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Cover: *Aferim* (d. Radu Jude) - poster.

SUMMARY

I. Cinematographic Art

Professor Doina RUȘTI, National University of Drama and Film “I.L. Caragiale” (UNATC), Bucharest - *The Red Man* (editorial)

Michel AROUIMI, Ph.D, Université du Littoral (Dunkerque, France) - *L’Egypte de Kenneth Anger: entre Marianne Faithfull et Jean Shrimpton*

Ioana MISCHIE, Ph.D, National University of Theatre and Film “I.L. Caragiale”, Bucharest (UNATC) - *The Wetland: Transmedia Multi-Layered Archival in Cinematic Virtual Reality*

Ana PASTI, Ph.D, National University of Theatre and Film “I.L. Caragiale”, Bucharest (UNATC) - *The Actor And The New Media.*

Daria IOAN Ph.D c Film and Theater Faculty, “Babeș- Bolyai University”, Cluj, *The Nebulous Empire. The Magic of Blur and Shining*

II. Cultural Studies

Romanian Vision

Eugen ISTODOR, Ph.D, Letters Faculty, University of Bucharest, *Fire, burn the teacher. Ioniță's initiation in Radu Jude's Aferim! on the tune of Anton Pann's manea.*

Editorial

The Red Man

Professor Doina RUȘTI¹

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Abstract

This article deals with the effects of some communicational restrictions, starting from a folk tale. The name, repetition, and programmed amnesia are three of the censorship conditions, and in the tale we refer to the dramatic end is determined by the communication restrictions the three heroes are exposed to. The nominal *lexem* is directly related to the story (Eco) and, according to the meaning employed by Derrida, the ignorant repetition determines the entrance into the mythical space. The actants lose their initial role because they enter a diegesis conceived especially to modify the known reality. The repetition mythologizes the brief statement the heroes have to repeat and this determines the birth of a second message, addressed to the consignee of the story. Our article underlines the constitutive elements of the communication between the real author of the message and the addressee placed outside the writing.

Key words: *Red Man, anamnesis, narrative programme, old Romanian story.*

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Books/articles (selectively):

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There is a legendary force of the word, which comes from its role of a trustful messenger of ipseity, because every word sent in the world pretends and *expects an answer*¹ and as a result becomes a symbolic ambassador of the human being. The theme of the magic word is being tackled more and more often, especially in recent cinematographic dystopias. A word is not only a pack of meanings, but also a key to the interior labyrinth. It doesn't bring a simple message, but it models, as Lévinas accurately observed, *to talk means to make the world become common*², through sharing and calling. Around this metamorphical power of the word there appeared the mitems which imposed it. According to Durand, *the mythology is the exemplary refinement of the symbol genesis*³, because it strengthens the subtle associations on which you can find a story or an archetype, through investigation and analysis. It is known that the linguistic connections have a large variety of placements and structures in the archaic life and that the mythology comprised them in a complex system of exegetics which, indeed, enriched the guiding marks and the symbolic effects.

Throughout the many linguistic structures scattered at the mythical level, we have chosen three: the name, the repeated word and the forgotten word. They are prolific sintems with bending functions, generating numerous connotative connections. We shall talk about them, following the mythological openness of an old Romanian story, found by Hasdeu, which deals very well with the mythical function of the word and with the mythology created around it. It's about the story *Three Brothers Serving the Red Man*⁴, dated from 1885⁵.

A poor old man, father of three sons, was concerned about their fate. That is why, one day, according to the story, *he ordered them* to go to a master, and not any master, but precisely to the Red Man. The boys fulfilled their dad's order and the task seemed easy: they had nothing to do but to say some words, different ones for each of them, from sunrise to sunset. Obviously, besides that, they were not permitted to use other words during all this time. The master did not submit them to impossible tests and did not want to deceive them, but he made them repeat some words for three years and at the end he paid them fairly with the right amount of money. The three brothers were very content and they started their journey back home. But their journey proved to be extremely

difficult, because they forgot all the other words they had known during the three years while they had been repeating only one expression. Being found in front of a body, they were accused of murder and as soon as they pronounced the Red Man's words, they were sent to hanging because those words were accusing them.

This story brings into discussion the three aspects of the linguistic communication: the name, the repetition and the programmed amnesia. Each of them refers to an important aspect of the symbolic communication and clears up the secret capacities of the word.

The name

The name emphasizes the guiding marks and so it maintains a feeling of topics familiarity. Giving names stands for a way of possession. The name clarifies, regulates, makes accessible places, things and especially people. The Red Man is a character which completes a mythical panoply, made up of Black Man, Lackbeard Man, old men and women, or children who individualize themselves by extraordinary features. All these names aim at symbolic positions and conditions of the human being, integrating adjacent meaning of the epithet. In our case the name constitutes a metaphorical and ambivalent transposition, because the Red Man is traditionally a devilish mitem, whose main role is to obstacle the maturation. Being the sign of life and death and regarding the blood, the red colour indicates not only the butcher but also the warrior, unifying the significances of blood and fire, and so it *supplies two different passions: relief and oppression*⁶. Taking part of the earthly symbols, the Red Man usually appears in the fairy-tales as a deceiving master, a kind of a guardian of the border between life and death, who tests the poor man's capacity to endure. The old man in the story found by Hasdeu commands to his sons to accept the Red Man's job. He is poor, approaching the end of his life and consequently desperate regarding the possibilities of his children's survival, knowing that they will get stuck between life and death. That is why, the confronting with the Red Man becomes for him the short alternative of their sons' life. If they had succeeded in passing this obstacle, nothing would have stayed in their way. But they end badly, they are defeated and live a condensed version of the life they should have lived. According to the oriental tradition, the condition of

the slave represents the supreme try beyond which the real life begins. But, in the story *Three Brothers Serving the Red Man*, the heroes don't realize that they have failed. They leave their master with the feeling that they have fulfilled their duty, he pays them for their work, but, actually, they lost an essential capacity of life and they are incapable of saving themselves.

The name of the Red Man is a warning to all these meanings. He is the hidden evil, impossible to find without traveling across the whole story he builds. Generally, proper names don't expose their significances but throughout their action, during the play. Umberto Eco demonstrates this hypothesis⁷, analyzing *the denotation of syntactical entities*, reaching the conclusion that the name is exclusively related to a story. Even in this case in which the name is explicit, defining an exceptional aspect of a human being, it doesn't get a meaning until it is positioned. That is why the story contains a kind of conclusion in which one can say that Red Man is the devil and the only one guilty for the drama of the three boys. His name is deceiving but contains a warning related to the significances of its denotation. The real force of the name comes from fable, from the story told and amplified, in which there come clear explanations related to the identity of the character. The name has here an equivocal role, that is to seduce, disappoint and destroy the three boys. So, there is a name which hides the true identity of the devil, it attenuates it, the same way with the mythology created around the character which agglutinates a series of overtones of delusion. In the medieval Romanian chronicles, the illusion represents the main appanage of the devil and the contextual meanings are organized around the idea of destructive seduction. In this story the name has exactly this role- to suggest the ambiguity of the character- while the old man, who sends his children to such a master, is aware of this semantic component: he knows that the Red Man is the deceiving devil but he does not have a choice because he wants to find *quickly* what the real value of his children is.

The repetition

The second aspect of the word is the repetition, generally known as the foundation of the magic and religious ceremony. In the story we refer to, it is simply a test of mind and it is not subordinate to a certain idea, it is not created by a sacred

numerology or accompanied by a gesture. The three brothers accept the command of the Red Man as an easy task without assuming its effects in time. The limited repetition amputates the connections and isolates the individual. The word repeated for a long period of time becomes just a form whose content is vaguely associated with the initial conditions in which the message was sent. The man who repeats is a vicious source against which the receiver creates himself a protection screen. According to the communist propaganda, the repetition of words whose meaning had been removed, had as a goal exactly the creation of this separating curtain with which the channels of communication between people were closed. The automatisms, verbal tics, slogans and generally the stereotype language acts like a lock which obstructs the bonds between people.

The three brothers of the story repeat the same linguistic sequence for three years, - meaning a mythical time and their action acquires exactly the anticipated effect: the exclusion of the other words. They endlessly utter some harmless words but their meaning reveals itself only in the context established before. When they are being asked who had killed the man in the middle of the road, the ex-slaves of the Red Man answer by uttering the only words they could still remember; the first one says: "All three of us". Disarmed by the answer, the people ask about the cause they have murdered him. Here the second one answers saying: "For a Romanian pressed cheese". Finally, the people get the idea: "You will be punished!". And then it comes the third brother's answer: "It's normal this way". The brothers, as victims of the Red Man, don't realize what happens to them and don't even know what the horrible message of the uttered words is. They only did their duty, saying conscientiously what they had been saying for three years.

The answers haven't been chosen at random. The Red Man had the control over the future and had adjusted the three brothers according to the events. They forgot to speak, the bonds with the world are destroyed for them because they accepted the Red Man's measures. The tale hero, tested by means of difficult tasks, is usually a cheater and does not pass the obstacles by himself. He asks for the help of kind animals and he is accompanied by mystagogues or he possesses different magic objects. In the story of the three brothers, the

heroes obey the Red Man's order without commenting or trying to rebel or to infringe on the interdiction to not utter other words besides the appointed ones. One can say that they are honest and that they respect their master. But the loyalty collides with their own human essence: the three heroes do not ask themselves questions, do not have any curiosity related to their master's reasons and they never suspect him of malevolence. In the traditional tale, the hero does not ever fully trust the strangers and the relationship with a master has the function of an a priori confrontation. The fact that the three brothers obey without objection anticipates their predisposition to be the bearers of a pattern and their entering a way of routine living cancels even their self-preservation instinct.

The erosion of words by repetition constitutes a way of annihilating the reality and this action has magic roots. The incantations, for instance, are created by means of exhausting repetition which casts away the ritual repeated effects. But here the destiny of the emitter is important, emitter who gets out of his existential role and becomes a container of Red Man's words by routine repetition. The brothers serve their master especially after they finish their probation as slaves. They become the missionaries of a message, patients in a story which totally belongs to the Red Man.

Jacques Derrida, analysing the repetitive acts at a mythical level, comes to the conclusion⁸ that *the repetition without knowledge* establishes his entrance in the myth. The three brothers follow an itinerary as heroes of a story built especially to modify the reality. According to the narratology, there is an epic scheme evolved on a limited number of variants. The ones who deal with narratology as V. I. Propp, A. Greimas, C. Bremond, Levi-Strauss, admit the existence of a *narrative programme* especially created on a conflict and on the intention of the characters and of the narrator to solve it. On this pattern of reconciliation one can build the story with its details and the receiver takes part in the conflictual process with the same desire of reconciliation and of the final victory. In our story, the conflict disseminates into the scheme of another story in which the three brothers take part without knowing. They are transformed into unconscious actors who take part in a myth born right in the heart of reality. A man had been killed and the three brothers declared themselves the authors of that murder

without knowing what was going on, what role they had and what implications their words had. The repetition without knowledge, born out of the blind obedience, transforms them into simple meaning vehicles. The conflict, on which the story should have been built, was solved even from the plot when the characters accepted the Red Man's order. The three brothers are defeated by their own docility and their participation to another narrative construction, whose exclusive author is the Red Man, does not constitute but an acceptance of the mission of patients in a transforming myth.

The programmed amnesia

Even if brain washed, the three brothers still have another chance to reach the threshold of maturation. The magic amnesia is currently followed by anamnesis because the oblivion individualizes itself mythologically as a gnostic metaphor of *spiritual death*. By amnesia, the human being breaks free from his past existence and lives an experience at the end of which he regains his memory, his identity and his meaning in life, and above all, redemption and immortality. Eliade analyses this motive starting with the *Hymn of the Pearl (The Deeds of Toma)*⁹, which deals with a prince who goes away in searching for the unique pearl but when he finds himself very close to it, he loses his memory; he lives like this until his parents find him and bring him to the real life with the help of memories. Anamnesis confirms the discovery of a transcendental principle within the self and this revelation constitutes the central element of the gnostic religion.

The three brothers of the story found by Hasdeu are seized with partial amnesia and so they enter their life lacking the force of communication without a clue of a future redemption. They live the initiation partially, they enter a mythical cycle without the hope of spiritual regeneration. For them, the oblivion does not occur because of a magic accident and does not represent a punishment or a test. The brothers lose their living place and the right to assert their identity because they are deceived by the devil. In a short-story book by Caragiale, *At the Mansion*, the hero, also young, is deceived by the devil who appears to him as *redhead, pug-nosed, boss-eyed rider with freckles*; under the power of his *shiny* eye, the young man enters a state of *dizziness* and forgets his meaning in life but finally, he saves himself without

knowing, carelessly wiping himself with the charmed kerchief of the devil. On this pattern one can usually develop the folk stories who deal with the devilish deceit. Every time there is something and somebody who intervene to destroy the magic. But to end an artificial situation there is a need for symbolic actions. For instance, Eliade explains that the anamnesis can be started by gestures, songs or words of a messenger. The process *amnesia-anamnesis* symbolizes the return to the *self*, to the individual origins, and through this, to the recognition of the *celestial* roots of the human being. The three brothers do not reach this initiation threshold but they live only the punishing oblivion (and even that is a partial one). They obeyed the Red Man instead of confronting him, losing the battle from the very beginning. But it remains to them the role of participants in the story.

They do not forget their meaning and ideal. After three years, they take their money and go home. So, they know who they are and what they have to do. They do not lose their ideals: when they find the body in the middle of the road, they stop to give a hand to a man in need. The three brothers forget only to speak, losing just the connections of their communication with the other people. Losing the power of word, they actually lose their freedom. They take part in the life, but the reality which they live is Red Man's. Deprived of words, they reproduced the story created by the Red Man using three answers by which he had anticipated the progress of events. The programmed, partial and linguistic amnesia is like the *lapsus linguae*, a consequence of an internal conflict where the subject is the only responsible. As Freud explains¹⁰, the temporary oblivion constitutes a warning and the action links to a complex story bearer of a secret message intended to a wise hermeneutics interpreter. As a consequence, the amnesia of the three brothers is not produced only by the hallucinatory repetition and by the communication interdiction but also by the deep discontent of the three boys. Basically, they search for the Red Man because their father have *ordered* them to. They also gave up talking because their master had forbidden them to. This obstacle blocks them to communicate and transforms them into executors because they already have the fixation of joining a project that is not theirs.

One should broach the story of word which changes their lives from this point of view.

The force of word

The story *The Three Brothers Serving the Red Man* broaches the theme of the rooted word which modifies the reality. The word, uttered without emotional implication, without passion and knowledge, transforms the emitter into a character being at the author's beck and call, in a demarche lacking in initiative in which the three heroes have nothing to do but to obey a parental order and the request of the master. As a part of the story, every hero helps to the transformation of the reality even though this reality belongs to them and uses them.

The three answers build the message of the Red Man with subtlety and this means that he gives a true answer because of the brothers' request to employ them. They have met many people ready to employ them on their way but they did not want to disobey their parental order. That is why, they *pray* the Red Man to employ them. The ideal appointed to them by their father goes beyond their possibilities and aspirations. Under these circumstances, the Red Man makes them participants to a story about the consequences of a blind obedience. By this, he justifies his name and the deep significance of *liberator* and *oppressor* of the human being. He gives to the three brothers exactly what they have asked for; he does not advise them but one cannot say that he punishes them. He simply fulfills their desire to be obedient slaves and this thing can be equally liberating and punishing.

As receptors of the myth, they would have had the possibility to adapt their message, they would have been able to memorize or ignore it. But as participants to the story, they enter the core of the mystery and they live the punishment in the supreme condition as ignorant neophytes, being unable to understand the meaning of the words they utter. The meaningless words bring them on the stage of their own conflict developed between freedom and parental order, not only for them but also for a receiver who deserve being warned. The ordinary answers, uttered for three years, become mythology finally and get ontological force by making them active. But they are not valuable for the emitter, unconscious bearer of the message, but for the reader of the story. The relation between the author and the receiver respects even the right structure of the myth, build exclusively on a real confrontation scheme, bore many times by an ignorant repetition

and contextualized favorably on its revelation as an essential mystery. The three brothers are the interpreters of a word which does not have any value

but through the story they build without knowing and which it is exactly their life as messengers.

L’Egypte de Kenneth Anger : entre Marianne Faithfull et Jean Shrimpton

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Abstract

Mon intérêt pour la chanteuse Marianne Faithfull, à qui j’ai très récemment consacré une volumineuse étude³, a été avivé par les mystérieuses coïncidences, dont elle-même s’étonne en songeant à son destin. Ce dernier nous est bien connu, par ses deux ouvrages autobiographiques. L’article présent se focalise sur le film *Lucifer rising*, qu’elle a tourné pour Kenneth Anger, à une époque où Marianne lâchait les rênes de sa carrière de chanteuse, dont l’éloignait son addiction aux drogues. Le travail de ce réalisateur, tel que Marianne le considère, témoigne d’un déclin spirituel universel, que les artistes ressentent et décrivent, sans vraiment le contrer. Comme si l’accentuation de ce déclin était le seul moyen d’y mettre fin, dans un avenir indéfini.

Dans sa jeunesse de pop-star, Marianne s’intéressait aux grands représentants de l’ésotérisme du XIX^e siècle. Même si le Zohar n’est mentionné que dans une liste d’ouvrages qu’elle semble ne connaître que de réputation, clôturée par la formule : « The hippie canon. »⁴ Après avoir évoqué la « magie » qui émanait de la « tribu » des Rolling Stones, ou celle des chorégraphies improvisées de Mick Jagger, comparé au dieu Shiva doté de multiples bras (« The macrocosmic Mick », dont le corps semble se fractionner en « molécules ; autant de particules miroitantes »⁵), Marianne mentionne ses lectures d’alors : « Eliphas Levi », le savant

² Michel Arouimi enseigne la littérature comparée à l’Université du Littoral. Ses recherches, illustrées par une vingtaine d’ouvrages et de nombreux articles, concernent la notion de l’harmonie: reflet d’un idéal transcendant – ou exorcisme des tensions qui, dans la société humaine, aboutissent au règne de la totalité. Cette recherche inspirée par les leçons de Rimbaud, Herman Melville, Joseph Conrad et de très nombreux autres auteurs, s’est étendue depuis quelques années à la culture de masse (domaines musical ou cinématographique).

M. Arouimi a publié une quinzaine d’ouvrages. Les plus récents concernent des écrivains qui se sont efforcés de redonner à la littérature et à l’écriture le sens d’une quête métaphysique. Par exemple *Vivre Rimbaud selon Ramuz et Bosco* (2010), *Jünger et ses dieux* (2011), *Rimbaud malgré l’autre* (2012) et surtout : *Ecrire selon la rose* (2015) : la survivance d’un mythe hébraïque dans la littérature occidentale. M. Arouimi applique ses méthodes d’analyse aux œuvres de la culture populaire, notamment dans ses ouvrages : *L’Apocalypse sur scène* (2002), *Françoise Hardy : pour un public majeur* (2012), *Mylène Farmer : le monde comme il tangué* (2014). Plus récemment, dans *La Métaphysique au cinéma* (2016), M. Arouimi étudie une quinzaine de films, certains inspirés par une nostalgie des idéaux de la métaphysique la plus reculée, et d’autres, au contraire, par un inquiétant désir de subversion de ces mêmes idéaux.

³ M. Arouimi, *Marianne Faithfull: un condensé de l’Histoire*, Paris: Camion Blanc, 2018.

⁴ Marianne Faithfull, *An autobiography*, Boston, New York, Toronto, London: Little, Brown and Company, 1994, p. 142.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

occultiste du XIX^e siècle, mais encore « Aleister Crowley » (1875-1945), poète occultiste voué à la magie sexuelle. Dans un chapitre ultérieur, Marianne évoque les lectures qu'elle partageait avec Mick Jagger, incité à lire « Eliphas Levi, the 1870s French hermetic magician who had influenced Rimbaud ». Marianne a-t-elle trouvé dans ces livres « interdits » dont elle s'imprégnait, l'aliment le plus secret de son inspiration ? Ou y a-t-elle simplement retrouvé une symbolique cabalistique, inscrite dans les fondements de sa psyché ?

Or le film *Lucifer rising*, tourné en 1972 après une assez longue gestation, est une sorte de poème filmé, qui nous vaut un syncrétisme délirant du savoir ésotérique. Kenneth Anger a exprimé dans une interview publiée en juillet 2013 dans *The Guardian* les enjeux ésotériques de ce film, inspiré en particulier par les écrits d'Aleister Crowley, connus de Marianne fréquentait bien avant ce tournage. (Un portrait photographique de ce mage semble décorer la pièce où, dans la deuxième moitié du film, Lucifer intellectualise sa mission, en consultant certains écrits.)

Mots-clés: Marianne Faithfull, ésotérisme du XIX^e siècle, l'Égypte antique, *Lucifer rising*

Un projet ténébreux

Marianne avait à cette époque une réputation de créature maléfique, entretenue par les médias. Elle-même retrace dans un chapitre de son *Autobiographie* les événements qui ont déterminé sa décision, après sa rupture avec Jagger, de vivre dans la rue, en se shootant sur les ruines d'un mur du vieux Soho, hanté par les dépravés de toute sorte. Sans doute attiré par cette aura maléfique, Kenneth Anger lui proposa le rôle de Lilith dans son film *Lucifer rising*, qui ne sortit qu'en 1980. Mick Jagger, convoité par Anger, avait d'abord accepté le rôle de Lucifer dans ce film, avant de faire marche arrière, après l'assassinat d'un spectateur lors d'un show des Stones à Altamont (Anger obtint alors l'accord du frère cadet de Jagger). Marianne ne se prive pas d'évoquer l'antisémitisme d'Anger, qui se permit des remarques déplaisantes sur les origines en partie juives, dont Marianne est restée fière. Mais elle se garde de faire allusion à Bobby Beausoleil, qui écrivit la musique du film : un dangereux dealer assassin, adepte de la secte de Charles Manson...

Marianne, soucieuse des effets mystérieux de toute activité artistique, scripturale ou scénique, sur la vie personnelle de l'artiste, a peut-être senti que sa dérive, accélérée depuis ce tournage, était une forme intériorisée de la dégradation des rapports humains, qui depuis le début des années 70 n'est pas si consciente parmi les hommes. Kenneth Anger croyait vraiment à la magie noire, mais de son côté Marianne sentait qu'en jouant ce rôle insensé qui faillit lui coûter la vie (dans une des

dernières scènes, tournées sur une montagne allemande), elle participait à une « magie [...] bien plus puissante »⁶ que celle dont se préoccupait ce cinéaste. Nous verrons que si magie il y a, elle se révèle dans la coïncidence du destin de Marianne en Égypte avec celui d'une autre star, plus brillante qu'elle à cette époque, mais sans rapport aucun avec ce film.

Il est difficile de dire ce que *raconte* de film de 29 minutes. Le projet d'Anger était une allégorie de l'évolution des sociétés humaines, quand le matriarcat et le patriarcat font place au règne de l'enfance, d'après les aveux de Beausoleil, son ténébreux collaborateur. Le sujet occulte du film dont la trame narrative est si effilochée, peut se définir comme une remise en cause du mythe de l'Un, décliné en symboles matériels ou incarné dans des figures à connotations religieuses, et dans un syncrétisme que domine l'Égypte antique. L'Un ou plus précisément sa capacité d'engendrement du multiple.

Il s'agit d'un film en diptyque, dont les deux versants sont eux-mêmes articulés en séquences fortement contrastées (changement de décor et/ou de personnages). Ces deux versants ne sont pas indépendants : le cadre de l'Égypte antique, qui domine dans le premier, se retrouve au début et à la fin du second, dans lequel alternent des visions de la campagne, parmi lesquelles une séquence à Stonehenge, théâtre d'une procession nocturne, contrebalance la vision des pyramides ou celle des plus grands monuments de l'Égypte antique, plus présents dans la première moitié du film.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

L'originalité de ce syncrétisme est d'être placé sous le signe (diversifié et récurrent) de Satan. L'idée d'une alchimie négative s'impose dès les premières images du film : le tout premier plan, très étiré, concerne un volcan en éruption, auquel succède la vision d'une mer calme, sous des nuages épars où s'affiche le titre du film. Après le feu et la terre, l'eau et l'air ; autrement dit le symbole universel de l'alchimie (l'alliance des quatre éléments naturels). Mais le but de la quête alchimique, symbolisée par un œuf dans maintes traditions, revêt un aspect inquiétant dès les premières séquences, avec l'éclosion d'un bébé alligator, dont se réjouit la déesse Isis, incarnée par une actrice. Dans la deuxième partie du film, un plan montrant le baptême de fidèles dans le Gange complète cette énigme : cette vision fluviale prenant le sens infernal des séquences qui l'encadrent.

Cette symbolique est redoublée par le rapport de la déesse égyptienne et de son double masculin, Osiris, avec lequel elle correspond par signes, dans un dialogue muet émaillé d'éclairs. Cette émergence de l'Androgyne mythique est détournée de son sens le plus bénéfique, par l'apparition de Lucifer, dans la séquence suivante. Non moins subversif, le contraste entre l'étoile de David (?) qui décore la literie de Lucifer (ou son adorateur ?) et le trône égyptien sur lequel il préside à quelque rituel sanglant. On peut y voir un télescopage paradoxal des pouvoirs du Pharaon et de celui de Moïse (certes absent du scénario). Plus tard, les références à l'homosexualité, soulignées par une ancienne gravure représentant la copulation d'un satyre avec un bouc, sont d'autres entorses, sataniques si l'on veut, au culte de l'Un, commun à l'alchimie et à la tradition égyptienne. Les symboles géométriques de l'Un (à commencer par le triangle et le cercle) se voient d'ailleurs rendus à Lucifer dans plusieurs séquences.

Il en va de même avec la vie et la mort, quand Lilith (déesse inquiétante jouée par Marianne), couchée dans une tombe, se lève et erre, bras en croix, parmi les colosses de la statuaire égyptiennes. Un tel geste, dans ce décor nocturne, et d'autant mieux que Marianne porte un bonnet de la même couleur que sa

robe verdâtre, incarne la scission de l'Un — mais avec les couleurs de Lilith, sorte de contrepartie négative du Christ.

Les visées ésotériques du scénario servent donc une célébration de la violence, illustrée dans des plans très variés (la violence sacrificielle, ou celle de la nature déchaînée). Autant de figurations de la dualité qui éloigne les hommes de la reconnaissance de leur lien avec l'Un : les rapports des hommes étant gouvernés par la dualité néfaste, à laquelle le mythe de l'Un semble fournir un antidote assez vain. La beauté de Marianne en Lilith (son visage si uni), exprime d'une certaine façon cette ambiguïté. De même avec ses costumes : une tunique moulante qui l'apparente à un bronze coulé d'un seul trait, ou bien, dans la seconde partie du film, sa cape noire doublée de satin rouge.

Je ne surestime pas les qualités esthétiques de ce film, qui semble un peu bâclé. Tourné dans des décors naturels, son budget aura été absorbé par les voyages à l'étranger. (Marianne ne se souvient pas avoir bénéficié d'un cachet.) Quoi qu'il en soit, Kenneth Anger a *réussi* à exprimer, au-delà de sa nostalgie de la magie noire, les forces invisibles qui justement font obstacle dans notre monde à la perception de l'Un. C'est ce que nous font comprendre les coïncidences, qui restent à montrer, entre le témoignage écrit de Marianne Faithfull tenant le rôle de Lilith, et l'expérience d'une autre artiste, dans un domaine qui n'est pas celui du cinéma.

Les choix artistiques de Marianne, comme ceux de ce réalisateur sulfureux, semblent obéir à une loi qui les dépasse mais dont ces artistes ont une vague conscience. Ces lois ont fasciné de grands écrivains, comme Herman Melville, au moins dans son récit ultime, *Billy Budd* : le destin du héros éponyme étant décrit comme une émanation de la « shekhina » : nom hébreux de la Sagesse divine, composée de Rigueur et de Douceur. Ce mystère nous est mieux connu sous le nom de l'Unité suprême, dont émanent les différences inhérentes au multiple.

M a r i a n n e e l l e - m ê m e , d a n s s o n autobiographie, emploie ce mot « Shekhina », mais à propos du charisme de Bob Dylan,

évoqué avec une certaine dérision. Les connaissances de Marianne en occultisme, même si elle n'en dit rien dans l'évocation du tournage de *Lucifer rising*, ont pu l'éclairer sur la figure de Lilith, désignée par la kabbale comme une altération démoniaque de la « Shekhina ». C'est ainsi que la kabbale explique le mal parmi les hommes, quand la shekhina enténébrée, couverte de chardons, se substitue à celle dont la rose est l'attribut. Si Marianne emploie le mot « Shekhina » par dérision, l'analogie entre l'esthétique du film et certains détails de *Billy Budd* ne doit pas faire sourire.

La leçon de Melville

On peut regretter que Marianne n'évoque pas dans ses mémoires, parmi ses si nombreuses lectures, le *Billy Budd* d'Herman Melville. Ce dernier figure pourtant dans les remerciements qui referment le livret de l'album *Vagabond ways* (1999) : on y trouve aussi les noms de Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Wilde... parmi ceux de grands amis de Marianne. Billy est bien l'archétype du bouc émissaire, auquel Marianne identifie les victimes de Jagger (à commencer par elle-même), vers la fin du chapitre qui précède celui où est évoqué le tournage de *Lucifer rising*⁷.

Or, le brouillon de *Billy Budd* recèle un passage où la « shekhina [de l'aube] » surcharge « le rose [de l'aube] »⁸. Et dans une phrase où un quasi-jeu de mots suggère le sens verbal de ce terme (*to rise*, *rose*, en anglais veut dire s'élever) : Billy au bout de la corde du gibet, à quatre heures du matin, « Billy ascended ; and, ascending, took the full rose of the dawn » (je souligne)⁹. Ce jeu de mots implicite de Melville se renouvelle sous la plume de Marianne qui décrit ainsi le décor égyptien du tournage du film (je traduis) : « Le

visage couvert de sang Max Factor, allongée dans la tombe d'un cimetière arabe à cinq heures du matin quand le soleil se levait sur les pyramides » (*as the sun rose over pyramids [...] When the sun rise on the solstice [...]»*¹⁰). Le détail des « cinq heures » coïncide avec la dernière heure de Billy Budd, à « quatre heures » du matin. Mais sous la plume de Marianne, le verbe « rose [rise] » évoque d'abord le titre du film *Lucifer rising* ; titre qui, dans le générique introductif, s'écrit en larges lettres remplies d'un rose mouvant.

L'adoption de la « shekhina » par les musulmans qui lui associent la fille de Mahomet, ajoute au caractère énigmatique de la situation de l'actrice Marianne, égarée dans un cimetière musulman qui la rapproche peut-être de l'ancêtre maure (d'après ses confidences sur son ascendance la plus reculée), auquel elle devrait les gènes qui, de son propre avis, la disposent au sadomasochisme. Dans ce souvenir de tournage, son visage ensanglanté figure la dégradation spirituelle dont résulte l'enténébrement de la shekhina, cette rose inouïe qui ne se manifeste alors que par ses épines cruelles. Mieux encore, dans une brève séquence de la seconde moitié du film, Marianne porte à bout de bras ce qui semble être une écharpe de soie. Comme le foulard qui, au cou d'un matelot noir au début de *Billy Budd*, préfigure la corde fatale (l'innocent Billy est pendu pour avoir tué malgré lui un lieutenant calomniateur). Une corde qui, sous la plume de Melville dans le poème conclusif de ce récit, renoue ingénuement avec la symbolique de la pendaison, rattachée à la shekhina par la tradition ; sans doute en raison du lien entre la parole divine, autre signification de la shekhina, et les vertus du langage humain, auxquelles met fin la pendaison !

⁷ « The stability of the group from the very beginning has always depended on Mick's demonization of someone in the inner circle » (*An Autobiography*, p. 198). Billy Budd est bien désigné comme un « pacificateur », au sein de l'équipage en proie à des tensions que sa mort par pendaison apaisera ... momentanément. Et Marianne d'observer : « If I was to become a human sacrifice [...] ».

⁸ J'ai tout dit de cette énigme dans mon ouvrage *Ecrire selon la rose*, Paris : Hermann, 2016. La construction de ce récit de Melville, avec ses trente-deux sections, n'est pas étrangère à la symbolique de la shekhina, comparant textuel de la beauté florale du héros lors de sa pendaison..

⁹ Herman Melville, *Billy Budd, sailor*, ed. Hayford and Sealts, U. of Chicago Press, 1962, p. 124.

¹⁰ Marianne Faithfull, *An autobiography*, op. cit., p. 207-208.

On peut d'ailleurs être intrigué par le prénom des deux actrices féminines, Marianne et Maryam Gibril (dans le rôle d'Isis) : le sens marital ces prénoms est celui de la shekhina, dans son expression christianisée (ou islamisée). De même avec le prénom de deux autres acteurs (les seuls mentionnés par Marianne), Chris O'Dell (un vieil ami et sorte de « frère » pour Marianne) et Chris Jagger (le frère de Mick), un prénom qui revêt le sens christique du sacrifice de Billy Budd. (Sous la plume de Melville, la « shekhina » avait le sens très christianisé que lui donnaient les théologiens de son époque.)

Les séquences successives du film, un peu comme le texte de *Billy Budd*, évoquent différentes traditions, dont le lien ou du moins le rapport analogique est suggéré par un camaïeu de tons roses, qui fait l'unité de ces séquences — jusqu'à la soucoupe volante qui, à la fin du film, survole les pyramides ! Et ce rose contraste avec les couleurs de la fureur punitive, dans la séquence récurrente d'un volcan en éruption. Voilà transposé le rapport de la Douceur miséricordieuse et de la Justice punitive.— N'oublions pas que la shekhina se définit comme le rapport giratoire de la Douceur et de la Rigueur, principes complémentaires de la sagesse divine.

Parmi les détails visuels du film, les tissus plissés, surtout ceux des costumes des acteurs, évoquent la robe aux plis infinis, métaphore de la shekhina dans la tradition comme dans le récit de Melville, où le ciel strié de vapeur de la dernière aube de Billy est comparé aux plis d'une robe. Il n'est pas jusqu'à la vision de l'aube et celle de l'écume des vagues qui, dans le film, ne coïncident avec les détails du décor de ce récit que Kenneth Anger n'a peut-être pas lu.

Dans le film, la vision fugitive de la gravure figurant un bélier rappelle, non sans ambiguïté, l'Ancien Testament, omniprésent dans *Billy Budd*. Mais l'antisémitisme déclaré que Marianne reproche à Anger, se prononce dans des plans trop rapides, avec des figures

géométriques apparentées à l'étoile de David, qui partagent le sens satanique de maints autres détails.

Quoi qu'il en soit, si ce film délirant est prophétique, c'est dans ses derniers plans ; certains pourraient illustrer l'uniformité de la société en devenir. La vision finale des colosses jumeaux sur le sable égyptien se lit comme le chiffre granitique des problèmes identitaires si conscients de Marianne, et d'abord de son clivage intérieur par les effets de la drogue, qui inspirent d'ailleurs l'esthétique psychédélique de ce film. Un plan assez long montre une Marianne hébétée, aussi présente sous l'objectif qu'elle est éloignée de notre monde...

Le seul passage de l'*Autobiographie* où Marianne se réfère à la « *Shekhina* » comporte d'ailleurs des aveux sur sa timidité dans le domaine de l'amour (impliqué dans la symbolique de la shekhina). Cette timidité est justement formulée par une métaphore qui évoque une définition canonique de la shekhina, la *vapeur céleste* : « I was terrified that I might simply vaporize [...] »¹¹. Le sentiment de cette vaporisation est suggéré par la présence de Bob Dylan, la « *Shekhina* » faite homme. Marianne, par le simple choix de ces mots, se dessine bien comme son égale.

Marianne elle-même écrit : « J'ai mon propre chemin spirituel mais je ne suis pas religieuse. En fait je suis *contre* la religion [...] parce que la magie noire est une religion »¹². Le souvenir de *Lucifer rising* inspire sans doute ces propos. Et Marianne finit par déclarer : « Je suis désolée, mais je ne crois pas en un Créateur, je ne crois pas avoir été fabriquée par un Être extérieur. [...] Cependant, je pense effectivement qu'il y a une étincelle divine dans chacun de nous, d'où proviennent tout art, toute beauté et toute vérité, et notre tâche est de les découvrir — et de cultiver notre jardin. »¹³

Jean Shrimpton en Egypte

Le film *Lucifer rising* a donné une forme plastique, assez complaisante, à ce qui peut

¹¹Marianne Faithfull, *An autobiography*, op. cit., p. 47

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 61

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 40, 306.

apparaître comme l'éclipse du sacré par son revers maléfique. Que penser des intrigantes coïncidences entre le parcours de Marianne-Lilith et celui du célèbre mannequin Jean Shrimpton, dont Marianne, comme toutes les vedettes de son époque, imitait l'apparence ? L'analogie de leur vécu, à l'époque même du tournage de *Lucifer rising*, n'est-elle que hasard ? Un poète pourrait y voir un effet des forces mystérieuses, qui manifestent une volonté divine, à moins qu'elle ne soit celle de Satan ?

Marianne avait innocemment détrôné la sœur de Jean, Chrissie Shrimpton, dans le cœur de Mick Jagger. Après le tournage de *Lucifer rising*, Marianne, privée de la garde du fils d'un premier compagnon, devait rencontrer Jean Shrimpton, venue la voir en compagnie de son nouvel ami (et ancien mari de Marianne !) Jean, qui aura été, certes peu de temps, une mère de substitution pour cet enfant, s'en revenait elle aussi d'Égypte, où elle s'était rendue pour une séance de pose avec son pygmalion David Bailey. Le tournage de *Lucifer rising* a sans doute coïncidé avec cette séance de pose pour *Vogue*, où Jean Shrimpton, toujours sublime, rompt pourtant avec son image de marque.

Profilé sur la pyramide, le corps de Jean vaut celui de Marianne incarnant la déesse Lilith, dans la tombe d'un cimetière égyptien. Jean Shrimpton évoque elle-même cette séance de pose, dans un passage extatique de son autobiographie, que termine cet aveu : « It was one of the finest moments of my life ». Telles que Jean les évoque dans ce passage, les pyramides d'Égypte ont l'aura des décors égyptiens de *Lucifer rising*. Sous sa plume, l'évocation du soleil, « leaving a dramatic pattern of black triangles on rose-coloured sand »¹⁴, présente un symbolisme qui ne se limite pas à l'antagonisme du noir et du rose¹⁵. Les principes de l'art universel, avec la valeur spirituelle qu'ils médiatisent, s'expriment dans le rapport de ces durs triangles (comparables à ceux qui prennent un sens infernal sous la

caméra de Kenneth Anger) et la douceur de la couleur du sable.

L'objectif de David Bailey ne semble pourtant pas animé par l'inspiration démoniaque, revendiquée par Anger. Peut-être Bailey conjurait-il dans cette séance exceptionnelle, avec des photos que j'ai analysées dans mon ouvrage *Marianne Faithfull : un condensé de l'Histoire*, la passion inspirée par la « Shrimp », devenue le modèle incontournable de toutes les femmes de la planète : un mimétisme dangereux, dont Marianne elle-même, simple clone de la Shrimp à ses débuts, n'avait pas tout à fait conscience. L'essence démoniaque de ce mimétisme se concentre dans *Lucifer rising*, qui poétise à sa manière la fascinante horreur du Double, mise pour celle de l'Un ?

Le mimétisme que Jean provoquait malgré elle, et qui jetait une sorte d'ombre sur sa vie personnelle, accompagne une détérioration de l'essence de notre être. Si cette essence est commune à tous nos êtres, l'imitation d'un modèle, quel qu'en soit le domaine, augure une forme de totalitarisme. La drogue a été pour Marianne une autre ombre ; trop souvent perçue comme un moyen d'accès à l'essence dont nous parlons, la drogue provoque une confusion subjective des apparences et des êtres qui nous entourent ; autre émergence de la totalité, autrement dit la contrefaçon de l'Unité qui peut définir cette essence.

Certes, c'est la campagne anglaise qui, dans un autre chapitre de son autobiographie, inspire à Jean Shrimpton des considérations métaphysiques. Mais après les détails relatifs au décor égyptien de *Lucifer rising*, Marianne décrit les accidents d'une montagne allemande non moins mystérieuse, sur laquelle eut lieu la fin du tournage. Le récit de ce dernier est rapporté dans un chapitre dont le titre, « The Wall », désigne le vieux mur en ruine, dans une friche urbaine de Londres, à l'ombre duquel s'était réfugiée Marianne, devenue une junkie sans domicile après ce tournage. C'est justement vers la fin de ce

¹⁴ Jean Shrimpton, *An autobiography*, London : Ebury Press, p. 147.

¹⁵ Cet émotion esthétique se renouvelle, plus loin dans cette autobiographie, à propos des vieilles pierres d'une région perdue de l'Angleterre, où Jean choisit de vivre. On songe au rapport, dans *Lucifer rising*, entre la vision de la pyramide et celle de Stonehenge.

chapitre, avant de revenir à Chrissie Shrimpton, que Marianne mentionne le nom de Jean Shrimpton, dont elle ne parle jamais ailleurs.

Dans ce même chapitre, Marianne se souvient encore de son vain coup de fil à son ancien professeur de lettres, une inoubliable « Mrs Simpson » qui, sans comprendre les motivations angoissées de Marianne, ne sut pas quoi lui répondre. La ressemblance de ces deux noms (Simpson et Shrimpton) laisse imaginer les raisons inouïes du mal être de Marianne, menacée d'une dépersonnalisation impliquant Miss Jean Shrimpton : la moue boudeuse et la maigreur de « la Shrimp » étant l'objet d'un mimétisme esthétique, dont Marianne s'est délivrée plus vite que de la drogue. En se débarrassant du masque de Jean Shrimpton, Marianne allait d'ailleurs trouver sa voie, dans le domaine artistique où le sort l'avait poussée.

Comble du *hasard* : la rencontre, dans les alentours du fameux « mur », de Marianne et de Mike Leander, son ancien producteur musical, qui avait signé la bande originale du film de Peter Watkins *Privilège*, sorti en 1967, où Jean Shrimpton avait le premier rôle. (De cette rencontre de Leander résulta un album de reprises bien tardivement publié, *Rich kid blues...*) Jean Shrimpton avait tardé à se remettre de cette expérience cinématographique, jugée par elle-même déplorable (elle dut affronter la mauvaise réputation de *Privilège* aux USA, où elle s'était réfugiée pour ne plus en entendre parler !) La sortie de *Privilège* a d'ailleurs coïncidé avec celle du film de Michael Winner, *I'll never forget what'sis name*, interdit aux Etats-Unis, et dans lequel Marianne Faithfull avait le rôle d'une délurée.

Marianne se montre vaguement consciente des effets désastreux du tournage de *Lucifer rising* sur sa vie personnelle. La séquence qui la montre couchée dans un caveau étroit, et celles où on la voit errer parmi les vestiges de l'art lapidaire égyptien, anticipent sa décision d'errer sans fin dans Londres, où la junkie qu'elle était devenue n'avait pour abri qu'un vieux mur de pierre, destiné à la démolition¹⁶. Kenneth Anger a sans doute senti en Marianne une faille de l'être, qui coïncidait avec l'objet de son film. Lequel donne une forme énigmatique à l'enténébrement du Principe dont émanent les destins humains, si l'on en croit la tradition. Mais quel état ou quel aspect de ce Principe peut expliquer les coïncidences soulignées entre le destin de Marianne et celui de Jean ?

Ce mystère échappe à notre vue ; peut-être en raison de l'aveuglement ou de la détérioration de notre être, inhérente au mimétisme qui, dans les formes systématiques qui sont la marque de notre époque, provoque une indifférenciation de la société. Ce phénomène est encore favorisé par les drogues qui ne portent pas ce nom, offertes (ou imposées) à tous par la Technique (au sens très général, et moderne, que lui donnait Jacques Ellul).

Selon la ou les traditions évoquées dans *Lucifer rising*, les êtres que nous sommes et leurs destin (ou leur destin !) sont autant de reflets de tel ou tel aspect du Principe divin (ou divinisé), que nous ne pouvons pas ne pas imiter (d'un point de vue subjectif), puisqu'il nous détermine. (Le mimétisme interhumain est bien sûr l'inversion réductrice de ce mystère.) Le film d'Anger évoque, sous une forme picturale diversifiée, l'agir de ce Principe ; mais en projetant sur lui la dualité néfaste, dont Satan est la figure mythique.

¹⁶ A la fin du chapitre « Broken english » de son *Autobiographie*, Marianne évoque les vidéos tournées à la demande de son producteur par Derek Jarman pour trois chansons de l'album *Broken english*, publié en 1979, qui fut pour elle une résurrection artistique : « Broken english », « Witches song » et « The ballad of Lucy Jordan ». Des vidéos qui, selon elle, étaient en avance sur leur temps, et qui ne furent que plus tard reconnues comme des œuvres de grande qualité artistique (le spectateur que je suis ne partage pas complètement cet enthousiasme...). Ces trois clips sont liés par la vision intermittente, dans chacun d'eux, de Marianne déambulant dans Londres, en mini jupe et en perfecto noir. La vidéo tournée pour « Witches song » (en position 2 sur l'album *Broken english*) est visiblement inspirée par le film *Lucifer rising*. Une ronde de masques participe à un rituel vaguement satanique aux allures de « mariage ». La cathédrale Saint-Paul, en vision nocturne au tout début du film, trouve un pendant iconoclaste dans le dernier plan : un mur associé à d'imaginables turpitudes, qui réfère apparemment au passé pas si lointain de Marianne : le « mur » en ruine, décor emblématique de son errance de droguée.

Dans une des premières séquences, le dialogue muet de la déesse Isis avec Osiris n'est que le prélude à des fantasmes sataniques qui incitent à voir dans le rapport de ces divinités une allégorie du mimétisme le plus commun.

La carrière de Marianne Faithfull, comme celle de Jean Shrimpton, est extérieure à cette révélation perverse. Mais leur vécu, tel qu'il est évoqué dans leurs autobiographies respectives, témoigne obscurément de la détermination métaphysique que Kenneth Anger, en cernant son origine, a peut-être tort d'associer à Lucifer. Marianne et Jean ont vaguement éprouvé ce malaise, résolu dans divers choix artistiques par Marianne, ou dans les adieux sans nuances de Jean au monde de la mode

Sur une des photos prises en Egypte, un sfumato inhabituel chez David Bailey rend Jean Shrimpton méconnaissable, tandis qu'à l'arrière plan les contours du Sphinx, dilués dans le ciel, matérialisent la gloire de l'Un agissant. Devant ce Sphinx, un très vieux mur de pierres en souffrance est encore une leçon, sur le délitement de nos êtres, dans une société en proie à l'uniformisation, soumise à des modèles contingents. Le mur de Marianne avait un peu le même sens ; peut-être ne faisait-elle, contre les pierres de cette ruine londonienne, que racheter le sacrilège de Kenneth Anger, détournant de leur signification les plus belles pierres sculptées à la gloire de l'Un, pour en faire une image arbitraire de la dualité la plus irrémédiable.



Jean Shrimpton en Egypte, 1972. Croquis M. A., d'après une photo de David Bailey.

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The Wetland: Transmedia Multi-Layered Archival in Cinematic Virtual Reality

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Abstract

Remote regions with no access to digital infrastructures face more and more the danger of virtual and even physical extinction. In this context, we aimed to ask ourselves: how can we design, in a highly technologized world, groundbreaking mechanisms for archiving cultures in the non-technologized communities? How can we capture stories, challenges, imaginaries in new technologies in communities that have no emphasis on tech? How can we re-position ourselves as artists, researchers, educators in this current crisis?

By using emergent technologies we aimed to begin a process of archiving archaic routines in remote villages in the summer of 2017. The first village we focussed on was Letea and the project was named “*The Wetland*”. Therefore, the current article investigates the contemporary stage of creative archival, relying on the transmedia documentary that I have conceived and directed.

“*The Wetland*” is a transmedia journey into the wilderness, humanness and profoundness of Letea village, Romania’s most remote wetland, increasingly affected by globalisation. The documentary explores the Letea Grind, a space populated by former refugees, also geographically known as Europe’s wildest and one of the most remote regions is situated in the North-Eastern side of the Delta of Danube, Romania. At the borderland of Europe, hardly accessible for

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the regular travelers, without any land roads, Letea is one of the most intriguing archaic villages of the Delta (along with C.A. Rosetti, Sfistofca, Cardon). The installation aims to create a methodology for multi-layered archival and remixel, in order to foster further dialogue towards protecting the region.

Trailer (cinematic VR):

<https://vimeo.com/235672944>

Trailer (music video remix):

<https://vimeo.com/272407255/1c6ca6684e>

Notes On Creative Archival

In 2016, Gabriella Giannachi launched the book *“Archive Everything: Mapping the Everyday”* where she highlights the complexity and the diversity of contemporary archival practices.¹⁸ Giannachi underlines that the distinction between libraries, archives and museums have been and are continuously perceived as rather ambiguous.¹⁹ Giannachi cherishes the definitions offered by Giorgio Agamben and Michel Foucault that theoretize archival as an open set of heterogeneous practices that could encompass discourses, buildings and any other forms of expression.²⁰ This brings us closer to the current understanding of creative archival.

In parallel, I would signal a distinct facet of the contemporary phenomenon: throughout the years there were clear borders between archives, art, new technology, science. At the moment, however, I believe we are witnessing a convergence of all these into what I tend to call “creative archival” techniques or even “transmedia archival”.

On an international level, there are numerous emergent creative archival projects and few functional transmedia models as well.

For example, *“New Dimensions in Testimony”* is an interactive virtual reality project that archives hundreds of answers of Holocaust survivors in order to then facilitate a “dialogue” between the

users (with a focus on youth) and the survivors. I have experienced the project at the *Future of Storytelling* event in New York, in the Fall of 2018. Indeed, asking the Holocaust survivors “direct questions” and having a responsive feedback felt convincing and meaningful.

The project was initiated by USC Shoah Foundation and the USC Institute for Creative Technologies in 2012 and it was conceived as an ongoing process ever since. For that specific project, the creators used groundbreaking technologies such as pioneering volumetric capture and custom-made display technologies, which were high budget at the time. The project blends into an organic project the tradition of oral storytelling with new pioneering technologies, having as a mission a bigger long-term goal: the one of revealing the stories of the Holocaust from the survivors even in a future when there will be no living survivors anymore.²¹ In other words, the experience archives the stories, the feelings, the inner thoughts of the humans that have overcome terror.

When designing the project, the team had a modular methodology. They were aware that even the new technologies like virtual reality are ephemeral and therefore they have recorded the interviews in multiple manners, with multiple technologies and backed them up in more locations around the world. This approach intrigued me and made me believe that they, in fact, had

¹⁸Gabriella Giannachi, *Archive Everything: Mapping the Everyday*, Ed. MIT Press, Cambridge, 2016.

¹⁹Idem, p. XV.

²⁰Ibidem.

²¹New Dimensions in Testimony, <http://ict.usc.edu/prototypes/new-dimensions-in-testimony/>, accessed on the 4th of October 2019.

unconsciously a transmedia archival approach.

Transmedia storytelling was initially defined by Henry Jenkins as “*a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience.*”²² However, the transmedia methodology can be easily applied to documentaries as well and also to archival processes and the final experience can be not only entertainment-driven, but also educational, artistic or social.

In the current article, I am defining as transmedia archival the process in which a place, a subject, an object or an idea is archived from multiple perspectives, from multiple angles and these perspectives and angles are told through multiple platforms. For example, in the case of *The Wetland*, where our main goal was to preserve the routine of an archaic village, we opted for a cinematic VR to archive the space, a podcast with interviews to archive the background stories and additional extensions to remix the local folklore and to bring it back to the popular culture.

The researchers in University of Maryland pointed out that people tend to remember more from a virtual reality experience than from the real equivalent of that experience.²³ If this is accurate, this positions the archive in a more visible place than the original space. In the case of *The Wetland*, a compelling VR experience of Letea could have a direct impact on the viewer and it could actually in the end help protecting the region as it creates awareness and a form of collective care for something that otherwise would feel “distant”.

In the current article I plead for extensive transmedia archival design, an archival mode involving transmedia strategies, new technologies and ongoing practices. Cinematic Virtual Reality may facilitate an immersive experience that fits archival purposes, however when complemented with additional extensions it can reach tremendous levels of complexity.

Above all, the current article launches an Odyssey of questions, to be continued on the long-term. Some are connected to the essence of archival practices. Can archival be creative? Can archival be modular? Can archival be flexible? Can archival be contradictory? Or is it meant to be rather “objective”, “fixed”, “unique”? Can archival result from an artistic project? Can an artistic project result from archival? What is the purpose of an archive? To preserve? Or also, to interpret, to debate, to reinvent a specific topic? How can we design new models for creative archival? How is the archive changed, when witnessing massive changes in the real archived subject? What is the perspective of people who have access only to the archive, but not also to the real space? Or the other way around? How do we decide what is worth of archival? Just as a sociologist knows how to blend numerous human typologies in order to reach an universal pattern, a creative archival specialist would know how to pick numerous ingredients in order to tease the user about a holistic place, person, object. Reigniting a former dilemma, what is the relationship between the archive and the original?

Other questions, however relate to “authorship” matter. How can we democratize the practices of creative archival with new tech? How can archives be co-created in the future? How can we spark dialogues between different forms of archival and between different archives? Finally, how can we archive the archives in such a way that we don’t risk losing them when witnessing the multiple shifts of technology?

Creative Archival in Cinematic Virtual Reality

When discussing about archival with the support of new technologies it feels at first an unusual approach. For years, archival was perceived as “dusty”, being associated rather with unused libraries or documents. In the exact same measure, emerging technologies are mostly associated with “new” concepts, narratives, audio-visual grammars

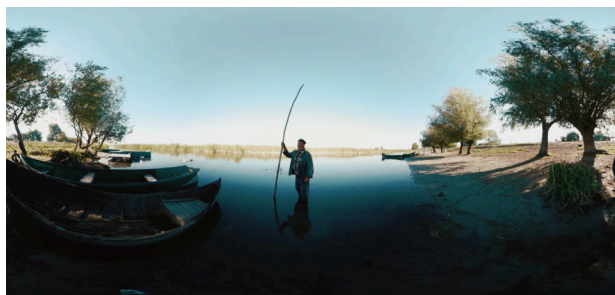
²²Henry Jenkins, Confessions of an Aca-Fan, http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2007/03/transmedia_storytelling_101.html, accessed on the 4th of October 2019.

²³Science Daily, <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/06/180613162613.htm>, accessed on the 4th of October 2019.

and rarely with issues of the past, considered “old”, “over-debated”.

However the intersection between archiving rituals of archaic routines in a creative manner by using new technologies and techniques such as cinematic virtual reality seems to uplift them both: the archival gains a sense of contemporary-ness, a sense of future-oriented-ness, while the new technologies gain new layers of exploratory meaning that are valid not only for the present-future, but also for reconsidering the past.

The Wetland: a transmedia documentary centered on cinematic virtual reality (case study)



24

Starting from the premise of preserving the routine of the remote villages of the Delta with the help of new technologies, in 2017 I have designed a transmedia premise entitled **The Wetland**.

We will hereby analyze the process behind it. I grew up in a village, a place where time and space seemed to have stopped - all the values, the youthfulness and depth of that time and space now makes its way into the cinematic worlds I contribute to (a form of intricate archival), however they are fading away from the original space. In this context, I began to archive rural roots of remote villages more as a search for authenticity and raw splendour. This turned, however, into a larger journey of self-discovery, but also into raising awareness on pressing topics such as: how can we balance traditions and globalisation?

“*The Wetland*” became a transmedia journey into the wilderness, humanness and profoundness of Letea village, Romania’s most remote wetland, increasingly affected by depopulation on one hand but also by globalisation on the other. The documentary explores the increasingly depopulated Letea Grind, a rural area with ex-refugees, also geographically known as Europe’s wildest and one

of the most remote regions is situated in the North-Eastern side of the Delta of Danube, Romania. At the borderland of Europe, hardly accessible for the regular travelers, without any land roads, Letea is one of the most intriguing archaic villages of the Delta (along with C.A. Rosetti, Sfistofca, Cardon). The installation aims to create a methodology for multi-layered archival and remixal, in order to foster further dialogue towards protecting the region. Genre-wise, the cinematic VR documentary is observational, characters-focussed, transformational.

The expanded installation version is conceived from three elements: the VR documentary archiving the routine and unfaded traditions of the wetland-village (15’), a music video cinematic piece remixing a song performed by the villagers by contemporary musicians (3’), podcasts reuniting interviews with tales of the villagers. The first two pieces are what we call a “fluid mirror”. One piece is archiving the authentic songs and pulse of the village, while the other is deliberately remixing the folklore in order to bring it closer to our contemporary times. In other words, we aimed to observe, remix and generate new perspectives on the remote space.

Although at first the project was meant to be commissioned by the Romanian Ministry of Tourism, we did not have the support of the institution in the end and we decided to take it further in an independent manner. This production choice proved to be ideal, as it increased our creative freedom on such a multi-layered project. We produced *The Wetland* with Storyscapes, a transmedia-oriented NGO that I have co-founded in 2012. Our logistical challenge was to fit in a very low budget and therefore we relied on minimum technological equipment and on a minimum team configuration. Unknowingly, we actually prototyped an archival methodology that almost anyone could replicate with minimum effort.

As a summary, the project was created on the course of one year with the following main time slots:

- The concept development (one-three weeks)
- The pre-production - staging and shooting (one month online, two days off-line)

²⁴Film still from *The Wetland*, cinematic VR directed by Ioana Mischie.

- The production - shooting days (seven days)
- The post-production : equirectangular editing, sound mix, music (three months)
- Exhibition - installing and launching the site-specific cinematic VR installation experience (year-long)

Taking into account that the project was not commissioned on a strict timeline, we took time to contemplate, to try multiple versions of the final result.

The transmedia concept development and pre-production

Letea is renown as one of the most remote villages in the Delta and its position and backstory made it extremely intriguing for documentaristic purposes. It is one of the spaces that suffered major transformations in time. For example, taking into account only one of the details, the entire village is still covered with hyper-soft sand, because in the past it used to be covered by the Black Sea. In the 18th century, the space was populated by Ukrainians, Russians while in 1775 another generation of immigrants arrived. This diversity of the area, the uniqueness of its evolution made it a character in itself. However, the overarching project was called *The Wetland*, with the intention to capture, in time, the stories of the surrounding villages as well.

For conceiving *The Wetland*, the process of research consisted of one month of extensive online and telephonic research prior to the exploratory phase. In this phase we designed the moodboards and the treatment of the experience. We also sketched the overall arcs of the documentary, while not becoming over-detailed or over-abstract, we tried to keep space for discoveries and explorations in the village.

We anticipated that the piece will consist of a series of inter-connected exploratory paths and we have designed five main pillars, each designed as a trichotomy (the concept was refined gradually during production as well):

The humanness: at first, we aimed to depict main characters who are associated with an unique craft and ideally to preserve the attitude from an entire

generation of son-father-grandfather or daughter-mother-granddaughter that prolongue or interrupt a certain tradition. Although we have kept the trans-generational approach, in the documentary we rather opted for a mosaic of characters, in order to display the diversity of characters: children, teens, adults and elder villagers were invited to spend hours with us and to allow us to film their routine. This brought a form of universality to the documentary. We did not have a specific “casting”, but we mostly asked the villagers with a track history in the village to share their thoughts on the evolution of the village. We have interviewed fishermen, boat creators, teens, land workers.

The nature in this remote land is outstanding and therefore we tried to preserve this trio in the documentary. We aimed to portray the land, water and air. Due to production reasons, we could not film underwater, however we did preserve the three dimensions throughout the documentary. Also, in the treatment we aimed to allow a cinematic space for observing the wild horses, however when filming on the terrain this became a side element.

The challenges of the region were another layer that was mostly introduced visually or via text inserts. The villagers are confronted with intense depopulation, lack of potable water, lack of access, lack of human rights, however only in the filming process we understood the magnitude of it. The village is situated between extinction and tradition, between authenticity and globalisation, between open space and privatisation.

The spirituality: we have tried to capture the solitude, the humor, the inventivity of the villagers along with the church rituals and traditions.

The rituals: we portrayed the routine of the village in a morning, afternoon, evening. Each of them had a distinct atmosphere and rhythm. The mornings in the village were starting earlier than 5am, while the evenings were becoming peaceful after 8pm.

Production

The filming process reunited seven days and it was



a first-time visit for our team. Although at first we were four team members, we have completed it in a team of two: I was the director and director of photography, while Ispas Alexandru was the aerial director of photography and the creator of the innovative rigs. At times the villagers would help us set up the equipment.



Technology-wise, the project was created with basic 360 technology, consisting of a Samsung Gear and accessories. However, the innovative layers came from using custom-made boat rigs and custom-made drone rigs along with drones to increase the aerial immersion. We have used both an ambisonic mic and a regular mic.

Time-wise, we allowed the first two days for in-depth observation. We slowly understood the “schedule” of the villagers and of the village as a living organism. Every single morning at around 6am, the cows in the village are trespassing the Danube river. We started from these kind of “markers”. In the windows that we had, we tried to interview villagers and to scout for new story paths.

We archived the story of Mr. Toma, the oldest fisherman in the village and the only one who still has a wooden boat. He lives with his wife, while

their children left the village. He is also one of the very few who can sing native songs.

We witnessed the story of a teenager who spends the last summer in the village before going to Tulcea to learn in high school. We preserved the routine of a Letea family, with two children that is daily going to have water reserves. And we have spent time with two children in the village.

From a cultural standpoint, we have interviewed a musician of the village and a cultural facilitator. And from a religious standpoint, we have followed the path of the priest in the village.



Apart of the lively households, we have documented as well the abandoned houses, which were clear statements on the depopulation of the region. Some of them seemed to still have pictures, magazines, pieces of furniture. Some others, however, were completely deserted, revealing the fact that there are side elements to the apparent beauty of the region.

When archiving the rural rituals, maybe one of the most striking one was the church ceremony, where the priest and three women in the village are carrying the ceremony for hours although often they do not have villagers in the crowd anymore.

The archival did reach a multi-layered approach, investigating the background, the present and the future of the village in an organic continuum. In short lines, Letea village was mapped like this:

- **HUMANS:** transgenerational (characters from distinct generations).

NATURE: water, land, air.

PHILOSOPHY: tradition vs. globalisation, open space vs. privatisation, depopulation, lack of potable water, lack of access.

However, not all of them are equally treated and not all of them are explicit in the cinematic VR documentary, which serves more as an experiential

introduction. What persists from the VR experience is the overall atmosphere, the overall traces that the village left on us, the overall attitude of the villagers, the overall routine. The cinematic VR experience is an immersive summary of the entire spatial experience, however it is not ideal for conveying the personal stories in-depth. We have used brief texts to root the background of the village.

Post-production

The post-production reunited three months allowed for stitching, editing, sound design, sound mix and color grading. The final version of the observational cinematic VR documentary reunites 15 minutes.

We have deliberately avoided to have dialogues in the immersive experience - only soundscapes and native music. I feel there is an “untranslatable” richness in the songs. Although we do not understand the lyrics, we can feel the tone, the nostalgia but also the playful attitude of the villagers, despite the challenges they are confronted with.

After all, music felt like a strong bond between the villagers and it felt like an universal language felt outside of the rural convention. It was one of the very few persistent native elements, apart of the local architecture.

The exhibition and distribution phase

The cinematic VR documentary was selected and displayed in international festivals such as GoEast (Wiesbaden, Germany) or First Forum (Los Angeles, California), but also in national events such as Internetics or Romanian Design Week (Bucharest). In Romanian Design Week we also had the chance to display it as an installation. When possible, we had a feedback notebook that was filled with impressions.

We have received compelling feedback from the foreigners that explored the archived region for the first time. To them, although documentaristic, it was like a journey into a surreal space. Out of the scenes that stood out, they often mentioned: the road of the animals, the empty church, the boat man. The experience was associated also with a form of profound lyricism. Although we had no special effects and not extreme color filters, the users considered it overall a poetic angle of the village. And in some ways, we were glad to have it seen as such because it is a form of creative

archival.

The project was explored by a trans-generational public - from children to older women and men. Overall, we can estimate a public of over 200 persons gathering all the exhibition events up to date (2017-2019).



In the future, we aim to organize an exhibition in the village as well and to test the perception of Letea villagers when seeing their own routine in a cinematic VR form. And also to train the younger villagers to preserve their routine through cinematic VR on a constant basis. Such tools could be meaningful also in schools or in the local cultural centers.

We have understood that The Wetland may carry with it not only an artistic and an archival weight, but also an educational layer and a social layer as well. The VR explorers felt connected but also charmed by the village, while some others felt intrigued by the problem of the region.

Cinematic virtual reality helped us convey a strong feeling of presence in the village as a whole. It helped us map it as an immersive mosaic. The ones intrigued by the piece may have the opportunity to dive deeper into the world by listening to the interviews of the villagers or by seeing the remixed folklore. Overall, it proved to be a meaningful creative archival practice.

Overall, the project can be considered a successful beginning of creative archival practices and expanded documentaristic forms. However, on the long-term, we have discovered also numerous elements that can serve towards improving it. Transmedia-wise, we could have improved it by

displaying it online - a path that we are currently working on. In this way the access would be increased and the users could connect immediately the extensions and shouldn't wait for an upcoming event for additional information.

Expanded Conclusions and Further Challenges

After exploring the process of creating *The Wetland*, we have highlighted numerous observations in connection to creative archival in cinematic virtual reality:

A complex multi-layered archival can be gained only in an ongoing process, in a process designed on the long-term that can capture not only the instant, but also the continuation of specific paths. *The Wetland*, however is still a proof that if a project is set up detailed enough in the beginning, it can reach levels of complexity even from the first segment.

Transmedia archival is highly effective because it may associate each layer of meaning, each character, each addition to the essence of the story with a distinct platform. In the case of *The Wetland*, we have preserved the visual observation layers in cinematic VR, while we isolated the interviews with the villagers in additional segments. This allows the user to choose the level of depth he may want in exploring a certain topic. It is a granular archival that can be explored in an organic manner or in insular manners. Although the cinematic VR had more visibility, whenever we have pitched the project, the audience was willing to decode additional aspects regarding the village.

At first, in the early stages of the project, we have imagined the cinematic VR as an interactive scavenger hunt. The users would see this immersive experience and then they would dive deeper into what interests them more - either a character, a music, a forest or the story of the sand. The ideal-case scenario was to create and interactive VR experience, however due to tech and budget limitations we could not combine them in this holistic manner.

Not only the archival per se, but also the remix of the archived materials can be considered an expansion of a specific story world. After all, archives are not meant to stay untouched, but to generate new ideas, perspectives, questions. The

remixed extension of *The Wetland* was highly intriguing as it felt contemporary and fresh, although it relied on archaic songs. People connected to the music video and to the remixed song in a completely different manner, they felt they belong to it and it belongs to them. It didn't seem Letea's but ours.

Archival can and should be as multi-layered as possible. For *The Wetland*, we have designed an archival mechanism on five pillars. We encourage artists and technologists to take into consideration what we call "creative multi-layered archival design". This would set up a methodology for the project. Our approach reuniting the trans-generational, trans-natural, trans-ritualic approaches proved to be meaningful however also over-ambitious. After all, the experience does not offer in-depth information, but rather a teaser of the whole.

In the popular culture, archival is often seen as preserving the "everything-ness" in connection to a certain person or space or object, which is, after all, impossible. Our definition of archival is more personal, more granular and is more tending towards a subjective perspective on specific layers of a certain person or space or object. We have achieved, in other words, slices of creative archival, that can be completed in time. We have tapped into slices of archival and our goal is to plead for what we call: **modular archival** - perspectives that can be explored freely in order to spark new types of questions.

The pluses of archival in cinematic virtual reality are that it allows a more organic approach especially when we aim to archive a space. The sense of presence is increased. It is, in some way, like a ticket into a condensed experience of Letea. In one of the installation displays, we even wanted to add sensorial elements to the VR experience - sand, water, wind, that are so indispensable from the village. Most probably if we would have used these extensions along with a Voyager chair, the experience would have felt even more immersive.

Regarding Letea itself, we have understood that actually the project ignites numerous debates. However, the backdrops of cinematic VR archival are that still, although rather affordable (Google cardboards), this technology is not accessible to many, therefore it can only be tried in spaces like

universities, tech centers, contemporary art museums, festivals or in spaces where there are trained facilitators at least in the first stages of the exhibition. The challenge on the long-term will be to train the villagers to archive their own routine in cinematic VR and in multiple additional platforms.

Overall, we believe there is a meaningful connection between archives, art and new technologies. Creative archival in documentary

filmmaking is still underrepresented in Romania and around the globe, however, with consistent efforts we can reach a level of complexity that would enchant multiple types of audiences, not only researchers, scientists or artists. It is, therefore, a call for solidarity and co-creativity, that on the long-term might help us create not only more meaningful archives, but also richer histories and maybe also more multi-layered presents and futures.

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The Actor And The New Media

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Abstract

The text identifies both the advantages and disadvantages that the new technologies have offered to the actors and compares the way the technology is being used in the European film industry, especially the Romanian and in American.

Keywords: New media, social media, eco casting, live auditions, casting directors, agents, managers, film industry, online platform, content creator, online training, masterclass.

We live in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world: economically, socially, politically and culturally. The technological progress of the last decades has accelerated the lateral social mobility and the phenomenon of cultural pluralism. The current technology allows for immediate accessibility to information, offers increasingly diverse and complex methods of instant communication and creates new contexts for people to affirm, express and self-promote in the virtual space. New businesses (on line products and services, smartphone applications, etc.) and new types of jobs (bloggers, vloggers, etc.) have developed as a result of the expansion of the

online environment, while others - basically all the industries which relied on the fabrication and use of physical materials to transmit information (paper, photos, videos, CDs and DVDs, etc.) - have suffered. Nowadays real-time information, communication and audio-visual expression are not only possible but more and more accessible both logistically and financially to anyone. It only takes a smartphone with Wi-Fi internet access to make it all happen.

Modified by all these I.T. transformations are, as well, the actors. Theoretically today's actors have a greater chance than ever to work on a

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global market, since their physical presence is no longer an absolute necessity to apply for a job. Their virtual presence in the on line space, became apparently an extremely efficient substitute. But new opportunities bring new obstacles. In the following material I will try to:

- A. identify the changes brought by the on going evolution of technology
- B. present the positive and negative consequences of these changes for the actors
- C. describe the specific differences between how the European film industry, (the Romanian one in particular) and the American one understands to use the new technology.

Therefore, concretely, for the professional actors the technological developments meant the followings:

1. Increased access to information regarding the labor market.

In the last couple of years the casting calls are posted mainly in the virtual space, on the national and international specialized sites (ActorsAcces, IMDB Pro, Spotlight, E-Talent, etc.) and the submissions are also made through these professional websites. Consequently an actor doesn't need to physically be in a particular place to find out about current audition opportunities.

This procedure is predominantly used in countries with a developed film and theater industry, which have a very dynamic and diverse market, such as the United States and the United Kingdom. In the Central and South - Eastern Europe this practice is not common. The countries in this region have weaker economies, considerably less policies to

support and protect national artistic productions, so fewer projects are being made²⁶.

At the same time, the artistic communities in these countries are smaller and less diversified ethnically, racially and culturally. (Most of the emigrant artists prefer to settle in the western countries, as the workforce in the acting field is concentrated there²⁷). Therefore the relatively small number of artists that exist in these regions allows the casting directors and not only (directors and producers too) to have an in-depth knowledge of the actors on the market.

As a result, the online casting calls are mainly used when there is a need to discover new talent or talent with specific traits. And this need is rare. The new talent is pretty effortless visible in these regions due to the fact that the acting pool is smaller and less competitive. Usually no scouting is required. Also the actors with particular looks and skills are most likely already known by the guild, precisely for these particularities, which, again, in smaller markets stand out. In addition, there are fewer projects in general and even fewer involving large casts, new talent and talent with distinct characteristics.

Under these circumstances an assumption can be made: the working opportunities for actors in the countries that practice the on line audition system are higher then in the countries where this practice is seldom. But the assumption is only partially correct.

Although in the US there are quite a lot of professional websites featuring auditions, the big networks and big production companies will go directly to the agents and managers when looking for talent. The auditions directly available to the actors are only for the smaller, independent, low budget productions. So, when it comes to projects with high stakes²⁸,

²⁶ Research for CULT Committee – Film Financing and the Digital Single Market: its Future, the Role of Territoriality and New Models of Financing, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies Directorate-General for Internal Policies PE 629.186- January 2019, p 35

²⁷ <https://actinginlondon.co.uk/best-location-for-an-acting-career/#>

²⁸ *Definesc ca proiect important un proiect care are atasat un regizor recunoscut, sau un producător puternic, sau un buget mare, sau o rețea de distribuție importantă, sau un rol ofertant pentru actor, de preferința principal, sau este un proiect în derualre sau recurent care a avut deja success de public, sau toate la un loc.*

the auditions are generally not open to the public. The casting calls are indeed posted online but only the managers and the agents will have access to these on line services. The actors are not allowed to submit on their own, even if they are somehow able to find out about these auditions. They have to be submitted by their agents and managers, assuming they have an agent or manager. (The stars are obviously an exception - which I will address at a later time).

But even for the actors with representation that's a long stretch. Because their representation might not be able or might not be interested to get them in the room. It all depends on the credits, the connections, the leverage that the respective agent or manager has in the industry and last but not least on their determination. An agency like CAA, ICM, UTA or William Morrison will have much better chances of getting a client in the room, even if the client is an unknown actor, than a less prestigious agency, even if that agency represents an actor more suited for the part, or more talented, or sometimes even more popular. Besides, the managers and agents will not push equally for their entire list of clients. They will work harder only for the up and rising clients or the ones with best chances to get the job - basically only for the actors with immediate commercial value.

While in Romania and all the countries where representation is a marginal phenomena- the important projects are casted through a casting director. But if the actor is able to find out about an audition on his own, theoretically, he is able to participate to the audition even if he was not called in by the casting director.

Also it should be noted that some directors make the selection themselves. Thus, in Romania and other countries with a similar industry structure, the system works in the actors favor, again, at least in theory.

In practice, the casting calls depend almost entirely on the relationship the actor manages to establish with the casting directors and the directors or the other members of the industry

(fellow actors, producers, etc). Usually the fellow actors represent the most valuable resource of information when it comes to new projects, because they either already received a direct offer to play a part (the ones with box-office) or because they were invited to audition in these respective projects.

Of course networking is highly recommended for actors, with or without representation, regardless of the system in which they practice. Because, even if the presence of the online services has contributed to opening up the access to the job market, the connections that one has in the industry are still playing a key factor in the audition process.

Another difference relies on the nature of the relationship the casting directors have with the directors. Although all the casting directors make a preliminary selection based on the criteria established by the director, in Romania most of the directors have a good knowledge of the acting pool, due to the fact that the pool itself is small. Therefore in addition to the proposals made by the casting directors which they take more or less into consideration, they will ask the casting director to call in a specific list of actors of their choice.

Since in the US the acting pool is much larger, more dynamic and more versatile, for the directors and the producers is more difficult to have an in-depth knowledge of it.

So the casting directors have more liberty and a bigger saying in the audition process. Their role is not necessarily stronger, but it is definitely more creative since they are the ones mainly responsible to find the right actors for the parts. (It should also be noted that they also have other means of discovering talents such as work shops, show-cases²⁹, industry mixture events, etc. These procedures are used frequently in the United States and the UK, in response to the high demand of the industry players to establish connections).

²⁹ <https://www.briantimoneyacting.co.uk/makes-good-acting-showcase/>

To summarize, in US the information regarding an acting job opportunity is more transparent, but that does not necessarily guaranty that the actor can actually apply for the job, while in Romania there's limited information about the job offers, but once one has it, the access to apply for the job is being granted.

In conclusion, more information does not necessarily means better employment opportunities.

2. Diversified casting procedures

In US, online live auditions via Skype or Face Time as well as Eco-casting³⁰ (the auditions recorded and then transmitted online) are used on a regular basis. These type of auditions allow the participation of a greater number of actors, because their physical presence is no longer strictly necessary. But while these procedures increase the work opportunities for the actors, they also increased the competition. Regardless, the online auditions and the eco-casting are less expensive and more convenient. Casting directors no longer need to have an actual physical space to host auditions, nor should actors need to travel to a specific location in order to audition. Plus, the Eco-casting allows both the actors and the casting directors to have a flexible schedule. Also the eco – casting gives the actor a better control over his own performance, since he can record as many takes as he considers necessary in order to achieve the desired result and he can edit the material. Eco-casting also eliminates some of the stress that an actor may feel during a live audition. (However any type of audition represents a precarious way to evaluate an actor's potential. It very nature/set-up implies a lot of pressure on the actor, and not all the actors know how to cope with the pressure³¹ regardless of their level of talent. Unfortunately, at present time, auditioning is the most common tool used by the industry to

identify the right actor for the part. Although there are notable exceptions of directors who prefer to discover the actor's potential in a different set up - through casual conversations or through interviews).

On a different note, the online auditions, especially the recorded ones, are more impersonal. No chemistry can be established in this way between the scene partners or the actor and the director. Nor it can be evaluated the actor's ability to comply with the director's requests. Eco casting also annihilates any real communication that might otherwise occur between the actor and the director during a live audition, which is sometimes more relevant to the director than the audition in itself. Also during the recorded auditions there's no room for feed-back or clarifying explanations that the actor might obtained from the director or the casting director during live or live on line auditions.

In Romania, live or recorded online auditions are a rare instance. They are mostly used for casting smaller parts in international projects, usually when the director is absent.

But even in US when it comes to the final call-backs, live, face-to-face auditions are nevertheless considered optimal. Despite this fact, especially for the smaller roles, there are numerous examples of actors that got the part solely through recorded auditions.

In any case, one fact is certain. Eco-casting although empowering for the actor, it, however, diminishes the creative collaboration that may result from a live or on line live audition.

3. New markets

International streaming platforms (such as Netflix, Hulu, Amazon, ShowTime, HBO Now, iTunes, Youtube, Vimeo, Vine, etc.) generated new types of products such as interent tv

³⁰ <https://www.backstage.com/advice-for-actors/tech/virtual-auditions/>

³¹ *In SUA în cadrul programelor de actorie este cursuri de acting for audition care adresează specific aceste probleme, după cum există tot felul de work-shops și clase private pe care actorii le fac în acest sens.*

series, online commercials, web-series, etc. Consequently more acting jobs were created and bigger markets were reached, thus giving the actors the chance to affirm overboard, because the online environment is accessible to audience from almost any corner of the world. (Currently, over 148 million citizens worldwide are Netflix subscribers)³².

In Romania new media products, besides the online commercials, are very few. The only online projects with some visibility were: *Comrade Detective*, a series produced by Amazon Studios and *Casting* a web series produced by Diud Film). So the job opportunities for the Romanian actors did not increase significantly, yet. The only exception is represented by the voice dubbing market. Since Netflix came to Romania the demand to dub foreign productions, which until now was limited to cartoons and children's films, expanded to television series.

In the USA new media is an extended phenomenon. There are countless cases of actors and directors who have created their own new media content - especially web series - that were later on purchased by the big studios or tv networks interested in developing the concepts. The negative effect, however, is that the actors' fees have decreased because the remuneration for the new media projects are not regulated by the Union, for two reasons:

- A) because there is no clear definition of what can be considered a new media product.³³ New Media is defined by SAG - AFTRA (the Artist's Union for Film, Television and Radio) as: "an independent and original production designed for a new entertainment environment that will be presented via the internet, cell phones or any other online platform".³⁴

- B) Because, at least when it comes to online commercials, the clients prefer amateur actors. On the one hand because they represent a cheaper labor force, on the other hand because the trend in the advertising market is exactly the opposite of what it used to be. If in the past marketing strategies were based on the principle of selectivity and exclusivity - a product or a service promoted by a star gave the buyer the illusion that his status was equal to the star's status if he were to use the same product or services - nowadays, on the contrary, the marketing strategies are based on the principle of inclusion and convenience - a product or a service promoted by an ordinary person - to which the buyer can identify - gives the buyer the reassurance that the product or the service works. As a result, not only the stars are no longer needed to validate the products/services for the potential buyers in order for them to purchase the product/service but even the regular actors are considered sometimes to "glam" to perform in commercials. Thus the Romanian have a serious competition in the amateur actors, who accept lower fees.

4. New contexts of affirmation

Actors can access, for free or at a certain cost, professional virtual spaces customized to promote and market performers. (Backstage, Stage 32, Acting showcase.com, Glamoirdias.com, etc.). They can also use social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn) to:

- a) create an audience/fan base.

In certain situations, in US, the online visibility of an actor plays an additional criteria in the casting process.³⁵ A large number of followers and fans theoretically mean a wider

³² <https://www.statista.com/statistics/250934/quarterly-number-of-netflix-streaming-subscribers-worldwide/>

³³ <https://www.sagaftra.org/using-new-media-contract>

³⁴ <https://www.sagaftra.org/search/what%20is%20new%20media>

³⁵ <http://brianmedavoy.com/future-of-media-means-for-acting-careers/>

audience, so sometimes casting it's a number's game.

In Romania, online popularity, although fashionable, has not yet become a determining factor in casting an actor.

b) interact with the audience/fans. Actors from both countries use social media consistently to connect and get feed-back from their public.

c) connect with the industry, to which, otherwise they have no or limited access. Nowadays the possibility of finding directors, producers, casting directors, etc. and subsequently establishing a communication with them is much more possible due to the virtual environment. In both countries this type of interaction is widely used, with the difference that in Romania Facebook and Instagram are the main tools utilized while in America Twitter and also Snapchat are also added to the pot.

d) become content creators. Most online social platforms are designed to encourage their users to become story tellers. And the digital era equally supported this trend. The current technology is cheaper and easier to use. Any actor with a smart phone can potentially make a movie. The case of the Duplass brothers is famous in this regard. The two created the short film *This is John*, in which Mark Duplass also played the main character. The material was filmed by the two brother's on their parents' video camera and the production cost was around 3\$ (the price of a digital mini-tape at the time). The film was selected in the official competition at Sundance in 2003 and practically launched the career of the two directors.

In Romania, the actor Florin Piersic Jr filmed almost without any financial resources *Eminescu versus Eminem*.

Currently, there are all kinds of companies specialized in promoting new –media materials on the internet (The Bit Screen, The New Venue, etc) and all kinds of venues (festivals) promoting web-series productions, One minute film productions, 48 hours movie productions etc,

5. Alternative education

These days in America there are a lot of online acting classes, public or private for amateurs, as well as all kind of on line services available for professional actors to prepare for an audition - from the accent reduction lessons to singing lessons, etc.

There are also many acting schools – licensed or not - that offer online acting programs and acting teachers - accredited or not - that offer online coaching for professional and amateur actors. The most notorious example is Kevin Spacey's Online Acting at Master Class³⁶.

In Romania, unlike the USA, there are no such services yet.

6. Different standards

In today's world due to the existence of on line services, acting training is accessible to all amateurs solely based on financial criteria, regardless of their acting potential. The positive effect is social inclusion (anybody of any gender, race, ethnicity, or nationality can participate). The negative effect is, however, the

de-professionalization of the craft, given that the academic training is no longer an absolute requirement for entering the market.

In U.S. there's a lot of flexibility when it comes to an actors background. Hollywood has a long tradition in fabricating stars out of amateur actors. Classical training is not a must for movie actors and the movie industry is more accessible for aspiring actors than the theater one. In Romania, with very few exceptions, no amateur actors became notorious. Here classical training is mandatory because the situation is quite the opposite. The theater industry is more accessible to an aspiring actor than the movie industry. Plus in Romania the on line training is non existent, thus the opportunities for aspiring actors are limited. And the private schools don't have a lot of credibility because they generally failed to produce professional successful actors.

7. New income sources

³⁶ Carson, Biz – *Kevin Spacey will teach you acting*, Revista Bussines Insider, Februarie 23, 2016

New media materials created by actors can generate income if

- a) once posted on the online channels (such as You Tube, Vine, etc) they get a lot of subscribers.
- b) a network or a studio is interesting in buying the material either to use it for distribution or to expand and exploit the concept behind the material.

Moreover, new media products have created a new type of job (practically a different take on the head scout position). The big studios and television network started to employ people specialized in internet scouting. These people's main activity is to navigate the internet and fish for good new media content.

Once again in US a lot of actors became content creators, in Romania, not so much.

8. Flexibility in the looks

Through CGI and Photoshop, digital editing was taken to the next level. Today, digital editing is not only used for special effects but also for what Hollywood calls "beauty-work" that allow aesthetic retouching of actors. In some cases, the procedures are used absolutely abusive: "I took the faces of the actresses and put them on more muscular bodies ... this thing happens all the time"³⁷, in others, the same procedures are absolutely life-saving: "digital placement of the actor's face on the body of another actor, when unexpected events happen, respectively the death of Brandon Lee during the filming of *Crow* in 1993"³⁸.

Due to financial limitations that most Romanian movie projects have, digital editing is not a common practice in the post-production process, unlike US. Therefore the demand for "beauty-work" being very small, Romania lacks the equipment and the professionals required for the job.

9. Flexibility in the age range

The aging or rejuvenation of an actor through special effects generated by the CGI are easier

to be made and look more convincing in this day and era then ever. Therefore the actual physical age of the actor is no longer such an important decision factor in the casting process. A striking example is Brad Pitt's in *The Strange Case of Benjamin Button*

Unlike Hollywood, Romania seldom uses special effects since the costs are very high and the genre of movies produced here rarely imply major physical transformations on the actor's part.

10. Diminished physical preparation for transformational role.

The physical transformation that certain roles require can be done nowadays with the use of technology. "Nowadays Christian Bale should not have lost 63 pounds for *The Machinist*. (...) Jack O'Connell, for example, did not have to lose weight to play an American soldier in a Japanese POW camp at Angeline Jolie's *Unbroken*. And *Homeland* simply hid Claire Danes' pregnancy by replacing her pregnant belly with a model's flat abdomen"³⁹.

Thus the physical training is not a must for an actor who plays a transformational role as it was back in the days. However in Hollywood though, looks play a key role in the actor's commercial value. Minimum stage combat and stunt skills are often required on the actor's part since numerous action movies are being produced here.

Most of the actors are fit. They work out on regular basis and some of them go through ongoing training to perfect different physical abilities. So, if asked to shape their body in a specific way, or to master certain skills they will find themselves on a familiar territory anyway.

In Romania, where the movie finances are so scarce, the technology to transform the physical age or appearance of an actor is rarely used due to the high costs. So the directors tend to type cast as much as possible. If a

³⁷ <https://www.businessinsider.com/digital-retouching-actors-in-movies-2016-4>

³⁸ <http://screen.oxfordjournals.org/> - Selcuk University on February 9, 2015

³⁹ <https://www.businessinsider.com/digital-retouching-actors-in-movies-2016-4#cgi-may-make-you-reconsider-an-actors-body-of-work-4>

physical transformation is still needed a director will ask the actor to go through a real physical preparation for the part. Two recent examples are those of Bogdan Dumitrache in Constantin Popescu's *Pororoca* and Alexandru Suciuc in Catalin Rotaru and Gabi Sarga's *Though Shall not kill*. Both actors lost 10 kg in order to play those parts.

11. Technological support in the creative process.

Apps like Linelearner that work as a substitute for a stage partner in the actor's process of line learning, Speak Easy Voice Recorder which actors use to record their auditions for voice over jobs or Actors Genie that provides last minute industry updates and important professional resources for the actors, as well as iPerform, an organizer which files all the actors' auditions proved to be very useful tools for the life of an actor. To my knowing these type of apps are not used by the Romanian actors, but they are extensively used by the American ones⁴⁰.

12. The appearance of "Vactors/cyberstars/synthespians"⁴¹

The CGI technology has allowed the introduction of virtual actors in films, mainly for the extras parts. So far, substantial roles with very small exceptions (*Simone*, *Congress* or *Ready Player One*) have not yet been played by virtual actors, but this possibility is very likely to happen in the future. There are already countless characters in the fantasy films - films that dominate at the present time the box office in US and the genre⁴² - that use real actors in combination with computer generated images. Also, there are quite a lot of digital clones of Hollywood stars from both past and present times. The first digital duplicates of deceased actors were those of Marilyn Monroe and Humphrey Bogart followed by Fred Astaire, Audrey Hepburn, Elvis Presley, George Burns, Bruce Lee. Actors

such as Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jim Carey, Michelle Pfeiffer, Denzel Washington, Gillian Anderson, David Duchovny and Kate Mugrew agreed to have their figures laser scanned to create digital computer models of them. The appearance of vactors, though financially efficient for the studios, is philologically worrying for most actors. With the exception of a few actors for whom the CGI has created new job offers (I refer to those actors whose physical characteristics were digitally processed in fantasy or live animation films, such as Andy Serkis in Gollum from *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, Ahmend Best in Jar Jar Binks from *Star Wars*, Ron Perlman in *HellBoy* from the eponymous films, etc.) for most of the actors, the synthespians might limit their job opportunities in the future. Again, the danger of virtual actors populating the Romanian cinema is a very remote prospect, due to obvious financial constraints.

Conclusions

Therefore although the new technologies offer many advantages and opportunities for the actors, the price to be paid is a certain disconnect on the artistic level, a limitation of the creative process during the casting process and a de - professionalization of the craft.

But perhaps the most important and concerning consequence is representing by the possibility of replacing the real life actors with virtual ones, a prospect which threatens the very existence of this profession, at least in the field of cinema.

Even if the future will be a mix of real and virtual actors, the social implications of this choice will be major and the long-term effects, although not yet known, will certainly exist.

Barbara Creed presents in the article "The cyberstar: digital pleasures and the end of the Unconscious" an interesting possibility raised by Sean Cubbit in his discussion of "the sublime times of special effects" - the possibility of "the special effects generating an

⁴⁰ <https://socialmediaweek.org/blog/2015/06/8-awesome-apps-actors/>

⁴¹ actori virtuali

⁴² <http://mentalfloss.com/article/581606/highest-grossing-movies-all-time-worldwide>

imagine of *impossible real*"⁴³ and consequently imposing a model of the ideal actor whose physical characteristics and aptitudes will be impossible to match by a real actor.

In the previous century the public identified with the celluloid stars. But the celluloid stars although displayed a counterfeit glamour, nevertheless were real people subjected to the same genetic, biological, psychological conditions and limitations as ordinary people experienced.

If in the future the audience will identify with the cyberstars whose traits are omnipotence and omnipresence - given by their immortal condition – their perception of reality and of themselves can be massively altered, especially when it comes to the young public - It is a common fact that teenagers and young adults are structurally predisposed to escape in their imagination, have absolutism tendencies and demiurgically manifestations.

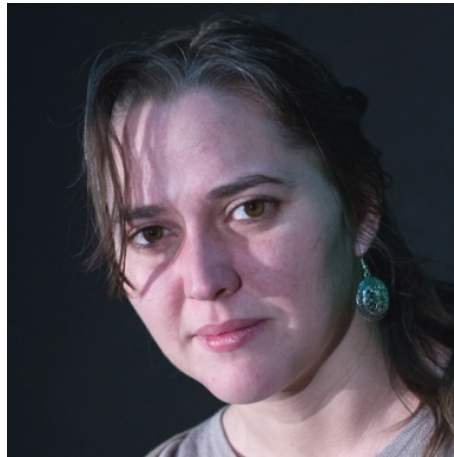
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⁴³ <http://screen.oxfordjournals.org/> - Selcuk University on February 9, 2015

The Nebulous Empire. The Magic of Blur and Shining

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Abstract:

This paper treats the aesthetics and the psychological effects of the nebulous images in both photography and film, the ways in which the human body and the spaces become part of an augmented reality at the moment that they are invested with the quality of shining or of being dispersed by other ethereal elements in translucent filmic compositions. When expanded by their luminous power, the figures and their surrounding areas design images of what we could call moments of enlightenment. The visibility of this kind of epiphanies is a matter of artistic vision that we aim to analyze in our paper.

Key words:

Nebula, augmented reality, translucent bodies, aura, negative image

Acknowledgements:

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“In the kingdom of imagination, everything that shines is a glance.”
(Bachelard, 1943: 210)

In cinematography, as well as in photography, when we come across images of an imprecise or vague consistency we observe that they hold the quality of intriguing us, making us wishful to see what hides beyond the hazy curtains of fog. Besides the psychological effect of fascination created by blurry images, we can discover a real pleasure caused by cloudy mediums, the joy of encountering the feeling of uncertainty which sets loose our imagination from the rigid outlines of reality. Moreover, seeing these images puts us in direct contact with dreams and the act of dreaming. Through their aesthetic nature, they summon the oneiric forces, causing the detachment from the daily monotony or any other signs of

reality. Furthermore, this kind of images have strong magical, even occult connotations. Reality seen through the visual filter offered by haze or any other types of blurring, has the power to transmit sensations from dream-like worlds, sensations that come from beyond the dullness of the common realm, where reality melts into the supernatural. In visual arts, diffusing the harsh outlines puts the viewer in direct contact with the surreal, and sometimes even with the ideal. For instance, in photography, the very same image captured with or without the filter of fog has an immediate psychological impact. Let us imagine this pond without the fog:



Figure 1: Ioan Daria, *Bless the Fog*, 2019

The immediate effect would be that of perceiving harmony within the composition, but that would lack the mystery provided by the mist that covers the lake. It is a known fact

that the Impressionist painters were drawn towards the blurry type images, which is why they often used the settings which involved water: to capture the unusual effects created

by the blend between water and air. The same thing happened in photography. Alfred Stieglitz and other impressionist photographers had an inclination towards images filtered by fog, mist or snowstorms. The work of Stieglitz consists of presenting New York in a diffused manner. The famous winters which consecrated him as an artist are marching exactly towards these images which cannot be perceived with clarity, thus providing a special kind of visual harmony. When the eye cannot receive clear information, reality becomes situated somewhere in the middle, making it possible to be understood one way or another. It might exist, or it might not. Maybe there is something else present in the image which cannot be seen, or maybe something is missing. This special space created through the power of diffusion is essential for inducing the viewer in a dream-like state. The artist leaves enough room for extra elements or for things that are missing, determining the viewer to create fantasies or fears, pulling him out of his mental comfort zone, and pushing him into a foggy world, where due to the lack of proper sight, he is forced to confront himself.

Gaston Bachelard made a beautiful presentation of imaginary weightlessness in his book *Air and Dreams*, whose subtitle is exactly an *Essay on the Imagination of Movement* in which he examines the mobility of images and "the immanence of the imaginative in the real, the continuous path from the real to the imaginative". (Bachelard, op. cit.: 11)

"One always wants imagination to be the faculty of forming images. While it is rather the faculty of distorting the images offered by perception, and is above all the faculty of liberating us from the first images, of changing images. If there is no change of images, unexpected union of images, there is no imagination, there is no imaginary action. If a present image does not refer to an absent image, if an occasional image does not result in a plethora of aberrant images, an explosion of images, there is no imagination. [...] The value

of an image is measured in the extent of its imaginary aura." (Bachelard, op. cit.: 7)

The perspective of dynamic images contributes to the idea that in the case of diffuse images, the outlines acquire a pulsation while the entire vision becomes flexible, consisting of fluid-looking elements. In the representation of fixe images, the traces left by the "moving" effect form nebulae in which the viewer can see latent possibilities of the image, parts that are not shown, but are still present. These areas of the image are right at the border between visible and invisible, and because they are redefined continuously by the process of observation, they provoke the viewer's creativity, just like in a dream.

"The dream is a cosmogony of an evening. Every night, the dreamer restarts the world. Any being who knows how to detach from the worries of the day, who knows how to give his reverie all the power of loneliness, will give his dream its cosmogonic function. [...] The cosmic dream, in the vagueness of sleep, possesses a kind of primitive nebula from which it forms countless shapes. While the stars [...] are the symbols of steadiness, the nebula, the milky way - to which a careful look should attribute the same steadiness - is, in the contemplation of an evening, the theme of endless deformations. [...] We could state, as a true postulate of material and dynamic imagination, the following sentence: "what is diffused is never seen in immobility." (ibid. : 225-226)"

For Bachelard, the diffusion of an image involves without a doubt the active movement of the elements, and not just a characteristic of the medium in which the image is being taken or seen. Therefore, the object of the image has to undergo a never-ending series of metamorphoses when it falls under diffusion. What is even more fascinating is the fact that our French writer believes that the diffusion is a part of the object, hence making a hint to the fact that reality itself has a certain degree of unclarity. However, for clarifying the context in which we will treat the image, I propose a

series of definitions with which we will operate. These were extracted from Oxford Dictionary and represent the generally accepted versions of the terms, as it follows:

NEBULOUS- adjective 1. In the form of a cloud or haze; hazy. 'a giant nebulous glow'; 2. (of a concept) vague or ill-defined. 'nebulous concepts like quality of life'

DIFFUSE -adjective 1. Spread out over a large area; not concentrated; 'the diffuse community which centered on the church' 'the light is more diffuse'; 2. Lacking clarity or conciseness. 'the second argument is more diffuse'

TRANSPARENT, -adjective 1. (of a material or article) allowing light to pass through so that objects behind can be distinctly seen. 'transparent blue water' 'fine transparent fabrics'

FLOU- adjective 1 softness, haziness, blurriness; also an adjective meaning foggy, fluffy, or indistinct.

BLURRY- adjective 1. Not clearly or distinctly visible or audible. 'video projectors provided extremely blurry images'; 1.1 Unable to perceive clear or sharp images.

'vision may be hazy or blurry for a few days after surgery' 'their eyes were blurry with tears'; 1.2 Perceived or remembered indistinctly. 'there's a very blurry line between art and advertising' 'my memories of him are blurry at best'

DISTORTION- adjective 1. The action of distorting or the state of being distorted. 'the virus causes distortion of the leaves' count noun 'deliberate distortions of pitch and timbre'; 2. The action of giving a misleading account or impression. 'we're fed up with the media's continuing distortion of our issues' (Romanian Oxford Living Dictionaries)

Applied to images, these terms work not only separately, but especially in correlation with each other. If the phenomenon of diffusion can

be discussed alongside with the faded structures and with the nebula or flou, the distortion works rather only partially with the term flou and fade, whereas the concept of transparency only involves them in some particular situations.

To illustrate the nebulous effect, which links almost all other definitions, we will give as examples a few cases in which it appears distinctly. The first is the 1968 photograph of Duane Michals, in which the viewer is confronted with a semi-spectral portrait.

According to the text written by the artist who defines the strange figure with a visible body and a nebulous face, the *Illuminated Man* corresponds to a higher stage of an enigmatic existence, at the border between the physical form and the invasion of the bodily plane by a powerful and dense mysterious light.

Duane Michals' skeptical attitude towards the reality considered to be veritable and towards using the means of photography to render it precisely, gave rise to a series of visual works in which the artist's searches illustrate phenomena that are far from the limits of perception, seen in a traditional manner. As he testifies, photographs of the physical appearances of things do not show reality. The world is composed of interacting reflections, and capturing them is highly unlikely. Photography is just the means by which the artist tries to explain his own experiences.

"How foolish of me to believe that it would be that easy. I had confused the appearance of trees and automobiles, and people with a reality itself, and believed that a photograph of these appearances to be a photograph of it. It is a melancholy truth that I will never be able to photograph it and can only fail. I am a reflection photographing other reflections within a reflection. To photograph reality is to photograph nothing." (The Observer Effect in Photography, 16.01.2012)

The illuminated man is one of the figures that appear in Michals' imagination in search of the truth about himself. This work precedes that of 1969, 'The Human Condition', in which the

artist extends his research on the nebula that penetrates and causes the human being to explode into a multitude of luminous particles with a dazzling center, similar to an image of a galaxy. The relativity of the actual physical appearance of human figures is, therefore, illustrated in this case by erasing the features of the face with light, but at the same time, strangely, preserving the rest of the physical qualities of the body. In the case of the photographic mini-sequence of 1969 (part of the series 'Real Dreams'), to which we will return to during our study, the luminous explosion is total and practically leads to the replacement of the photographed subject with a cosmic reverie. Strongly influenced by surrealist art, Michals works on the topic of disintegrating the human image through various methods, of which the light invasion of a bodily fragment is mainly related to the spiritual nature of his subjects. In 'The True Identity of Man' (1972), he manages to overlay the image from the neck down of the studied figure, intensifying the brightness in the last photo, entitled 'Man as God'. The intense white area of the character's body that embodies the human, corresponds to the 'burning' effect of the image. In photographic terms, the area where the image is overexposed is considered to be 'burnt'. In the case of Duane Michals's works in which the effect of overexposure appears, the burning can mean an internal combustion, determined by the evolution of the human spirit. It is interesting that Michals' play with the nebula and diffusion not only appears as a reflection of the interior that comes to contain the researched figures, but also as a luminous expanding background in other images. For instance, in Joseph Cornell's photograph (1972), the light appears as a devourer of the portrait and the space around it.

As in the first case, of the *Illuminated Man*, the figure of Joseph Cornell is presented by Michals in such a manner that his features are almost impossible to identify, this time due to the contre-jour technique. This generally involves photographing a subject that sits between the light source and the camera. Following the use of this technique, dark forms

of the subject are obtained, cut by strong contrasts of the illuminated frame.

In his book *The Image*, Jacques Aumont draws attention to another aspect of photography, of time made visible:

"The photographic device, of whatever kind, [...] consists in what the viewer knows: the photographic image has captured time in order to restore it to us. This refund is conventional, coded, and it will itself be highly variable depending on what the photograph has recorded: a 'duration' or what we call a 'moment'. [...]"

The photograph transmits to its spectator the time of the luminous event which it represents. The device ensures the transmission." (Aumont, 2003: 127)

In the case of Duane Michals, the diffuse appearance of the silhouette indicates the fact that the time of the event is longer, in accordance with the exposure of the photographic film. The interesting association between Aumont's remarks and the images of the American artist is one that may involve the idea of an unknown time of an action that is happening, or simply a time of presence and co-presence (of the model and photographer in the same space), since we don't exactly know the exposure time used, the exact opening of the aperture, the brightness of the lens, the luminosity of the described space, or the real time of the movements detectable in the image.

Most of the time, such photographs involve something with the effect of overexposure, burning, but they can respect the limits of a correct exposure, depending on the photographer's aesthetic intention. In Michals' work, Joseph Cornell is situated between two windows: the one shown in the photograph, and the one of the chosen frame. The light filtered through the window curtains carves a filiform silhouette (reminiscent of some of Joseph Koudelka's faded figures), of a reduced volume, in which the human body is almost sublimated. Without a visible reflection in the mirror, Joseph Cornell appears as a sketch,

rather than a portrait. As the artist himself states:

“Most portraits are what I call “stand and stare,” which everybody does. You stand and look in the camera. Then in another type of portrait, which I call “prose portrait,” rather than showing what somebody looks like, you try to give the atmosphere of who the person is. The idea is that you don’t necessarily show somebody.” (Saturdays Magazine, 20.03.2017)

The mutilation of body volume through an image, as well as the disassembly and reassembly, is a theme that has often been approached in photography and film by surrealists and Dadaists. We will meet with such sublimations of the figures in the subchapter of our thesis dedicated to evanescence and in the one dedicated to distortions.

Another example of a nebulous image is a frame from Maya Deren's 1951 film, *Ensemble for Somnambulists*.

In this experimental film, Deren imposes the aesthetics of the unfinished, of the open work, not only on the way he constructs the choreography, but also on the appearances of the dancers, who often appear in intermediate stages between materiality and luminous forms. The artist's editing techniques are used in such a way that a series of resulting images have a faded nature, and the bodies appear to have an interior nebula-like luminosity. The frame above is almost a photographic solarization, understood as partial veiling of the film during the development process and whose final appearance is rather that of a negative image.

After *Ritual* and *Transfigured Time*, Deren expanded her work into negative images. For example, her films from the early 1950s profoundly illustrate the impact of the Voodoo mythology. In *The Very Eye of Night*, the dancers float in plans of the black space. Released by the horizontal orbit, the vertical orbit and the gravity planes, the movement of the dancers and the room/camera becomes

four-dimensional. For a film workshop which he led for the Toronto Film Society in Canada in 1952, in *Ensemble for Somnambulists*, there were no plans, but a void of darkness. [...] Each “somnambulist” is multiplied, traveling through paradise, abyss, and inside the self. (Sullivan: 2)

Deren's dancers shine like moving celestial bodies. If we look closely at the image, it is topical also through the resemblance of this inner light of the body with that of a neon. More than half a century later, French director Leos Carax stages in his film ‘Holy Motors’ (2012), a dance of two electrically illuminated characters, as a meeting of two bodies like two galaxies. The twists of Carax's dancers resulting from their encounter produce a fluid mixing effect of the two forms signaled by a multitude of small light bulbs, until, at times, they create a new, uncertain, always moving shape. The nebulous character of the figures performing the two choreographies is related to the laws of a space that does not correspond to the known physical one, a space that is suspended in a sort of abyss. In both cases, the dark background is used to relativize the movements of the bodies, as well as their weight, in the perspective of a minimalist decor in which the traditional coordinates can be easily reversed. The lack of landmarks in the dark space, the abyss in which the protagonists seem to evolve, is reminiscent of the works of Yves Klein on the subject of the void, of which the most well-known is the photograph of the performance entitled ‘Leap into the void’ (1960). In the film, this leap is staged by the suicide of the character played by Kylie Minogue, who is thrown from the Samaritaine building, whose antagonistic decor has been considered by some critics a house of ghosts:

“It's huge and dark. [...] A gigantic hollow concrete ship, between ruin and splendor, the interior of the Samaritaine is, at night, plunged into an almost complete darkness, from which magnificently emerges the grand staircase which seems almost untouched and whose

successive flights draw a kind of rococo spaceship. Up there, powerful projectors send a diffuse light [...]. But this light does not get to the ground level. There, in the darkness, the ghosts move slowly.” (Slate, 4.10.2011)

It is known that Maya Deren and Leos Carax are both directors who operate in their films the most unusual transgressions of space, which they often present as being built on the logic of an accumulation of contrasting places through which their characters go through as if there existed a real continuity between them. Both relativize this dimension as much as possible, so that even the common differentiation between interior and exterior is questioned, opening up new territories for the perception of spatiality. In the case of the black background, Deren's dancers and Carax's characters appear as if suspended in a black box whose position is also relative. In the absence of concrete landmarks of the obscure locations, the void favors the movement of the bodies in an unconventional, dreamlike space, detached from the natural incidence of known

physical phenomena. In ‘Ensemble for Somnambulists’, the nebula of the dance performed by the ghost figures in the choreography of Maya Deren appears as suspended in an obscure setting, whose limits are not clear and which seem infinite, like the cosmic space. Carax also moves easily, with the help of video effects, the constellations of the bodies of the two characters from the real space into a virtual one, which appears, at first, as a non-space, so that he can then be transposed into a fluid reverie of the encounter between their avatars.

From a photographic and cinematographic point of view, the negative images and working with luminous, nebulous figures, opens the perspective of the abyssal space, in which the physical experience is doubled by the inner journey, with its strange, sometimes inexplicable episodes. Through this dark abyss, it becomes possible to explore the aspects of a human being, which we could define, in such cases, in the specific, proper way, as enlightenments.

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II. Cultural Studies
Romanian Vision

“Fire, burn the teacher”. Ioniță's initiation in Radu Jude's *Aferim!* on the tune of Anton Pann's *manea*

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Abstract

Whoever hears the official version of the song from *Aferim!* enjoys the music, but needs the historical social context of the time to understand what it is about. For those who are more attentive, "Burn the fire" is a song about an assumed educational failure. And, starting from here, we can see how this song gives the meaning of the initiation Constandin - Ioniță. We will try to document this initiation, the data that promises Ioniță a better society, but also the way in which the Jude-Lăzărescu scenario makes use of situational and verbal ambiguity. We note that the analyses of the film have so far debated the status of woman, servant and stranger. And these have been countless or misinterpreted, ignoring the socio-political codes of the 18th century.

Keywords: *Aferim!*, Radu Jude, Florin Lăzărescu, modernization, Anton Pann, sociology, script

The two protagonists' journey of initiation, representing two different generations, provides an opportunity to question the present and to see to what extent it is able to provide a better world for the young Ionita. Jude and Lăzărescu, the authors of the script, do not intend to provide certainties. Nor act like sociologists. Fiction is still fiction in the end and it starts from real data in order to develop a world of its own, in which symbols have their say at the expense of the elements of historical, social, and political reality. The

present attempt must be seen as a way of deciphering social codes, an adequate understanding, therefore, of the travel days of 1835, when captain Constandin sets off in search of his servant Carfin, but also as a deciphering of the art of the scriptwriters who keep the ambiguity as to how Romanian world should progress for Ioniță's good.

“COSTANDIN (sighing): Mă gândesc așa, Ioniță, o să ne pomenească oare, cu o vorbă bună, ipochimenii ce-o să trăiască peste o sută

sau două sute de ani? Zi, mă. [*I wonder, Ioniță, will the folk that will live in a hundred or two hundred years from now speak well of us? Come on, tell me.*]

IONIȚĂ: Nu știu, taicule. [*I don't know, father.*]

COSTANDIN: Eu cred că n-o să ne pomenească. N-o să se gîndească că noi le-am netezit drumul în viață. Sau o să se gîndească la noi și o să ne înjure de mamă. Poate.” (Scenariul *Aferim!*) [*I think they won't. They won't think it was we who paved the way for them in life. Or they will think of us and curse our mothers. Maybe.*] (*Aferim!*. “Script”)

Who is “the Greek”?

Let's start with the first part of the song: “Arză-l focul dascăl / Cum mă necăjește, / Umblă să mă-nvețe / Grecul pășărește / Tipto tiptis tipto tiptis / Tipto tiptis tipto tip / Ah! Ce foc pe mine! / Of! Ce supărare! / Să strig toata ziua / Tot în gura mare: / Tipto tiptis tipto tiptis / Tipto tiptis tipto tip.” [*Fire, burn the teacher / how he troubles me / Comes to teach me / The Greek leaves / Tipto tiptis tipto tiptis / Tipto tiptis tipto tip / Ah! How the fire burns! / Oh! What a pity! / To shout all day / Aloud: / Tipto tiptis tipto tiptis / Tipto tiptis tipto tip.*] (*Aferim!*. “Script”)

What reality is hidden behind these lines? Who is the “Greek”? We cannot explain otherwise, except by looking at the “Romanian Country, 1835” - as it is written in the opening credits. These are the years when the school and education introduced by the Phanariot rulers, depended on Greek teachers. The context is the époque of Anton Pann, the folk collector of this song.

The situation of education in “the Greek's” century. Just how literate should Ioniță be?

Education represents a small system (voyevodal schools or monasteries) and does not represent an essential criterion for access to administrative or political positions.

Institutional and mentality progress is slow. Between 1780 and 1800, “someone called Calinescu leaves abroad to study, is caught and punished with 26 stick hits at the soles.” (P. Cornea, 1972: 57)

Due to the need to train civil servants for the administration, the rulers of Moldovia and of the Romanian Country set up secondary and high school education in the Romanian language (Iasi, 1813, Gh. Asachi and, in Bucharest, 1818, Gheorghe Lazar), but this proved to be of limited success:

“Despite this enlightened mentality, education progressed slowly and without continuity. The reforms of 1748, those of 1776, those of 1813 and 1818 changed only to a small extent the character of the parochial and non-modern character of education. The Royal Academy of Bucharest had only 9 teachers in 1776 (...). In 1834, only 1129 Moldavians and only 3050 Romanians from Muntenia attended public schools. An equal number were schooled through preceptors and private schools” (V. Georgescu, 1993:128).

Education, practiced as an elitist form, becomes rather “dangerous”:

“The conflict between the intentions of the rulers and the wishes of the initiators, the schools become a forum for national proselytism, a center of gravity of the feeble Romanian intellectuality” (P. Cornea, 1972: 70).

The possible hierarchy-model in which one required literacy was the church, given the church rituals, but the practical purpose for the instruction of the staff was not found there either (see the demonstration in K. Hitchins-1998: 88-89). Even in the case of the literate ones, who are otherwise in a small number, the level of literacy does not exceed the first elementary classes.

A retrospective look at the biographies of Romanian writers (in the “Dictionary of 19th century writers”, 1979) shows that completing studies in the case of the pashoptists is rather an exception and a difficulty for the future of one's career. Such were the words used by

some who embraced a career as a result of book learning: "Look at what these boyar sons have become, Golescu who measures roads and doctor Kretulescu, two merchants said, who aspire to become boyars" (C. Vintilă-Ghițulescu, 2013: 94).

In short, the times do not require of Constandin or Ionita to have a special education, it all depends on Ionita's will to get out of the shadow of his father. And the same situation can be found in the military career, for which Constandin "prepares" Ionita.

If Constandin was required to know a little Greek and proves that he knows some Turkish, Ioniță has a future in Romanian. Anton Pann and the "Romanianization" of the official language

All this superficial learning in the Romanian countries was acquired in Greek. The French model was taken over by the Phanariot rulers, but the use of the mother tongue is limited to the chancellery and to the church. The church witnesses some processes of renewal (Ciobanu, 1974: 317-322, 327-328), among which the "Romanianization" of the devotional texts. They had to be translated - printed from Greek / Slavonic (Cuza would impose the obligation to use the Romanian language in the liturgy since February 15, 1863), and the author of the song about the Greek teacher represents an example of Romanianizing devotional texts.

Prior to 1821, together with Hieromonk Macarie and the Protopsaltis Grigorie of the Metropolitan Church, Anton Pann was part of the commission that aimed to translate the liturgical songs into Romanian. Indeed, the Commission dissipated after Vladimirescu's Revolution, but Anton Pann worked long enough to understand the need / tendency to renew the church. Gh. Ciobanu claims that the Romanianization of these works meant adaptation both at the level of the texts and at the level of the musical method.

There is an inventory of classifications by which Anton Pann labels these adaptations of words and music: "processed", "compiled", "translated", "interpreted", "composed", "Romanianized". Anton Pann translated and

composed absolutely all the necessary devotional songs - something nobody did after that." (Ciobanu, 1974: 322) In other words, he adapted the texts to the word order in Romanian, to the musicality of the Romanian words and its preference for certain intervals, for a certain structuring of the song and the rhythm:

"Insofar the writer of an introduction to a book would be wrong, if he were to say earth instead of the almighty sky, mourning instead of humility and joy; the translator of a song would use someone else's melody instead." (Anton Pann - Bazul teoretic, apud Ciobanu, 1974:319)

Anton Pann has also achieved something else in his Romanianization efforts. This fact is reflected in Constandin's songs from *Aferim!*. Anton Pann studies in the Bucharest of 1816 alongside Petre Efesiul "the new method" of the psaltic transcription of Agapie Paliermu of Chios, perfected by Grigorios Protopsalti, Hourmouzios Hartophilaxant and Hrisant de Mandit. Petre Efesiul teaches Anton Pann the method that would become a great rule of 19th century musical art and which is still valid today. The new system consists in simplifying the notation, which provided too many markers, and in establishing the rhythm of the songs and the systemization of the scales (Mateescu, 1981: 38-39).

As Ciobanu emphasizes: "But the contribution of Anton Pann does not stop here. ... Anton Pann is the first of us to print the first hymns in the "sintomon" irmologic style, as it is practiced today. All those who followed his method did nothing but imitate him closely." In the work entitled *Heruvico-Chinonicar* (1847), Anton Pann makes a call for the use of the Romanian language and the new method of reading the song:

„Cântă, măi frate române, pe graiul și limba ta și lasă cele străine ei de a și le cânta.

Cântă să-nțelegi și însuți și câți la tine ascult, Cinstește ca fiecare limba și neamu-ți mai mult.

Nu fi în țară-ți ca unul din nemernici, venetici,

Ca când nu știi românește și-n limba care poți zici..."

[Sing, Romanian brother, in your tongue and language
and leave aside what is foreign.
Sing and understand so that others may listen,
Praise your language and fellow countrymen more,
Don't be like a stranger in your own country,
As if you don't know Romanian and use another language...] (Aferim!. "Script")

We cannot know for certain whether Constandin benefited from Anton Pann's works or not, but what is certain is that *Aferim!*'s script writers did, and that these texts are considered a model for today's musical interpretations, given the successful adaptations of Romanian and of transcription for the stage:

"Ah! Ce bucurie
Când văd pe câmpie,
Mi se-arată mie:
Căprioare mănătoare,
Prepelite zburătoare,
Păsărele cântătoare,
Ce mă chem la vânătoare."

["Oh! What joy
When I see on the plain,
In front of me:
Grazing deer,
Flying quails,
Singing birdies,
Biding me to hunt."] (Aferim!. "Script")

The culture of Ioniță's society will be overwhelmingly oral

As learning was considered painstaking, the oral culture is the reality of 19th century Romania, given the low profitability and the slow reform of the education. There are moments in *Aferim!* when written documents are required. For example, the brief scene in which Iordache promises a document that justifies Constandin's work towards the government. There are also bargains for the

sale of slaves at the fair. But much more eloquent than the value of written papers is the negotiation between the tax collectors:

"ZAPCIUL (The Captain)

Ce căutați voi aci? [*What are you doing here?*]

COSTANDIN

Ziua bună. Eu sînt subocîrmuitorul Costandin sin Gheorghe din plasa Uzun, sud Ialomița. El e feciorul meu, dorobanț, care mă ajută. [Good day to you. My name is assistant governor Constandin of Gheorghe from Uzun, south of Ialomita. He is my son, a gendarme, who is helping me.]

ZAPCIUL (The Captain)

Și ce alișveriș aveți aci? [*And what business brings you here?*]

COSTANDIN

Căutăm un țigan fugit de la dumnealui, boierul Iordache Cîndescu." [*We're looking for a gypsy who ran away from boyar Iordache Cîndescu.*] (Aferim!. "Script")

This is the moment Constandin is being searched for documents, it is the sign of the new times, and it is the evidence that captain Constandin is a modern servant. A simple gesture like this gives the measure of a better future for Ioniță. The document means placing society on a predictable line, the document meaning greater trust between the members of the community and implicitly the trust in modern institutions, including that of Justice. But the scene is important for Ioniță's "future". Disappointment: the small negotiation along with the bribe function much more effectively than "paper":

COSTANDIN

Am o vorbă cu mata. Cei doi se retrag cîțiva metri, lîngă un copac. Ioniță se apropie și el. [*May I have a word with you? The two men take a few steps back, near a tree. Ionita approaches too.*]

ZAPCIUL (The Captain)

Zi. [Tell me.]

COSTANDIN

Cum să facem să ne înțelegem și noi?
[How can we arrive at an understanding?]

ZAPCIUL

Păi zi mata. [You tell me]

COSTANDIN

Îți dau doi taleri și mă lași să-l caut. [I'll give you two guineas and you'll let me look for him]

ZAPCIUL (The Captain)

Știu și eu, bei-mu... Trăim vremuri grele. A năvălit și muscalii peste noi, nu e ușor. [*I don't know ... These are hard times. Russians have attacked us, it's not easy.*]

COSTANDIN

Și cât ai vrea? [*And how much would you like?*]

ZAPCIUL (The Captain)

Îmi dai taleri patru, peșingea pe ipîngea, și-ți spui și unde găsești cioara. [*Give me three guineas and I'll tell you where the gypsy is*] (Aferim!, "Script")

A synthesis regarding "paper identity" is done by C. Vintilă- Ghițulescu (2013:210). The Organic Statutes impose the establishing of statistical records. This manner of organizing in an institutionalized Western system brought IDs and property documents to the fore. However, "paper identity" remains a curiosity of nineteenth century Romania. Classifying and certificates of all kinds spark suspicion. This represented a form of bypassing new taxes. "Witnesses and the village are more than enough as far as a ritual is concerned" (Vintilă- Ghițulescu:210). This happens in towns as well, given the small population and type of communities, especially rural in nature.

From the point of view of the initiation, the manner in which Constandin solves the situation is an example for his son, Ionita. Oral negotiation is something that is passed on to Ionita. "Until 1865, when it was adopted by the Civil Code, documents about citizenship status do not have the continuity and periodicity imposed by the natural rhythm of births, marriages and deaths." (C. Vintilă-Ghițulescu, 2013:210). Written documents are one of the instruments through which Ionita tries to create a future for him based on objectivity.

Despite Ionita's attempts to impose modern methods, Constandin relies on his own:

"COSTANDIN

(irritated)

Nu mă supăr, dar balbuțești ca un prost. Totdeauna îmi fuți vorba și nu mă lași să isprăvesc... Eu știu cel mai bine cum să-l găsim. Nu mă iau io după muscă, să mă ducă la căcat. Pornim incolo!

[I don't mind, but you are faltering like a fool. You always alter what I say and you never let me finish... I know the best way to find him. I don't follow the fly, to lead me to the shit. Let's go that way!]

IONIȚĂ

Da. [Yes]

COSTANDIN

(angry)

Cîrcîrăgești mereu ca un nărod. [*You talk like a fool*] (Aferim!, "Script")

Perhaps the lack of trust in paperwork, which also meant a lack of trust in modern Institutions would have brought the servant Carfin before a trial which might have given him a chance, but young Ioniță pleads for this chance in vain.

In what alphabet could the documents be written in? Codifying spoken language

Written culture requires above all a standardization of language for the sake of efficiency. In 1859, it was still written in a transition alphabet (letters – both Cyrillic and Latin), the Romanian language was not codified, it was not able to express the realities of the time in writing. It was necessary to have a full experience of the "transcription" from the oral in writing so that only after 1880 did the Romanian Academy decide to impose Romanian as spoken in Muntenia as an official referential system and implicitly the recognition of the success of finding the right signs for this diverse reality. However, Ioniță will know the personalization-searches of this written language. If Anton Pann manages to impose his experiences on the audience that "buys" his books, the main newspapers of the

time, C.A. Rosetti and I.H. Rădulescu, will each have their own "language" for writing journalistic texts, which they will perpetuate after 1859, constantly disagreeing with society's rules. And the audience in front of this alphabet would still encounter difficulties as late as 1878, such as Caragiale's characters, Jupân Dumitrache, a lumberjack, captain in the civic guard and Nae Ipingscu, officer and political friend of the captain. Ioniță will enter into a cross-cultural dialogue with Jupân Dumitrache. Will he at least turn into an Ipingscu?

"IPINGESCU (finding his words): "... A manca... sfânta Constituțiune..." [*To eat... the holy Constitution*]

JUPÂN DUMITRACHE (a bit sleepy): Adică, cum s-o mănânce? [*What do you mean, to eat it?*]

IPINGESCU: Stai să vei... că spune el... "Sfânta Constituțiune, și mai ales cei din masa poporului..." [*Wait and see... "The Holy Constitution, and especially the folk..."*]

JUPÂN DUMITRACHE (unedified): E scris adânc. [*That's deep.*]

IPINGESCU: Ba nu-i adânc deloc. Nu pricepi? Vezi cum vine vorba lui: să nu mai mănânce nimeni din sudoarea bunioară a unuia ca mine și ca dumneata, care suntem din popor; adică să șază numai poporul la masă, că el e stăpân." (Caragiale, 2014: 56) [*It's not deep at all. Don't you understand? Check out hat he says: nobody should eat out of the sweat of someone like me or you, who belong to the people; therefore, only the folk should have a seat at the table, as he is the master.*] (Caragiale, 2014: 56)

Popular culture with Constandin and Ioniță

In *Aferim!*, Constandin sings at different intervals, we may state that these metaphorically mark the end of some scenes/ moments of searching:

"COSTANDIN

Ploscuța mea, iubit vas
Pasăre cu dulce glas
Eu la gură te ridic,
Tu îmi cântă: coglic!coglic!"

[My flask, beloved one
Sweet-singing bird
I raise you to my lips
And you sing to me: oy, oy!]

"Puțin mai târziu, Costandin stă întins și cântă vesel, amețit de rachiu, în timp ce Ioniță se joacă cu jarul rămas de la foc. [A little later, Constandin is lying down and is singing happily, drunk on brandy, as Ioniță is playing with the embers left over from the fire.]

COSTANDIN

O să mor, ah, o să mor
Fără nici un ajutor.
N-am pe nimeni nicăiri
Să-mi dea ranii lecuiri.
Vedeți trai rău și trudit
Amărit și dosădit.
Numai unii cu noroc
Și alții să ard în foc."

[I'm going to die, oh, die
Without any help.
I have nobody anywhere
To soothe my wound.
I've lived a bad and harsh life
I'm wretched and miserable.
Only some have luck
The rest can burn.] (*Aferim!*, "Script")

But there is also a long dialogue about Ionita's culture, started by the priest with the story of the giant Jews:

PREOTUL [THE PRIEST]

Înainte să-i facă pe oameni, Dumnezeu a făcut o încercare și i-a făcut pe jidovii uriași. Niște uriași răi și urâți. Când a priceput Dumnezeu că a greșit, i-a făcut praf și pulbere. La Sodoma. A mai lăsat doar câțiva așa, de prăsilă și i-a făcut pe protopărinții noștri, pe Adam și Eva. Dar jidovii uriași care a rămas s-a înmulțit, s-au

făcut din ce în ce mai mici, dar s-au înmulțit. Ei e ovreii noștri de azi. Jidovii.

[Before God made man, He tried to make giant Jews. Some bad and ugly ones. When God realized He made a mistake, He turned them to ashes. At Sodoma. He left a few alive and made our protoparents, Adam and Eve. But the giant Jews who remained multiplied and became smaller and smaller, but their number grew. And here they are, the Jews of today.] (Aferim!, "Script")

The dialogue regarding general knowledge is continued by Costandin starting from the issue of the ends of the earth:

COSTANDIN

Nu e cum ziceai, Ioniță. Poți să mergi pînă cînd mori că n-ajungi la capătul pămîntului. [*It's not like you said, Ionita. You can walk until you die and you still won't reach the ends of the earth*].

IONIȚĂ

Nouă așa ne-a zis la biserica părintele, că pămîntul se termină, nu e fără de sfîrșit. [*This is what the priest told us at church, that the earth has an end, it is not endless*].

COSTANDIN

Fii, bre, om cuminte. Cum să fie așa? Numai un nerod te-a învățat pe tine acolo. [*Settle down. How can it be so? Only a fool would teach that*].

IONIȚĂ

Popa Duhu ne-a spus că toate lucrurile are un capăt și un sfîrșit, în afară de Dumnezeu, care n-are nici început, nici sfîrșit. Ce, nu e așa că pămîntul are sfîrșit? Și cînd se termină nu e așa, un hău mare? [*Father Duhu told us that all things have a beginning and an end, except God, who has neither beginning, nor end. What, isn't it true that the earth has an end? And when it ends, it's not a big chasm?*]

Zapciul îl privește lung, ca trezit din somn. [The captain takes a good look at him, as if he had awoken from his sleep].

COSTANDIN

Nu știu, mă, lasă-mă. Nu mă interesează. [*I don't know, let me be. I don't care.*]

Costandin continuă să privească în gol, muncit de gînduri. [Constandin continues to stare into the void, tormented by his thoughts.] (Aferim!, "Script")

All these moments (songs and dialogues about the beginning and the ends of the earth) are part of what we call today the popular culture in which we also include popularization literature. Caragiale considered some of the Anton Pann's cultural products, sung as we have seen in *Aferim!*, to be "orduri" [trash]:

"Our famous poet Anton Pann has published alongside so many admirable original works and translations a collection of popular songs and poems of his time. It's a sad heritage, especially as far as the poetic side is concerned. In this pile of literary thrash, of the testimonies of imbecility of an era, rare honest examples may still be found..." (1896, reproduced in Caragiale: 2001: 565-568).

What Caragiale labels "trash" is actually the culture of the époque, but more importantly, it symbolically expresses the aspiration to grasp something about one's world.

Pann's goals (from the readers that include the songs) and Costandin's perplexity are explained by Nicolae Manolescu:

"In fact, Anton Pann is the most characteristic poet for extending the old spirit in a time that is abandoning it little by little. He is the preserver of this spirit and the anthologist of the productions that illustrated it. (...) Eliade sensed the change. What he did not foresee is the fact that, although the intellectual elite now adopts Romanticism and rejects the erotic songs in the outdated manner of Alecu Viscărescu and Conachi, these continue to satisfy a large mass of urban readers, in particular, those belonging to the burgeoning small bourgeoisie who still find them deliciously dense. The proof is provided by Anton Pann, as much self-taught as Mumuleanu, a man of spirit, but with a modest

culture, not even a foreign language speaker, and who begins to collect and make available to craftsmen, officials, church singers, townsfolk, the old literary productions. These are the paying subscribers of the *Erotocritic* of 1837, the readers of the special poems of 1831, of the hospital of love from 1850. (...) As it turns out, Pann has no idea that literature has changed radically in those decades, and we don't know if he was sensitive to what was being written at that time, as he was content to first of all popularize fashionable literature. (...)” (N. Manolescu, 1990:114).

Of course, Ioniță's insisting that Carfin be saved comes from the fact that he sees the world differently, the earth as round. He sees an end of the world from which you can come back. Implicitly, you can act as you wish, but you will come back and be judged for your deeds. Not just by God, but by the Justice system as well.

Constandin sides with the Phanariots, Ioniță with the French. The profile of boyar Iordache

Constandin was in trouble. Between 1711 and 1821 "75 throne changes take place in Wallachia, as 31 rulers from eleven families ascend to the throne" (N. Djuvara, 2006: 35). Of course, one must not forget the frequent Balkan Wars and the imposition of duality by the Ottoman Empire, as a suzerain power, as well as the Tsarist Empire, a protective power, at the head of Wallachia. Finally, the political influence in Wallachia is complemented by a symbolic conquest, the one that came from France. The French Revolution of 1789, then the Napoleonic Era, from the Consulate to the Empire, completed in 1812, led to the strengthening of the prestige of the bourgeoisie and its Enlightenment ideas.

All these political changes are reflected in the configuration of Power, but also at the level of the economic and social profile within Wallachia. The profit obtained from land transactions or agricultural products is invested in maintaining the individual in the political hierarchy. The fusion of economic and political factors will block the formation and

ascension of an authentic middle class until the mid-19th century. In this sense, I.C. Filliti accepts the existence of a pseudo-bourgeoisie, the adaptation of the "bourgeois forms" of civilization in the absence of the type of society capable of supporting them". M. Kogălniceanu, however, is much more trenchant: "The bourgeoisie, meaning the middle class, the most powerful group of a state, is non-existent" (in A.F. Platon, 1997: 264-265).

Initially, in the history of Wallachia, the financial capital from land transactions "dictated" the rule and influence in the decision area. The Phanariot regime preserves the meaning of the investment, but diversifies the products of "representation and identification" (C. Vintilă-Ghițulescu, 2013: 28). V. Georgescu (1993: 100) explains this process in detail. If the dictatorship was historically linked to the military reward, after the 1739 reform of Constantin Mavrocordat, the administration became "a simple rank not bound by the estate, nor by the estate, but only by the will of the gentleman, who granted it to his liking. Thus, anyone who enjoyed the favor of the ruler, whether he held a position or not, whether he owned or inherited a property, could become a boyar. Through this reform, the Phanariots made a very useful tool for controlling the landed nobility, forcing it to enter into its graces in order to maintain its social status" (Georgescu, 1993: 100).

The diversity of prestigious marks does not change the rule of the financial-political game:

"The absence of ranks, the absence of a valued hierarchy also valid in the plane of social visibility is also reflected in the pursuit of titles, decorations, girdles, diplomas. Romanians love decorations, titles, especially when offered by a foreign power" (C. Vintilă-Ghițulescu, 2013: 47).

Moreover, the reformation in the bourgeois institutional sense (impersonalization and efficiency), tested by the Organic Statutes, would become yet another occasion for personalization of a relatively small number of decision-making positions (C. Vintilă-Ghițulescu, 2013: 41), the disputes during

Prince Sturdza's time were among more than 800 rank-loving boyars, who fought for only 30-40 posts). This conservative tendency would create internal disputes, between the meritocracy and the new rich, between natives and foreigners, arbitrated by the European political powers. Constandin is aware of these things. Boyar Iordache is far more powerful at his court in Ialomița than he is, a mere servant to the ruling prince. In consequence, Constandin is humble, defending the position and conservatism of boyar Iordache. Unfortunately, as we have shown, the "better" world will resist renewal, even after Carol I (1866), when Constandin's son, should we make brief calculus, becomes a man of 40 (if we count the year 1835 as the time when Ioniță was 17-19).

What social status do Constandin and Ioniță have?

"COSTANDIN

Fir-ar el al dracu de meșteșug nenorocit. Uite cum ne tîrîm și sîntem dați prin pîrlitură. Asta e viață dă cîine, Ioniță, nu dă om. Ostenim și alergăm ca niște jigăanii pentru o bucată de mămăligă.

[To hell with this damn job. Look at us, how we struggle. This is a dog's life, Ionita, not a man's life. We sweat and run like brutes for a little polenta]

IONIȚĂ

Da. [Yes.]

COSTANDIN

Dar nici dacă eram țărani nu ne era mai bine, nu? [But if we were peasants it wouldn't have been better, right?]

IONIȚĂ

Nu, bre, era mai rău. [No, I would have been worse.]

COSTANDIN

Da. Of, dacă eram și eu mai tînăr, eram la armata regulată acu. Pe Marcu l-a luat, că are cinci ani mai puțin ca mine. Ehe, asta mi-au fost soarta, că nu sunt vremile sub cîrma omului, ci bietul om sub cîrma vremii... Dar

dacă prindeam și eu armata asta nouă făcută de muscali...

[Yes. Oh, if I were younger, I would be in the regular army now. They let Marcu join because he is five years younger than me. This was my fate, as man is not at the helm, fate is at the helm of man... But if I could have joined this new army led by Russians...]

IONIȚĂ

Și acuma nu te primește? [And now they won't let you join?]

COSTANDIN

Nu, lua-i-ar dracu să-i ia... Dar tu, dacă înveți toate iușchiuzarlîcurile și marafeturile de zapciu de la mine și dacă ești dorobanț dă ispravă, te bag la armată și pînă la treizeci de ani ajungi polcovnic, o să vezi. Că ești plin de foc și de mîndrețe. Dar ești și putoare..."

[No, to hell with them ... But if you learn all the tricks of the trade from a captain like me and if you are a good gendarme, I'll help you get into the army and before you reach thirty you'll become a colonel, you'll see. You are full of enthusiasm and pride. But you're also lazy...] (Aferim!. "Script")

The appeal to be hard-working is not enough for Ionita. Nineteenth-century society does not offer truly meritocratic system of social ascension, despite the promises of the Organic Statutes. "The censorship" applied to social hierarchy appears to be portrayed in these terms:

"The four main social strata – the boyars, the clergy, middle class townsfolk and the peasantry – were distinguished from one another through the political, economic and social privileges which set each other apart from the rest (...). Social exclusivism was manifested through marriage, which remained an association between ranks and equal orders. The discrimination between strata was expressed through titles, dress and property, one's way of using the mother tongue, through the attitude towards some foreign languages and cultures, especially Greek and French" (K. Hitchins, 1998:81).

K. Hitchins continues his analysis, demonstrating that climbing up the predominant social ladder of the époque, besides that of the Phanariot system of money exchange, is represented by two other forms that serve the utility of the époque: the administration of estates and the army, both bringing investment capital and political promotion. The number of estates held, a requirement for those living in the Capital, given the frequent changes at the level of the political Power, among other reasons, has led to bestowing the exploiting of wealth to leaseholders. On the other hand, the wars of the nineteenth century created the possibility of financially rewarding the participants in the army, which allowed them to buy titles or estates and to integrate themselves into the political system of the époque. The example given by Costandin is that of Tudor Vladimirescu:

COSTANDIN

Băgam noi spaima în ei, împuşcându-I şi omorându-i ca pe nişte dobitoace. De, eram tineri şi nebuni, eram şi eu lefegiu, altă putere aveam... Şi toate muierile mă iubea, aveam prin toate satele câte o posadnică. Dar vezi să nu-i spui lui mă-ta. [*We used to put fear into them, shoot and kill them like animals. What can you do, we were young and crazy, I was a mercenary, I used to have more power... All the women loved me, I had a love in every village. But don't tell your mother.*]

IONIŢĂ

Nu-i spun, bre. [*I won't.*]

COSTANDIN

Aşa. Eşti băiat mare de-acu. Că o apucă zulia, ştii cum e ea. [*Alright. You're a man now. She might go nuts, you know how she is.*]

Costandin takes a mouthful of wine from the jug.

COSTANDIN

E-he, a trecut viaţa... Vorba aia:

În zadar venim în lume,

în zadar trăim pă lume,

În zadar ne străduim,
în zadar ne chipuim.
Să dobândim toate-n lume,
Cînd nimic luăm din lume.
Toate vin, toate să duc,
Toate trec într-un minut.

[Life has passed... You know how they say:
In vain we come into this world,
In vain we live in this world,
In vain we struggle,
In vain we imagine
That we'll gain all there is,
When in fact we take nothing with us.
All come, all go,
All pass in a minute.] (Aferim!. "Script")

But Tudor Vladimirescu is the result of a double pragmatic equation. Employed by a boyar, Glogoveanu, Tudor Vladimirescu chose to join the rank of the *panduri*, participating in the Russian-Turkish War of 1806–1812. Between 1806 – 1820, by means of influence and financial capital, he manages to obtain and maintain the public office of head of a brigade of a mountain district. Influenced by the reformist ideas of the époque, but especially by the camp of the resenting boyars, Tudor Vladimirescu would lead a military campaign to Bucharest, which is in fact a quixotic act. The changing of landed rulers does not lead to change at the level of social structure. The defeat of Vladimirescu's social movement brings about the duality of deciding powers: Ottoman –Tzarist and the époque of Organic Statutes.

C. Vintilă - Ghiţulescu shows that these represent the first reconceptualization, but also the first failure of the administrative reform: „...when it came down to occupying the most important jobs in a state, boyars and their sons had priority. The Organic Statutes did little to change this situation, introducing only the principle of merit, which should have launched a professional competition within the order of the boyars.” (C. Vintilă- Ghiţulescu: 62); However, when there was talk of “promotion or being chosen and appointed into an important public office, the ruler has full power, as candidates are chosen only from

the boyars" (...) (C. Vintilă-Ghițulescu:63). Practically, the reorganized boyars of 1835, in Moldavia, and in 1837, in Wallachia, ranks became public offices, which would perpetuate its own system under the guise of modernity, while leaseholders and military men would follow the same pattern of the époque.

Let us take the modernizers as an example. In the first generation, the journalist is a clerk of the political Power (newspaper editor or professor in a ruler-sponsored school), as was the case of I.H. Rădulescu and Gh. Asachi. After 1848, the journalist will stick to national social practices and not to the Organic Statutes. He would infiltrate the official hierarchy, obtaining state-funded jobs "on recommendation". The newspaper, until the Union of the Principalities, did not offer him any symbolic status (social status, independence) or financial aid (a wage etc.):

„Când a mâncat cineva vreodată pâine cu autorlâcul (autorul) unde se vorbește limba românească, afară numai dacă nu va fi hotărât a se face și cerșător.” [“If someone ate bread with the author where Romanian is spoken, except he hadn’t made up his mind and became a beggar”] (I.H. Rădulescu, citat de P. Cornea, 1972:452).

This is how the journalist’s siding with censorship could be explained, as C. Negruzzi and Gh. Asachi held jobs as censors in 1848, having a moderate or even opposing position to the revolutionary act. In fact, the majority of the prestigious names of the 1848 Revolution were part of the social and political hierarchy of the time:

“After 1830, the criticisms brought against the social order and of the political system seem to lose their amplitude, tending to avoid directly addressing the shortcomings and blunt advertising forms... Of course, the period of the Organic Statutes needed the energies instead of refusing them, as the former period. Intellectuals are called upon to actively participate in the great battle for Enlightenment” (P. Cornea-1972: 419).

One could also add Mihail Kogălniceanu, Al. I. Cuza and V. Alecsandri to the list of intellectuals from this period. They are included into the decision-making system of the ruler Grigore Alexandru Ghica. This “official” status, more so than the editing of newspapers, created the access to the consultative meetings (called *Divanurile ad-hoc*) and, subsequently, to the success of the Union of the Principalities. There is here, a gist in the song, which defines the times that await Ioniță:

“Acuș trag cu pușca,
Le pun la pământ
Și eu trag ca tine,
Dar eu trag în vânt.”

[Soon I’ll shoot my gun,
I’ll put them to the ground
I’m shooting like you,
But shooting in the wind.] (Aferim!. “Script”)

Conclusion on the character Carfin

Carfin is caught by Constandin and Ioniță and judged by Iordache, marking the moment of clarification between father and son. Should you be worthy, Constandin seems to highlight, you will arrive at this scenario of compromise. Both will serve the state. The father is a servant of the state, but is actually a servant to the one who pays him money. The son will likely enroll into the army, an institution of modernity, but which will subsume the mentalities of this conservative world. Constandin tries, but fails, to oppose the ancient rule of “an eye for an eye”, but it is Iordache, the all-powerful one, who makes the rules. Ioniță hopes that a more objective Justice/Institution would prevail, that would also take facts into account, not just hurt egos, a justice driven away from the whims of the all-powerful. Constandin believes obedience to be the solution, while Ioniță looks towards a possible solution in a double Justice: personal judgment and exculpation by the institution per se.

Wrapped in chains, slave Carfin makes them entertain doubts regarding the inferiority of

Jews, gypsy slaves and the decisive argument stems from the story of Carfin's journey:

"CARFIN

Aşa-i, stăpîne, dar odată am avut viaţă bună şi eu. [*That's right, master, but I used to have a better life before.*]

COSTANDIN

Cînd asta, bă? [*When was that?*]

CARFIN

Păi cînd am fost rob la vornicul Dimitrie Bibescu, în politia Bucureştilor şi, după ce a murit dumnealui, la vornicul Mihalache Manu şi la cocoana Smaranda Văcărescu. [*Well, when I used to be slave to his highness Dimitrie Bibescu, in the jurisdiction of Bucharest and, after he died, I worked for his highness Mihalache Manu and Lady Smaranda Vacarescu.*]

COSTANDIN

Mincinos mai eşti, ȱigane. [*You're suck a liar, you gypsy.*]

CARFIN

Mă jur, să-mi crape ochii, na! [*I swear on my eyes, there you go!*]

(bragging)

Îngrijeam de caii boierului... Şi-am fost cu el şi la Paris, şi la Lipsca. Şi la Viena... Eu am văzut lumea. [*I used to look after the boyar's horses... And I went with him to Paris and Leipzig. And Vienna... I've seen the world.*]

IONIŢĂ

Şi cum e lumea, Carfine? [*And how's the world like, Carfin?*]

CARFIN

Mare şi frumoasă. Nu ca la noi. [*Grand and beautiful. Not like it is here.*]

COSTANDIN

Uite că ştie ȱiganul ce-i şofranul! [*Don't cast your pearls before swine!*]

IONIŢĂ

Zi şi mie cum e Viena? Că eu, drept să spun, n-am ieşit din plasa noastră decît cînd a avut taica treabă. [*Tell me, how's Vienna like? I, to be fair, I only left our borough when my father had some business.*]

CARFIN

E aşa... Nu ştiu cum să zic... Ca vreo trei ȱîrguri laolaltă numai cu palate în loc de căşi.

[*It's like... I don't know how to describe it... Like three towns put together with palaces instead of houses.*]

IONIŢĂ

Da' Lipsca? [*What about Leipzig?*]

CARFIN

Lipsca e mai urîtă. Da' tot e mai frumoasă decît orice de pe la noi. [*Leipzig is uglier. But it's still more beautiful than what we have here.*]

COSTANDIN

Şi Parisul? [*And Paris?*]

CARFIN

Cît zece sate de palate din alea ca la Viena... Vuiet mare, drumurile de piatră, prinţese şi cai cît n-apuci să vezi la noi într-o viaţă de om. Şi nici nu să bate slugile. [*As much as ten villages of Vienna-like palaces... Big bustle, cobbled streets, more princesses and horses than you could ever see in a lifetime here. And servants don't get beaten up.*]

IONIŢĂ

(sceptical, yet friendly)

Nu spui fandacsii, bă?! [*You're not making this up, right?*]

CARFIN

Nu e fandacsii, bre, ce dracu. [*It's not make-believe, what the hell.*]

COSTANDIN

Mda. Nu zic nu, vulpea ştie multe, dar mai multe ştie cel care o prinde. [*Yeah. I don't doubt that, the fox knows a lot, but the one who catches it knows more.*] (Aferim!. "Script")

Carfin saw the world first hand, understanding the difference between Wallachia, Leipzig and Paris. The ones who haven't seen the world, think it is "make-believe", the fact that a slave went on a journey for a noble cause, unlike Costandin and IoniŢă. Costandin imagines a better world for his son, on condition that he listen to him and that he not neglect his physical well-being. IoniŢă dreams of a more positive world, which you can only get to know by reaching its end and that one can mend through the experience accumulated during the initiation. Carfin saw that world, witnessing both Future and Paradise. Telling them about "make-believe", he puts forth a

perspective to which the two companions have to be aware of.

The purpose of this scene is to turn the whole Constandin's scenario on its head (surrendering the servant and obtaining the reward). The slave is no longer a slave. Carfin's trip to Leipzig and Paris make him an equal to Constandin and Ioniță. It is the moment of equality between the three. He has a background the others have only dreamed of, and which now must be taken into account. Carfin seems to say: boyar Iordache is right, but I am right as well. Constandin and Ioniță realize that there is a need for Justice, yet a different kind of Justice than that of the 1830s. If we were to look at the sociological description of the 1800s presented above, it is a justice for which Carfin, Constandin and Ioniță were born too early. The chance-balance that Jude and Lăzărescu give their characters is to judge/ have reason for you own needs, beyond the riot, the social codes, as well as the social and political constraints. Beyond failed beginnings, beyond injustices, beyond "not making a fool of yourself":

"Costandin lays his hand on Ioniță's shoulder.

COSTANDIN

Hai, bă, ce pizda mă-sii, nu fi derdemînt. Fii om, nu carne cu ochi. (...) Zău. Asta-i viața... Dumnezeu ține viermi mulți sub pământ și noi unul pe altul nu putem să ne ținem... Așa e lumea asta și de-ai face ce-ai face, rămîne cum este ea, nu poți s-o întorci cu umărul, măcar să te pui în ruptul capului. Trăim și noi cum putem, nu cum vrem."

[Come on, what the fuck, don't be a rag. Be a man, not flesh with eyes (...) God! That's life... God looks after worms and we can't look after each other... This is how the world is and whatever you do, it stays the same, you can't

turn it around, no matter how stubborn you are. We live how we can, not how we want.] (Aferim!. "Script")

In fact, Constandin has nothing to do but to show that his son's identity, which he considers his own business, is, in its very essence, dialogical. Ioniță's identity also includes dialogue with the Other, with Carfin the slave. "Which means that his way of affirming himself is indissociable from the validation the Other grants or rejects. In other words, any "self-image" proposed by the subject is subject to recognition by the Other. A recognition that is inscribed, in its turn, in the dialectic of identity and otherness, because the Other must recognize the persistence of certain features that ensure the uniqueness of the subject and that can aid in distinguishing it from others." Ioniță's future depends on how he responds to Carfin's tragedy, which, for any parent, represents a cause for concern.

This amounts to possible divergences in opinion between Ioniță (who claims his membership) and the group (who denies this identification). Erving Goffman (Goffman, 1963 apud Ferreol, Jucquois, 2005: 46) demonstrates the modalities of dialogue between real identity and virtual-social identity, and Vinsonneau (Vinsonneau, 1999, apud Ferreol, Jucquois, 2005: 46-47) talks about the identity of the group of belonging and that of the reference group, the first being one of effective affiliation, while the second one in which the subject tries to recognize itself, the one that provides the norms and values that the subject wants to adopt, but of which he is not (yet) part of (Ferreol, Jucquois, 2005: 331). Constandin headed off in order to capture one sure thing, a slave, but instead only managed to fall into a trap and capture the whole anxiety of the world around 1800, which he passed on to his son Ioniță.

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