IDENTITY AND OTHERNESS IN ANTON HOLBAN'S NOVELS

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Abstract: *As stated by Tzvetan Todorov, otherness is based on three axes: the first one is based on the idea that the other is good or bad, I love him or I love him not, he is equal or inferior; the second axe is considering the approach or the removal action towards the other, I am identifying with the other or I am assimilating the other and I require the own image; the third plan is based on neutrality or indifference towards the identity of the other. From this theory starts the review of the three novels of Anton Holban, in which analyzing the narrator-character, Sandu, in the relationship with the three female characters, we can apprehend notes of the identity and otherness concepts in the substance of Holban psychological novel.*

Keywords: *self-searching, identity, otherness*

The objective prose of Anton Holban is substituted with the subjective one in his three psychological and erotic novels, being under the guardianship authenticity: ,*''O moarte care nu dovedește nimic"* (1931), *''Ioana"* (1934), *''Jocurile Daniei"* (1971). Proustian influence is obvious in the first novel from this trilogy, in which "organized fiction leaves place for the bitter inward glance, the relentless analysis directed towards themselves and the ones surrounding him" (Emil Vasilescu, 2002: 85).

In all three novels the main male character is Sandu that carries with him the authors dates and its love experiences. Sandu's self-definition occurs only in relationship with Irina, Ioana and Dania. This is often determined by confrontation or motivated ascensions by the urgent need to measure with them or even to prove his superiority. The only one that appears superior to him is Dania. Comparison with Other occurs from the instinct of twinning, specifically in that original sense of coexistence, which Husserl defines it as a measure of awareness of the Other, in the understanding of identity process. "We can discover the others in ourselves, we can comprehend that we are not forming an unitary substance and radically foreign of all that is ourselves, I am other.'' (Tzvetan Todorov,1994: 7).

The man is shaped by the Other, without talking about imitation or about superiority and inferiority relations; each finds himself by appealing to Another, and this act of identification is individual truth. Sandu always relate to the image of femininity around him and tries either to be his superior, or to be on her liking or simply to torment and to feel the pleasure of other suffering.

Sartre is considering that seeing the others in relation with themselves you can measure your on power. Thing that Sandu is doing, and the one who has the most suffering to is Irina.

The otherness can also be represented by love that is a way of conciliation of this conflict between the interior liberty and exterior limits, because it means the return to self and wishing the other and themselves. Eros stops turning inwards and thereby the being is released from the burden of solitude, but does not lead to the dissolution of the self in the Other. Interesting is the characterization of the main character of the novel made by the critic Nicolae Manolescu ,, O moarte care nu dovedește nimic", that would be the first stage of the knowledge of love, only in the following two novels Sandu

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matures and sees different love: “Very young, he is in the misogyny stage due to virile vanity we have most in our twenties. He considers himself superior to Irina, and he treats as accordingly. He doesn’t have only the claim to educate her in his taste, but he proves an inability teacher, cruel and blase. Selfishness and male sufficiency leads him to see mediocre the relationship with Irina, that even he can not break, neither can not do it interesting.” (Nicolae Manolescu, 2007: 440-441).

For Sandu, Irina turns to be a psychological case that intrigues him and that turns him in a real psychologist who is researching thoroughly her whole being. He was carrying her like a object in stores, legations, train ticket offices, ruining all her plans, feeling how he was taking her air, restricting her freedom. In the moment when he said his farewell to Irina at the station, Sandu was amazed by her indifference, in any way both of them where distant, and the good buys where no longer as tragic as before. Something had changed, Sandu kissed her short on the cold cheek, and her mouth did not touch him.

Irina was very hard to define and read, she was the one that let to Sandu a ridiculous taste due to her French voice, exaggerated make-up and her uncovered legs. His thinking about Irina changed quickly, and Sandu looked at her with a light superiority, he is not impressed of any of her aspect and he felt that he has rights on her, but without promising her something.

Interesting is the fact that Dudu, for example he thought the two ones were amusing and identical from far, while Sandu’s father considered Irina *ugly*. This grade was bothering him because he was aware that it is the truth and now he has the first attempt to ward off the girl. He was trying from Berlin to reply increasingly rare to her continually coming letters in which Irina forget to take into account any time spelling, writing randomly, quickly, ceaselessly. The conclusion that can be made from this entire craziness of hers was that she loved to death Sandu and that she was bored alone. So passionate she was about Sandu, that she accepts everything he said, she approves of all his opinions, she was reading all the volumes he was giving her in order to discuss about. Although she was trying to please him, Sandu didn’t promise he will marry her, but that she will be his best friend. Sometimes he tried to make her feel better, to make-over and he was deceiving making her an intellectual capable that he can talk. He was living the present near Irina, he felt condemned with it and become attached psychologist, her teacher, giving her benevolent advices of a good friend regarding how to dress, how to laugh, how to do her hair, how to keep your head, what to read, etc. in this way he found his play around Irina: the one of educating her, of making her intellectual, to make her in a sort of equal to him, if not identical.

He accepted the fact that he liked to discuss with her about literature and art, although he didn’t do anything else then listening himself, repeating his ideas, assisting and listen to his own thoughts. He wanted her to be able to inquire of any single writer, for example, one that he didn’t know most about, in this way Irina would have helped him to complement his knowledge, without having to deal with this personal. This being was capable of anything to pleasure Sandu, she wanted to be identical, to please and to be satisfied with her. Irina is unable to argue on behalf of their own judgments and she was easily implemented using the false reasoning Sandu.

“If she did not have intellectual qualities, I think her to be able either strong instincts. I do not remember her with great lies, with hatred, with desperate jealousy, with rare sacrifices. Her words, sometimes great, did not make me illusions and I took them as the result of shaky logic. However, she was made up only of instincts. I've

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never seen her contradicting me simply because of her own judgments." (Anton Holban, 2010: 43)

Sandu does nothing else than to impose Irina his own values, without a charge about this.

And in the end Sandu is the type of man who "does not confirm his virility than through women slavery, but feels stronger than under her protection (the same woman). Sandu's personality reveals not only attacking a weaker creature, its perfect contour into inverse with the depersonalization of the victim." (Mihai Mangiulea, 1989: 135-136).

Only a poor creature, lower his, as Irina, could highlight the true essence of this male character.

Always, Sandu had conflicting tastes, sometimes happy, sometimes desperate, sometimes feels pity for Irina and sometimes hates her and sometimes is not interested. This is the dual nature of Sandu, and Irina is a victim of this individual unable to understand herself and the one who craves for a bit of attention and love from him.

The narrator-character recognizes that the fault belongs in the construction of the character Irina that becomes unnoticed because his efforts to explain every particle that enters into its composition. The blame falls on literature that makes us live in illusions and therefore we are not satisfied with the reality in which we live. Because of the literature that Sandu incessantly digest, Irina appears to bland compared to Andromaca, for which there are no weakness and resist Pirus imprecations; or Esther, who risk their lives to save the nation; or Monime, who is determined to take the impetuous desire of Mitridate, giving up their own feelings; or Berenice, who has the courage to leave and let Titus in imperial service obligations; or Junie who will not give up until she has the wedding ring on her finger. Put together these great female figures of ancient literature, Irina appears faded, but Sandu had to understand the reality in which he lives is different, and times have changed.

In the novel "Ioana", once moved in Cavarna, the female character loses its elegance, she tries to dress according to the site, although this makes her hilarious. Sandu is looks at her with love, tenderness and compassion because he sees its sincere efforts to accommodate with the site and to do on his pleasing. Ioana is always fresh although she went through many hardships, her face is bathed in light and her eyes shine with happiness, specific things only for those who have suffered. Her whole appearance of warmth, optimism and light attracts love and appreciation of Sandu.

The reader has access to a portrait of Ioana through narrator seize a series of contradictions in it, such as her pleasure for classic literature, although it is "the victim of all romantic turmoil." (Ibidem: 133).

She enjoys the writings of Racine and La Fontaine, passion that was inspired by Sandu, this is denoting his overwhelming influence on her, settling even an actantial relationship teacher-student type. Slowly the girl detaches from her initiator, by her own she interpret the works of the two authors, managing to elucidate anything without the help of Sandu, him no longer having any role.

Later, Ioana becomes a knowledge initiated in Racine and La Fontaine works, and shes able to clarify Sandu many meanings, explaining unexpected, showing extraordinary intelligence, which consists of its critical spirit regarding books. This quality makes her admirable stand out from the rest of women that can only say whether they liked or not the literary work. Her intelligence is proof that she was able to learn herself French, through work, and ultimately Sandu was meant to help develop her tastes. Thus, near Sandu Ioana increased, was fulfilled, and due to the love for him she

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become a woman, it was he who had initiated into the mysteries of love, trying to shape her after his image and likeness.

Sandu jumps quickly from one state to another, feels for Ioana a kind of hatred for her being capable of betrayal, but on the other hand feels lucky to be loved by a woman as exceptional as this, due to which learned very many things, discovered new meanings only because of them. He feels he can not live without her, although he is always struggling with Ioana and vice versa. Fighting is the only thing that's left Sandu is the last satisfaction that can heal somehow wounded male pride.

Interesting is the construction of the female character, Anton Holban like Camil Petrescu's novel "Patul lui Procust" uses the character building technique by his own style of writing. From Ioana's letters, in its rows, it can be build her temper: suspicions, hurry allegations, but always full of suggestions, passion in hate and love, pointless trying to be wise and magnanimous, her innocence, anger, remorse. The way of writing betrayed her and it could show Sandu if she cheated or not.

Like in the novel "O moarte care nu dovedește nimic" we can identify the cause of death that is obsessing the protagonist, the idea of death becomes for him a tic. Stir death among the smallest matters, so managed to reduce the severity. The idea of suicide does not scare him, but he even is thinking very seriously about this, because he feels a wretched temperament, and death would be the only escape. He conveyed even to Ioana the idea of death, explaining a lot of vibration at a dead. He was trying to submit in his obsession, but she looked revolted at times, but he could not break the idea of death and the futility of each gesture.

Holban's authenticity prose is evident through the explanatory rows as to why he wrote the book. The reason is simple: the consolation desire, healing the people who will read the novel which is a kind of cry for salvation, liberation. Through it he wants to unravel what happened, understand whose fault it was, although he is aware that any sentence would give the reader, he will not be satisfied with it. As if he hears the interpretation, which is a trivial one: two lovers are miserable because the women sinned. Hears the irony of the reader who is unhappy because there is no clear explanation given by the author in terms of the couple, where the two actors prefer to struggle side by side, rather than separate.

The novel "Jocurile Daniei" begins with the presentation of the relationship between the narrator-character and Dania, the first of them feeling that intimacy between them are quite advanced, although they know eachother for very little time, namely a few months, plus that they are togheter very rare. Dania has an oriental temperament, is shy, likes to let time pass over her, she lives in an abstract world, inaccessible, the reality disappoints her and her mind seems devoid of any reality due to the ghost existence of the narrator-character, it seemed she was waiting for him for a long time, telling him even by name. It was obvious that she did not like reality, living in her own world of fantasies, and what liked at him was the way he wrote, which made her wanting to meet him, even went out on the street to intersect with him or shr went to a concert where he knew he would be. She forgot him when for while something else started to haunt her or she went abroad, and she forgot him completely, but that until a small event brings him back to mind.

The way of being of Dania was full of falsehood always changing her perfume, she had countless clothing, she was always flirtatious, too artificial. What she feels is not as strong as feeling as the protagonist, who suffers for her distance, for her indifference, this feeling this provokes him thirst for revenge because of her spiritual dryness and because of the dozens of moments of humiliation he endured from her. He

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is hiding his revenge, this only for his satisfaction and the one he was cheating on Dania was Milly. He was hurting for her many travels and for the delay in writing the answer for his letters, and if she decide to do her going someone interrupts ans she postpones the moment for other time. Indeed Dania is part of the upper class and the ladies like her were writing very hard elegant letters, and she never got to send a few lines written at random, written on the first handy paper, with the address incomplete and with confusing words, however all of this because she does not have any patience and she would miss him. This lack of pleasure of writing is notices as her writing is with upper letters, sharp points, which occupies much space and fits very least on the page.

One of the problems between the two is that the girl is Hebrew, and he is a Christian. Narrator character acknowledges that he did not like dirty Jews, fearful, never troubled, but as he disliked the superficial and sly Romanians. He never took into account Dania s nature because in her home it is not noticed she is Hebrew. But the thing that bothers is that Jews are hiding, unable to devote themselves completely, naively, being cautious, balanced, things that also he met at Dania. She is not able to have any opinion because she can not have something straight in her mind. The narrator recognizes that he felt the girl rarely Jew and would have wanted to meet her in a synagogue where to see how she was praying fervently and this way he can think she knows that her love is thorough. Here can be found the otherness, Sandu is aware of the other differences, differences in mentality, behavior, religion, social status, and last but not least, age (Dania having only nineteen years).

With the separation of Dania, Sandu feels that the woman he loved broke in two, both being present in his mind: that of trying to change innermost thoughts and the foreign, who gave him no attention.

After analyzing the three novels confirms the thesis of Baudrillard and Guillaume, that eros invented by an entire labor this harmony idol, of love fusion, shaped almost incestuous of twin woman beings as projective resurrection of the same, which is not and acquires supernatural than the ideal form of same-artifact now destined to love, that is a pathetic beings ideal similarity and equality. [...] The same who looks with envy at another, which invests in another, which alienates the other, but is never other than a ephemeral form of a difference that I'm close to me." (Jean Baudrillard, Marc Guillaume, 2002: 128)

In conclusion, Sandu is the depiction of which that takes part in the scene and at the same time he observed everything was both an actor and audience, having the ability to duplicate. He was an actor that had the passion of the act and the curious public was hearing all the words, seeing all the characters, the setting. He wanted to transcribe authentic, honest, faithful all that he was thinking, restore all scenes. Becomes aware with ,,in every each other is Other - which is not me, which is different from me, but that I can understand, even assimilate and there is also a radical otherness, inadmissible, incomprehensible and even unimaginable." (Jean Baudrillard, Marc Guillaume, 2002: 6) Thus, reporting in turn to Irina, Ioana and Dania, he acknowledge his flaws, his lacks even the temptation to assimilate the image of women, to assign his own conceptions, attitudes, ideas, behaviors, feelings.

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