l'amitié. Au demeurant, ce que ces écrivains cherchent est un type de société constituée en-dehors des idéologies. Ils veulent être ensemble, sans assumer, pourtant, un thème commun. Or, cette intuition va contre l'imaginaire social de la modernité. Elle s'oppose instinctivement aux projets sociaux fondés sur l'annexion de l'individu à une idéologie, qu'elle soit la droite, nationaliste, ou la gauche, internationaliste. La vision sociale engagée par cette amitié littéraire est foncièrement anachronique dans le contexte de la modernité. Aussi s'illustrera-t-elle par une gesticulation nostalgique et par une préférence accordée aux formes littéraires du passé.

Et c'est là une dernière coïncidence qu'il faut absolument relever, le fait que tous ces communautés littéraires orientées par le culte de l'amitié manifestent un intérêt marqué pour la tragédie, dans sa forme antique. A Coppet, on écrivait des tragédies pour alimenter chaque automne de véritables saisons théâtrales organisées au château par Germaine de Staël¹⁵. Les écrivains du Cercle littéraire de Sibiu faisaient la même chose: Radu Stanca projetait depuis 1946 que leur groupe se constitue autour d'un Théâtre propre (*Euphorion*), où on mettrait en scène, à côté des tragédies classiques, ses propres tragédies; en 1948 ils étaient arrivés à tenir «chaque nuit» des séminaires qui débattent sur la «question tragique» (V. Eftimiu, *Tragedii eline*; A. Holban, *Oameni feluriți*; H. Papadat-Bengescu, *Medievala, Sora mea, Ana*; T. Archip, *Luminița*)¹⁶. Plusieurs écrivains cultivaient le genre tragique chez Sburătorul aussi – Lovinescu lui-même écrit une *Lulu*, en partant du modèle que lui offrait Frank Wedekind. Lev Lunz produit à son tour une tragicomédie, *Hors la loi*. Ce dernier 'exercice' est peut-être encore plus significatif vu que, dans la Russie des Sérapiens, la tragédie manquait complètement de tradition; le genre était pratiquement inexistant¹⁷. Qui plus est, toutes les quatre communautés se retrouvent dans le même mythe tragique, celui d'Iphigénie. Cette héroïne qui a été séparée de son peuple in-

carne, peut-être, le sentiment de ces écrivains unis par le rêve de l'amitié, de vivre ensemble dans un monde qui ne leur appartient pas. L'évocation de l'emblème de la poétique aristotélicienne justifie, dans ce cas, le retour à la littérature telle qu'elle était définie avant l'âge démocratique.

Notes

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¹ Ș. Cioculescu, *Amintiri. Mărturii* (Souvenirs. Témoignages), Eminescu, București 1981, p. 234. S'il n'est pas indiqué différemment, toutes les traductions sont de l'auteur.

² V. Pozner, *Panorama de la littérature russe*, KRA, Paris 1929, p. 326.

³ C. Baltazar, *Contemporan cu ei* (Contemporain avec eux), Editura Pentru Literatură, București 1962, p. 88.

⁴ Un tel annonce est enregistré pour Karl Schlegel et August von Kotzebue (v. B. Franco, «Wallenstein» et le romantisme français, «Revue Germanique Internationale», 22, 2004, pp. 161-173).

⁵ L. Luntz, *Manifeste des Sérapiens*, reproduit dans Livia Cotorcea, *Avangarda rusă* (L'Avant-Garde russe), Editura Universității, «Al. I. Cuza», Iassy 2009, pp. 259-264.

⁶ I. Peltz, *Amintiri din viața literară* (Souvenirs de la vie littéraire), Cartea românească, București 1974, p. 81.

⁷ L. Luntz, *Manifeste de Sérapiens*, cit., p. 261.

⁸ R. Barthes, *Comment vivre ensemble: simulations romanesques de quelques espaces quotidiens. Notes de cours et de séminaires au Collège de France, 1976-1977*, éd. par Claude Coste, Seuil-IMEC, Paris 2002.

⁹ H. Papadat-Bengescu, *Sburătorul văzut de...* (Sburătorul vu par...), «Vremea», 232, 1932, p. 8.

¹⁰ F. Aderca, *Mărturia unei generații* (Le témoignage d'une génération), Editura pentru Literatură, București 1967, p. 17.

¹¹ L. Luntz, *Manifeste des Sérapiens*, cit., p. 260.

¹² G. Barbilian, *Ion Barbu. Amintiri* (Ion Barbu. Souvenirs), Cartea românească, București 1979, p. 330.

¹³ E. Lovinescu, *Memorii. Aqua forte* (Mémoires. Aqua forte), Minerva, București 1998, p. 185.

¹⁴ L. Luntz, *Manifeste de Sérapiens*, cit., p. 263.

¹⁵ Germaine de Staël écrit quatre tragédies en vers, Benjamin Constant produit *Wallstein*, une adaptation de la trilogie *Wallenstein* de Schiller.

¹⁶ R. Stanca, I. Negoieșcu, *Un roman epistolar* (Un roman par lettres), Dacia, Cluj-Napoca 1998, p. 128.

¹⁷ C'est à peine en 1825 que Pușkin écrit une «tragédie romantique», où il traite avec indifférence les règles classiques.

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Márta Nagy
Zabán

The Relationship Between National Identity and Literature Education in Cluj in the Last Quarter of the 19th Century*

The history of the Romanian Department of the University of Cluj can be told from various points of view. One of them – from which, to my mind, the dynamics and caesuras that supervened in the process of its formation seem graspable – is provided by the succession of the heads of the department. Another important point of view that, as we shall see further on, is present in various aspects concerning the case of the Romanian department, is the issue of professional identity associated with one-person-departments and the problems of meeting, or failing to meet, expectations from outside, i.e. public opinion. From this perspective, the retirement of Grigore Silași and the appointment of Grigore Moldovan in 1886 can be regarded as a clear caesura within the history of the department. Although Silași's work is regarded by historians of literature as more beneficial to the Romanian nation and literature than that of Grigore Moldovan, the appointment of the former in 1872 was not trouble-free, and his nationality also generated a number of conflicts during his time as the head of department. With regard to the scandals around the Romanian Department, we can highlight three problematic years – starting from the initial period of the department – that were marked by Silași's leadership: 1872, 1876, and 1884.

In comparison with the other heads of department¹ at the Hungarian Royal University of Cluj, Silași was appointed somewhat later, on October 20, 1872; it is not the first minutes of the faculty of letters, dated October 23, 1872, but the ones dated November 19 that record his presence.

By the scholars studying his work, Silași is regarded both as a university professor and militant for the defence of the nation who was mired in his nationality. Nevertheless the first objections to his appointment came from Romanian speaking areas. The article in the «Telegraful», a Sibiu based periodical, was adopted and published by the «Federațiunea» (The Federation), a periodical from Budapest along with a short comment: the



correspondent of «Telegraful» disapproved of Silași's appointment because he considered the denomination of the newly elected head of the department a mistake². In this case he was not criticized because of his nationality, but because of the religious group to which he belonged, and the criticism was launched by a Romanian Orthodox religious community. So besides the many welcoming manifestations in the Romanian press there were also voices according to which Silași, as a Greek-Catholic, would represent the views and mentality of only a small fraction of the Romanian nation. There were some opinions, conceived in the Romanian press, according to which Silași would not be eligible for the position he had just earned, because he was of the Greek-Catholic faith, and therefore his views would represent only a small portion of Romanians.

Among the documents of the Faculty of Letters from the academic years of 1876-1877, no more than eleven books of minutes have remained. These include the minutes of October 25, 1876, which record the moment in which Silași is pulled up by the board of professors about the squabble going on in the press of Cluj.

Here I would like to attempt to reconstruct the logic behind the professor's pleading, and the reasons behind the accusations made by the Cluj-based magazines «Kelet» (East), «Magyar Polgár» (The Hungarian Citizen) and «Ébredés» (Awakening), as well as the ones recorded in the minutes of the department.

On October 13, 1876, the Cluj-based gazette «Kelet» (East), in its short news section, informed with indignation that according to its/their sources, Grigore Silași was imparting courses in Romanian at the University of Cluj. And, although we may find it incredible that such a thing would happen at the Hungarian Royal University, Silași was called upon to make a declaration regarding the issue³. In his declaration Silași explained, that he always abided by the legal provisions despite their being often unjust; however, he immediately rejected the accusation. In spite of the fact that the nature of the matter would have required that he imparted his courses in Romanian, he did it in Hungarian. Although, in order to enhance the Romanian students' understanding of Hungarian, «I sometimes, here and there, strived to make the presented material understood in Romanian too by my Romanian-speaking students»⁴. Following the falloff in articles concerning the issue in «Kelet» (East), on October 20 «Magyar Polgár» (The Hungarian Citizen) also took up the matter by providing a summary of the pen-war published by «Kelet» (East) and told by «a former student of his»⁵. Silași was accused of other charges, according to which the political conduct shown by the professor inhibited non-Romanian speaking students from studying Romanian language and literature. The article in «Magyar Polgár» (The Hungarian Citizen) called on Silași to abandon this behaviour for the future, since «a professorial post is a holy place, and the least thing it is meant to do is raise tigers against the country»⁶. It is clear that the press

of Cluj was trying to politicize a completely professional matter, that is, the optimization of the instruction of language and literature and from this perspective, it finds its own intervention in the professional matter as legitimate. On November 1 «Kelet» (East) raised the issue again with a heading that dealt with the review of the Romanian press. It considered the fact that «Gazeta Transilvaniei» had published Silași's declaration as a political blunder. In it he had explained that it was not just about a few lectures imparted in Romanian, but that the Romanian nation had been demanding an independent Romanian university for 28 years and this was what the future of the Romanian language depended on⁷. Consequently, even the newspapers regarded this matter as political, and not as a methodological issue concerning the instruction of the Romanian language and literature.

At first sight the squabbles that erupted around the Romanian department look like a series of spontaneous reactions. But if we start to analyse the reports, the news, and the daily events reported in the cited newspapers prior to this issue, we can place the arguments regarding the university scandal in a more arduous process of wider impact.

The press material published before the accusations against Silași reveals that the relations between the Romanian and Hungarian peoples were considerably tense. The reports of «Ébredés» (Awakening), «Magyar Polgár» (The Hungarian Citizen) and «Kelet» (East) dating from this period mostly cover issues of international political relations. I believe that the Balkan war in 1876 largely determined the attitude of the Hungarians in Cluj towards Romania and Romanians, and implicitly towards Grigore Silași, a representative of Romanian culture.

Shortly before he was nominated head of the Romanian Department, the following words about the war situation appeared in «Ébredés» (Awakening):

There is no doubt about Russia wanting a war. [...] All the European states are following with rapt attention the unfolding events, because the menacing war shall bear crucial influence on the evolution of the plurisecular Eastern Question. [...] As far as we are concerned, however, every result that marks a new stage in the Eastern Question is crucial [...]. Our advantage over the provinces of the Ottoman Empire in terms of civilization, industry and commerce, urges us to endeavour to enforce the influence that we lost in the West. [...] This is one of the reasons why we cannot follow the eastern situation with apathy. The other reason is Russia itself. If the Russian Empire – with a Slavic population of over seventy million –, that never really ceased to be a Slavic population and extending power, one day devoured Turkey or just some of its provinces, it would still not be satisfied with this achievement [...] if Turkey ever came to be ruled by the Russians, enclosed from all sides, we would hardly be able to preserve our national independence.⁸

For the Hungarians of Transylvania, the deterrent thought of panslavism represented Romania's approach to Russia in a fairly negative way: one which put the Romanians living on the territory of the Monarchy

into a delicate situation, implying the possibility of a compulsive fight with their own nation⁹. All this is intensified by the news taken over from the Romanian newspapers that report about Romania's dangerous involvement in the war¹⁰. For example, on October 17 «Magyar Polgár» (The Hungarian Citizen) reported about the military preparedness of Romania, and that «a pamphlet has recently appeared, according to which not only will Turkey be divided, but Hungary too. Moreover it hopes that Bessarabia will be freed from Russia»¹¹. The example of the students of the University of Budapest demonstrating in favour of the Turks¹² was later followed by the students in Cluj; the general mood was thus, by all means, anti-Romanian, and this favoured raising the Romanian issue.

That the press and political community found it legitimate to take an interest in university matters of a certain nature is only one aspect of the question. And the attitude of the university colleagues can be regarded as fairly peculiar. There is evidence in the minutes of the faculty that the scandal blown up around Silași also attracted the attention of his colleagues. Moreover, they felt they had the right to bring the Romanian professor to book. Despite the expectations one might have, the faculty board did not address the issue from a professional standpoint by inquiring about the professional methods used in the teaching of Romanian language and literature, or by transforming the accusations made against Silași into methodological issues.

The minutes of the meeting of the Faculty of Letters, Linguistics and History of Science dated October 25, 1876 read as follows:

32. The dean pronounces that when local newspapers attacked Professor Dr. Gergely Szilasy, he asked the professor whether the charges had any basis; Dr. Gergely Szilasy replied that the accusations were unfounded, and that he could refer to his former Hungarian-speaking students, who would confirm that he did not impart lectures in Romanian.

Since he only has Romanian-speaking students now, it happens once in a while that, for the sake of the students who speak poor Hungarian, he explains certain things in Romanian too, nevertheless his lectures are always delivered in Hungarian.

The board acknowledges Dr. Gergely Szilasy's declaration and takes note of the matter.¹³

It is clear that the issue was not addressed from a professional point of view. However, contrary to the approach of the newspapers, the colleagues of the board accepted that for practical reasons, certain things needed to be explained in Romanian. Characteristically, professionalism is subordinated to scientific aspects.

At the Romanian Department of the University of Cluj, the end of the Silași era is marked by the academic year 1883-1884. On May 16, 1884, the newspaper «Kolozsvári Közlöny» (Journal of Cluj) offered detailed information about the events of the past few days in an article entitled

Egyetemünk ifjúsága a román ultrák ellen (Our Young University Students against the Romanian Ultras¹⁴) which described the events of May 14. According to the article some Hungarian students met in the Bánffy garden, where a series of speeches on the anti-Hungarianism of the Romanian press were being delivered, with the Romanian students of Cluj, the Romanian university professor and the Julia Association. The newspaper presented the demonstration of the Hungarian students as a natural reaction to the agitations of the Romanian radical nationalist newspapers, and it considered their act patriotic. According to the testimony of the reporter, the speeches held at this event deemed the Romanian Julia Association, and its provocative activities, responsible for Grigore Silași imparting lectures in Romanian at the University of Cluj. Incited by the speeches, the students went to demonstrate in front of the building of the Julia Association, and in front of the houses of Silași and of his lawyers. From there they continued towards Hotel Biasini, where a Romanian event was taking place for the celebrations of May 15. In the eyes of Hungarians this was pure provocation because it was the commemoration of the anti-Hungarian national assembly that had been held in 1848 at Balázsfalva. The article also gives an account of the claims of the Hungarian students, and the lectures of Silași held in Romanian appear to be a neuralgic point. In the following days, further news was published about the suspension of the Julia Association¹⁵, and the burning of Romanian magazines, at the hands of Hungarian youths, in Cluj's main square¹⁶. Then, the issue of May 20 published Silași's declaration, in which he contested all the accusations against him:

I plead that the following derogatory affirmations are unfounded: 1. that I am the president of the "Julia" literary youth association; 2. that I did not fulfil my obligations as a university professor according to the national laws and to the relevant provisions of his excellency, the Royal Hungarian Education Minister; [...] 4. that I ever instigated anti-national and anti-Hungarian feelings, be it privately, or publicly at meetings [...].¹⁷

Here Silași reacts according to the logic of the accusations in the newspapers. As in the case of the scandals analysed above, the issue of the teaching of Romanian literature is not addressed as a professional matter, but as a political one, or a scientific one. However, from the declaration of Silași, which was noted down in the minutes of the meeting of the faculty, we know that other events took place. The day before the publication of the above-mentioned declaration, on May 19, Silași himself, as dean of the Faculty of Letters, convoked an extraordinary meeting in response to the written request signed by his colleagues. The object of the meeting: clarification of the students' demonstration against Silași, and the adoption of further measures. Since the following is an important, and so far unpublished, source containing Silași's version, I shall quote long portions from it:

Dr. Gergely Szilasi, honouring the request, declares the following: On the 14th of the current month, Wednesday evening, 9 p.m. young people gathered in mass in front of his house and demonstrated for a quarter of an hour. They shouted: Let's hear Szilasi! He, however, thinking it was not recommended, did not come to his window. The next day, while coming at his regular time to hold a lecture, he saw, from a considerable distance, that there was a particularly large group of students in front of the classroom, but he did not turn back hoping that, if needed, he would calm down spirits by saying a few clarifying words. [...] At the end of the lecture one student stood up and said: "We have listened to the lecture of the right honourable professor. We have learned from it and we hereby express our thanks", at which the undersigned replied: "I would be glad if at least five or six of you regularly came to my lectures either as students or as guests. Thus we would have the opportunity to understand each other, and with mutual trust we would wish: Long live Hungary!" The spokesperson of the students replied: "If the right honourable Professor truly wishes it, we will also say: Long live." The majority of youths dispersed among acclamation, but some "Abzug" exclamations were also heard. On the 16th [...] he could already hear the clamour coming from the agitated youths when entering the university court. He turned back with the intention of obtaining official assistance in order to hold his lecture, but later, having reassured the students that he would not do any harm to anyone, by giving his word of honour to a delegate of the students, without any further consideration he went up to the classroom. But this time it was not the same classroom in which he usually held his lectures. It was a larger one, because it was adequate to the approximately 70 members of the audience. Nevertheless, before starting his lecture, a young man stood up and said: "Yesterday we had the chance to hear your explications about the masculine and the feminine words in Romanian, and now we would like to deal with other matters and we want an answer to the following questions: Firstly, is it true what they say, that yesterday in the main square you said: Rope for the Hungarians!?" To this question, the undersigned replied as follows: "He is not used to utter such expressions at all, not even against his enemies, let alone against Hungarians. He respects and loves the Hungarians and wishes to always live in friendship with them." His words were interrupted by some of the youths, who asked whether he considered the Hungarians his enemies. To this he replied: "Gentlemen, Hungary is my country, I was born here and this is where I want to die, even as a beggar!"¹⁸

The demonstrations that took place in front of his house had serious consequences in the following days. This time the questions of the academic board did not ask whether the rumours, circulating among the students and in the press, about Silași's teaching methods and his public nationalist manifestations and attitudes were true. Instead they asked about the pedagogical background of the above described events: how do you justify letting your prestige as a university professor, and the prestige of the entire faculty get blemished? A professor's behaviour, his ability to preserve his prestige, were visibly an important part of the 'university professor' status, as much as, for example, professional competence. After his declaration, Silași left the meet-

ing, and his colleagues, immediately after discussing the issue, put on record their regret that such compromise of professorial prestige, such lack of respect towards the other professors, harmed academic freedom, and concluded that it is the obligation of the academic board to repair the damage. Most surprisingly, in the following minutes Silași is asked to answer whether the students' rumours and the accusations brought against him in the press are valid. He is also asked to publish his answers in the newspapers that have accused him – probably the declaration published on March 20 was a consequence of this. The meeting was resumed on May 23, and since Silași found his colleagues' attitude towards him unworthy, he refused to make a written declaration for the faculty, and did not think that the council was competent enough to judge his case. Following Silași's departure from the meeting, the board decided to pass the case to the university council, and wished to submit the faculty proceedings to the Minister of Education. Ministerial rescript no. 25.304 disposed the admonition of the students that disturbed Silași's class, and the council's examination against Silași discharged him from «imparting lectures and from any kind of official activity»¹⁹.

The events of 1884 are better understood if one considers the basic mood of the era, which was determined by national conflicts. At that time the issue of nationality in Hungary was not to be neglected due to two laws that had recently come into force. In the year that the *Az 1879: XVIII. törvénycikk a magyar nyelv tanításáról a népoktatási tanintézetekben* (Act 1879: XVIII Concerning the Instruction of the Hungarian Language in the Academic Institutions for Public Education) was adopted, it triggered massive objections among the minorities. The law, that established the imposition of the Hungarian language to non-Hungarian speaking students, was put into force gradually, but in 1883 it was fully validated. Another nationality law was adopted in 1883, namely the *Az 1883: XXX. törvénycikk a középiskolákról és azok tanárainak képzéséről* (Act 1883: XXX Concerning Secondary Schools and the Formation of their Professors), through which the Hungarian language was imposed further. This trend in Hungarian legislation triggered intense objections in the Romanian language periodicals both in Romania and in Hungary. And the tension around the Romanian-Hungarian issue spread to Transylvania too. With the dishonouring of the professor of Romanian language and literature, the culmination of the tensions in Cluj can almost be regarded as naturally resulting from the events.

Therefore I think that the scandals that blemished Grigore Silași's career as head of department were not aimed at his person, but were demonstrations of the change of the symbolic status of the Romanian department as an institution.

The position of the head of the Romanian Department was clearly regarded as one of the instruments of self-representation of certain circles, and thus they wanted to see their own values among the values represented by the university department. This is why in the eyes of the Orthodox Church, the Greek-Catholic denomination of Silași seemed problematic,

whereas his Romanian nationality seemed militant from the Hungarian perspective. These perspectives do not express a professional point of view; indeed, even his colleagues, who shared his same profession, never addressed the question of his competence. The department, and the head of the department had to meet different requirements than that of professionalism. The status and identity of the head of the department required, for example, that the person appointed should be a religious person and a patriot. However, these concepts gained different meanings according to certain denominations and certain nationalities: for the Hungarians, being a good patriot meant being loyal to a different nation than the Romanians. Similarly, the question of denomination is also dependent upon the perspective. The fact that not even his own colleagues found it necessary to transform the arguments against Silași into a question of professionalism shows that, at that time, these were accepted and significant aspects of professional identity, of the career as a university professor and of the history of the academic departments. The kind of interpretation which would clarify these and would present the history of some of the departments only as a profession-related story would be erroneous and one-sided. Also, it would be unable to explain many of the phenomena.

Notes

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¹ They were appointed on 29th September 1872 by Franz Joseph following the nomination of the Minister of Religion and Education. *Acta Reg. Scient. Universitatis Claudiopolitanae Ani MDCCCLXXII-III. Fasciculus I. Négy (I-IV) Beszéd, melyek a Kolozsvári Kir. Tudomány-Egyetem megnyitása alkalmával MDCCCLXXII. october 19-én és november 10-én tartattak* (Four (I-IV) Speeches, which were held at the occasion of the inauguration of the Royal University of Cluj on October 19 and November 10, MDCCLXXII), Cluj 1873, p. 7. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the author.

² Anonymous, *Óre ce se fia?* (What should there be?), «Federațiunea» (The Federation), 109-709, 1872, pp. 435-436.

³ Anonymous, *Dr. Szilasi Gergelyről* (About Dr. Gergely Szilasi), «Kelet» (East), 234, 1876, p. 925.

⁴ Anonymous, *Szilasi Gergely*, «Kelet» (East), 237, 1876, p. 936.

⁵ Anonymous, *Ismét Dr. Szilassy!* (Dr. Szilassy again!), «Magyar Polgár» (The Hungarian Citizen), 241, 1876, p. 3.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ Anonymous, *Ismét az „Ébredés” és a „Gazeta Transylvaniei”* (It is “Ébredés” and “Gazeta Transylvaniei again”), «Kelet» (East), 250, 1876, p. 1005.

⁸ Anonymous, *Kolozsvár, október 3.* (Cluj, October 3), «Ébredés» (Awakening), 3, 1876, p. 4.

⁹ Anonymous, *Az erdélyi románok és a keleti válság* (Romanians from Transylvania and the Eastern Crisis), «Ébredés» (Awakening), 23, 1876, p. 3.

¹⁰ Shortly before the accusations against Silași it was announced that Russian troops were lining up along the Hungarian border after having marched through Romania. Anonymous, *A Románián átvonuló oroszokról* (About the Russians Marching through Romania), «Kelet», 228, 1876, p. 898.

¹¹ «Magyar Polgár» (The Hungarian Citizen), 238, 1876, p. 5.

- ¹² Anonymous, *Az ifjúság tüntetése* (The Youth Protest), «Ébredés» (Awakening), 24, 1876, p. 4.
- ¹³ National Archives of Cluj, fond no. 315. Documents of the Faculty of Letters, Linguistics and Science History, October 25, 1876.
- ¹⁴ Anonymous, *Egyetemünk ifjúsága a román ultrák ellen* (Our Young University Students against the Romanian Ultras), «Kolozsvári Közlöny» (The Journal of Cluj), 113, 1884, p. 2.
- ¹⁵ L–T, *Kolozsvár, május 16.* (Cluj, May 16), «Kolozsvári Közlöny» (The Journal of Cluj), 114, 1884, p. 1. The issue of May 22 published the petition of the students submitted to the university council concerning the suspension of the Julia-association (Anonymous, *A kolozsvári egyetemi ifjúság* (Cluj Young University Students), «Kolozsvári Közlöny» (The Journal of Cluj), 118, 1884, p. 5).
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- ¹⁸ National Archives of Cluj, fond no. 315. Documents of the Faculty of Letters, Linguistics and Science History, May 19, 1884.
- ¹⁹ *A Vallás- és Közoktatásügyi magyar királyi Minisztérium által a Kolozsvári Ferenc József Tudomány-egyetem tanácsához intézett elvi jelentőségű rendeleteinek gyűjteménye az 1872/3-1898/9. tan évekről* (A Collection of Leading Ordinances Addressed by the Royal Ministry of Religion and Education to the Council of the Franz Joseph University of Cluj from the Academic Years 1872/3-1898/9.), Cluj 1900, pp. 232-235.

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N. T., «Magyar Polgár» (The Hungarian Citizen), 238, 1876, p. 5.

Imre József Balázs

Abstract: The emergence of avant-garde literature coincided with a major identity project in Hungarian literature from Romania during the 1918-1926 period. It was the period when regional identity became more and more important for the Transylvanian Hungarians, and the ideology of Transylvanianism took shape. Avant-garde culture was by that time an alternative for the regionalizing project, and in journals like «Napkelet», «Genius» or «Periszkop» as well as in individual volumes, it tried to prove the validity of a different model, and in some cases also had a hybridizing effect on regional culture.

Keywords: regional literature, Transylvanianism, avant-garde, expressionism, constructivism.

Biodata: Imre-József Balázs (<balazsimrejozsef@gmail.com>) graduated in 1998 at the Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj. He earned a PhD degree from BBU Cluj in 2004. He has been the editor of the cultural review «Korunk» since 1999 (chief editor since 2008), and a lecturer at the Department of Hungarian Literature at BBU Cluj. Some of his publications are: *Hervay Gizella*, 2003; *Humor az avantgárdban és a posztmodernben* (Humour in the Avant-Garde and in Postmodernism, with the cooperation of Zsuzsa Selyem), 2004; *Az avantgárd az erdélyi magyar irodalomban* (The Avant-Garde in Transylvanian Hungarian Literature), 2006; *Vidrakönyv* (The Book of Otters), 2006; *Avangarda în literatura maghiară din România*, translated by Kocsis Francisko, 2009; *Avant-garde and Representations of Communism in Hungarian Literature from Romania*, 2009.

Luca Baratta

Abstract: In the summer of 1716, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu undertook a long journey across Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean to accompany

her husband to Constantinople. Here, the Whig politician Edward had been appointed ambassador extraordinary of George I to Sultan Ahmet III and representative of the Levant Company to the Sublime Porte. Living for almost two years in the Ottoman Empire offered the English gentlewoman the possibility not only to appreciate the customs and mores of the local people, but also to realize how false and groundless were many of the ideas she had heard about the Turks. For this reason, in the well-known *Embassy Letters* she posted to relatives and friends during her Turkish sojourn, she discredited the authors of those travel accounts, who failed to tell the truth but conveyed what was partial and erroneous, and continually emphasised the authenticity of her experience. In this essay, through representative extracts of her epistolary narrative, I will try to show how Lady Montagu systematically debunked the stereotyped image of the Orient that her male predecessors had instrumentally propagated in early modern England.

Keywords: voyage, foreign culture, epistolary narrative, Turkish women, Orient.

Biodata: Luca Baratta (<luca.baratta@unifi.it>) graduated from the University of Florence in 2010 with a dissertation entitled *The crying Sinne of Blood: le streghe del Lancashire tra storia e letteratura*. He is currently a PhD candidate in English Studies at the same institution, where he has also been Tutor didattico (2009-2010) and a member of the National Voluntary Service (2010-2011). His doctoral research project deals with the 'perception of human monstrous births in Early Modern England'.

Alexandra Cătană

Abstract: For any young writer seeking recognition, the literary canon functions as an ultimate reference, providing an undeniable acknowledgment. However, becoming a part of literary history requires not only the creation of a work of art, but also the definition of a literary identity, the 'forging' of a 'name' that could represent the work on the international literary scene. When founding Lettrism, the radical *avant-garde* movement of the early '40s, the Romanian adolescent Isidore Isou is, therefore, determined to become much more than a 'master', but a proper artistic 'Name', accepted and recognised worldwide. Through a selective close-reading of his theoretical and biographical works, I intend to question the national and artistic implications of such an identity construction and the rhetorical means that make it possible.

Keywords: Isidore Isou, Lettrism, nationalism, national identity, name, canon, literary history.

Biodata: Alexandra Cătană (<ada.catana@gmail.com>) is a PhD student, enrolled in a joint research at the University of Geneva (Switzerland) and the University Babeș-Bolyai (Romania). Currently writing a thesis on

Lettrism and the tensional relations between the verbal and the iconic in the work of Isidore Isou, Alexandra Cătană is able to continue her prior studies on Rhetoric of Arts (France), Literature and Aesthetics (Geneva), which have led to a book on *Reading Space in the poetics of Paul Claudel and Șerban Foarță* (Lectura spațiului în poetica lui Paul Claudel și Șerban Foarță), and to several other articles on the European avant-gardes and their visual poetry.

Filomena Compagno

Abstract: This essay focuses upon some studies of mine (the *Glosario del Cancionero de Castillo*, a study upon Jorge Manrique poems love language and my paper for the *Mediterranean Studies Association* Corfu Congress in May 2011). I want to demonstrate that we can find the courtly love canon, typical of many medieval literature poems in music, also in present day love songs. For this purpose I analysed some love poems of French, Italian and Spanish medieval literature, which were also sung and played in ancient times, and some love songs written by the Italian singer Walter Fontana, ex Lost's frontman in the past and now a soloist. In these texts we can find some common themes like the 'fire of love', crying, *senhal*, and some rhetorical figures like anaphora and parallelism.

Keywords: amour courtois, Walter Fontana, poésies d'amour, musique, *Cancionero General*.

Biodata: Filomena Compagno (<fcompagno@virgilio.it>) graduated in Modern Languages and Literatures from the University of Rome La Sapienza. Her dissertation, entitled *Glosario del Cancionero de Castillo*, was published in 2004 and is available on: <<http://cisadu2.let.uniroma1.it/glosarios/cancionero/index.html>>. Member of the Mediterranean Studies Association, she is currently a third-year PhD student in Lingue e Culture del Mediterraneo at the University of Florence.

Simona De Luca

Abstract: The question of literary canon/s today is still a predominant issue in the current literary scenario. The huge debate carried on over the past years has led to acceptance of the fact that the concept of canon is a very complex and articulated one. After resistance in defining what the canon is, scholars today seem to have reached a partial agreement on establishing the prerequisites that enable a work of art to enter the canon. Moreover, the debate has succeeded in shifting the attention and tension of the issue beyond the simple dual scheme: canonical versus non-canonical. Most scholars today support canons that are 'other' than the traditionally established ones. This essay intends to explore the proliferation of different canons, alternative, parallel ones, to be constructed and de-constructed, and the ways in which different canons may co-exist,

interact among themselves within so-called High and Low Culture, dealing with market requirements and needs. In such a context the phenomenon of Rap Music, as a mixed form of poetry, music, and body performance as well, will also be examined.

Keywords: canon, canonical, mainstream/subaltern culture(s) and discourse, culture of resistance, history/-ies, tradition, subversion, rap music.

Biodata: Simona De Luca (<s.deluca84@virgilio.it>) graduated in 2007 in Intercultural Studies with a dissertation titled: *The Scandalist, or the Trouble Maker*. In 2009 she took her second level degree *cum laude* in International Cultural Studies with a thesis titled: *Peter Ackroyd's Fictive Biographies*. Since 2011 she has been a PhD student in Languages, Literatures and Comparative Cultures – curriculum Language, Literature and Philology: Intercultural Perspectives. In her research she aims to investigate Renaissance courtly life and literature in Europe, with special attention to the issue of the self-fashioning of the Renaissance aristocratic courtier.

Gábor Dobó

Abstract: The following essay deals with four unpublished letters between the Dadaist Tristan Tzara (1896-1963) and the Hungarian avant-garde artist Lajos Kassák (1887-1967). The letters have a documentary value. The first one offers a retrospective survey of the flourishing period of the historical avant-garde and provides an insight into the ways of publishing avant-garde art pieces in the early 1920s, while the other three letters report about French and Hungarian cultural life in the 1950s. The current essay is based on a study written by Georges Baal and Henri Béhar in 1990. In their work the authors published 19 letters written by the Hungarian avant-garde artists to Tzara during the 1920s and the 1930s. Baal and Béhar point out that in these letters the artists are not secretive about the financial problems, which they had to struggle with. Their main goal, however, is not to gain profit from their activity: they consider financial issues a technical problem, which has to be solved in order to promote their art in as many languages and places as possible.

Keywords: Tristan Tzara, Lajos Kassák, unpublished letters, avant-garde.

Biodata: Gábor Dobó (<gabor.dobo.87@gmail.com>) earned his MA degree in Comparative Studies in Italian and Hungarian Literature within a double-degree program offered by the University of Florence and the Eötvös Loránd University in 2011. In 2012 he conducted research on Italian Futurism in Florence thanks to a scholarship. He is currently a PhD candidate at Eötvös Loránd University. His research interests are Hungarian avant-garde and Futurism.

Oana Fotache

Abstract: This paper discusses the possibility of a comparative history of Romanian literature, in a regional and a European/larger context. Starting from an analysis of the recent theoretical debates over the hybridization of comparative literature and historiography, it then investigates the presence of Romanian literature in several contemporary European literary histories or literature dictionaries. The tradition of Romanian literary historiography has seldom included a broader, transnational perspective; the purpose of this essay is to see how the foreign gaze has perceived (and constructed) the image of Romanian literature, in recent years.

Keywords: literary historiography, Romanian, comparative, transnational, European.

Biodata: Oana Fotache (<oana_fotache@yahoo.com>) is Assistant Professor of Literary Theory at the University of Bucharest (Romania). PhD in literary theory (2006). Her recent publications include: *Postcards from Europe. Representations of (Western) Europe in Romanian Travel Writings, 1960-2010*, forthcoming in M. DeCoste, D. MacDonald, R. Kilbourn (eds), *Europe in its Own Eyes/In the Eyes of the Other* (Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2013); 'Global Literature' – In Search of a Definition, in L. Papadima, D. Damrosch, T. D'haen (eds), *The Canonical Debate Today. Crossing Disciplinary and Cultural Boundaries* (Rodopi, 2011); *Narrating the Communist Prison: An Interpretive Model of Some Romanian Case Studies* («Journal of East European Studies», 2011); *Discourses on Method in Postwar Romanian Literary Criticism* (Univ. of Bucharest Press, 2009). She is currently a postdoctoral fellow of the University of Cluj.

Guido Mattia Gallerani

Abstract: Following the interpretation of Alfonso Berardinelli, the contribution focuses on the introduction of anthologies of Italian contemporary poetry as a primary instrument to understand a specific epoch's poetics. The aim is to schematize a basic typology of poetry anthologies and verify changes in recent times. Consequently, anthologies have been considered an independent literary genre, which covers poetic works in a renewed system of relations, sustained by a specific critical discourse. The analysis starts from the literary form called *antologia d'autore*, referring to Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo's work on 20th century poetry as a first example of this typology. Furthermore, the concept of 'canon' that is discussed has no correlation with the generic canon set by Harold Bloom. The canon, as it is called, refers to the idea of an artificial construction which tends to turn critical discourse into institutional power. The analysis underlines the extrinsic institutional supports that constitute the

anthologies' background. In conclusion, the anthology in contemporary Italian poetry panorama emerges as a self-concealing literary form.

Keywords: Italian poetry, anthology, canon, Mengaldo, criticism.

Biodata: Guido Mattia Gallerani (<guidomattia.gallerani@unifi.it>) is a PhD candidate in Comparative Literature at the University of Florence. He has been a visiting scholar at the University of Montréal and has conducted seminars at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven and at the University of St Andrews. He is in charge of the narrative collection at "Ladolfi" publishing (Novara, Italy) and on the board of *St. Andrews Journal of Italian Poetry*. He is interested in theories of literary genres, especially regarding the Essay and Contemporary Poetry. As a translator, he published in Italian the volume *Verlaine d'ardoise et de pluie (Verlaine d'ardesia e di pioggia, Kolibris, 2011)* by Guy Goffette and edited, with Alberto Bertoni, a selection of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* (Giunti, 2012). His book *Roland Barthes e la tentazione del romanzo* is forthcoming (Morellini).

Stefania Lucchesini

Abstract: Foreign Accent Syndrome (FAS) is a rare disorder characterized by the emergence of a perceived foreign accent, i.e. the pronunciation of a patient is perceived by listeners of the same speech community as distinctly foreign. FAS can occur in the context of acquired brain damage or psychogenic illness but it is also described as developmental motor speech impairment. Acoustic analyses of speech produced by patients with FAS support the notion that prosodic timing impairment can play a unitary role in the identification of the disorder; however, given the variability in symptomatology and aetiology across patients, additional research will be needed to determine whether FAS might constitute a sub-type of language impairment associated with an instance of substantial brain reorganization for speech motor control.

Keywords: foreign accent syndrome, speech disorder, prosody, inflection, rhythm.

Biodata: Stefania Lucchesini (<stefania.lucchesini@unifi.it>) earned her MA in Linguistics in 2006 from the University of Florence. Since July 2006, under the supervision of Professor Luciana Brandi, she has worked for DiLCo, the Lab. of Language Disorders of the University of Florence. She earned her PhD in Linguistics in 2010. Her doctoral dissertation focused on echolalic speech in the development of children with and without autism. She is currently a temporary research fellow at the Department of Languages, Literatures and Intercultural Studies of the University of Florence where she carries on her research on narrative text productions in both children and elderly people.

Ionuț Miloi

Abstract: This paper aims to give an account of the ideological conflict present in the theories of 'second degree literature' and analyse the derivative textual practices from the perspective of a conservative or a subversive function regarding the texts which they, in one way or another, rewrite.

Keywords: rewriting, intertextuality, literary theory, ideology, literature in the second degree.

Biodata: Ionuț Miloi (<miloi_ionut@yahoo.com>) is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Letters of the Babeș -Bolyai University, with a thesis concerning the field of theory of literature. The title of the thesis is *A Poetics of Rewriting in the Romanian Literature*. He has published a series of articles and a book regarding the short stories of the Romanian writer Mircea Nedelciu.

Carmen Muntean

Abstract: This paper tries to investigate the way in which national language becomes an ideological construct and, by using a diachronic approach, outline the major stages in this process, from the pre-modern period through German Romanticism and the French Revolution's politics of language, up to the unusual case of forging Norwegian as a national language. By analysing these stages, I aim to prove how the idea of a 'national language' has been closely appropriated by nationalist ideologues and reveal the importance of this aspect in investigating nationalist movements, especially in today's resurgence of linguistically-motivated ethno-regionalism.

Keywords: nationalism, language policy, national language, ideology.

Biodata: Carmen Muntean (<carmen.muntean@yahoo.com>) is a 3rd year PhD student at the Faculty of Letters, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. Her research interests lie in the field of deconstructing nationalist ideology and she is currently working on her doctoral thesis entitled *Imagining the national language in modern literary Romanian ideology*.

Ilaria Natali

Abstract: This essay addresses the place of 'mad-writing' in the Western literary canon and, in particular, intends to show how three authors, who have received scant scholarly attention, can actually be considered key figures in a specific sub-canon of literary madness. James Carkesse, Anne Finch and Christopher Smart are imputed-insane writers, who were officially acknowledged as suffering from mental disorders and thus confined, or otherwise displaced from society. Analysis of *Lucida Intervalla*,

Miscellany Poems and *Jubilate Agno* reveals that, despite their manifold differences, these texts are connected by various common threads and recurring patterns, which might be related to their authors' 'stigma' of mental deviance. The subtle intertextual networks underlying these works also shed new light on the complex relationships that Carkesse, Finch and Smart establish with mainstream scientific discourse, encouraging an interdisciplinary and integrative pattern of 'mad-writing' research.

Keywords: madness and poetry, James Carkesse, Anne Finch, Christopher Smart, marginality and canon.

Biodata: Ilaria Natali (<ilaria.natali@unifi.it>) has been a Research Fellow at the University of Florence since 2008 and teacher at the University Institute Carlo Bo (Florence) since 2011. She has published three books and several articles; her main research interests include Modernist and Eighteenth Century literature.

Magda Răduță

Abstract: In the last communist decade, the Romanian literary press is as dichotomic as the cultural field itself. The confrontation between the aesthetic pole, discreetly refusing to be involved in the communist propaganda, and the nationalist one, very loud and very close to the Party, is visible in the literary press. We propose a short review of this politicized battle field, emphasizing two of the main topics in the confrontation: the national ideology behind the first protochronic articles and the literary battles for imposing a heteronomous definition of literature.

Keywords: Romanian literature, literary field, protochronism, aestheticism, literary press.

Biodata: Magda Răduță (<magdalena.raduta@litere.ro>) is an assistant professor, Department of Philological Studies, Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest; PhD in Romanian Literature (with a thesis on *Romanian Literary Pamphlet in Interwar period*), University of Bucharest, 2009. She is currently a PhD candidate in Sociology (subject: *The 80s Literary Generation in the Romanian Literary Field*), École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris. Translator (French-Romanian): literature (Agnès Desarthes, Jean Teulé), literary theory and comparatism (Paul Cornea). Research interests: literary history, sociology of literature, writer's identity and writer's responsibility, politics and literature in the communist era.

Debora Sensi

Abstract: *La cajera*, a short story by González Sainz, has a double relationship with the *fin amour* archetype. Many differences co-exist with few similarities,

since the impossibility of experiencing love is intensified in post-modernism owing to nihilism. Divergences can be observed in respect of gaze, the site of noble feelings in courtly poetry, but that of malice in *La cajera*. In Sainz's story, reiterated encounters between lovers, are circular, while being linear in the courtly model. The word is another source of distance, since courtly lyric poetry clashes with the crisis of *logos* in the short story. Specific topography should also be noted. As opposed to *fin amour*, in *La cajera*, the woman beloved turns into a *locus horridus*: thus the result is involution of the courtly *topos* of the grille. Its double, the chain on the door of the woman's dwelling becomes the border between two worlds, which, asymptotically, approach each other without intersecting.

Keywords: love, glance, time, language, topography.

Biodata: Debora Sensi (<deborasensi@virgilio.it>) is a PhD candidate in Lingue e Culture del Mediterraneo at the University of Florence. Her research project deals with the theatrical figure of the devil in Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *autos sacramentales* and mythological plays. In July 2010 she took part in the seminar 'Leyendas negras y leyendas áureas' with a paper entitled *Fabia ne El caballero de Olmedo*, published in 2011 by Alinea.

Ana-Maria Stan

Abstract: This article proposes to the interested reader an interdisciplinary, nuanced view upon the cultural relations which were established and developed in the first half of the 20th century between Italy and Romania. Approaching the subject with the methodological tools of both a historian and a literary historian, it analyses the variety of catalysts and structures which made Italy a dynamic and noteworthy presence on the Romanian cultural scene. Amongst the problems this text tries to elucidate are the place and impact held by the Italian *avant-garde* (especially Futurism and its world-famous leader, F.T. Marinetti) within the larger framework of Italian literary and artistic representations in Romania. It also highlights some of the underlying connections between politics and the cultural and literary personalities or associations, as well as the complex manner in which they use and abuse each other.

Keywords: Italo-Romanian cultural relationships, Franco-Italian cultural rivalry, Italian culture dissemination, futurism, politics, interwar years.

Biodata: Ana-Maria Stan (<ana.stan@ubbcluj.ro>) has a PhD in contemporary history awarded in 2005 by the Université Paris IV-Sorbonne and the Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania. She works as a researcher at the Babeş-Bolyai University and currently manages the University Historical Museum. A specialist in cultural and academic history,

she is now involved in a postdoctoral research program that investigates the Romanian *avant-garde* from a socio- historical and literary perspective.

Levente T. Szabó

Abstract: Even though he is usually mentioned in the histories of the polyglot «Összehasonlító Irodalomtörténelmi Lapok» (Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum) – the first international journal of comparative literary studies – the co-founder and co-editor Sámuel Brassai was pushed into the background. Based on a series of archival and unknown documents, the article rehabilitates the figure of the ‘lost editor’ along two selected main focal points (his vision on translation and foreign language acquisition) in order to explain the «Aclu» as a joint scholarly venture.

Keywords: Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum, Brassai Sámuel, historical theories of translation and foreign language acquisition.

Biodata: Levente T. Szabó (<szabolevente@yahoo.com>) is a university lecturer in nineteenth-century Hungarian and comparative literature, theories of literary history, respectively visuality and literature at Babes-Bolyai University, Romania. Author of a successful book on the literary modernity project of the nineteenth-century Hungarian writer, Kálmán Mikszáth (L’Harmattan, 2007) and another one on the nationalization of nineteenth-century Hungarian literature (KompPress, 2008). He has published extensively on the emergence of the modern Hungarian professional literary system in the nineteenth century and the ideological uses of literary works in the same period.

Adrian Tudurachi

Abstract: The editing of the first avant-gardist publications in Romania (1922) coincided with an essential event in the process of liberation for the Jewish community as they gained the right to political representation. This simultaneous occurrence of these two events, one political, the other literary, was no coincidence. For almost a year, the avant-gardists were explicitly and intentionally engaged in the politics of the Jewish minority by illustrating their project and actions. In this way, the negative stereotype frequently invoked by official criticism during the thirties, associating the avant-gardists with Jewishness was in part due to an image that the avant-gardists themselves had constructed. The article analyses the meaning of the hazardous political engagement of the first Romanian avant-gardists by trying to explain the postural ‘advantages’ offered by the strategy of representing Jewish identity in public. The most important dimension of this legitimizing project was constituted by the effort of the Jewish community to redefine the status of ‘minority’, situating it in relation to the Romanian ‘majority’ and its nationalist elements.

Keywords: Romanian avant-garde, «Contimporanul» (1922-1932), Jewish identity, nationalism, political minority.

Biodata: Adrian Tudurachi (<adrian.tudurachi@gmail.com>) is a researcher at the Romanian Academy, The Institute of Linguistics and Literary History «Sextil Pușcariu» and a postdoctoral fellow at Babeș-Bolyai University (Cluj-Napoca). He published an essay on the work of the Romanian theoretician Mihail Dragomirescu (*Le destin précaire des idées littéraires*, 2006) and coordinated, with Ioana Both, a collective work on the relations between literature and national identity (*Identité nationale: réalité, histoire, littérature*, 2008). Research interests: history of literary ideas, historical poetics, aesthetic experiences.

Ligia Tudurachi

Abstract: Within the morphology of literary groups, it is possible to distinguish circles of authors based on a practice of 'friendship' as a particular case. This 'morphological' particularity spreads out over several levels, constituting itself as a topic of reflection, as a type of discourse (ranging from pages of correspondence and confessions to literary pages properly speaking) or as a privileged relation to literature. On the basis of a comparative approach applied to four groups of authors from different eras and cultures, this study will attempt to delimit the uniqueness of this form of literary sociability by considering its effects in the sphere of vital practices.

Keywords: literary groups, Sburătorul (1919-1943), friendship, literary sociability, vital practices.

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Márta Nagy Zabán

Abstract: Between 1872 and 1886, in the first fourteen years of the existence of the Hungarian Royal University of Cluj, Grigore Silași was the professor of Romanian language and literature. By the scholars studying his work, Silași is regarded both as a university professor, and as a militant for the defence of the nation. At first sight the squabbles that erupted around the Romanian department look like a series of spontaneous reactions, but if we analyse the reports and news, we can place the arguments regarding the

university scandals in a more arduous process of wider impact. This study aims to prove that the scandals that blemished Grigore Silași's career as head of department were not aimed at his person, but were demonstrations of the change of the symbolic status of the Romanian department as an institution.

Keywords: Grigore Silași, literary history, Cluj, nationalism, 19th century, Romanian department.

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