

THE IMAGE OF FEMINITY IN THE WORKS OF ANTON HOLBAN

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ABSTRACT:

THE NOVELS OF ANTON HOLBAN PRESENTS AN IMAGE OF FEMININITY INFLUENCED BY THE WAY IN WHICH THE WOMEN SHOW HER AFFECTION AND ESPECIALLY HOW SANDU, THE CHARACTER-NARRATOR PERCEIVE IT, SO, THE WOMAN IN THE OPINION OF SANDU AND IN READERS'S VISION REMAINS AN ETERNAL MYSTERY. WE KNOW ABOUT WOMEN FROM HOLBAN'S CREATION ONLY THAT HE TELLS US ENOUGH AS NARRATOR, HOWEVER THE WRITER LETS SOME OPEN WINDOWS THROUGH THE SOUL OF CHARACTERS, SO THAT WE CAN LOOK THE IMAGE OF FEMINITY BOTH FROM OUTSIDE AND INSIDE IT.

KEYWORDS: SUPERIORITY, SUPERFICIALITY, CAPRICE, ENIGMA, CONSISTENCY SOUL.

The novels *A death that proves nothing*, *Ioana* and *The Games of Dania* written by Anton Holban present the women seen in different hypostasis and in different circumstances of her life. Therefore we can see an inner process that possesses every character and which highlights the dominant features of his character, whatever the circumstances in which it is located.

To analyze the image of woman in the work of Anton Holban, we must look both outside and inside her. We can observe the fundamental features of the female characters in his works, Holban through the male character considers that these women have a certain opinion about the events around them, the image of femininity is therefore discovered from inside. The female characters created by Holban seem secondary, but they symbolize the catalyst factor influencing the male character because it there would be nothing without them, although he is the one that narrates the events. Both, Sandu, the male character and the other characters reveal themselves to each other and the readers will find their mirror throughout the events.

Studying the relationship between the first Sandu, student at the Faculty of Letters in Bucharest, and Irina, a colleague of him we can notice the superiority that he treats her, and assigns her, constantly criticizing the woman that was his girlfriend.. Irina and Sandu known each other during a hiking, and from this point will be five years that the two will spend the time together. Sandu wonders from the beginning if it is good to keep in touch with Irina, being entirely convinced that it is incapable of deep feelings because it has an unstable character and looking to her "with an easy air of superiority"².

He realizes, however, that without the only one admirer that it is Irina it would have no existence. He constantly feels the need to be appreciated, listened to, that have to accepted his

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² Anton Holban, *A death that proves nothing*, (București: Ed. Art, 2010), 30

superiority, Sandu feelings alone without a person might compare in every moment of his life, and to come out triumphantly from this comparison. Although it is not an important person to him, constantly emphasizing the defects of Irina: "I thought her head small, her hair because of the heat, wet with sweat and falling in thin strands, the face swollen and soft, almost non-existent genes, snub nose, thin teeth and endless"³, however, the absence of a character to support its superiority is troublesome. He supports the idea of progress Irina, but this idea would not fit with the image created her about it, that of a girlfriend who would sacrifice for the sake of not being able to take a decision without being influenced by him.

Sandu finally meditates even when about the death of is of Irina: "So small was able by a great gesture"⁴, imagining that only a strong person, tormented by inner fires would be capable of suicide and considered it incapable of apply to a gesture so great. The end of the novel supports the idea that possesses the whole story, the feeling of superiority of Sandu to Irina, Irina the one "insignificant"⁵ woman. The other characters in the novel do not agree Irina and considered it "ugly" or "feeble minded", from which we can conclude that she was not very gifted, neither intellectually or physically.

Analyzing the situation in the inside and removing these negative aspects, which can be subjective perspective of each character, we see a girl madly in love of Sandu, by agreeing with his any expectation. To the reader does not presented the information of the regarding way of thinking of Irina, we have only occasional short lines, like "X plays the piano cute"⁶. It is possible that Irina was not an intelligent woman, but this does not imply the absence of pervasive experiences and contradictory. Often it lacked the judgment, but this can be attributed to her love for Sandu, love does not let her think logically and to end the useless sacrifice that obeyed at all times.

In "Ioana", Sandu, the male character is more mature, he "places the woman on a plane of equality". Love becomes a dialogue between partners of the same level, recognizing them the qualities that Ioana would not be never suitable for Irina's description: "Ioana is the most accomplished critic of mine (...), my equal in many subtle concerns (...), I am sure to talk with a woman for hours as to explain a shade of a draconian character is absolutely exceptional "⁷, thinking that their love is incomparable.

Ioana, the same as Irina, confesses her love to Sandu but, although he is not lower their love story can not be a happy ending. The two main characters of the novel have deep feelings for each other and trying to rebuild their relationship after a separation of three years, during which Sandu was tormented by doubts. This feeling appears the moment when Ioana starts a relationship with "the other", a close friend of his Sandu the story that down menus throughout the novel. The regret felt by Ioana gives strength to continue the relationship, but its explosive character is much different from the subject of Irina.

First Ioana is persevering with Sandu, trying to convince him that she did not feel anything for "other" and that has not stopped to love him in this period. But being tormented by his lover reproofs, it reaches a state of indifference, noting that not all struggles will never end, and the end is suggestive "I have dreamed Ahmed"⁸, Ahmed is a sign of their relationship, which ended.

The Portrait that Sandu wants to present us illustrates a beautiful woman, strong, self-confident, able to support their opinions with arguments convincing, often illustrating that "Ioana is very smart"⁹. We see a slight jealousy of Sandu on the ability demonstrated by that Ioana, feeling disappointed at the thought that it could reach the same stage whether it was he or another "teacher" them. Sandu shown pleased to be her boyfriend, his vanity is to be close to such a woman, because many of Ioana's behavior reveals its own characteristics. It is fully convinced that Ioana knows everything and still have control.

³ Holban, *A death that proves nothing*, 28

⁴ Holban, *A death that proves nothing*, 120

⁵ Holban, *A death that proves nothing*, 106

⁶ Holban, *A death that proves nothing*, 57

⁷ Anton Holban, *Ioana*, (București: Ed. Art, 2010), 175

⁸ Holban, *Ioana*, 286

⁹ Holban, *Ioana*, 133

The opinion that the other characters have of Ioana seems to be all positive. Vicky, sister of John and Rose, their cousin spent time with both. Hacik was another character who delights the couple company and all the port came to say goodbye when they heard their departure. Therefore, Ioana's external image is one that makes honesty, being a person valued by others.

Ioana is the kind of woman who sacrifices for the person whom he loves, but sees a limit between sacrificing and being happy. It is often unhappy that Sandu can not overcome her relationship with "the other" victim and that all happened because he does not love ("You don't love me Sandu"¹⁰) and realize that the women will always remain a mystery for men, finding by Sandu ("Feminine mystery ... No need to assist, as we have seen, the big events you shiver"¹¹). Ioana understands Sandu and do it everything possible to be happy together, but introspective nature, unforgiving Sandu, would try to destroy any building, which proves end of both boredom. „This love will dramatically mark the existence and will destroy the soul. But all these are minor since the novel combines both love and malice in an emotionally unbalanced passion always remains chaste, and sensuality is missing entirely"¹².

"The games of Dania" presents another vision of Sandu about the female character; he turned into a sympathetic person with his girlfriend. The role of tortured love lies this time of the hero Sandu is no longer the controller of the relationship "depends on decisions Dania, so I am inferior. What I feel humble!"¹³, the character becoming a puppet of Dania, their conversations or meetings taking place only when it wanted "... right in front of me organize their next day ... do not even think to myself"¹⁴.

The image of Dania's femininity humiliates him, he is revolted by her behavior that reveals lack of interest for him: "Princess who can claim everything, you can give her everything without you ask anything in return"¹⁵. Sandu feels inferior in terms of economic, seeing that "Dania is a very rich girl"¹⁶, coming from a rich family and enjoy everything gives life at the age of nineteen, even she can create it an image that would be in its own advantage, it is „the person she can produce wherever she needs a recognizable social mask"¹⁷.

Whole novel tells us just about any comments regarding the behavior of Dania, Sandu telling facts that attended, with much more objective than in earlier novels where the hero just supposed. He wants to be close to her, saying, "They have no sense games, Dania!"¹⁸, but it remains indifferent to his comments. The end is in agreement with the manner in which to place all the relationships, ending exactly when Dania wanted, without Sandu even have known. He needs to specify the facts that deserves an explanation and decides to call her, to make sure that signified something for her or not. But he demeans again, noting that Dania avoided talking about the reasons for their separation precisely that she wanted to happen by itself. We are dealing with the image of a woman who enjoys the most of her youth, without worrying about the worries of tomorrow.

The opposition between the two (age, economic, religious) illustrates the uncertain basis that the relationship is built from the beginning with the consequence the inevitable rupture. The other characters admire Dania, even Mady, her cousin, with whom the couple spend longer time in order not to be suspected, it reconciles Sandu whenever he feels the need to love Dania confirmation: "So

¹⁰ Holban, *Ioana*, 210

¹¹ Holban, *Ioana*, 163

¹² Ana-Maria DUDĂU, HYPOSTASIS OF NATURALISM, Annals of the „Constantin Brâncuși” University of Târgu Jiu, Letter and Social Science Series, Issue 2/2014, „ACADEMICA BRÂNCUȘI” PUBLISHER, ISSN 1844 – 6051, 61.

¹³ Anton Holban, *The Games of Dania*, (București: Ed. Art, 2010), 355

¹⁴ Holban, *The Games of Dania*, 294

¹⁵ Holban, *The Games of Dania*, 292

¹⁶ Holban, *The Games of Dania*, 301

¹⁷ Minodora Otilia SIMION, MODERNISM AND VIRGINIA WOOLF'S NOVEL MRS.DALLOWAY, Annals of the „Constantin Brâncuși” University of Târgu Jiu, Letter and Social Science Series, Issue 1/2014, „ACADEMICA BRÂNCUȘI” PUBLISHER, ISSN 1844 – 6051, 121.

¹⁸ Holban, *The Games of Dania*, 309

she is like this, not must do you mind "¹⁹ to restore peace. The reader meets a vivacious female character, regardless of the sad aspects of life.

We consider that Dania was a girl pleased of her life, enjoying the most of every moment of his life. She was stylish, being admired by those around capable of deep feelings, although it explained only when she wanted. Dania is the example only of a selfish woman who is satisfied with the superficial aspects of existence. Sandu seems to be another way to have fun and can be substituted at any time, which she did, when probably found that this is too high demands that she's not prepared to respect them.

We can thus understand the affliction of Sandu, in each of the three novels. Although his dramas are caused by various facts, his character remains uncertain and prevents him from being reconciled: "The lucidity is a chance that Holban gave it of his hero, to enable it to be saved"²⁰, but this lucidity get obsessive and stimulates Sandu to establish the communication in another manner: "The literature plays, therefore, literally and figuratively, its the last book"²¹.

All the three novels illustrate an image of femininity, influenced by the way in which the women exercise their love. However, each of these women remain both for Sandu and for the reader, one of the greatest mysteries.

Holban's heroines, and „the silhouettes" of these shall be only endless replays of an ideological project are variations on the same theme of their lack of consistency mind. The destiny of women in the novels of Anton Holban is subject to strict rules imposed by the character-narrator. We know about women's creations of Holban only as long as the narrator confesses us, however the writer leaves some open windows to get into the soul of the characters, so we can look of femininity image from both outside and inside her.

The novels of Anton Holban presents an image of femininity influenced by the way how the women express their affection and especially how Sandu, the character-narrator perceives them; so that, both the woman in Sandu's vision and the readers opinion remains an eternal mystery.

¹⁹ Holban, *The Games of Dania*, 291

²⁰ Alexandru Călinescu, *Anton Holban. The complex of lucidity*, 178

²¹ Călinescu, *Anton Holban. The complex of lucidity*, 179.

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