MASTERS AND DISCIPLES IN NICOLAE BREBAN'S "NIGHT AND DAY"

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Abstract: *The study contains a presentation of the novel "Night and day", by Nicolae Breban, focusing on the narrative techniques used, on the character typology and the most important ideas that are revealed by the dialogues/monologues of prince Calimachi, or his magister, Jiquidi. Young Calimachi is balancing between two possible masters: Professor Marinetti and a strange old man, Jiquidi, eventually choosing the second one.*

Keywords: *power, master, disciple*

The novel *Night and Day* (1998) opens the tetralogy with the same title, but just like the other three novels: *The Will of Power* (2004), *The Unseen Power* (2006), *Jiquidi* (2007), it can also be separately received, independent of the three parts. In fact, like all Breban's novels, from *Francisca* to *Amphitryon,* this novel approaches the same obsessive subjects, which became common places for Breban's prose: power in its multiple forms and manifestations, the relationship *master – disciple, master – servant, executioner – victim,* the myth of the province. The relationship between master – *disciple* associates in this case, with the reason of the apparently for *nothing* crime, appearing numerous analogies to Raskolnikov along the characters' discourse.

"Regarded from the Romanian traditional aesthetics point of view – that first and foremost pretends an epic – mimetic representation of reality – the eternal repeated discussions in *Night and Day* seem to build-up an almost entirely non-epic novel, thus atypical, reminding of Breban's maieutics in *Don Juan, The Road to the Wall or Ambush and Seduction."* (Pop, I., 2017:1106)

There are a few important characters who can be found in the whole tetralogy, novelistic building concentrating around them. These characters who migrates from one novel to another are: Herrlich – Hergot - the little Jew, prince Calimachi, Professor Marinetti, Amedeu Dumitrascu, Marzea, priest Bizoniu. They are the characters that populate the tetralogy, between them being established a complicated net, elaborated by relations based on force, power and subjugation, specific to the novelist. These characters perform in a social environment, not very well shaped, a capital from the province, probably Cluj. The social environment itself is less important, the emphasis being on the characters' ideas, conceptions and experience.

Among the narrative voices which can be identified in the novel, that of the young prince Calimachi occupies the most extended part, the novel starting in the first person, with his confession. The narrator of this confession is Cicerone, also called Cici. Calimachi tells him how he met Hergot. It often becomes hard to follow who is the relater along the novel,

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the author "including all the characters' discourse in a mega-speech. Here, we assist to an extremely developed technique of inclusion, in which a narrative voice swallows another one. From the interior of this voice, which is not a neutral one, unexpectedly it passes to another, invited to take further the narration, without the possibility of tracking down subjective marks in all this coming and going. The voices, distinguishable, even though uncustomized, confront, in the end, with the impersonal voice - suspect itself."(Malita, L., 2001:19)

The novel starts introducing the relationship between Calimachi and Hergot - the first, an aristocrat, is nervous at the beginning, then flattered, as in the end, to become dependent on Hergot presence. This man who is at his disposal, who seems to be born only to serve the others is one of Breban' specific character. The relationship master – servant, detectable in all his work, the servant has a very important role, often proving to be much more powerful than the delusive master. A big part of the novel presents Grobei as the perfect servant who, during his life was in the service of a few different people, between them being the beautiful Leila. Then, he turns out to be the strong one, reversing the places. Hergot, humble and perfectly polite, will become indispensable to those he serves, making them dependent on him. The whole process is a subtle one and the master – victim realizes this transformation only when it is too late. Calimachi has a kind – despiteful attitude towards Hergot, as then, when the insignificant character disappears, he will miss him extremely. Hergot is the one whom he visits. He will tell him about a mysterious person and will bring a tape from the same person, Jiquidi, a character, who, at a certain moment, will become very important, will be abandoned by the author along the second and third volume, but the fourth volume will be dedicated to him and will wear his name.

Liviu Malita, in his monographic study, dedicated to Nicolae Breban, names this type of character – "a useless character". This character is a small one, insignificant and the other characters who get in contact with him, despise him and they look down on him. At some time, after its presence becomes an usual one, he disappears without a clear reason: "Only now, his revealing role of the true nature of the character begins to take shape. His absence comes to help the axis – character to discover some significant parts of his own personality, ignored until then, creating the impression that he is his own Destiny." (Malita, L., *op. cit.*: 49). The same strategy is approached by Rogulski when he wants to gain Tonia's heart (after he makes her dependent on his presence, he abandons her, while in her absence to change himself, to rediscover the essence of femininity hidden under the bourgeois mentality), as Grobei related with Lelia (when she seemed to resign and accepts the little office clerk marriage proposal, he disappears, this time turning into himself.) If in *Don Juan* and in *The Annunciation* this disappearance was just a moment, a stage of the meticulous strategy of seduction or of the evolution of its own destiny, in *Night and Day*, Hergot's disappearance becomes the pretext of the epic evolution (as much as it is), and, thrilled, feeling painfully (physically and psychic) the absence of the insignificant character, prince Calimachi will set up an inquiry to find out the truth about Hergot's death. In this context of investigating Hergot's mysterious death, Calimachi meets different people, the most important of them being Professor Marinetti and the old Jiquidi.

Hergot is a strange character who appears more or less in all of the tetralogy volumes, although he dies even in the first volume. There will be allusions, different

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characters who met him relating facts in which the mysterious character took part. The action of the tetralogy is pretty winding, always reminding moments from the past or repeating the same events for more than once, eventually from different perspectives. The attempt to elucidate Hergot's secret death is equal to Calimachi with a self-knowledge process, a self-discovery of the soul darkness. Thus, he will meet Professor Marinetti, a personality of Cluj, succeeding to get in the world of elite. He rejects him, isolating himself of all those who were idolizing the professor, proclaiming him an absolute master. Calimachi does not want to recognize Marinetti as being a master, although he appreciates his intellectual qualities. Instead, Jiquidi, an old man whom he can hardly gauge his character, subdues him with his reactionary ideas. Jiquidi, a past expectation of Cluj, a brilliant teenager, who, at a certain moment receded from society, is a mysterious character. His ideas, but also his original way of being fascinates Calimachi and the others who get in contact with him, in a way or another. Around Jiquidi, this *person phenomenon*, as he is considered, he feels he is breathing an air of *craziness*, but so exciting, intellectual and inwards, so that he urges, pushes him to pass all bounds, to get over good and bad.

Meeting Jiquidi, his acceptance to be his apprentice, to be round him represents Calimachi's crucial event in his life. Jiquidi is one of Breban's characters who "himself realizes his vain break and ontological adventure, denying and defying everything in the name of an assumed uniqueness, of a Satanic elite aimed to change radically a type of humanity drugged by the warm and toxic waters of the western democracies." (Vasile, G., 2001: 20) Jiquidi and his disciples (prince Calimachi and the Student) are disappointed by the actual society, by the instauration of some protective, of good-sense collusions, by the subversion of old hierarchies and turning over the real elite. The strange Jiquidi' speeches and behavior remind of Nietzsche's superman. He talks about people with an innate authority, inborn leaders, as there are great subordinates, too, meant to be number two, also extremely important, whose major role is not only to assist the real master, but also to promote him in the others' eyes.

Thus, Calimachi performs between two characters, plausible masters, embodying different values, attitudes and behaviors: Marinetti, embodiment of the Apollonian, diurnal, well-balanced, sociable, smart, who gathers around him a lot of enthusiasts and Jiquidi, representing Dionysus, the nocturnal, repugnant to adulations, despiteful to everyone, sarcastic, practising the pedagogy of insult and humiliation towards those who are looking for him and want to stay round him.

As long as he succeeds to keep control of himself, Calimachi controls himself and his thoughts. He has a quick ascension between Professor Marinetti's enthusiastic disciples, just because in that group of adulators, he is the only one that does not go through the ritual of idolization, keeping his independence. But, his freedom succumbs to the malefic charm proliferated by Jiquidi: "I fell in love with that fake old man […] I lost my psychological independence. He became the axis of my existence; […] he was dominating me, […] I came to relate all my values and reasoning to his criteria, often capricious or, at the best, incomprehensible." (Breban, N., 1998: 252)

In spite of offences, Calimachi accepts and recognizes Jiquidi as an absolute master, being attracted and fascinated by him. Calimachi gets in contact with Marinetti during his investigation of Hergot's disappearance. He found his name on *the little Jew*'s

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notebook – Jiquidi himself met Marinetti and it seemed that in their youth they were close, each of them developing differently. Jiquidi asks Calimachi to continue visiting Marinetti, as a sign of submission. The Prince will bring into effect a few of Jiquidi's ideas, manipulating Amedeu Dumitrascu and Patricia, trying to get them away from the professor's influence.

If the conventional and pedant Marinetti chooses a pedagogical attitude, is still looking for proselytes of his theories and has an authentic master or a spiritual leader, the instinct of great ideas, of major themes, Jiquidi is a sympathizer of non-pedagogy, of gratuitousness, of farce, of absolute emptiness. Calimachi has the tendency of a cynical. This way, the model that he mentions a few times is Diogenes. The prince recognizes that he is cynical in his best moments, as for the rest he is an anti – idealist or an anti – romantic. He is also opposed to Martinetti, he hates great ideas and their rhetoric. Influenced by Nietzsche, he chooses to live his destiny by himself, against the ideological groups of history.

Within the challenging discussions of the novel *Night and Day* between Calimachi and Jiquidi, the thesis of the autonomy of the aesthetical value related to the moral value which is associated with the amoral value, regarding the new truth of the crime in the name of an idea, a thesis whose initiator was Raskolnikov, par excellence.

> This is a profound amoral thesis, the same way as in Dostoyevsky and Nietzsche's works, supported fervently within the essay debate in *Day and Night:* after the crime between the blood relatives, which is frequent in the ancient tragedy and justified through hamartia and after the crime of passion, the third type of crime, the spiritual one, accomplished and theorized by the predictive Raskolnikov, will dominate the twentieth century, this time being an instrument, not that spiritual, but a political one. (Pop, I., *op. cit*.: 1107)

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