FRAU ANNA'S INTERIOR MONOLOGUE IN STRATIS TSIRKAS' *DRIFTING CITIES*

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Abstract:
The present paper aims at analyzing the direct interior monologue of one of the main characters in Stratis Tsirkas' novel *Drifting Cities*, Frau Anna, starting both from Dorrit Cohn's and Gerard Genette's main assumptions on how consciousness is (re)presented in fiction and Freud's psychoanalysis and technique of free association used in psychotherapy.
Keywords: interior monologue, unconscious, subconscious, consciousness, mimesis.

Rezumat:
Acest articol îşi propune să analizeze tehnica monologului interior folosit în cazul unuia din personajele principale din romanul lui Stratis Tsirkas *Drifting Cities* (Oraşe în derivă)-Frau Anna- pornind de la teoriile lui Dorrit Cohn şi Gérard Genette referitoare la modul cum este reprezentată conştiinţa în ficţiune, dar şi de la psihanaliza lui Freud şi tehnica liberei asocieri folosită de acesta în şedinţele de psihoterapie.
Cuvinte-cheie: monolog interior, inconştient, subconştient, conştiinţă, mimesis.

It is unanimously agreed in the theory of literature that Freud's psychoanalysis has influenced to a great extent the interior monologue technique, especially in the modern novel. This is why this technique seems to have turned into a way of penetrating and understanding the psychic depth of a character which hides beneath the verbal surface. According to Dorrit Cohn, "*in this respect, the technique can be compared to the psychoanalytic technique of free association, the method according to which the voice must be given to all thoughts without exception which enter the mind.*"[1]

More than that, Gerard Genette has argued that,

[1] D. Cohn, 1984, p. 87.

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"*One of the main paths of emancipation of the modern novel has consisted of pushing this mimesis of speech to its extreme, or rather to its limit, obliterating the last traces of the narrating instance and giving the floor to the character right away*."[2]

Genette also points out that if in indirect speech the character can speak "through the voice of the narrator, and the two instances are then merged'', in interior monologue the narrator is obliterated and the character substitutes for him.[3]

Furthermore, many specialists have stressed the relationship between language and thinking, some considering that thinking consists of verbalization, that the thought and the words in which this is expressed are one and the same thing, others considering that thought takes shape independently of language and that language is a mere vehicle, the container of an already accomplished thought. However, some others, especially in the light of Freud's psychoanalysis, have stressed the intensity of the psychic life where the unconscious plays a crucial role as a permanent source of energy which influences the consciousness but it can never be articulated into words. This is why the interior monologue may be looked upon more as a method of hinting at, rather than expressing a character's depth of the mind:

"*But this analogy by no means implies that quoted monologues are recitations of unconscious thoughts. Even perfectly executed free association would, in Freudian theory, reflect the unconscious only symptomatically, by way of revealing fissures and irregularities in the texture of the discourse-incongruous associations, slips of the tongue, repetitions, omissions, and other forms of over- and under-emphasis.*"[4]

Such a technique uses Stratis Tsirkas in the case of the character Frau Anna, in the first volume of his trilogy *Drifting Cities*, a volume which masterfully recreates the atmosphere of the Middle East in World War II:

"*This intricately designed novel, marked by a variety of points of view and narrative modes, has at its center the fight for the soul of the Greek army that, along with the government, has regrouped in Egypt after the German victory*."[5]

[2] G. Genette, 1983, p. 173-174.
[3] G. Genette, 1983, p. 174.
[4] D. Cohn, p. 88.
[5] E. Quinn, 2004, p. 149.

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The *Drifting Cities*, where the books of the trilogy are respectively set, are Jerusalem, Cairo and Alexandria.

A middle-aged woman, Frau Anna is doomed to live the rest of her life in frustration in Jerusalem, a city which is drifting toward chaos in a war-torn Middle-East.

Anna's direct interior monologue has the special feature of being in the second person singular; the second person pronoun ''you'' is used in reference to the person speaking, which is usually 'I'. In addition, Dorrit Cohn remarks that the second person form is usually associated with the voice of conscience in this context:

"*The peculiar rhetoric of self-addressed chiding, judgment or interrogation would seem to confirm Freud's notion that the voice of conscience (the superego) is constituted through the internalization of the parental voice or the voices of other authority figures.*"

A leit-motif of Anna's monologues is her loneliness, so one can state that in her case the self tends to take itself for audience. In this respect, Dujardin, quoted by Genette, wrote that

"*A discourse without an auditor and unspoken, by which a character expresses his most intimate thoughts, those closest to the unconscious, prior to all logical organization, or, simply, thought in its dawning state- expresses it by means of direct phrases reduced to their syntactical minimum, in such a way to give the impression of hodgepodge.*"[6]

The influence of the free association technique is obvious especially when many of her thoughts start as a consequence of the action of outside stimuli (audio-visual, tactile, even taste). For example, in Chapter 8, her interior monologue starts by rendering the acute sensation (of throat burning) she experiences while she is drinking some hot drink. Consequently, she is in a state of drunkenness which allows memories from her past to come up to the surface of her consciousness in the form of flashbacks but not only. Her memories contain not only fragments of events which took place in her childhood or adolescence, but also figures that marked in a way or another those periods. Some of these figures have names (for example the name Eric, repeated several times in her fragmentary memories about her adolescence, probably a boy she was in love with), but they do not have voices, whereas others do not have names, but they do

[6] E. Dujardan 1931, in: Genette 1983, p. 174.

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have voices. Their voices appear usually very unexpectedly in dialogues within Frau Anna's interior monologue:

"*Quivering in the glass like a white flame. That's why it burns your throat… Oh, if only there were a breeze… Lia Betty where are you off to girls. They didn't hear…Eric's fair hair…You see they didn't call you.*"[7]

The abrupt introduction of dialogue within the interior monologue creates confusion most of the time because it is very difficult to understand whom these voices belong to, unless the character states that. This confusion is heightened as well by the absence of inverted commas or quotation marks. Stylistically, the absence of inverted commas or quotation marks creates a certain textual continuity like in the case of stream-of-consciousness technique. Consequently, the interior monologue appears to follow the meandering current of the character's thoughts, just like in the case of stream-of-consciousness.

Another example that outside stimuli find a response in her conscious mind is the absence of a breeze in the present which brings back memories from her childhood, especially a certain figure, Eric, or not exactly the entire figure, just a feature-his fair hair. Usually her states of insomnia, drowsiness, exhaustion bring about fissures at the level of her consciousness, allowing the unconscious to manifest itself.

Generally, her memories about her past tend to have at their centre her repressed sexuality both as a child and as an adolescent, which also hint at her repressed sexuality in the present. Above these memories a sense of failure hovers, suggested by her failures especially those regarding her relationships with men. In Chapter 2, for example, she suddenly remembers her husband, his cheating on her with another woman and how she discovered that. Yet, she does not manage to articulate her thoughts entirely or up to the end. One can infer that this happens because these memories are too painful, unbearable for her and, in the light of psychoanalysis, she (un)consciously represses them into the subconscious and probably even farther into the unconscious:

"*He had been keeping that woman for years. His great love. It all came to light when. Telephone call while you were washing Sam's hair what's that you're saying oh what's that you are saying this is Frau Anna*

[7] S. Tsirkas, 1995, p. 15.

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this is Frau. He died. Her letters and the keys and the debts and the mortgages. How dark the light grows all of a sudden."[8]

This is why it is not by chance that this flashback ends up with Anna's apparent remark on the light surrounding her in the room where she is reflecting. The light which suddenly becomes dark undoubtedly refers to her subconscious or unconscious where she represses the painful memories of her marriage. Moreover, her interior monologues are filled with rhetorical questions ("*How they manage to hook men how they hold them in their spell*"[9]), reveal her sense of failure, of failing to discover the secret of making men fall in love with her.

Many of her thoughts are about or focused on Mano, hinting at her infatuation with him, but also at her physical attraction to him. Her interior monologue reveals the torment of a woman in love whose affection is never responded (her motherly care for Mano, her jealousy, her confusion created by Mano's coldness towards her) but more than that, it suggests the torment of a sexually frustrated woman: "*Kaloyannosh. Kaloyannosh have pity on Anna as she lies struggling with sleep.*" Her frustrations are also suggested by the free associations she makes between people's and animals' sexual life in her memories about the filly in Uncle Karl's stables:

"*She's lucky and she knows it. Please don't make a fuss about it is the only happiness I have left if I lose it I will turn into an animal. The only happiness having her insides pumped all night long as she sleeps. Her bedsprings make such a racket you can hear the noise as far as the Wailing Wall. And then wake up he says you've got to wash and she comes out of the room naked except for a towel round her bottom. She goes straight to the bathroom. The filly in Uncle Karl's stables…The Schramek woman would do well not to run.*"[10]

Anna's relationship with her son (even if he never appears as a full character in the novel, being only mentioned by Anna in her monologue) seems to be suggestive of her failure as a mother too. Actually her affection for Mano Simonidis (also known as Kaloyannis) strikingly resembles that of a mother towards her son: she waits for him late at night, she sews his buttons, she feeds him. It is not by chance that she rents him her son's old room. In other words, she tries to compensate for her failure to love her son

[8] *Ibid*., p. 19-20.
[9] *Ibid*., p. 20.
[10] *Ibid*.

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(since he is ''crude and cold like his father''- her remark suggesting that she unconsciously projects on her son the figure of her husband) by loving Mano in exchange. In Chapter 3, in a state of insomnia, when she becomes very sensitive to outside stimuli, a child's cry brings about a chain of thoughts, some of which are not articulated to the end, being left in suspension, thoughts which reveal, always implicitly, her fear regarding the possibility that her son may be corrupted spiritually (he might be turned into a Christian) but also sexually by a woman:

"*The child's crying again…Do you think she might want Sam for. Doesn't look like it. She's thirty five and…*"[11]

Generally, in her descriptions of women included in her interior monologue, women are seen degraded, decadent, corruptive of men, the cause of her failed relationships with men.

Quite frequently, many of her memories focus on her past, seen in opposition to the present: she had been born in a rich family and she used to be waited on by other people, whereas now, in the present, she has to wait on other people, she has become a servant, even though she never admits it, but she always implies it. This is how one can account for the abrupt shift in her account about her origins, in Chapter 3, when she suddenly goes on describing in detail how she carried the bath tub and hot water into Emmy's room :

"*Oh Anna...Oh daughter of the celebrated house of. Textile magnates patrons of the arts bankers of Cologne. Those were different times…She asked for the big tub: you took it upstairs to her. She asked for hot water; you carried three pailfuls up and down those terrible stairs.*"[12]

Behind the nostalgia she is feeling about her past, there are strong frustrations hidden, as well as a certain complex of inferiority (she is not an aristocrat), hinted at also by her rhetorical questions filled with irony:

"*How can her Highness possibly take her bath in the same tub as a Rosenthal?*"[13]

Her permanent feeling of living in a decaying present is doubled by her obsession with death:

"*Those were different times. This lousy slut will be the end of you. You will meet your ancestors sooner than you thought.*"[14]

[11] *Ibid*., p. 21.
[12] *Ibid*., p. 17.
[13] *Ibid*.

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Her obsession with death is very complex: first of all it concerns the financial death of her family and generally of the social class she belonged to; secondly, in the context of the Second World War, her obsession has at its center the already in progress extermination of the Jews by the Nazis. This is why, as she confesses, she took refuge in Jerusalem together with her son. Consequently she is a refugee, but she never admits it. Her refusal to admit that is highlighted also by her fear of being around refugees, of living in a ghetto:

"*And he said don't be in such a hurry you'll soon have so many clients you won't know where to put them, What kind of clients you asked. Very good ones refugees from Egypt. Why refugees you said.*", "*Anna who knows. Hitler in Jerusalem. Why not. The goyim will find a way to make the best of it and as for the Muslim they're already praying for him to come. And you alone. In the same ghetto with Rosa Hliaska.*"[15]

In one of her previous monologues she confesses that she has come to Jerusalem, to the Promised Land (an ideal she no longer believes in) in hope of salvation, of a new beginning. Yet, this salvation, this new beginning never takes place and she is once again overwhelmed by the feeling of having failed once more. This time this feeling no longer remains at the level of the subconscious, but it reaches the level of the consciousness, being articulated into words:

"*You failed Anna. You bungled your life just like the tomato soup. Each time…*"[16]

It is not by chance that after admitting her failure, she enumerates the names of the men in relationship with whom she failed:

"*Eric adorable fair hair blowing in the breeze. Feldman two-faced lover unfaithful husband. Kaloyannosh heartless ungrateful stranger.*"[17]

Stylistically, the most interesting feature of Frau Anna's interior monologue is the insertion of dialogue: her dialogues with other people or dialogues she witnessed. These dialogues are never marked by quotation marks. Still, some of them are marked by phrases like "he said'' or "you said'', which signalize the quoted dialogue. Whenever Anna is in a state of insomnia, which allows her subconscious to reign, the dialogues are never

[14] *Ibid*.
[15] *Ibid*., p. 100.
[16] *Ibid*., p. 101.
[17] *Ibid*.

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marked, they appear in the form of voices which sometimes have, sometimes do not have an identity. More than that, they are usually left unfinished, and they are disconnected from one another. On the other hand, when her consciousness reigns, the dialogues are marked by index phrases, the voices are well-articulated and have a clear and stated identity, whereas the accounts and the descriptions included in the interior monologue are focused on external happenings.

Another interesting feature of Frau Anna's we already signalized and commented on is the use of the second person singular instead of the first person singular, together with the absence of punctuation, clearly marking the insertion of the character's more or less articulated thoughts, as well as anxieties, frustrations and repressions directly into the narrative.

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