

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### ENCOUNTER OF DIVERSITIES

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#### ABSTRACT

In imagological context, an image has a wide receptive and information power and handles a range of related terms, such as delusions, prejudices, stereotypes, myths, mentality, and otherness. In literature, the repertoire of stereotypes, as we know, is not just for entertainment, but also teaching, it is the first step in reading literary encounters of different cultures, it is a provocative speech on intercultural communication. In *Signs near the Travel Road*, Andric spoke numerous times of one's powerlessness to create a reliable and complete image, and emphasized that the image we have of ourselves is never correct. Images that we create about ourselves, due to the complexity and inscrutability of human being, often change, as well as the subjective perceptions we have of others and which are based on the ever-changing external circumstances that often determine our point of view. In this paper we shall talk about the imagology, and about the characters of femmes fatales in Andric's work that are actually "projections" (in the psychological sense) of what others see in them, their fatality is at the level of imagined characteristics attributed by the environment, they are the mirror of someone else's dream.

**Key Words:** Comparative literature, Imagology, Encounter, Andric, Literary criticism, Femme fatale

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#### INTRODUCTION

For the West, the Balkans still represent a specific type of diversity and otherness. However, the Balkans constantly and simultaneously re-create and deny their differences in relation to the West. In imagological context, an image has a wide receptive and information power, and handles a range of related terms, such as misconceptions prejudices, stereotypes, myths, mentality, otherness, as well as in the Balkan logical terms: Balkanization, Balkan model of the world, the Balkan mentality. In this context, the Balkans is used as a metaphor, while as of the beginning of the 20th century it has a clear pejorative connotations, and it has eventually become a symbol for something halfway-developed, half-civilized, semi-oriental, aggressive, barbaric, different... Such metaphor was criticized by Maria Todorova in the book *Imaginary Balkans* (Todorova 2006: 93-100) claiming that the peculiar discourse that is called Balkanism greatly determines attitudes towards the Balkans, as well as concrete actions towards them.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Self-image and the image of the Other in literature is very significant not only for understanding the national character but also for the release from ideological views and stereotyping. In literature, the repertoire of stereotypes, as we know, is not just fun, but also for teaching, it is the first step in reading a literary meeting of different cultures, it is a provocative speech on intercultural communication. The narrative, images, prejudices and stereotypes are the key analytical tools that enable the creation of ideologized constructions of reality that can be studied through imagological interpretation of literary texts in the

interdisciplinary approach and the relation with: history, anthropology, psychology. Mikhail Bakhtin believes that a sense reveals its depth in the meeting and contact with other "foreign" meaning and that there is a dialogue between them. In such form of dialogue meeting between the two cultures they flow into one another, they are not mixed, each preserves its uniqueness and integrity, but are mutually enriching. Basically, he says that we ask the foreign culture some new questions, those it did not ask itself, and a foreign culture explains, reveals its new faces and new semantic depth. Without these questions it is impossible to creatively understand anything which is different and foreign (Bakhtin, 1980).

Literary works can affect the imaginary boundaries to become effective and the real boundaries to move. In the book *Comparative Literature* we read: "Misconceptions are transmitted faster and better than the truth"; so that with the exceptions of comparative history of what we consider as ideas 'only' History of the myths' (...) the Earth that incarnates a myth we believe in, we see as a woman we love "(Pishois, Rousseau, 1973: 89). Collective imagination even nowadays recycles "the myth of Balkan masculinity" and the creation of stereotypes about the Balkan patriarchy, as often happens in the West, but also in the Balkan countries. Nobel laureate Ivo Andric in *Signs by the Roadside* repeatedly speaks of man's powerlessness to create the reliable and complete picture, and emphasizes that the image we have of ourselves is never correct. The images that we create about ourselves, due to the complexity and inscrutability of human beings, often change, as well as subjective notions that we have about others which are based on the ever changing external circumstances that often determine our point of view. A literary critic of the second half of the 20th century, "Andricologist" Peter Džadžić can be considered a pioneer of Serbian imagological criticism in the case of texts from his literary and anthropological studies.

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Džadžić clearly laid out and thoroughly explored the world of Andrić's heroes. Interpreting *The Damned Yard* the critic inspiredly analyzes how physical forms actually reveal deeper features. He exactly observes that in Andrić's work the visible clearly indicates the invisible. Describing one's exterior Andrić leads us to thinking about the intertwining of biophysical and psychological qualities. "The feeling of inferiority makes those 'tiny, little' people tell a story that elevates them in the eyes of others. Adler's principle of compensation has here a very clear application.

The paradise each mythomaniac pictures is usually full of women. They seek confirmation of their values, which do not exist outside of their story, from the audience - passers-by who spend their time in the prison yard" (Džadžić, 1995a : 166). The characters of mythomaniacs will serve the critic as an excellent framework for the development of theories about mythomania in the Balkans in particular, an interesting two-volume study *Homo Balcanicus, Homo Heroicus I, II* in which he applied a special imagological approach - studying how the mechanisms of speech on the Other (though never once mentioned imagology in the text) *Homo Balcanicus, Homo Heroicus* illuminates the dark side of the Balkan mentality. In these books, the critic is the closest to what we today call imagological criticism which includes the so-called *autoimaginative creation* ie . the production of self-image and the image of the community. He wrote the special studies of mentality.

### Comparative Literature , femme fatale , myths and misconceptions

Džadžić studied the relationship of "us" and "the other" , "ours" and "foreign" , "me" and "a foreigner" , "the same" and "different" addressing the influence of different cultures and the problems of the interaction of these relationships in our literature. This is clearly visible in Džadžić's striving imagological interpretation of literary facts. From the matrix of folkloric-mythic consciousness develops the image of the Other with clear negative connotations in this image. In the clash with the elements of comedy and drama identity, he developed a convincing psychological profile of *homo balcanicus*. Explaining that every mythomaniac creates their desired reality by fantasy and fictional stories, therefore compensating for their shortcomings, the critic observes that unrealized and unconfirmation of mythomaniac personality is the source of inspiration for these stories. Of course, the paradise each mythomaniac fantasizes about is full of women.

In the book *Records* we read Džadžić's essay "Femme fatale" in which he describes the characters of women in the prose of Ivo Andrić, that belong to the large family of fatal women (femme fatale), that has always inspired artists, especially writers of many nations. "Femme fatale , 'negative anima' as said by Jung , 'cold and ruthless as some dangerous aspects of nature' , destined to seduce, drive insane and destroy, particularly detrimental to the opposite sex, is not just a constant theme of art literature of the world, but also a big topic of ancient mythological and religious systems" (Džadžić 1988: 47). In the aforementioned article "Femme fatale" (originally published in NIN, 25. 3. 1984) the critic inspiredly writes about the femme fatale characters -from Adam's first wife Lilith, the Assyrian goddess Ishtar, the Egyptian goddess Isis, Aphrodite and Cleopatra, over to Anika. Džadžić gives

such a broad overview of femme fatales in world literature to clearly prove the thesis of universal mythic presence of a dangerous seductress or "negative anima" in Jungian terms.

When writing about femme fatale, in the context of Andrić's works, the critic, after the abundance of examples, reaches the conclusions that *The Bridge on the Zepa* is a sublimation of Andrić's poetic ideas and his metaphysical sense of the world in miniature, whereas *Anika's Times* is a poetic recreation of female fatality, as well as the fate of women endowed with perfection of form. Sources of poetry, which are in the motif of sex as a "stigma", tumultuous traumatic core that imposes to the reality a black curtain of evil, guilt and suffering, motives in unrequited love and subconscious movement - have here, in *Anika's Times*, in the clearest form, the foundation of a real and valid psychological construction of psychoanalytic character. In *Anika's Times* Andrić sees into a woman's past, as a femme fatale who has a fatal taste of original sin: *In every woman there is a devil who is to be killed whether with work or birth or both*. Anika's character is illustrated with Andrić's variant of the "fatal woman" archetype (femme fatale) who is the cause of evil. Also, in the story, a written legend, the curse embodied in the woman spreads in real geographic area, Dobrun, the city of damned Jerina.

Thus, the mechanism of cyclic repetitions is activated on the basis of events that leads to the other, which had occurred in the past. *Anika's Times* are the expression of full creative maturity and a form of Andrić's mythical and psychological interpretation of the world, the archetypal imagination. In terms of archetypal imagination Džadžić finds the determinant of Andrić's shaping of the reality. A similar mechanism of cyclical repetition and constant return to legends, based on the paradigms of "the man who is running after a woman" or "enemy brothers", is given in the most explicit way in *Anika's Times*, as suggested by the aforementioned critic.

### Conclusion

Peter Džadžić well understood and persuasively showed a woman in Andrić's work when he said that she was "the mirror of someone else's dream" : "Not once does Andrić, in the rich orchestration of his stories, single out a woman's lust. She remains to be of scarce emotional life, a tragic being over which they voluptuously tremble, that does not tremble; does not tremble out of sensual indulgence, but is imbued with disgust, revulsion, awareness of sin, of evil." (Džadžić, 1995b: 302). Even into her death, a woman goes by one instinct of self-destruction, without a lot of words, without voice, she is more of an oriental model woman – a body, demonic incarnation of sensuality. Many of Andrić's heroes search for the ideal woman who eludes them. Andrić was interested in the position of women in patriarchal, but also in civil societies, and mostly dealt with the representation of women in the eyes and lives of men. In the story *Abuse*, as it seems, Andrić most strikingly described the image of civic life in which the heroine suffers emotional abuse which is specific in its invisibility and, at the same time, destructive force, inability of a female victim to make the environment understand her suffering. Jasmina Ahmetagić properly described her as a female victim, the one " who offers no resistance, and the cause of her passivity, except for family education, is the nobility of the soul from which emerges, disgust, and her deep sense of shame.

"(Ahmetagić, 2011: 131). The aforementioned feeling of shame Andric virtuously explains: "Maybe this is the real, big and full human disgrace, when a person is silent of disgust and stiff with shame because of what others do to them, so they do not know how and cannot defend their rights, but must, in addition to being a victim, take upon themselves to look guilty" (Andric, 1981a: 132). Describing the patriarchal Balkan image of the inferior Other, a humiliated and disenfranchised female being, reduced to zero level of worthiness, Andric pointed out, as if in a mirror, an image of a woman who takes on a spiritual figure and power that surpasses man.

The erotic is strongly expressed in Andric's stories. The Ex Ponto sentences, from the beginning of Andric's opus, indicate a great, heady, deadly symphony of sensuality: "Women, your shadow lies to the dormant desire to ascetics and sleepless desire of perverts. - If we reduced all the thoughts and aspirations of the world to their original directions and true motives, I would think that half of them would fit in the warm cavity of your armpits " (Andric, 1981b: 25). For the town a woman is a Hades' temptation, craving that brings destruction, but she is especially tragic because she is, in fact, just a "projection" (in the psychological sense ) of what others see in her, the fatality on the level of imaginary qualities which her surroundings attributed to her. Balkan mentality determines the relationship of male-female principle, and, in fact, in this encounter of diversities women and men suffer equally. In *Signs by the Roadside* Andric had noted that in this society we suffer all equally, both women and men, but the roles are divided, somehow like this: When men suffer because of women, it is almost always because women are not what they would like them to be.

When women suffer because of men, it is because they are what they are. Although the writer positively depicts women, the characters that appear on the pages of literature depict a woman as the Other - as a being preoccupied with her femininity and sexuality, a being fundamentally different from a man.

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