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BIENVENUE/WELCOME

C'est un grand plaisir d'introduire ce numéro de *Confetti* et de fêter toutes des étudiantes dans le programme de Maîtrise ès arts en littératures et cultures du monde au Département des langues et littératures modernes à l'Université d'Ottawa. The journal's title evokes not only the celebration of our students' rich talents but also the multicoloured, joyful diversity that marks the essence of our program.

La Maîtrise est un programme d'études interdisciplinaire et bilingue en sciences humaines qui offre une formation centrée sur la recherche et l'évaluation des formes de contacts, de relations et d'échanges multiculturels, interculturels et transculturels. The students in the program and the faculty members involved with it come from a broad range of academic disciplines and cultural backgrounds. Our shared passion for studying cultural expressions from around the world complements our immense diversity of approaches, and this combination leads to exciting and often unexpected synergies. Dans l'atmosphère intime de nos séminaires, nous apprenons les uns des autres et nous nous posons des défis intellectuels. In one short year, the faculty and student members of the program get to know and collaborate with each other in the development of the students' individual research programs. Some of the fruits of that labour are presented here.

Mes collègues et moi sommes très, très fières/fiers des éditrices et auteurs de *Confetti* et je tiens à les féliciter pour cette excellente initiative.

Joerg Esleben
Directeur du département, langues et littératures modernes
Department Chair, Modern Languages and Literatures

It is my honour and great pleasure as the director of this program to make a few introductory remarks to the 2019 issue of our journal, created entirely by our students, which showcases their research and explorations in the areas of literature and culture. Ceci reflète nos étudiant(e)s de la Maîtrise ès arts en littératures et cultures du monde, un programme unique au Canada et au monde : bilingue, interdisciplinaire et dynamique.

On trouve ici une collection variée et riche. Kaila Desjardins discusses the representation of Post-traumatic stress disorder and other forms of mental illness the popular television show, *Game of Thrones*. Kareem Khadr analyzes SoundClap rap through a close reading of the lyrics of this new musical genre. Raymond Auclair propose une analyse littéraire d'un travail orientaliste. Rebecca Cook examines issues relating to sustainability within Indigenous communities. Solomiya Ostapyk looks at representations of the « gypsy » in film as an expression of orientalism. Anna Pellerin Petrova propose une analyse féministe de la chanson folklorique bulgare.

Au nom de tous les professeurs dans ce programme, je voudrais féliciter le groupe pour ce merveilleux projet. This volume underlines the dynamism of our students and we are very proud of their accomplishments.

Rebecca Margolis
Directrice, Maîtrise ès arts en littératures et cultures du monde
Director, Master of Arts in World Literatures and Cultures

**In the Public Eye – or Ear: Character and Behaviour in
Pop Culture**

**Aux yeux – où à l'oreille – du public : La personnalité et
le comportement dans la culture populaire**

The Significance of a Trauma Survivor: The Representation of PTSD in HBO's *Game of Thrones*

By Kaila Desjardins

Abstract

Mass media plays an important role in the dissemination of information regarding post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other forms of mental illness. The portrayal of characters with PTSD on television shows such as *Game of Thrones* (*GoT*) has the potential to deliver educational and therapeutic benefits; it is important for individuals who have not had exposure to the disorder to see others experience it, and watching someone go through trauma can help those who have lived through their own. While he has not been diagnosed, this paper postulates that *GoT* character Theon Greyjoy has PTSD, and it examines the representation of this illness in the popular television program. This postulation is based on Theon's experiences and behaviours as well as on the five criteria identified for the diagnosis of PTSD outlined in the *Diagnosis and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, fifth edition (*DSM-V*).

The Home Box Office television series *Game of Thrones* (*GoT*) is known for its violent battles, controversial romances, and sexually explicit scenes. There are more than a dozen complex main characters with ever changing morals, often making it difficult for audiences to fully love or fully hate them. This is true of Theon Greyjoy, a lord from the Iron Islands of the country Westeros (an "ironborn"), who fights alongside his best friend, betrays him, and gets captured and tortured. His journey is long, hard, and not one from which he emerges unscathed. Indeed, as the seasons rolled by, it became evident to a number of viewers – myself included – that Theon can be diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a main character on a popular show, Theon is arguably an important emblem for people who have been diagnosed with PTSD or another mental illness. The way he views himself, the way others treat him, and the way he copes or does not cope with his illness can help or harm audiences' understanding of such

illnesses. Furthermore, the trauma he experiences helps create empathy within those who have not undergone such an event, as they often find it hard to believe that someone who has experienced it is not exaggerating the severity of the event and its after-effects (McNally 203-204). The representation of PTSD in *Game of Thrones* is thus important and necessary to promote empathy towards people with mental illnesses, as well as to encourage self-love and hope in people who have one, because Theon's journey calls attention to the day-to-day lives of real people who struggle to be heard and understood.

Unfortunately, scholarly work on *GoT* is scarce. What has been written typically analyzes the portrayal of its female, not male, characters, often in relation to gender and sex. As a result, the scholarly material in this paper comes from more general articles that discuss mental health and PTSD, rather than mental health/PTSD *and GoT*. There are other sources that deal with both, but these come in the form of fan articles and interviews with the cast and crew of the show. Regardless of the lack of scholarly sources on *GoT*, the sources that pertain to the topic discussed here provide a valuable insight into Theon's journey and its impact on audiences.

Before analyzing Theon, it is important to understand what PTSD is and how someone comes to be diagnosed with it. PTSD became an official diagnosable illness after the Vietnam war, when psychiatrists started to believe the war itself was what caused mental health issues, rather than something pre-existing being heightened by it (McNally 179-180). After conducting more studies, medical professionals realized the same set of symptoms in war veterans with PTSD can appear in those who have experienced other "terrifying, life-threatening stressors," such as sexual abuse (McNally 181). Since, five criteria have been identified for the diagnosis of PTSD and are included in the *Diagnosis and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, fifth edition (*DSM-V*): A) "[e]xposure [sic] to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence" by experiencing it themselves, seeing someone else experience it, learning a close family member

or friend has experienced it, or repeatedly being exposed to details of traumatic events (as a first responder would be; McNally 188); B) intrusion, meaning the patient experiences their symptoms repeatedly; C) avoidance of anything that can bring back the experience of the trauma; D) cognition and mood changes, such as numbing, blaming, and negative emotions that impact daily life; and E) change to arousal and reactivity, resulting in phenomena such as hypervigilance or recklessness (McNally 181-182). For a diagnosis to be possible, Criterion A must be present, while symptoms in the other criteria have to occur for more than one month and regularly impact daily life (McNally 181, 182). As will be made clear, Theon fits the criteria and the time stipulation for such a diagnosis to be made.

To be clear, Theon has not been diagnosed in the show itself. While other fans have stipulated that he does have PTSD, it is in no way official. Therefore, I postulate that Theon has PTSD rather than declare it, based on the *DSM-V*, and on the character's experiences and behaviours.

The trauma Theon experiences is intense, violent, and effective, as it not only physically harms him, but results in the creation of the obedient and unquestioning Reek, the persona attributed to Theon by his abuser. According to Lilla Hárđi and Adrienn Kroó, torture is designed “to cause severe pain and suffering in order to destroy the structure of the personality and the identity of the victim” (133), and to make the victim “accept the torturer’s construction of reality and become submissive” (134). It is clear in the pilot episode that Theon is over-confident and cocky, and the audience slowly watches this dissolve while he is being tortured. From the moment he is tied to a cross and physically harmed (“Dark Wings, Dark Words”), to the moment he declares “My name is... Reek” (“Mhysa” 20:41), *GoT* adheres to the design of torture as outlined above. In the episode “Dark Wings, Dark Words,” the audience gets a glimpse of Theon’s future while he is interrogated and tortured. Theon screams and begs to no avail, wearing

away at his confidence and willpower. At least five people are in the room witnessing this infliction of pain, perhaps with the goal of showing Theon that no one cares about what he is going through. Thus begins the process of destroying his identity from someone of high status to someone who means nothing.

In the same episode and the two to follow (“Walk of Punishment” and “And Now His Watch is Ended”), Theon is given false hope by an unknown man, later revealed to be Ramsay Snow, who ordered Theon’s torture and is his principal abuser. Ramsay acts the part of a sympathetic servant, aghast at what the others are doing to Theon, and helps him “escape.” When Ramsay comes to untie him in “Walk of Punishment,” Theon’s breathing accelerates in panic before seeing who it is. This suggests he has been trained to believe that when someone enters the room, pain will follow. However, when he is taken off the cross, Theon’s confidence returns and he is determined to escape, proving he has not been broken as of yet. Ramsay proves time and again on this “escape” that he can be trusted to the point where Theon divulges politically important information to him in “And Now His Watch is Ended.” Believing Ramsay to be taking him to his older sister, Yara, Theon is horrified when he is brought back to the torture room instead. Before being tied up, Ramsay orders new torturers to “[p]ut [Theon] back where he belongs” (“And Now His Watch is Ended” 22:48). As a result, Theon is remade a victim, is shown he cannot put faith in those who show him kindness, and is told that he is good for nothing but to be tortured. So continues the endeavour to debase and dehumanize him.

These episodes are followed by more torture, most significantly maiming. In “The Climb”, Ramsay provides Theon with a false hope of avoiding physical harm through a guessing game in which Theon must guess where they are and who his abuser is. Despite initially telling him he guessed correctly, Ramsay maims Theon’s hand, revealing Theon guessed incorrectly. Theon is therefore shown again that he cannot trust anyone, and that Ramsay will hurt him no

matter what he does. The second episode involves Ramsay using women and sex against Theon, two things Theon is known to love. When two women approach him, Theon is terrified and frantically asks, “[w]here is he?... Who sent you?” while searching for signs of his tormentor (“The Bear and the Maiden Fair” 36:15, 36:33). He slowly relaxes and becomes at ease, only to have Ramsay blow a bugle horn, used in “The Climb” to wake him from sleep, to interrupt the moment. Ramsay states, “Everyone knows you love girls. I bet you always thought they loved you back” (“The Bear and the Maiden Fair” 39:30), debasing Theon to someone who is not loveable. The scene ends with a sort of punishment for Theon being who he is when Ramsay has a few men cut off Theon’s penis. In doing so, he is stripped of an aspect of himself that had come to define him.

The next time we see Theon, he is desperate for Ramsay to kill him. When Ramsay refuses him, we see that Theon is broken by the knowledge of having to live. It is at this moment that Ramsay comes in and deals the final blow, forcing Theon to accept the name Reek, because he is, according to Ramsay, “just... meat” (“Mhysa” 19:30), not a person. To return to the aims of torture put forward by Hárði and Kroó, Ramsay “causes severe pain” to tear down Theon’s identity (133), makes him “helpless, intimidated... and desperate” (133), and makes Theon “accept [his own] construction of reality,” one in which Theon is nothing more than his submissive pet (134).

The effects of this dehumanizing torture take a mental and physical toll on Theon. He hardly makes eye contact with anyone, especially Ramsay; he constantly twitches and rarely blinks; he follows Ramsay around and does what he’s told; and his eyes seem distant, as though he has retreated into himself. He is frequently reminded of his worthlessness by Ramsay and others around him with titles like “pet rat” (“The Lion and the Rose” 12:57), and “this creature” (“The Lion and the Rose” 13:28). He is even reminded that he is not “Theon” but “Reek” when

Ramsay forces him to play the part of his former self to reclaim a holdfast for Ramsay's father ("The Mountain and the Viper"). As a result, Theon steadfastly declares he is Reek when faced with people from his past. When Yara tries to rescue him and calls him "Theon," he, terrified, yells, "I'm Reek! Loyal Reek! Good Reek! I've always been Reek!" ("The Laws of Gods and Men" 13:33) Later, when Sansa Stark, a young lady with whom Theon grew up and who is like a younger sister to him, asks for help to escape Ramsay herself, he again insists that he is Reek, not Theon ("The Gift" 6:55-6:57). This aligns with a further point from Hárði and Kroó, which claims "the internalization of the torturer's attitude... has severe consequences concerning the survivor's self-image, self-esteem, and identity" (133). As Theon believes he is Reek and sees himself as nothing more than Ramsay's loyal pet, he demonstrates how torture is internalized, going beyond physical harm and encroaching on a person's mental life.

Eventually, Sansa's dire situation spurs Theon into helping her escape Winterfell, the seat of Westeros' North, held by Ramsay, and escaping with her. During this scene, Theon makes willing and steady eye contact with her, suggesting he is ready to shed Reek and reclaim Theon ("Mother's Mercy"). However, being physically removed from the situation does not mean Theon has escaped from the effects of years of torture. This is where the evidence of PTSD begins to arise. It is without question that Theon has experienced a traumatic event, satisfying Criterion A. Criterion B, persistent symptoms, are shown a number of times after he and Sansa escape Winterfell. The symptoms are especially visible when he and Yara are in Volantis, a city outside Westeros in which they hide from their vengeful uncle, Euron, in the episode "The Broken Man". While the siblings sit in a marketplace surrounded by prostitutes, Theon jumps every time one comes near him, avoids eye contact with them, and constantly glances over his shoulder. This suggests he is recalling the false seduction before his castration in "The Bear and the Maiden Fair", triggering the re-emergence of his symptoms. According to McNally, his

behaviour in the marketplace also fits with Criterion C, avoidance. Not only does he avoid the women themselves, he tries to avoid what they make him think of, even if there is no suggestion of harm. Fear from trauma can resurface at any point, especially when the stressor was “unpredictable and uncontrollable”, two things Ramsay makes certain of. As a result, Theon’s mind is constantly vigilant to possible threats because he never knew when they would come while being tortured (McNally 191-192). In the presence of women trying to seduce him, this fear would only be heightened, and the lack of eye contact physically displays his avoidance strategy. Moreover, since Theon is hypervigilant to any advances and on edge, this scene also demonstrates Criterion E.

The remaining criterion, Criterion D, is less overt. However, Theon constantly reminds others that he has done bad things in the past, putting himself down. Had he not captured Winterfell and subsequently killed two children, believed by the public to be the brothers of the King in the North, there is a chance Theon would not have been captured by Ramsay’s men. As a result, Theon’s negative and blameful mind frame can relate to his trauma if he sees his past deeds as a direct cause of it. By being in this mindset, Theon satisfies the final Criterion.

Evidently, from our point of view, Theon’s trauma is lasting and pervasive. The symptoms outlined above appear not only while he is Ramsay’s captive, but months and years after his escape. However, not all the show’s characters see it this way, nor do select viewers. Turning again to the marketplace scene in “The Broken Man,” Yara urges Theon to return to who he once was by telling him, “I know you’ve had some bad years... But I’m tired of watching you cower like a beat dog” (35:59-36:05), and, “I need you. The real Theon Greyjoy, not this rat-shit pretender. Can you find him for me?... You [escaped] and you’re never going back” (36:11-36:28). To top it off, she tells him, albeit gently, to kill himself if he cannot fix the problem (36:44-36:56). Yara exemplifies the belief that those who have PTSD should be able to simply

move past the trauma. Similarly, a number of audience members took to Twitter proclaiming Theon a “coward” and a “selfish man” after he jumps ship during the battle at sea in “Stormborn” when he sees Euron has a knife to Yara’s throat and Euron’s men are killing everyone on board (Willingham). Yara’s reaction may simply display the attitude ironborn have towards trauma, but the audience reactions prove why Theon’s experience is important to show in today’s society: not enough people understand that PTSD is not something you can simply get over, potentially in part because of characters like Yara who proclaim otherwise.

Not exempt from the assumption that Theon could return to his former self after a few years of distance are the show’s creators. In an interview following the episode “Stormborn,” creator and writer D.B. Weiss addressed why it was necessary for Theon to leave Yara to Euron. Weiss noted how he and the other writers “realized that you don’t just get over what happened to Theon, that’s something that’s... going to be a part of him for the rest of his life” (“Inside Game of Thrones”). Upon realizing this, it makes sense for Theon to escape the confines of the burning vessel as he watches Euron’s men torture Yara’s and kill for fun. Euron even emulates Ramsay in this scene with a gleeful look in his eyes in response to the carnage. Theon is visibly affected, and reverts to Reek before us – his eyes glaze over in retreat, he stops blinking, he twitches, he avoids eye contact, and his breathing becomes ragged. Once away from the ship, he is calmer albeit sad, with his eyes more focused and his breathing returned to normal. This moment displays what some people go through when their PTSD is triggered, thus providing a learning opportunity for *GoT* fans who have not had exposure to PTSD.

This scene depicts what Alfie Allen, the actor who plays Theon, calls “conflicting emotions” between the battle confidence he seems to have regained, and the torment he associates with violence and blood (Morton). This is perhaps in part why viewers believed Theon to be cowardly when he jumps. Between Volantis and the battle on the ship, Theon’s confidence

grows. Yara looks to him for advice and protection; he makes eye contact with most everyone, including powerful strangers like Queen Daenerys in “Battle of the Bastards”; his posture is better, standing straight with his head held high rather than hunched over; and he fights well in the first moments of the ship battle. However, none of this prepares him to face his biggest triggers – senseless killing and psychopathic torturers – and so there should not have been the expectation that he would not react negatively to them. In PTSD, “[r]ecollection of the [original traumatic] event is involuntary, intrusive, and emotionally distressing, more akin to reliving it than merely recalling it” (McNally 181). Theon is thus faced with the choice of continuing to relive the horrors of his trauma or to escape them, thereby relieving his distress. His decision to leave also recalls the criteria of PTSD, namely the intrusive nature of the symptoms and avoidance. As the battle occurs years after his escape from Winterfell, *GoT* outlines how people with PTSD can experience the effects of their trauma for a long time.

This nuanced and convincing portrayal of a mental illness and of living with it is important for modern audiences to watch. Since it is such a realistic display of PTSD, people who do not have the disease are able to better understand why and how it occurs, as well as come to see that trauma is not something easily forgotten, no matter how hard one tries.

Though the remainder of the paper discusses the importance of the portrayal of PTSD in *GoT* as an educational tool for those who do not have it or who are not exposed to it and as a therapeutic output for those who do have PTSD, simply watching the show does not guarantee either of these benefits. In other words, an educational framework accompanying the series may be needed, such as videos about PTSD featuring characters like Theon, before some viewers can appreciate the portrayal or become aware of the presence of the mental illness in the show. Furthermore, the therapeutic benefits are strictly a potentiality in that they hinge upon viewers

identifying Theon as someone with PTSD. Therefore, the place Theon may hold in raising awareness for and helping people cope with PTSD is entirely viewer-dependent.

Television plays a central role in the distribution of knowledge on and around mental health, especially such wide-spread shows as *GoT*. Anne E. Robbins notes in her dissertation, *A Role for Media in Reducing the Stigma of Mental Illness*, that “mass media are considered the primary source” of information when it comes to mental illness, especially for those “who have had no direct experience with [it]” (23). She goes on to explain how the portrayal of mental illness and the stereotypes that surround it in television impact how audiences act towards mental health and illness, meaning negative portrayals can be damaging for people who live with a mental illness (Robbins 24). Her dissertation discusses how most portrayals are negative in one way or another, and how mass media needs to correct this to improve patients’ “life chances and recovery possibilities” (Stuart qtd. in Robbins 37). Theon is an important figure in this fight against negative portrayals of mental illnesses, because of the accuracy and the sympathetic approach taken. This is not to say the portrayal is perfect; Theon refers to himself as a “coward” for leaving Yara (“The Dragon and the Wolf” 49:34), other ironborn see him as craven, etc. That said, Theon’s life with PTSD shows how he is not dangerous (a common misconception about people with a mental illness; Robbins 26), and illustrates how he can live a relatively normal life in spite of it.

It is not just speculation that characters like Theon have a positive impact for the outlook on mental illness. Kim Renfro admits in her article “In Defense of Theon Greyjoy and His Actions During This Week’s Big ‘Game of Thrones’ Battle” that she was initially frustrated with Theon for jumping ship. She believed this was a sign that he is losing progress as a character because he had shown confidence in earlier episodes. However, her opinion changed after taking to Twitter and finding positive feedback for the scene. She quotes @GameOverRos, who

tweeted, “One person I haven’t credited with Theon’s scene - @b_cogman [the writer of “Stormborn”]. Thank you. You did mental illness right. And I’m proud to be a fan today.” From words like these, Renfro believes the audience needs to consider how Theon’s journey is representative of someone with PTSD rather than an act of cowardice, even if those come to be Theon’s own words. Allen has also had people come up to him and tell him their personal stories. One that he recounts in an interview comes from a woman who is abused by her husband. She told Allen “[Theon’s abuse is] not pathetic, and it gives me strength,” which made him understand that he has “responsibilities as an actor” (Willingham). It is thus undeniably necessary that the depiction of trauma and life post-trauma on television must be treated with care and respect because it has a real impact on audiences beyond a disturbing moment in an entertaining production.

Theon’s significance is further noted by professionals. AJ Willingham discussed trauma shown on *GoT* with therapist, relationship coach, and writer Sharie Stines. Stines explains how triggers can result in a person who has experienced trauma splitting into personas, what she calls “modes”, to protect themselves. This is why Reek emerges on the ship, as he can best protect Theon when he faces some of his worst triggers. Therefore, by having Theon revert to Reek, Cogman and the team portrayed a realistic element of PTSD to millions of viewers world-wide, teaching them about the illness without explicitly saying so. Furthermore, Stines asserts that people who have lived through trauma can be helped by watching someone go through their own (Willingham). Hence, the woman who approached Allen is not the only one to receive strength through Theon’s experiences. This vicarious interaction helps some trauma survivors work through self-belittling and show them that they are not alone in how they feel. Ergo, Theon presents not only a potential means to teach people about the real consequences of PTSD, but also a potential source of therapeutic relief.

Despite these positives, could the depiction of Theon actually be harmful for the perceptions of PTSD and other mental illnesses? Perhaps, especially when diction is taken into consideration. There is a frequent use of, and allusion to the word “coward” in relation to Theon’s actions. This makes it seem as though Theon chooses to be afraid and to avoid violent situations, ignoring the presence of triggers. This word could make people with PTSD and other trauma-related illnesses feel misunderstood or worthless. It can also teach people who do not have contact with these illnesses that trauma is not something someone should harbour forever, as though it is an active decision. This interpretation would align Theon with the negative portrayals of mental illness addressed by Robbins. She notes that it is not only violence and physical difference that can alienate viewers from these characters, but the language associated with them. According to H. Stuart, negative terminology “denigrate[s], segregate[s], alienate[s] and denote[s]... inferior status” (qtd. in Robbins 27). If terminology is used in productions to belittle specific characters in the eyes of other characters, it is understandable that someone with a mental illness watching the action could feel attacked. Moreover, it would come as no surprise for someone without an illness to begin using similarly negative diction towards someone who is mentally ill.

Despite this possibility, even the scenes that use negative language to describe Theon’s actions do not, by their end, portray him as inferior. The last use of the word “coward” in reference to Theon is when he rallies his men to save Yara from Euron in “The Dragon and the Wolf,” the season seven finale. In this scene, he is confident when he stands up to ironborn Harrag, who refuses to take orders from the man who abandoned Yara out of what Harrag believes to be weakness. He physically and verbally attacks Theon and says he will kill him if Theon does not stand down. Instead, Theon fights back. Even a consequence of Theon’s torture – his castration – becomes a strength when Harrag knees him in the groin with no result, confusing

him and giving Theon the upper hand. Theon's actions suggest he is something other than cowardly, therefore negating the term he uses moments before his display of fortitude. Overall, this scene, especially in comparison to the final moments in "Stormborn," proves that someone with PTSD is not weak, only unexpectedly triggered.

Another positive impact Theon can have on viewers is in regards to those who have been bullied. Though not a form of intense torture like he undergoes, bullying can be psychologically damaging and make a victim feel less-than. When a victim, particularly a child, does not live up to societal norms for behaviour and interaction, which are frequently altered as a result of their experiences, they are punished by society by way of exclusion (Hunka 83, 89). This is because the "onus [is] on the [victim] to participate in civic life... unless she connects, gives... she will be deemed a failure" (Hunka 89). This is much like how Yara expects Theon should return to his pre-trauma self as though nothing has happened, which ultimately makes Theon believe the same. The onus is placed on him to get better, to think of revenge, what Yara promises him in "The Broken Man," later, and concentrate on different matters in the present. However, his perception of the world is different from what it used to be, different from someone who has not been traumatized, and Yara, as well as the audience, should respect that (Hunka 89). Someone who was or is being bullied is likely to appreciate this and see a link between what they experienced and what Theon experiences, at least a little, since, again, his torture is not the same as being bullied. *GoT* thus presents another mirror for someone who is struggling, and they can become inspired as they watch Theon find strength to stand up against people who would do him or his family harm.

For Emily Hunka, a big step in coping with trauma like bullying is to find a support group and to know that there are people who care about you. She says this is where "children [read: bullying victims] can acquire stronger chances at happiness," along with other coping strategies

(88). I highlight this strategy in particular, for it pertains to Theon's journey. As previously explained, Ramsay convinces Theon that no one cares about him. Part of Theon's healing, then, is to prove to himself that others do in fact care, and that he has people he can trust. From the outset, he knows he can rely on Yara, since she is the only one who attempted a rescue while he was Ramsay's captive ("The Dragon and the Wolf" 48:01-48:21). Importantly, though, the audience witnesses Jon Snow, one of Theon's best friends and member of the family Theon betrayed, say to him, "It's not my place to forgive you for all of [the bad you've done]. But what I can forgive, I do" ("The Dragon and the Wolf" 47:35). While not in reference to the trauma Theon faced, this forgiveness deeply touches him and, I believe, lends him strength to face Hurrig in the next scene. As Hunka states, "a genuine wellbeing is dependent on others... without any requirement to work for it" (101-102). This helps us cope with hardships, find strength where we did not think we had any, and believe in ourselves. Though Theon had to work for forgiveness for his betrayals, Jon's friendly demeanour implies that Theon will have his support from now on, without the need to prove himself time and again. M. Başıoğlu also discusses the importance of social support, claiming a lack of it can result in "helplessness and hopelessness", leading to "anxiety and depression" (Hárdi and Kroó 136). The strength gained from social interaction is visible in Theon, who proves capable of believing in himself with the knowledge that he has Yara, Jon, and perhaps Sansa, who places her implicit trust in him upon their escape from Winterfell.

By displaying Theon finding a social circle and people who care about him, *GoT* may be providing hope for people who feel they have none. Theon is debased, devalued, and torn down for years to a point where it almost appeared as though he would not make it out alive. To see him rise and live despite the trauma and his PTSD is inspirational, and proves that being hurt by someone else does not mean you are not worthy of relationships. While there is a good amount of

work to do, especially in regards to how Yara views him, the confidence she has in him and the kindness shown to him by Jon are enough for him to counter feelings of unworthiness, and hopefully do the same for people with similar feelings who watch him.

Theon's journey is not over yet, with the final season of *GoT* set to air in April 2019. This gives plenty of opportunity to have Theon change his opinions about himself and his triggered actions, to have other characters stop perceiving him as weak, and for him to take next steps in treating his PTSD. Though the first two may be optimistic, it being the notoriously painful *GoT*, after all, the third is easily achievable. Hárði and Kroó discuss treatment models and therapies that help trauma survivors and people with PTSD better cope with stressors and triggers. They claim that in all treatment models, telling another person the story and the emotions around it can help someone who went through a traumatic experience make sense of and assign meaning to it (Hárði and Kroó 137). As of yet, Theon has not divulged much information to anyone, although he may have done so off screen to Yara prior to "The Broken Man." Since there is no concrete information of such a discussion taking place, it seems unlikely. As such, opening up may help Theon view himself as something other than a coward – perhaps as a survivor, a fighter, and someone who can be redeemed from the bad things he did prior to his capture.

By portraying Theon as a complex, troubled character with charms and flaws, the writers of *GoT* have created a character with whom the audience can sympathize. While not everyone has empathy for him at all times, particularly when he is triggered, the remaining episodes have time to prove that mental illness is not something that simply "goes away" and that someone can "get over" traumatic experiences once they are physically removed from the situation. Moreover, the positive feedback the show has received suggests that more characters with properly represented mental illnesses are needed in popular culture. If Theon has helped people cope with their own trauma, to find hope for themselves, or to find someone with whom to relate, should

there not be more like him in fictional worlds? Sympathetic characters like Theon Greyjoy are needed in the fight against the stigma around mental illness because they prove that it can impact anyone, be triggered at unexpected times, and that those who have an illness are worthy of our care and support for one simple reason – they are human, too.

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Artists & Artisans: A Critical Discourse Analysis of SoundCloud Rap

By Kareem Khadr

Abstract

The following paper examines what sort of influence is being exerted through the discourse reproduced in one of the newest waves in the Hip-Hop/Rap genre, SoundCloud Rap. SoundCloud Rap could be categorized as one of the few competing sub-genres that opposes themes of authenticity which “gatekeepers” of original Hip-Hop/Rap attribute to the genre’s earlier days. In this paper, a close reading of the lyrics from the most listened to SoundCloud Rap songs of 2017 and 2018 is performed to determine if SoundCloud Rap demonstrates the formulaic structure and promotion of certain social practices, ideologies and themes that are characteristic of “mainstream” popular culture hegemonic products.

Introduction

In June 2017, The New York Times published an article revealing the newest wave in the Hip-Hop/Rap genre to a more general audience, known as SoundCloud Rap (Caramanica, 2017). SoundCloud is presented as a streaming service oriented towards musical discovery, with a low barrier of entry for aspiring artists. The new wave takes its name after the streaming service since it serves as the platform for the artists behind the most recent “vital and disruptive movement in hip-hop”. The music is described as “low-fidelity” and “insistent” referring to its substandard production quality and repetitive beats, while the artists are described as “outlandish characters” known for their face tattoos, dyed hair, high fashion streetwear and prescription drug use.

The history of the Hip-Hop/Rap genre and its subsequent surrounding culture is well known. Emerging during the 1970s as an expressive art form commenting on the social, economic and political disparities of New York’s oppressed inner-city youth (Price III, 2006), Hip-Hop has now become a multibillion dollar institution of the music industry. SoundCloud Rap is no exception, as major recording labels “hover” over SoundCloud to sign new artists

(Caramanica, 2017). Hip-Hop/Rap culture has evolved to represent a wide range of communities from differing races, ages, and social classes, thus growing beyond its “sub-cultural roots” (Kotarba et al., 2013). SoundCloud Rap could be categorized as one of the few competing sub-genres that opposes themes of authenticity which “gatekeepers” of original Hip-Hop/Rap attribute to the genre’s earlier days.

At the turn of the century, the Hip-Hop/Rap genre was the best-selling genre of popular music (Neal, 2002), meaning it had surpassed the realm of youth culture, into a product shaped for “commercialized mainstream consumption”. When music becomes labelled “mainstream”, it is often viewed as a representation of a hegemony (Huber, 2013). The case can be made that SoundCloud Rap, is a hegemonic product of the music industry that exerts an influence over its millions of consumers world-wide. Therefore, one question that should be asked is: what sort of influence is being exerted through the discourse reproduced in SoundCloud Rap? The aim of this paper, is to perform a close reading of the lyrics from the most listened to SoundCloud Rap songs through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis to determine answers to the following questions: (1) Do the songs follow a formulaic structure characterized by the homogeneity and inauthenticity (Huber, 2013) of commercial “mainstream” hegemonic cultural products? (2) Does its content promote certain social practices, ideologies or themes that may contribute to its listeners’ personal deprivation, misery or denial of a pursuit towards a fulfilling life (Lê and Lê, 2009)?

Defining Popular Culture & Popular Music

The concept of “popular culture” has been defined in many contradictory ways (Bennet, 1980), therefore it is up to the user of the concept to define it within a given context, often by contrasting it to other “conceptual categories” (Storey, 2006). Williams (1983) identifies four reoccurring definitions of the term “popular culture” in relation to cultural products: (1) products

well-liked by many people, (2) products of inferior quality, (3) products created to gain favor with the general population, and (4) products created in the interest of the general population. The definition of “popular culture” that should be applied in the context of this paper is a blend of William’s first three definitions, or put simply, popular culture as “mass culture”. This definition defines popular culture as a “formulaic”, “manipulative” and a “commercial” enterprise produced for “brain-numbing” consumption by an audience that is “non-discriminating” (Storey, 2006). Another useful definition of popular culture in reference to the context of this paper could be popular culture as a “form of public fantasy”, meaning that popular culture represents a “dream world” that provides an everyday escape for the consumer (Storey, 2006). To complete our definition of popular culture, it must be contrasted with the other conceptual categories that are absent from the term being used. Popular culture and its products, in this context, are lacking the complex, authentic, moral, aesthetic and creative aspects that would be found in, for example, a youth or counter culture. Those who use the “mass culture” definition of popular culture are said to have a certain “lost organic community” in mind (Storey, 2006) when reflecting upon the history of a given culture. This is observed through the “gatekeepers” of the Hip-Hop/Rap genre who reflect upon its subcultural roots as its “lost organic community”, however, it is not the aim of the paper to apply our definition of “popular culture” to the entirety of the genre today, rather it is to determine if the definition, as well as the term “popular music”, applies to the SoundCloud Rap wave.

Compatible with our definition of “popular culture”, “popular music” is equated to “commercially mass produced music for a mass market” (Shuker, 2001). Being a product of mass production, popular music is, in this context, a “highly standardized commodity” and not a creative expression of personal or group identity (Edgar and Sedgwick, 2008). Popular songs are described as formulaic, superficial, and made for passive consumption. Although they are

described as uncreative expressions of identity, they are identity forming nonetheless (Hall and Whannel, 1964), since they have been observed as an instrument used to deal with emotional difficulties. In contrast, “authentic music”, a product of for example “youth-culture”, is described as conveying innovative, individualized expressions of an artist that reflect certain values belonging to a subcultural group that the artist identifies with (Edgar and Sedgwick, 2008). Rap music is the undisputed “creative force” of Hip-Hop/Rap culture (Kotarba et al., 2013), therefore it is justified to perform a lyrical analysis of SoundCloud’s most played songs to determine what sort of identity is being constructed, and what sort of meaning is being conveyed to its listeners. Specifically, as a “highly standardized commodity”, SoundCloud Rap should be analyzed as representative of the music industry’s political economy of popular music: an identity forming instrument that maintains a hegemony between a controlling music industry and compliant consuming audience.

Hip-Hop/Rap as “Mainstream”

As previously stated, the Hip-Hop/Rap genre emerged as a black subculture of the generation that followed the civil rights movement, highlighting the struggles of their inner-city experience during the 1970s. The genre was quick to be embraced by a variety of communities, leading to several subcultural spin-offs of the genre, however it was also quick to be transformed into a global commodity by the music industry’s corporations. Corporations began to guide the creative process of the genre, offering up a product that satisfied the “voyeuristic demands” of a middle-class consumer society, described as “totally removed” from rap music’s themes of poverty, drug dealing and violence (Kotarba et al., 2013). The creativity and social consciousness of oppressed Black Americans that marked the early days of the genre was forgotten as the music industry framed the Black American as anything but creative or complex as the genre became mainstream (Bynoe, 2004). Hip-Hop enthusiasts detested the mainstream movement and image

the music industry was creating out of the genre (Harrison, 2009), such as popular 1980s rapper KRS-One (Forman, 2013). He suggested that the mainstream movement of Hip-Hop/Rap compromised the culture as it restricted the “genuine cultural expression” of the artists, who instead have shifted their focus to “commercial self-interest”. Although this concern is not unanimous amongst the audience and artists of the genre today (Forman, 2013), it is undeniable that the genre fits the categorization as “mainstream” by contemporary standards (Huber, 2013) through its dominating presence on digital platforms (streaming services, social media) that we are exposed to daily.

Critical Discourse Analysis: Analyzing SoundCloud Rap

Critical Discourse Analysis aims to address social problems that are created as the result of a hegemonic relationship between groups of differing social power (Lê and Lê, 2009). Social power is associated with a given group or institution that exerts social control over a group of lesser power through a given resource. A discourse that is controlled by an institution of greater social power over a lesser group exerts a certain ideological work by influencing the “acts” and “minds” of the “lesser” people (Van Dijk, 2004). The discourse shapes the consumer’s ideologies, values, attitudes and social practices in relation to certain situations and environments. In the case of SoundCloud Rap, a power relation can be observed between the music industry, the artists and creators belonging to the genre, and the listeners. The music industry is perceived as the institution with the greatest social power in this dynamic as they have been observed to guide the creative process of Hip-Hop/Rap music (Kotarba et al., 2013) to the point where some artists have commented that there is a restriction in the representational options (Forman, 2013). The restriction is driven by “commercial self-interest”, thus limiting authentic cultural expressions of Hip-Hop/Rap culture. Artists and creators are thus below the music industry in terms of social power, but above the consumer of the cultural product, in this case, the audience of SoundCloud

rap. The consumed music, its associated culture and commodities shape the listeners identity and serve as an important resource for dealing with emotional transitions (Hall and Whannel, 1964). The most listened to songs of SoundCloud Rap are the controlled resource, as it is the discourse embodied as text that mediates the listeners relations to certain situations and people, their attitudes towards certain topics and activities, and their identity as members of the Hip-Hop/Rap culture within their society. The aim of the following analysis is to determine if the most played SoundCloud Rap songs follow a formulaic structure in terms of content, vocabulary, and stylistic components that mark inauthentic products of a mainstream popular music genre, as well as to determine if its content promotes themes or social practices that may negatively influence a listener's life.

According to SoundCloud's official "Playback" channel, the most listened Hip-Hop/Rap song released in 2017 is Lil Uzi Vert's "XO TOUR Llif3" at 190,000,000 plays (The SoundCloud Blog, 2017). The tempo is upbeat, the beat is bass-heavy, while the lyrics relay the artist's relationship issues, prescription drug abuse and displays of wealth.

I don't really care if you cry
On the real, you shoulda never lied
Shoulda saw the way she looked me in my eyes
She said, "Baby, I am not afraid to die"
Push me to the edge
All my friends are dead (Chorus, 1-6)

The chorus' first three bars refer to the artist's breakup with his significant other, while the final three provide the gloomy tone to the song and reveal a few topics that are prevalent in SoundCloud Rap. Suicide is often alluded to in light of any emotional distress the artist is conveying. For example, Uzi later sings "She say I'm insane, yeah / I might blow my brain out

(hey)” (Verse 1, 12-13). As mentioned earlier, popular music serves as an important resource for listeners dealing with difficult emotional transitions (Hall and Whannel, 1964), therefore listeners may come to associate this negative solution to common distressing social situations, in this case referring to breakups. The last bar, “All my friends are dead”, can also be interpreted as a reference to the dead presidents depicted on American currency, therefore we observe a glorification of wealth by the artist declaring that his only friend is his money. The song also promotes a reoccurring social practice commonly found in SoundCloud Rap, the abuse of prescription drugs as a means of coping with personal anxiety or emotional pain.

Xanny, help the pain, yeah

Please, Xanny, make it go away

I'm committed, not addicted, but it keep control of me

All the pain, now I can't feel it

I swear that it's slowin' me, yeah (Verse 1, 14-18)

Uzi is referring to Xanax, a prescription drug used to treat anxiety disorders, as a means to numb his emotional pain. In saying “I’m committed, not addicted”, the artist hints that he is aware of the dangers of addiction, however, by saying but it keep control of me”, Uzi contradicts his previous claim that he is not addicted. This denial of addiction reinforces the portrayal of the egotistical persona in rap music. Again, we observe the promotion of a social practice that could contribute to a listener’s personal misery should they identify with the message being conveyed in this song.

That is not your swag, I swear you fake hard

Now these niggas wanna take my cadence

.....

Clothes from overseas, got the racks and they all C-Notes

You is not a G though

Lookin' at you stackin' all your money, it all green though (Verse 2, 1-2, 7-9)

Lastly, a pattern in language associated to displays of wealth, whether it be referring to money, expensive brands, or excessive consumption, is repeatedly observed in SoundCloud Rap. Accompanying displays of wealth are often references to the inauthenticity of other artists who are accused of copying a certain artist's fashion style or rapping style. In the above bars, Uzi seems to take a shot at other artists, accusing them of not only copying his "swag" meaning his fashion sense and overall persona, but also "cadence" referring to his distinctive rap flow. He later goes on to brag about his superior wealth, by referring to his "C-notes", meaning 100\$ bills, and expensive foreign clothes, while belittling other artists wealth since their money is "all green though", referring to an absence of the distinctive blue coloration of American 100\$ bills. A lifestyle of excessive displays of wealth and consumption is repeatedly promoted in SoundCloud Rap, potentially pushing a pro-capitalist and pro-consumerist ideology upon its listeners. Certainly not all pursuits of wealth contribute to personal deprivation or denial of a fulfilling life, however seeing as most musical products fail (Fiske 1989, Frith 1983) the association between a musical career and wealth primed in this song is not the most viable of options when considering achieving an overall fulfilling life. Pursuing wealth by drug-dealing, a social practice glorified in the other SoundCloud Rap songs we will observe, is also not an encouraging option.

Next, we turn to Juice WRLD's "Lucid Dreams" as SoundCloud's most listened to Hip-Hop/Rap song released in 2018 on their official "Playback 2018" playlist at 125,000,000 plays (The SoundCloud Blog, 2018). Like Lil Uzi Vert's "XO TOUR Llif3", "Lucid Dreams" delves into the artist's emotional distress over a breakup.

It's to the point where I love and I hate you

And I cannot change you, so I must replace you, oh

Easier said than done, I thought you were the one

Listenin' to my heart instead of my head

You found another one, but I am the better one

I won't let you forget me (Chorus, 3-8)

Comparing his emotional anguish to a dream, Juice WRLD copes with his feelings towards his significant other as a dreamer can control a lucid dream, by “replacing” her. As previously observed in Lil Uzi Vert’s song, Juice WRLD also abuses prescription drugs to cope with the emotional distress of a breakup, potentially creating an association between the harmful practice and the given social situation of a breakup in a listener’s understanding.

You left me falling and landing inside my grave

I know that you want me dead

I take prescriptions to make me feel a-okay

I know it's all in my head

.....

Now I'm just better off dead (Verse 1, 1-4, 9)

Both “XO TOUR Llif3” and “Lucid Dreams” have a nihilistic and gloomy ambiance through their references to death and suicide. Although both artists acknowledge the danger of prescription drug abuse, the songs nevertheless promote the harmful social practice as a coping mechanism in a specific social context, and thus can be labeled as detrimental to an audience that identifies with these songs to deal with the emotional distress of a breakup. The songs also share some stylistic similarities. Both songs are 808 heavy (base-drum producer), contain repetitive choruses and are structured intro/chorus/verse with a slight differentiation in the later halves of the songs. The similar content, repetitive choruses and shared formulaic structure of the two songs reflect the homogeneous aspect we identified earlier as a characteristic of popular,

mainstream music. “Lucid Dreams” differs from “XO TOUR Llif3” in that it is less up-beat, utilizing a slower melody and a lower BPM, while there is an absence of common Hip-Hop/Rap vernacular and the use of ad libs that marks the next SoundCloud Rap songs.

“Gucci Gang” by Lil Pump is SoundCloud’s second most listened Hip-Hop/Rap song released in 2017 featured in their official playback playlist at 127,000,000 plays (The SoundCloud Blog, 2017). With a play time of two minutes and five seconds, Lil Pump says “Gucci Gang” fifty-three times throughout the song, indicative of the repetitive nature and lack of creativity of the song’s lyrics. Trademark features such as ad libs, heavy use of bass, a simple rhyme scheme and language associated to popular topics and activities characterize this popular song.

Spend three racks on a new chain (Yuh)

My bitch love do cocaine, ooh (Ooh)

I fuck a bitch, I forgot her name (Brr, yuh)

I can't buy a bitch no wedding ring (Ooh)

Rather go and buy Balmain (Brr) (Chorus, 3-7)

The chorus of the song provides an example of the song’s shallow content. The song promotes substance abuse, as the artists mentions cocaine, Percocet, meth, and lean all within the same song. The song also promotes a consumerist culture, as the artist brags about buying an expensive necklace, “chain”, and designer shoes, “Balmain”. The language associated to women, referring to them as “bitch”, depersonalizes not only the artist’s romantic engagements to them, but also reflects the recurring objectification of women found within Hip-Hop/Rap culture. This may negatively influence a listener’s interpersonal relationships if they identify with the themes of the song in similar social contexts involving a romantic partner.

My lean cost more than your rent, ooh (It do)

Your momma still live in a tent, yuh (Brr)

Still slangin' dope in the 'jects, huh? (Yeah)

Me and my grandma take meds, ooh (Huh?) (Verse 1, 1-4)

While the previous songs promoted the consumption of drugs as a coping mechanism, here Lil Pump refers to “lean”, a mix of prescription cough syrup and soda, as well as “meds”, for recreational use. “My lean cost more than your rent / Your momma still live in a tent” is a reiteration of the theme observed in the Lil Uzi Vert song, in which the artist bragged about his wealth while belittling the wealth of a listener. Bragging to the interlocutor continues in “Still slangin’ dope in the ‘jects, huh?/Me and my grandma take meds, ooh”. Lil Pump belittles the listener who still sells drugs in the projects while he has moved on to the expensive hobby of prescription drug use. The artist’s positive association to drug consumption and his negative association to interpersonal relationships, promotes a lifestyle that undoubtedly denies a fulfilling life.

Lastly, we turn to SoundCloud’s second most listened to Hip-Hop/Rap song released in 2018 on their “Playback 2018” playlist: Rich the Kid’s “Plug Walk” at 75, 000, 000 plays (The SoundCloud Blog, 2018).

Plug walk (plug walk, plug, plug)

I don't even understand how the fuck my plug talk (Huh? what, what?)

Pick him up in a space coupe, I don't let my plug walk (Skrrt, pull up in a space coupe)

New freak, had to cut my other lil' bitch off (ooh, ooh, lil' bitch)

50K, you could come and book a nigga for a plug walk (Chorus, 1-5)

The chorus refers to the artist’s drug supplier, the “plug”, and how Rich the Kid doesn’t understand him since he likely speaks another language. Rich doesn’t let his plug walk, rapping

that he picks him up in his “space coupe” referring to an expensive, futuristic-looking car. “Freak” and “bitch” are vocabulary associated to women, and as observed in “Gucci Gang”, sexual relations to women are objectified and depersonalized. The artist also brags about his wealth, claiming it costs nothing short of 50,000\$ to strike a drug deal with himself.

I stuck kis in the Louis V (Louis V)

Fuck 12, I’m a G, ain't no stoppin' me (ain't no stoppin' me)

And my wrist is on overseas (drip)

Rich nigga, you can't talk to me (rich) (Verse 2, 9-12)

“Plug Walk” promotes drug consumption and dealing, material consumerist culture, and depersonalized sexual relationships with women. “kis in the Louis V” is understood as kilograms of drugs in an expensive brand name bag, while “wrist is on overseas (drip)” refers to an expensive watch that has been covered in diamonds. The artist promotes a negative attitude towards law enforcement, “12”, reinforcing the commercial image of the rapper as “gangster” in contrast to the complex and socially conscious image they once had during the genre’s early days. Lastly, we get a hint of the of the artist’s wealth-driven ego through his last bar, “you can’t talk to me”. Social practices of illegal drug consumption and distribution, a pro-consumerist ideology, objectification of women in interpersonal relationships, are all patterns previously identified as not beneficial for a listener to identify with as it may deny the pursuit of a fulfilling life.

Both “Gucci Gang” and “Plug Walk” utilize a simple rhyme scheme, a vernacular consistent with the Hip-Hop/Rap genre and culture, and repetitive adlibs that characterize the songs as homogenous and formulaic in structure. The content of the songs reflects Bynoe’s comment about the music industry creating an image of the Rapper as anything but a complex or creative individual (2004). Together, not only do “Gucci Gang” and “Plug Walk” satisfy our

definition of a product of popular culture as mass culture due to their formulaic structures, but they also satisfy the voyeuristic definition of popular culture in that the middle-class listener escapes into the dream world of the cultural “other” (Storey, 2006). The excessive material consumption, recreational drug use without consequence and the numerous depersonalized sexual relationships is not a lifestyle that the average middle-class consumer can live out, therefore it could be said that they live out this almost utopian fantasy through songs such as these.

Conclusion

To conclude, we come back to the aims of the paper which was to determine if the songs are characterized by the features of homogeneous mainstream Hip-Hop/Rap music and if their content promote practices, ideologies or themes that could contribute to a listener’s misery, preventing them from pursuing a fulfilling life. All four songs are structurally formulaic, following an identical pattern of intro/chorus/verse to begin the songs with only slight differences in their later parts. Earlier, we described products of a popular culture as highly standardized commodities made for passive consumption. The SoundCloud Rap songs analyzed above could all be described as such, since they make use of repetitive lyrics, catchy and upbeat melodies with little expression of personal or group identities. The first two songs, “XO TOUR Llif3” and “Lucid Dreams” cannot be outright labelled as uncreative since the artists do demonstrate some lyrical complexity. On the other hand, the content as an influencing discourse upon its listeners is problematic as both songs provide detrimental coping mechanisms when experiencing emotional distress due to a breakup by resorting to prescription drug abuse. The last two songs, “Gucci Gang” and “Plug Walk”, are undoubtedly lacking the creative and aesthetic complexities to not label them as superficial. Both their content and stylistic components are marked by the characteristics of an inorganic and inauthentic mainstream production. The content of these two songs, not only reinforce substance abuse as the previous two songs did, but also many other

social practices and ideologies that would lead to the denial of a fulfilling life should listeners identify with them. Drug abuse, drug dealing, depersonalizing interpersonal relations with women, excessive material consumption and an egotistical mentality that encourages looking down upon others of lower financial status are examples of the discourse reinforced through the songs' content.

The close reading of the most listened to SoundCloud Rap songs revealed a discourse reflective of a possible hegemonic relationship between the artists and their listeners. Analysis of the lyrics revealed artists plagued by enormous egos, demonstrated through their displays of wealth, toxic masculinity, unsustainable social practices and ideologies that are not viable to identify with if the listeners hope to pursue a fulfilling life. The commodities, brands, activities and attitudes glorified by the artists could potentially be negatively influencing a group of lower social power. Although SoundCloud is said to promote independent artists, the very same commodities, brands, activities and attitudes promoted by the artists may not be authentic expressions, therefore any negative influence upon listeners cannot be the sole responsibility of the artists. The music industry must take the lion's share of the responsibility as the institution or group with the most social power in this hegemonic dynamic. It is the music industry that continuously guided the creative process of the genre that glorified the pursuit of wealth by any means which was observed in the above SoundCloud Rap lyrics. Steering away from the image of the rapper as a creative and complex individual driven by social consciousness, the primary concern of the rapper becomes the pursuit of wealth and its accompanying values as the genre continues to be commercialized. The music industry continuously reproduced this image of the rapper by only signing artists who reproduce the desired homogenous sound until it began to subtly exert some control over Hip-Hop/Rap culture and those who identified with it. As we noted earlier, after the commercialization of the genre, artists began to feel limited in their

representational options and they become guided by commercial self-interest rather than creative expression. We have observed this in our analysis, as the songs could be described as lacking individual expression or values associated to a non-mainstream, subcultural group. The creative process of the genre is thus said to be controlled by the music industry since an aspiring artist will likely engage in the discursive practice of reproducing the mainstream “sound”. That “sound” exerts an influence over the consumers who begin to believe that it is that specific “sound” which they want to hear. Therefore, regardless of an aspiring artist’s natural talent to rhyme and create music, it is in their best financial interest to reproduce the sound that the industry is already pushing onto Hip-Hop/Rap listeners if they hope to achieve the desired wealth that is glorified within the culture. According to the above analysis, the most popular songs of SoundCloud Rap could be described as reproduced products of artisans, rather than unique expressions of artists.

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Space and Place: Environment as Identity-Forming
L'espace et le lieu : L'environnement à l'origine de
l'identité

Désorienter : Nerval, déçu, repeint l'Orient

Par Raymond Auclair

Résumé

Nerval entreprend un voyage d'un an durant lequel il séjourne au Caire « pour quelque temps » ("Harem" 13). Le récit de ce séjour décrit le harem du vice-roi et le désir qu'avait eu Nerval de composer son propre harem. Ses déceptions sont décrites dans des conversations qu'il tient avec d'autres Européens qui, eux aussi, séjournent au Caire. Il fait part à son ami Théophile Gautier, resté à Paris, des regrets de ne plus trouver, en Égypte, Le Caire qu'il a connu (avant de partir), exprimant sa hâte de retrouver Le Caire fictif que Gautier aura fait peindre pour son ballet *La Péri*. Nerval semble vouloir dépoussiérer des mythes sur les musulmans, mais il en introduit de nouveaux qui semblent tirés d'autres cultures non reliées à son histoire, dont les oignons-dieux et la géophagie. Son esclave sert surtout de support pour ses rêves, ses suppositions et ses préjugés sur l'Autre. Il passe du temps dans des ruines ou d'anciens palais, à discuter de passé biblique ou de différences religieuses qui n'en sont pas vraiment. Il emprunte à d'autres orientalistes des descriptions canoniques. Malgré une première impression, « Le harem » reste une œuvre orientaliste. Son récit est vu comme « Le Caire le plus oriental, même en partie démystifié » (Corredor-Guinard 21).

Introduction

Gérard de Nerval (né Gérard Labrunie) est fils d'un médecin militaire qui suit l'armée napoléonienne. Gérard est jeune quand sa mère meurt à l'étranger. Il est confié à un grand-oncle qui l'élève jusqu'au retour en France de son père. Sa vie publique commence à l'âge de 19 ans. À 22 ans, on le présente à Victor Hugo ("Harem" 7). Il semble promis à un grand futur littéraire. Un héritage reçu de son grand-père lui permet de voyager, d'abord en Europe (Allemagne et Autriche), puis, fin 1842 -- à 39 ans -- il part pour l'Orient (Malte, Grèce, Égypte, Constantinople) ("Harem" 8). Le *Voyage en Orient* décrit ce voyage; « Le harem » ne présente qu'une partie de son séjour en Égypte.

Le récit montre qu'il avait, de l'Orient, une vision orientaliste déjà établie par les auteurs de l'époque, dont Chateaubriand (Naïm 130). Avec son ami de lycée et colocataire à Paris,

Théophile Gautier, sa connaissance de l'Orient passe par les musées visités et par les œuvres de la scène. Elle passe aussi par le récit publié en 1836 d'Edward William Lane : *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (Saïd 63).

Philastre et Cambon sont des illustrateurs et architectes qui ont dessiné des décors pour des opéras et ballets célèbres; ce sont eux qui ont dessiné Le Caire pour *la Péri* de Théophile Gautier. Le ballet ayant été présenté au début de 1843, alors que Nerval était déjà en Égypte; Gautier lui décrit le décor qui représente Le Caire (dans le ballet) :

« Au second acte, quand le rideau se lève, du haut d'une terrasse, tu verras Le Caire à vol d'oiseau, et tu ne voudras jamais croire que MM. Philastre et Cambon n'ont pas été en Égypte. La forteresse, la mosquée du sultan Hassan, les frêles minarets, qui ressemblent à des hochets d'ivoire, les coupoles d'étain et de cuivre qui reluisent çà et là comme des casques de géant, les terrasses, surmontées de cabinets de cèdre, puis là-bas, tout au fond, le Nil, débordé, et les pyramides de Gizeh, perçant de leur angle de marbre le sable pâle du désert, rien n'y manque, c'est un panorama complet. Je ne sais trop ce que j'aurais vu de plus en allant là-bas moi-même. » (page Web *Péri*).

Du Caire, Nerval lui répond : « Oh ! Que je suis curieux d'aller voir à Paris, le Caire de Philastre et Cambon; je suis sûr que c'est mon Caire d'autrefois, celui que j'avais vu tant de fois en rêve » (cité par Naïm 136). Nerval avait déjà une vision de la ville, avant même de partir en voyage.

Sur le harem, Nerval partage les préjugés de Gautier et plusieurs auteurs de l'époque :

« Dans ce sérail unique, se trouvent réunis tous les types de la perfection féminine : la Géorgienne aux formes royales, la Grecque au profil droit découpé en camée, l'Arabe pure et fauve comme un bronze, la Juive à la peau d'opale, inondée d'opulents cheveux roux, l'Espagnole fine et cambrée, la Française vive et jolie, cent chefs-d'œuvre vivants que signeraient Phidias, Raphaël, Le Titien » (*Péri*)

Le harem orientalisé est un lieu de délices. D'abord décrit par des femmes occidentales (les hommes n'y ont pas accès), il est vite romancé, car les premières Occidentales à le décrire sont des voyageuses britanniques du 18^e siècle (p.ex., Lady Mary Wortley Montagu) qui doivent

veiller à leur réputation. Elles utilisent des pseudonymes ou écrivent sous le nom d'une servante décrivant le voyage de sa maîtresse. Certaines, n'ayant pas réussi à cacher leur identité, ou n'ayant pas suffisamment 'adouci' les descriptions physiques, se trouvent mises à l'écart de la vie sociale à leur retour au pays.

Une de ces voyageuses (Lady Stanhope 1776-1839 -- nièce du premier ministre William Pitt) s'est volontairement expatriée lors de son voyage en Orient (Chasles 928 et Lamartine 147) et, après sa mort, s'est vue décrite comme une « sorcière » dans la biographie écrite par son médecin (Chasles 900). Nerval a appris son histoire en lisant le *Voyage en Orient* de Lamartine. (Lamartine 147-166) Elle aura perpétué le sentiment de supériorité occidentale, étant devenue, durant son exil, reine de Tador et chef arabe. Ce récit correspond à l'idée proposée par Saïd que l'orientalisme entretient le mythe de la supériorité des Occidentaux sur les Autres.

Nerval arrive en Égypte, la tête pleine d'idées préconçues, forgées par l'orientalisme des œuvres littéraires de son époque. En plus de Chateaubriand et de Lamartine, dont il reproduit les voyages (Saïd 309) et du récit de Lane dont il tire des citations [non créditées] (Saïd 63 et Casajus 2), Nerval prétend qu'il ne veut que « dissiper la moisissure de l'archive orientaliste préexistante » (Saïd 297). Voyons comment Nerval est affecté par ses idées préconçues.

« Le harem »

« Le harem » forme la partie III du tome 1 du *Voyage en Orient*. La partie III compte onze chapitres. Dans cette partie, Nerval parle explicitement du harem aux chapitres 7 et 8 (dix pages sur les 62 de la partie III). Ces deux chapitres ont la forme d'une conversation pendant une pause, lors d'une promenade arrangée par le consul général. « Il y avait avec nous, outre le secrétaire de légation, un grave personnage en costume oriental, nommé le cheik Abou-Khaled que le consul avait invité pour nous donner des explications » ("Harem" 41).

La conversation sur le harem se fait entre Nerval et le cheik, donnant aux descriptions du harem un air de vérité puisque les affirmations sont mises dans la bouche du cheik. Le groupe visite « un charmant palais orné de rocailles où les femmes du vice-roi viennent habiter quelquefois l'été. » ("Harem" 53).

L'amorce de Nerval révèle un certain préjugé: « Mais ce qui surtout manque en général aux harems les plus princiers, ce sont des lits. » ("Harem" 54). Le pluriel laisse entendre que ce n'est pas le premier harem visité par Nerval, mais la suite indique que c'est la première fois que Nerval pose la question.

« Où couchent donc, disais-je au cheik, ces femmes et leurs esclaves ? ». Nous voilà déjà dans le vif du sujet qui préoccupe l'Européen : si c'est un harem, où sont les lits, les chambres? Le cheik explique que les femmes couchent tout habillées sur les divans, dans leurs chambres; les esclaves font de même dans la grande salle. Le mari a sa propre chambre.

La prochaine préoccupation européenne, en parlant du mari : « s'il amène avec lui deux ou trois de ces dames... » ("Harem" 55). Le cheik s'indigne. Aucune femme ne consentirait à partager son mari avec une autre, même légitime: « Est-ce ainsi que l'on fait en Europe? ».

Nerval se défend en disant que les chrétiens « supposent que les Turcs, en ayant plusieurs [femmes], vivent avec elles comme avec une seule. » Nerval ne s'inclut pas dans ce que pensent les chrétiens. Le cheik lui explique qu'un tel cas serait matière à divorce immédiat.

Nerval prend la défense des incompris : l'Europe est dans l'erreur quant aux coutumes musulmanes. Nerval ne s'était pas inclus dans l'erreur, mais par un nous, il partage le préjugé : « La vie des [hommes] Turcs est pour nous l'idéal de la puissance et du plaisir, et je vois qu'ils ne sont pas seulement maîtres chez eux. » ("Harem" 55). Le consul, dans sa première intervention sur ce sujet, a la voix de l'autorité (il est l'Européen qui connaît l'Orient) : la plupart des hommes n'ont qu'une seule femme (celle-ci en ayant fait une condition de l'union); il faut être riche pour

en avoir plusieurs, à cause de tous les droits qu'aurait chacune. Nous verrons comment cet échange touche la situation que vit Nerval depuis son arrivée au Caire.

Le consul décrit longuement la « vraie » situation. Nerval plaint les Turcs « comme on les calomnie! » ("Harem" 56). Ce pronom on nous place à mi-chemin entre les chrétiens (exclusif) et le nous (inclusif). Nerval parle alors de maîtresses, ce qui semble courant en Europe, mais le consul lui explique que les lois musulmanes sont plus directes sur ce sujet. Par ces voix extérieures, la conversation corrige (en apparence) les préjugés européens de Nerval.

Réflexions sur le harem

« Je méditais sur ce que j'avais entendu » ("Harem" 58) commence le chapitre 8 (Les mystères du harem). Nerval doit oublier son « illusion [...] les délices du harem, la toute-puissance du mari ou du maître, des femmes charmantes s'unissant pour faire le bonheur d'un seul » ("Harem" 58). Déjà, du Caire, des années avant la publication de son livre, il a écrit les mêmes mots à son ami Gautier (Nerval, cité par Naïm 135).

Nerval reprend en ses mots les arguments du consul : la femme turque (c'est-à-dire musulmane) a les mêmes droits que la femme européenne. « Gardons-nous de penser que ces belles dames consentent même à chanter ou danser pour divertir leur seigneur. » ("Harem" 59). Il se désole aussi de ce que le mari ne peut profiter des esclaves qu'il doit donner à sa (ou ses) femme(s) : ces esclaves « sont devenues leur propriété personnelle ; et s'il lui plaisait d'en acquérir pour son usage, il ferait sagement de les établir dans une autre maison » surtout s'il en use pour avoir plus d'enfants ("Harem" 59).

Nerval pense, en Occidental, que le droit de la femme de naissance libre de sortir à sa guise pourrait lui permettre de tromper son mari. « Le droit du mari se borne à la faire accompagner par des esclaves ; mais [cela n'empêcherait pas la femme] de sortir sous un déguisement, soit du bain, soit de la maison d'une de leurs amies, tandis que les surveillants

attendraient à la porte. » ("Harem" 60-61). Il se désole du peu de contrôle des maris sur leurs femmes et de leur aise à passer inaperçues : « l'uniformité des vêtements leur donnerait en réalité plus de liberté qu'aux Européennes » ("Harem" 61).

Il s'attaque à un préjugé fondamental : « La loi musulmane n'a donc rien qui réduise, comme on l'a cru, les femmes à un état d'esclavage et d'abjection. » ("Harem" 61). Il donne des différences mineures, certaines à l'avantage de l'homme, d'autres à l'avantage de la femme ("Harem" 62). La forme de ce discours -- si l'on ne s'en tient qu'à ces pages -- semble neutre et impartial. L'impartialité fond quand les principes s'appliquent à son propre ménage.

Son harem

Au début du récit dans « Le harem », Nerval est déjà installé au Caire avec une esclave fraîchement acquise. « Je n'eus pas plutôt ramené du bazar l'esclave javanaise que je me vis assailli d'une foule de réflexions » ("Harem" 20). Il nous décrit aussi la jeune femme, surtout les marques au fer chaud et les tatouages qui marquent son visage et sa poitrine. Ceci porte à penser qu'il l'inspecte comme on le ferait d'une possession, et non pas d'une personne.

Les intentions de Nerval sont claires et sont exprimées dans une autre partie du *Voyage en Orient* : « Il faut que je m'unisse à quelque fille ingénue de ce sol sacré qui est notre première patrie » (Nerval, cité dans Saïd 318).

Il faut revenir à la partie II pour comprendre pourquoi et comment il l'avait acquise. Avec Abdullah, son drogman d'office, il se rend chez un marchand d'esclaves riche, qui a la réputation de garder de garder les plus belles pour lui-même. ("Women" 102). Abdullah a bonne réputation en tant que drogman. Il refuse de rester avec Nerval à l'hôtel français qui ne coûte pas assez cher. Après tout, le drogman a une réputation à maintenir ("Women" 15).

En arrivant chez le marchand d'esclaves, Abdullah lui dit que le marchand a bonne opinion de Nerval, simplement du fait qu'il est avec Abdullah ("Women" 102-103). Ils expliquent au marchand que Nerval veut établir une maisonnée de bon style, ce qui comprend le besoin d'acheter une épouse – ce besoin vient de Lane qui raconte l'interdiction de vivre en célibataire dans un quartier de gens mariés (Auriant, cité par Casajus 17). Avant d'arriver chez le marchand, Nerval, décrivant son propre habillement, dit qu'il faut faire attention, quand on achète une femme, de ne pas l'effrayer au premier abord ("Women" 102). Il est clair que Nerval veut établir son propre harem. Le drogman et le marchand semblent aussi le penser, car on lui présente des jeunes filles et des femmes en âge de se marier. Finalement, on lui montre une Javanaise pour laquelle il éprouve un désir immédiat. Il la décrit comme sortie d'une peinture vue en Hollande et il la choisit par désir pour le bizarre et l'inconnu ("Women" 107).

Nerval s'inquiète (subtilement) de sa virginité, ce à quoi Abdullah, sans même vérifier auprès du marchand, répond qu'un bon musulman, surtout un marchand, ne risquerait pas l'ire de ses épouses légitimes ni sa réputation auprès de ses clients ("Women" 107). Après quelques complications de paiement - Nerval doit passer par la banque et, en chemin, nous décrit une cérémonie musulmane de ses souvenirs (Casajus 15-16), Nerval ramène chez lui sa Javanaise nommée Zeynab ainsi qu'une malle de vêtement lui appartenant ("Women" 109).

La partie III du récit « Le harem » commence alors. Quarante pages nous séparent de la discussion avec le cheik et le consul. Ces premières pages décrivent le quotidien de son logis et ses inquiétudes domestiques -- au sujet de Zeynab, mais aussi de son cuisinier et des autres aides – et préparent ce que Nerval espère devenir son propre harem, selon ses préjugés européens.

Une jalousie bien occidentale

Nerval dit avoir choisi de vivre au Caire assez longtemps pour comprendre et aimer la ville ("Harem" 13). Il voulait aussi profiter d'avantages, basés sur les idées orientalistes préconçues, comprenant le désir d'être servi en tout et d'avoir un harem oriental, plutôt que de s'empêtrer dans un mariage selon les règles occidentales. Il décrit les plaisirs quotidiens, comme celui des visites aux bains et des « estafiers aux mains armées de gants de crin » ("Harem" 19). Il s'y fait masser, boit du café, mange des sorbets et fume le narghilé, jusqu'au moment de la sieste ("Harem" 19-20). C'est la vie orientale rêvée.

Zeynab est cette « femme d'un pays lointain et singulier, qui parle une langue inconnue, dont le costume et les habitudes frappent déjà par l'étrangeté seule, et qui enfin n'a rien de ces vulgarités de détail que l'habitude nous révèle chez les femmes de notre patrie.» ("Harem" 21). Avant que ne s'écoule une semaine (période de la « garantie ») il inspecte son bien plus attentivement et découvre qu'elle est marquée de brûlures, de tatouages faits par d'anciens propriétaires et qu'elle avait d'autres marques physiques. Après avoir examiné Zeynab « avec cette sollicitude de propriétaire qui s'inquiète de ce qu'on a fait des coupes dans le bien qu'il vient d'acquérir » Nerval conclut « il n'y avait donc pas trop de quoi se plaindre, tout examen fait. » ("Harem" 22).

L'ami juif Yousef demande pourquoi Nerval n'a pas fait un mariage à la copte ou trouvé un domestique qui se serait marié à sa place, « plus simple et moins coûteux. » ("Harem" 23). Yousef lui conseille aussi de ne pas se servir du drogman pour parler avec l'esclave. « Il lui communiquerait de mauvaises idées [...] elle s'enfuirait [...] cela s'est vu. » ("Harem" 26).

Nerval est maintenant très inquiet. Que peut-il faire? Doit-il engager un eunuque? Peut-il sortir et la laisser seule (avec les domestiques mâles)? Doit-il toujours l'amener avec lui, « dans un pays où jamais femme ne s'est montrée au bras d'un homme » ("Harem" 26)? Peut-il lui

accorder l'indépendance des femmes françaises « dans un pays où les femmes, on le sait, n'ont aucun principe contre la plus vulgaire séduction. » ("Harem" 26).

Cette crise de jalousie de l'homme âgé pour une jeune fille – il a 40 ans, elle 18 - l'amène à réduire ses contacts avec le drogman et à diminuer considérablement son personnel, ne gardant que le cuisinier et le portier ("Harem" 27, 39). Zeynab doit porter un masque devant le cuisinier et ne peut se pencher à la fenêtre. Lorsque Nerval est invité par le consul à passer une journée de promenade, il s'empresse de vider sa maison (même le cuisinier) et d'embaucher un mamelouk copte et son épouse pour venir s'occuper de sa maison et de l'esclave. Ces derniers s'empressent d'accepter, puisqu'ils vivaient dans une de ces maisons « que les rats avaient abandonnées déjà comme peu sûres. » ("Harem" 40). Ce n'est qu'après avoir protégé sa maison et son bien précieux que Nerval consent à partir toute une journée en promenade avec le consul.

L'esclave insoumise

Lors de son premier repas chez Nerval, Zeynab refuse de manger. « Est-ce que vous voulez vous laisser mourir de faim? » mais ils ne se comprennent pas ("Harem" 29-30). Finalement, passe un chevrier de qui on achète du lait, qu'elle accepte de boire. Nerval avait eu peur qu'elle ne soit de « cette race javanaise qui se nourrit d'une sorte de terre grasse » ("Harem" 33).

Il décide alors d'aller voir quelqu'un qui pourrait traduire. Depuis la visite de Yousef, il ne fait confiance ni au drogman ni au Juif. Il va voir madame Bonhomme qui tient un magasin d'articles de toilette; il l'avait rencontrée beaucoup plus tôt au théâtre, où elle jouait le rôle principal ("Women" 91). L'actrice de Nerval joue le même rôle que la gantière du Yurick de Sterne. Par l'entremise de madame Bonhomme, Nerval apprend que Zeynab veut s'habiller à la mode européenne. Des coiffures proposées, Zeynab choisit le *taktikos*, réservé aux femmes libres.

Elle raconte qu'elle était d'une famille noble; enlevée en bas âge, elle a été vendue à un cheik très vieux de La Mecque (celui qui lui aurait donné les vêtements de la malle).

On apprend aussi qu'elle est de foi musulmane et, puisque c'est le ramadan et que le repas se tenait avant le coucher du soleil ... Voilà pourquoi elle avait refusé de manger. Aussi, elle parle très bien l'arabe; Nerval demande à l'actrice de lui montrer quelques mots d'arabe. « Mon intelligence suppléera au reste, en attendant que je m'instruise mieux » ("Harem" 37).

Le cuisiner parti, Nerval demande au couple mamelouk de le remplacer. Mais « ce couple respectable ignorait parfaitement les éléments de la cuisine, même égyptienne. » L'esclave refuse de manger ce qu'ils préparent; elle va jusqu'à les injurier. Nerval fait dire à l'esclave qu'elle doit dorénavant faire la cuisine; elle le foudroie d'un regard offensé : « Dites au *sidi* [...] que je suis une *cadine* (dame) et non une *odaleuk* (servante) » et qu'elle demandera au pacha d'exercer son droit d'être revendue si on la force à faire des « fonctions viles. » ("Harem" 63-64).

Ainsi, les conversations tenues avec le consul et le cheik décrivent sa nouvelle réalité : son esclave ne sera pas celle qui va satisfaire ses désirs sans qu'il lui en coûte.

Peut-il en faire une compagne? Il veut qu'elle apprenne le français. Il la laisse écrire à sa guise et ce qui apparaît n'est que charabia. « Elle avait cru que, toutes les fois qu'on pensait à une chose en promenant au hasard la plume sur le papier, l'idée devait ainsi se traduire clairement pour l'œil du lecteur. » ("Harem" 65-66).

Ces trois incidents montrent le préjugé qu'entretient Nerval : 1) Sa connaissance des habitudes alimentaires des doublement-orientaux (Java étant un Orient pour les Turcs) se limite à celles des bayadères (danseuses indiennes) vues aux Champs Élysées et à l'idée qu'un peuple se nourrit de terre – la géophagie existe vraiment, mais cause l'anémie. 2) Il prétend que son intelligence lui permettra de communiquer sans connaître la langue – en réalité, Nerval parle

suffisamment l'arabe à ce moment (Casajus 10). 3) Il conclut que l'incapacité d'écrire de Zeynab vient d'une naïveté intellectuelle orientale.

Cet orientalisme individuel ne sert pas à soutenir le projet saïdien d'imposer une culture étrangère à tout un peuple, mais plus simplement à justifier une bulle de colonisation personnelle là où Nerval aurait voulu vivre la vie de pacha à laquelle il s'était préparé avant son voyage.

Finalement, voyant que cette expérience échoue et que son harem, maintenant trop coûteux, s'écroule, Nerval rend la liberté à l'esclave, liberté qu'elle refuse. « Voilà un singulier pays où les esclaves ne veulent pas de liberté! » ("Harem" 75).

Nerval s'est préparé à son voyage en Orient. Il y apporte un bagage orientaliste, une mythologie personnelle, une attitude culturelle (Saïd 315). L'idée de se construire un harem (selon sa préconception) n'est pas un hasard; cela fait partie de ses plans de voyage. Il est clair que ses idées préconçues sont fausses. A-t-il même appris quelque chose de son séjour au Caire?

La gloire passée

L'orientalisme classique admet que les civilisations orientales ont eu des périodes avancées... dans le passé. On étudie les civilisations orientales comme on étudie les civilisations mortes (Abdel-Malek 114).

" Le harem" commence aux ruines de la mosquée d'Amrou puis celle du calife Hakem. Dans ces ruines, Nerval retrouve la grandeur passée de la culture turque. « Hakem, que nos vieux orientalistes appellent le Chacamerille [...] le maître absolu de l'Égypte » ("Harem" 15-16). Il y connaît, par exemple, « l'observatoire où il allait consulter les astres » ("Harem" 16).

La découverte, par les Européens, que les Égyptiens étaient très avancés en astronomie, est relativement récente. On savait déjà, au 12^e siècle, que les Arabes avaient amélioré l'Almageste de Ptolémée. Plus récemment, on découvrait - dans des transcriptions commerciales

anciennes - que les Égyptiens étaient réputés pour leurs clepsydras si précis qu'ils avaient déterminé l'équation du temps, le décalage de quelques secondes entre le temps solaire et le temps constant, causé par l'ellipticité de l'orbite de la Terre autour du Soleil. À l'époque des César, les Égyptiens vendaient des cadrans solaires au gnomon en forme d'analemme.



Ruines de la mosquée de Hakem (1840) selon Prosper Marilhat.

L'observatoire de Hakem devait donc être comparable aux premiers observatoires sérieux de l'Europe qui n'arrivent que dix siècles plus tard. Les instruments astronomiques sont incorporés à même la structure de l'édifice : grands murs souvent méridionaux et gradués avec précision, trous savamment situés dans des plafonds, etc. La longueur de ces lignes de mire permettait des mesures précises. Ce principe reste inchangé jusqu'à l'observatoire de Tycho Brahe au 16^e siècle.

S'il avait été le moindrement intéressé, Nerval aurait facilement trouvé quelques signes. Mais, l'orientaliste semble beaucoup plus intéressé par les souvenirs religieux et bibliques

soulevés lors de la visite des ruines (17), ce qui correspond à « l'étude des aspects culturels - notamment la langue et la religion - détachés de l'évolution sociale » (Abdel-Malek 114).

Un siècle avant Nerval et Lamartine, « les Européens pouvaient [...] percevoir que l'Orient était en train d'être distancé et dépassé par la science occidentale » (Saïd 128); Saïd ajoute, citant Galland qui expliquait la *Bibliothèque Orientale* d'Herbelot (1697), que le travail de l'orientaliste était de « confirmer l'Orient aux yeux de ses lecteurs. » (Saïd 128).

Même dans le rappel de la gloire antique (la mention de l'observatoire de Hakem), le « travail scientifique des savants [sous Hakem, est] complètement ignoré » (Abdel-Malek 115); Nerval s'en tient aux récits historiques (plutôt bibliques) déjà retenus par les orientalistes. Tout au plus permet-il que la foi soit universelle, quelle que soit la religion : « Ainsi Orphée, ainsi Moïse, ainsi [...] Rama, emportaient un même fonds d'enseignement et de croyance [...] qui partout constituait des civilisations durables. » ("Harem" 17).

Nerval dit à son ami Gautier que « pour quelqu'un qui n'a jamais vu l'Orient [...] un lotus est toujours un lotus; pour moi, c'est seulement une espèce d'oignon » (Nerval cité par Saïd 185), mais un oignon qui précipitera son abandon de l'esclave ("Harem" 73-74). Voilà qui donne l'impression que Nerval tente de désorienter l'orientalisme. A-t-il réussi à « avoir chassé [l'Égypte] de mon imagination, pour la loger tristement dans mes souvenirs » (Nerval, cité par Naïm 135)?

Un orientalisme déguisé

S'agit-il plutôt d'une nouvelle forme d'orientalisme dans laquelle l'auteur se permet de laisser jouer une conscience personnelle, tout en suivant aveuglément les autres diktats de l'orientalisme? Sur les récits de voyage, Saïd parle de trois catégories d'orientalisme d'intention : 1) l'observation scientifique stricte, 2) la projection de préférences stylistiques qui viennent

subtilement se mêler aux observations, 3) « l'écrivain pour lequel le voyage en Orient, réel ou métaphorique, est la réalisation d'un projet profondément senti et pressant », où le projet vient teinter l'information (Saïd 280). Il décrit le « *Voyage en Orient* de Nerval comme représentant la catégorie trois » où le « moi orientaliste » prend beaucoup de place (Saïd 281).

Les écrivains orientalistes ne font pas que suivre une recette d'écriture sur l'Orient. Ils « ont pu entretenir entre eux une longue discussion [...] en utilisant toutes ces généralités sans se poser de questions et en restant, cependant, compréhensibles les uns pour les autres. » (Saïd 188). L'orientalisme serait donc un système de citation d'ouvrages et d'auteurs (Saïd 63).

Nerval participe clairement à cette discussion dans « Le harem ». Il fait référence, par exemple, au Yorick de Sterne pour comparer la satisfaction qu'il éprouve d'avoir pensé à madame Bonhomme comme interprète : « On sait à quel point le bon Yorick, inconnu, inquiet, perdu dans le grand tumulte de la vie parisienne, fut ravi de trouver accueil chez une aimable et complaisante gantière » ("Harem" 34). Si Nerval peut faire apparaître Yorick sans l'expliquer, peut-être fait-il d'autres ajouts qu'il pense aussi clairs pour son lecteur.

Le travail de l'orientaliste est de faire voir l'Orient à son public. Certains le font avec un fond d'honnêteté (catégorie 1 de Saïd), mais d'autres sont plutôt comme des peintres qui tiennent à nous montrer leur impression, quitte à changer le paysage pour renforcer le sentiment à transmettre (Corredor-Guinard 22).

Il est difficile pour l'amateur qui n'a pas visité une contrée ou qui n'est pas versé dans les descriptions précises d'un lieu (ou d'un temps) de reconnaître les changements apportés par l'artiste. Par exemple, dans la *Fuite en Égypte* de Carrache, un Italien voit tout de suite, malgré le décalage temporel, qu'il s'agit d'un paysage toscan, dans lequel l'artiste a placé deux chameaux pour symboliser l'Égypte.



Carrache : *La fuite en Égypte* (1603)

Les chameaux sont au loin, à notre gauche, sur la colline menant au château.

Dans sa description de la vie au Caire, Nerval est comme Carracci : il décrit ce qu'il connaît, puis ajoute des symboles de l'Autre. Plusieurs descriptions du Caire sont tirées, mot pour mot, de passages des *Modern Egyptians* de Lane décrivant... un village Syrien (Saïd 63).

Carracci n'a pas voulu faire passer son paysage toscan pour une vue réelle de l'Égypte : Marie est vêtue comme la Vierge du classicisme italien et a les traits d'une Italienne. Carracci voulait simplement remémorer, pour la décoration d'une chapelle du neveu d'un pape, un événement lié à la vie de Jésus et Marie, où les symboles suffisent pour ramener à l'esprit des habitants locaux, l'Histoire approuvée par l'Église.

De la même façon, Nerval est plus intéressé à nous donner des impressions orientales, plutôt qu'une image précise. Pensons à tout ce qui entoure la Javanaise et qui forme, par conséquent, toute la partie principale dans « Le harem ». Cette esclave est fictive. Selon une lettre écrite des mois auparavant par Narval, c'est à une Syrienne qu'on aurait voulu le marier, mariage qui n'a jamais eu lieu (Casajus 17).

Dans la conversation orientaliste décrite par Saïd, Nerval suit les traces de Chateaubriand et de Lamartine. Il emprunte beaucoup aux *Modern Egyptians* de Lane, autorité dans le domaine de l'Orient : « l'orientalisme a été capable d'en faire un texte de référence. » (Saïd 281). En faisant un voyage en Orient sur les traces de Chateaubriand et de Lamartine, et en empruntant [souvent sans donner la source] à des experts tels que Lane, Nerval rend son texte plus facile à comprendre pour les lecteurs habitués à l'Orient accepté de l'Europe. La précision est superflue; il suffit de placer un chameau à la bonne place.

Comme Lane et d'autres auteurs-voyageurs orientalistes, « il découvre la nécessité du mariage dans une société islamique [...] Nerval s'attache à une femme [et] sa liaison [...] est plus qu'une obligation sociale. » (Saïd 318). L'union lui permet de « conduire sa vie comme un roman [... et] créer l'intérêt » autour de lui-même (Nerval, cité par Saïd 318). Ce mot « roman » laisse entendre qu'il accepte la fiction dans son récit.

« Le harem » est orientaliste

Au moment de partir en voyage, Nerval est déjà un auteur connu. Victor Hugo lui avait demandé de participer à un projet. Il avait traduit Faust; Goethe préférait sa traduction à l'original (Eckermann, Sun.Jan.3 1830). Nerval a préparé son voyage en Orient par de nombreuses et longues lectures de textes orientalistes (p.ex. Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Lane). Ses idées préconçues sont apparentes dans le récit.

Bien que son récit laisse entrevoir une certaine déception quant aux préconceptions, ces déceptions sont plutôt personnelles et même égoïstes, et non pas envers les sources orientalistes. Il est déçu que son rêve d'un harem ne se soit pas matérialisé, mais sa déception découle plutôt de sa jalousie occidentale et des problèmes auxquels les orientalistes ne l'ont pas préparé.

« Il est clair désormais que j'avais fait une folie en achetant cette femme » ("Harem" 64) n'est, dans le contexte, qu'une admission touchant CETTE femme, et non l'idée d'acheter une femme. Il craignait qu'elle ne devienne « qu'un sujet de dépense » ("Harem" 64). Il lui reprochait son désir de s'habiller et se comporter comme une femme libre - du moins, sa conception occidentale de femme libre ("Harem" 65), elle qui refuse la liberté quand elle lui est offerte.

Lors d'une visite avec elle, à Choubrah, il apprend que les femmes musulmanes ne peuvent se montrer nues, même devant leur maître ("Harem" 71). Puis il trouve des oignons suspendus dans sa chambre et comprend que ces oignons jouent un rôle religieux puisqu'elle « les remet à leur place avec de grands signes d'adoration. » ("Harem" 72).

Dans sa déception, Nerval décrit un Orient inférieur, superstitieux, inculte et sans avenir. Il quittera Le Caire avec l'esclave, mais avant son retour en France, « sa liaison avec Zeynab n'est qu'un souvenir. » (Naïm 136). Il écrira que « la femme orientale est une machine, rien de plus; elle ne fait aucune différence entre un homme et un autre homme. » (Nerval cité par Naïm 136).

Nerval continue de présenter l'Autre comme n'étant pas Nous et ne pouvant pas être aussi bon que nous. Zeynab n'écrit pas, non pas parce que personne ne lui a montré (ce qui est sans doute le cas), mais parce qu'elle croyait que l'écriture était naturelle. Le mamelouk, tout utile qu'il fut à la France, vit dans la misère et ne sait pas cuisiner.

Nerval avait entrepris son pèlerinage « pour dissiper la moisissure de l'archive orientaliste préexistante » (Saïd 297). Mais ce nettoyage, qu'on pense entrepris dans « Le harem », perd son lustre quand Nerval revient en France. « Il y a, parmi les 'orientalistes', ceux qui ne sont jamais allés en Orient; Nerval sera de ceux qui n'en sont jamais vraiment revenus. » (Corredor-Guinard 21).

La discussion décrite par Saïd, entre les auteurs orientalistes, n'est pas interrompue par Nerval. Même si son récit promet d'abord une nouvelle vision de l'Orient, il continue cependant dans le « réductionnisme orientaliste », un « Orient de souvenirs, de ruines suggestives » et un intérêt pour le « passé biblique » (Saïd 297). Au lieu de décrire ce qu'il voit, il préfère « les descriptions de Lane » qui assurent la continuation de la description acceptée par l'Occident (Saïd 309).

Conclusion

Alors qu'il y a encore des orientalistes qui décrivent les contrées lointaines, sans y être allés, Nerval entreprend un voyage d'un an durant lequel il séjourne au Caire pour un temps. Le récit (en partie fictif) de ce séjour décrit le harem du vice-roi et le désir qu'avait eu Nerval de composer son propre harem. Ses déceptions sont décrites dans des conversations et des descriptions.

Il fait part à son ami Théophile Gautier, resté à Paris, du regret de ne plus trouver Le Caire qu'il a connu (avant de partir), exprimant sa hâte de retrouver ce Caire fictif que Gautier a fait peindre pour son ballet *La Péri*.

Même lorsqu'il semble dépoussiérer des mythes sur les musulmans, il en introduit de nouveaux qui semblent tirés d'Orients différents, non reliés à son histoire, par exemple, les oignons-dieux de l'ancienne Égypte (inconnus à Java) ainsi que les peuples géophages qui sont très peu nombreux et existent surtout en Afrique du Sud et en Amérique du Sud.

Tout au long de l'histoire, Nerval reste Occidental, avec une jalousie occidentale qui lui fait s'éloigner de ceux qui pourraient le conseiller, mais qui sont Autres (le drogman, le Juif). Le mamelouk est toléré parce qu'il a servi la France. Zeynab sert surtout de support pour ses rêves,

ses suppositions et ses préjugés sur l'Autre; par son refus de liberté, c'est tout l'Orient qui est impropre à la liberté.

Dans les 62 pages de la partie III « Le harem », Nerval passe du temps dans des ruines ou d'anciens palais, à discuter de passé biblique ou de différences religieuses qui n'en sont pas vraiment. Il nous donne des paysages syriens (tirés de Lane) qu'il place dans les rues du Caire, pour confirmer l'orientalisme de son récit et s'appuyer sur l'autorité de Lane.

« Le harem » reste donc, malgré la première impression, très orientaliste. Nerval nous sert un paysage composé de scènes provenant d'ailleurs, des Autres qui perpétuent le patron classique, et... quelques chameaux placés aux bons endroits.

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The Social and Cultural Impacts of Reducing the Reliance on Diesel in Canada's Northern Indigenous Communities

By Rebecca L. Cook

Abstract

As the Canadian government seeks to reconcile its relationship with the Indigenous Peoples of Canada, energy poverty in northern Indigenous communities must be addressed and resolved by the development of clean energy projects. Though the Canadian government has declared its intention to work alongside and assist these communities with the shift toward more sustainable methods for power, this paper highlights the necessity of following through on these initiatives. Relying on a qualitative secondary research approach, this study brings together various aspects into a holistic perspective to make a case for the imbrication of social and cultural factors as well as consequences to drive the argument of the need to reduce the reliance on diesel in northern Indigenous communities.

According to The Conference Board of Canada's report titled "Power Shift: Electricity for Canada's Remote Communities" there are approximately 300 remote communities in northern Canada that are not connected to the North American electrical network (Knowles i), the grid which provides a majority of Canadians a luxury that is often taken for granted. According to *The Agenda's* program titled "Indigenous Power Struggle", "of those 300, 175 are Indigenous communities" (Indigenous Power Struggle¹). These communities are largely dependent on diesel for their power. Diesel is an energy source that is highly unreliable and expensive due to high transportation costs exacerbated by the remoteness of these communities. Furthermore, diesel is destructive to the environment as it is responsible for emitting large amounts of carbon dioxide (CO₂), among other pollutants, into the atmosphere.

According to a video released by the Department of Natural Resources Canada titled *Incorporating Renewable Energy in Remote Communities*, "Per-capita energy use of fossil fuel in

¹ Further citations from this source will be abbreviated as IPS

Canada's northern remote communities is nearly twice the national average due to cold winters and the use of diesel-powered generators for electricity" (Incorporating Renewable Energy²). Thus, as per its agreement with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the Canadian government must aim to meet its requirements by reducing the dependence on diesel fuel in these rural and remote communities. In attempting to do so, sustainable options must be considered and implemented through the support of the Canadian federal government, as these communities are often small and impoverished, lacking the capital needed to complete the transition to cleaner energy.

Hoping to meet the requirement of reducing GHG emissions, in 2016, the First Ministers of Canada "adopt[ed] the Vancouver Declaration of Clean Growth and Climate Change," which aims to "take ambitious action [...] to reduce GHG emissions by 30 percent below 2005 levels by 2030" (Environment and Climate Change Canada³). Arising from this declaration less than a year later, in December 2016, the Canadian government implemented the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, which was

[...] designed to achieve the behavioural and structural changes needed to transition to a low-carbon economy, [...] developed collaboratively by Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments, with input from Indigenous Peoples as well as from businesses, non-governmental organizations, and Canadians across the country (ECCC).

As a result, "\$220 million over six years [will be dedicated] to support clean energy infrastructure projects that reduce reliance on diesel in off-grid, rural and remote communities," while "\$53.5 million is committed over 10 years for the deployment of renewable energy projects in northern

² Further citations from this source will be abbreviated as IRE.

³ Further citations from this source will be abbreviated as ECCC.

communities to reduce their reliance on diesel [...] through the use of local renewable energy sources and energy efficiency” (ECCC and Natural Resources Canada).

The goal of the present study is not to reiterate what alternatives exist to diesel in remote communities; it has been proven that solar, wind, hydro and/or biomass technology is available to reduce the reliance on diesel for power by storing the energy emitted from these sustainable sources into “smart” microgrids (IRE). The current microgrids, which are the local electrical grids these communities rely on for power, are usually powered by diesel generators; therefore, “integrating solar and wind energy generators” (IRE) will reduce the communities’ reliance on diesel.

That said, the objective of this study is to discuss the consequences that will arise, both socially and culturally, from reducing northern Indigenous communities’ reliance on diesel. In addition to this, a small portion of the treatise will be concerned with how this long-term project has the potential to alter Canadian culture, notably in correcting the Western anthropocentric way of regarding the environment. The arguments offered in this study will only serve to strengthen the significant necessity of providing these Indigenous communities with sustainable alternatives to diesel, especially in a time when the Canadian government is seeking to reconcile its relationship with the Indigenous peoples of Canada.

Part of this study is grounded in structural theories of poverty. Structural theory can be used to explain the cycle of poverty by exposing the large-scale structural conditions, such as “labor market opportunities and/or demographic vulnerabilities” (Brady 146), that make individuals more susceptible to poverty. This study also operates within the context of postcolonial theory as the social problems presented in the study result from colonialism and are reinforced by social structures. For another part, this study can be understood within the framework of ecocriticism. Ecocriticism, as defined by Derek Gladwin, “is a broad way for

literary and cultural scholars to investigate the global ecological crisis through the intersection of literature, culture, and the physical environment” (Gladwin). It will be important to keep this literary and cultural theory in mind as we proceed to discuss the cultural consequences of moving away from diesel for power in northern communities, as it provides insight on how the Canadian government, and, by extension, Canadian culture, may come to address the ecological crisis that is plaguing our time.

My principal methodological approach for studying the social and cultural impact of reducing the North’s reliance on diesel is through qualitative secondary research. I will be studying, synthesizing and analyzing the positions of various individuals from TV programs, government incentive programs and literature, and books, essays, and news articles treating the subject at hand. The main body of work I will be consulting throughout this study is a program in the series *The Agenda with Steve Paikin* titled “Indigenous Power Struggle,” which aired in 2016. In this TVO program, Paikin is joined by five individuals: Isadore Day, the former Ontario Regional Chief for the Chiefs of Ontario; Judith Sayers, former elected Chief of the Huducasth First Nations in British Columbia and professor at the University of Victoria in the Faculty of Law; Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, former Vice Provost for Aboriginal Initiatives at Lakehead University; Christopher Henderson, President of Lumos Energy and a Clean Energy Advisor to numerous Aboriginal communities in Canada; and Mitchell Diabo, former Secretary-Treasurer at the Kasabonika Lake Community Development Corporation. I will also be consulting Chris Henderson’s book, *Aboriginal Power: Clean Energy & the Future of Canada’s First Peoples*, published in 2013, along with Indigenous writer N. Scott Momaday’s 1976 essay titled “A First American Views His Land”. Finally, I will be assessing news articles as well as videos and information provided by the Canadian government. The first half of the present document aims to discuss the social results of reducing northern Indigenous communities’ reliance on diesel, while

the remainder of the paper will examine the cultural impact on Indigenous culture, which has the potential to extend into Canadian culture.

The social conditions in Indigenous communities are anything but favourable. As stated in the article “Social Conditions of Indigenous Peoples in Canada,” “[m]uch of the housing in Indigenous communities is inadequate and in need of repair” and “[...] on-reserve rates of overcrowding is significantly higher compared to non-Indigenous homes and those living off-reserve”. (Sawchuk). Concerning water services, “13.5 per cent [of on-reserve homes receive water] by truck service, 13 per cent by individual wells and 1.5 per cent [...] [do] not have water service” and “[...] two-thirds of First Nations people in Canada live[] under at least one water advisory” (Sawchuk). In regard to the health of Indigenous people, it is said “that the leading causes of death [...] were external causes (accidental poisoning, vehicle accident, and intentional self-harm), disease of the circulatory system [...] and neoplasms [...]” (Sawchuk). These are the conditions encountered by Indigenous communities all over Canada, even more so in northern communities. As *The Agenda*’s Steve Paikin reiterates in regards to an earlier statement made by former Chief Isadore Day, “[Indigenous] people are living in substandard living conditions. We need to bring our communities into the 21st century” (IPS).

In the same program, Day discusses a particular tragedy that occurred within the Pikangikum First Nations community, located remotely in northwestern Ontario. This Indigenous community faces dire conditions due to impoverished energy. In March of 2016, a fire broke out in a residential home, taking the lives of nine people, three of which were young children. The report on the Pikangikum fire highlights the poor living conditions in First Nation communities, stating “House fires strike with deadly frequency on First Nations reserves – a function of shoddy construction, overcrowding and the lack of running water” (Galloway and Gignac). This quote serves to sum up and echo the former discussion concerning the subpar conditions Indigenous

people are forced to live in. Furthermore, Day states that “[...] one of the central issues and causes [of the fire] is the fact they’re not on the grid” (IPS). Rarely do we recognize the association between plumbing and electricity, such that these two aspects are dependent on each other in remote communities. Therefore, the lack of dependable electricity contributes to the fact that these communities do not have reliable water services.

This link between water and electricity highlights the first consequence generated from reducing the North’s reliance on diesel. As these Indigenous communities have impoverished energy, they are likely to live in impoverished conditions; therefore, having access to reliable and sustainable energy and distribution increases the likelihood that people will live better. Meeting the basic human necessity most Canadians already have - water accessibility – will lead to the immediate and positive social consequence of improved living conditions. As identified by Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, the diesel generators that power the Pikangikum community “were too old to be able to accommodate [...]” running water inside people’s homes (IPS). This is not only applicable to the Pikangikum community. As “[m]any diesel generators are aging” (IRE), they are too old to support access to water within residences. Therefore, reducing the reliance on diesel and replacing it with sustainable resources and distribution implies that these communities could access adequate water services.

As Christopher Henderson points out during the discussion, health complications also arise from continued reliance on diesel. For instance, respiratory problems can develop due to poor air quality (IPS). Over the last few decades, numerous studies have been conducted to report the effects of air pollution on lung function. These studies have shown that diesel emissions have adverse health implications, such that they have a role to play in the development of respiratory illnesses. Further confirming this notion is the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Housing and Health Guidelines, which state that indoor air pollution emerging from “Poor quality heating and

cooking devices [...] [such as] open fires or simple stoves fuelled by kerosene, biomass [...] and coal” contribute to the declination of respiratory health (WHO 88). Therefore, in areas that rely heavily upon diesel fuel to power the whole community, as well as upon alternative sources to power cooking and heating, it is probable that children and adults alike suffer from respiratory issues. Moreover, the WHO statement that “[h]ousing that is difficult or expensive to heat can contribute to poor respiratory and cardiovascular outcomes [...]” (WHO 3) is consistent with one of the leading causes of death of Indigenous people, that of diseases of the circulatory system. For these reasons, reducing the reliance on diesel to power remote northern communities will produce yet another positive social consequence for the health of individuals as a result of improving the conditions within their homes.

With this in mind, Day reports that the source of the Pikangikum fire “was a wood-burning [...] system” (IPS), and he stresses that this method of heating is a safety concern. On the subject of safety, given that many of these northern communities are only accessible by air travel or by ice roads, the safety of the individuals transporting the goods, the communities themselves, and the environment are at risk. Throughout the winter months, truck drivers transporting goods and fuel are putting themselves at risk as they drive in unfavourable conditions, specifically if the ice roads are unsafe due to the thawing of ice, or if they are inaccessible due to winter storms. When adverse weather conditions occur, the communities normally supplied by trucks have no option but to request air deliveries, which, as a result, drastically increases the cost of transportation. This not only puts the pilot of the plane at risk in the case of a storm, it places a strain on the community, as they must be cautious with their supply in the event that obtaining more fuel takes longer than anticipated. Moreover, the transportation of diesel fuel risks harmful environmental effects in the case of a spill. Judith Sayers states that “the fear of diesel spills into precious lakes or sacred sites” (IPS) is something Indigenous people are concerned about. They

are mindful of the safety of the environment, the animals and people that inhabit it, the water sources that run through it, as well as the ancestral sites that encompass their land. Thus, reducing these communities' reliance on diesel will produce positive results by providing members with safer conditions for their lives at home, as well as for the lives of other environmental bodies.

The final social consequence observed in this study in terms of moving towards more sustainable sources for power is the means of development. Mitchell Diabo discusses the reality of his community of Kasabonika Lake, an Indigenous community located 500 miles north of Thunder Bay. He notes that overcrowding occurs because families continue to grow, thus the population of the community increases, but “[n]o new housing, no new buildings, no new anything” can be built due to the “capacity of diesel power” (IPS). In other words, growth within the community's infrastructure is impossible whenever the microgrid reaches its peak limit. Henderson further develops this notion, remarking that the communities' dependency on diesel for power “[s]ocially [...] means the community doesn't have the power for economic development. Jobs are hard to create or maintain or even have” (IPS). Therefore, reducing these northern communities' reliance on diesel would generate growth within their infrastructures: it would facilitate development of additional housing, therefore reducing the percentage of overcrowding. Furthermore, it would provide the opportunity for more businesses to establish themselves within the community, creating more jobs for individuals and thus reducing the percentage of unemployment.

Considering the opportunity for economic growth, it is important to mention that moving towards environmentally sustainable sources for power will also generate more employment within the environmental industry. Henderson notes in his book *Aboriginal Power* that “build[ing] clean-energy capacity” is possible, “[b]ut it requires training, mentorship, advisors, partners, governing systems and investment” (112). In other words, as the projects concerning

renewable energy become reality, they will create initiatives for employment, but not employment for just anyone. Henderson is suggesting that educating, training, and mentoring Indigenous people is necessary to build the infrastructure needed to support renewable energy for three reasons. Firstly, “renewable energy partnerships are maximizing Aboriginal employment and introducing preferred hiring;” secondly, these jobs will primarily be in the remote Indigenous communities of Canada; and thirdly, these employment opportunities “need an inflow of young people who can be trained in green-job skills, something that Aboriginal communities have in abundance” (Henderson 187). Thus, securing more sustainable forms of energy will allow Indigenous communities to grow while enabling Indigenous youth to secure jobs in a field that will guarantee employment opportunities once they have completed their training and certification.

Also important to note is that the impoverished conditions Indigenous people endure so far outlined in this study are situated in the context of colonialism. All of the social aspects these communities currently face result from a history of oppression and subjugation, from the displacement of Indigenous communities “[...] for the benefit and convenience of the government” (IPS), to the horrors of residential schools, to the laws that assure control over the colonized. As stated by Jonathan Kay of the National Post,

[...] the Indian Act created a system that perversely discourages residents from leaving even the most appallingly impoverished reserves — without actually giving them any of the capitalist tools [...] necessary to prosper. This paradox lies at the heart of the cruelty we have inflicted on aboriginal peoples (Kay).

Kay captures the repercussions of colonialism while also identifying a part of the structure that has enabled the persistent disadvantaged conditions of Indigenous people. Indigenous people cannot simply relocate: not only have they already been displaced several times, but their land is

sacred. It is their connection to the past, to their ancestors; they identify with the land. The solution is to finally give these communities the tools they need to thrive: this needs to be rectified to reconcile the wrongs that have been done to the Indigenous Peoples of Canada.

Moreover, attempting to address the social issues discussed in this document reveals the potential that the underlying structural framework that enables the deprivation of these communities can be broken. Each social consequence that will rise from reducing the North's reliance on diesel actively works against the cycle of poverty. Therefore, it seems even more crucial that we address the energy poverty afflicting Indigenous communities.

So far, this discussion has revolved around the social consequences that will be brought by the reduction of diesel dependency in northern communities. For the remainder of this study, the discussion will focus on the cultural consequences that will arise from this change. As mentioned in "Indigenous Power Struggle," Indigenous people have been cast out of conversations regarding decisions that directly impact them (IPS). Wesley-Esquimaux suggests that the Canadian government must "engage the Indigenous community in the conversation" in areas that concern them (IPS). In *Aboriginal Power*, Henderson takes this idea a step further, urging the Canadian government to not only include Indigenous communities in the conversation by just consulting with them, but to include them in every step of the process regarding any kind of change that affects them. He notes that "[...] Canada's First Peoples seek a Respectful, Comprehensive, Proactive, Interactive, Resourced and Substantive community-engagement process" (104).

Answering the call for community engagement, the Canadian government has declared that it is working with Indigenous Peoples in the transition towards sustainable energy, stating that it "is working in partnership with the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Métis National Council [...] in the implementation of the Pan-Canadian Framework"

(ECCC). Furthermore, the Government of Canada states that “[t]hese partnerships will help build stronger, positive relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians” (Natural Resources Canada).

This aspect of including Indigenous communities in the process leads to the first cultural consequence arising from reducing diesel dependency. Because Indigenous communities are involved and interactive with the process, each stage that is reached between the community, businesses, and/or government during the transition toward clean and sustainable energy calls for celebration as it is marking an important milestone. Whenever there is a cause for celebration, traditional ceremonies, though varying in each Indigenous culture, are performed as they carry significant meaning to the people. Henderson notes that Indigenous ceremonies may be performed “when traditional lands are committed to the project, when the project partnership is forged, when the project is named, when the ground is broken for construction and when the initiative is commissioned” (110). Not only does this keep Indigenous cultures alive and thriving, but it also allows non-Indigenous individuals to learn and be immersed in the culture. Non-Indigenous people involved in the process are given insight into a resilient and diverse culture, learning that Indigenous people derive their strength from their cultural, communal, territorial, and ancestral ties. As a way of reconciling with the past, we must encourage the traditional practices of Indigenous cultures. We can do so by involving the community in determining how clean energy methods can be implemented, but also by encouraging Indigenous cultural practices and extending knowledge to non-Indigenous peoples about Indigenous culture. In reference to the previously-mentioned quote by the Government of Canada, this kind of cultural consequence creates strong and promising connections between Indigenous and Canadian culture (Natural Resources Canada).

In a like manner, moving away from diesel to sustainable alternatives provides a second cultural consequence as it promotes the beliefs and attitudes Indigenous cultures have in regards to the environment. Known as stewards of the environment, “Canada’s Aboriginal peoples believe that they are both individually and collectively responsible for protecting Mother Earth” (Henderson 101). Often, it is Indigenous people who are concerned about the exploitation or destruction of the environment. For thousands of years, Indigenous people lived in harmony with nature, never taking more than was needed to support their life. Moving away from diesel, a harmful fuel for the environment, towards sustainable resources denotes that these communities will be able to embrace their traditional cultural beliefs. As stated by the Government of Canada, “[f]unded [clean energy] projects could enable Indigenous communities to harness and use energy in a way that is more compatible with traditional values” (NRCan).

Moreover, in relation to the first cultural consequence gained from moving toward clean energy to power northern Indigenous communities, working with the communities promotes traditional Indigenous beliefs. Henderson reports that when the community is engaged in the process, whenever their interests are taken seriously, whenever they are met with understanding and respect, it “respect[s] [and] adhere[s] to [Indigenous] cultural norms and practices” (100). He provides the example of the Two-Row Wampum Belt to illustrate the coexistence between two parties that share mutual interests. He writes that “[...] the Two-Row Wampum is an agreement between equal parties to travel into the future based on a mutual understanding” (100). Furthermore, as Indigenous people become more involved in the processes of clean energy, their teachings will influence the decisions made and will extend beyond their culture as they become taught in education and training for clean energy employment.

Indigenous people view the environment differently than the traditional, Western way of regarding the environment. In his 1976 essay “A First American Views His Land,” N. Scott

Momaday describes his Indigenous outlook on the environment, which he contrasts with the Western view. His writing is marked by picturesque descriptions of the American landscape. He writes that the Indigenous of North America have a “unique investment in the American landscape,” being that the “investment represents perhaps thirty thousand years of habitation. That tenure is worth something in itself [...],” because “The Indian [...] is at home here,” on the land tying him to his ancestors (Momaday 574).

Momaday posits where such a conception of the landscape begins, noting that “[p]erhaps it begins with the recognition of beauty, the realization that the physical world *is* beautiful” (574). But he goes further with his assessment when he describes his experience with the chief of the Pueblo tribe, a community located in New Mexico. The chief, described as an old man, kept the tribe’s calendar by observing the position of the sun on the skyline each and every morning. It was by these means that he told his people when to plant, harvest, or perform certain ceremonies. Momaday writes that “the image of [...] the old man gazing each morning after the ranging sun – came to represent for me the epitome of that real harmony between man and the land [...]” (577). Indigenous people are in touch with themselves and their surroundings to ensure their survival. As Momaday explains, the Indigenous “comprehension of the earth and air is surely a matter of morality, for it brings into account not only man’s instinctive reaction to his environment but the full realization of his humanity as well [...]” (576). Man is no greater than his environment; he is not there to dominate or to exploit its resources - man exists to live with nature.

This conception of nature contrasts with the Western, anthropocentric view of the environment. Momaday writes that “[i]n our society we conceive the land in terms of ownership and use [...]. Ownership implies use, and use implies consumption. But this way of thinking of the land is alien to the Indian” (580). Though Indigenous people also use the land, their “first truth is that [they] *love* the land; [they] see it as beautiful; [they] delight in it; [they are] alive in

it” (580). As Momaday closes his essay, he makes a call that echoes the goal of ecocriticism: “It is this ancient ethic of the Native American that must shape our efforts to preserve the earth and the life upon and within it” (580).

Indigenous literature, such as Momaday’s essay, as well as Indigenous culture are useful to provide responses and solutions to our current environmental crisis. The fundamental issue underlying climate change is how individuals relate themselves to the environment. The dominant view of looking at the physical world is through the lens of exploitation for financial gain. Not much has changed since Momaday’s 1976 essay, as people still see the land as something to own and to consume, disguising the destruction of the land as human progress. That being said, there is a rise in individuals who are now recognizing the intrinsic value of the environment, and they are demanding change. As Momaday suggests, it is the Indigenous environmental ethic that offers prosperity in addressing current environmental concerns.

This last point introduces the last goal of this study. The long-term project of reducing northern Indigenous communities’ reliance on diesel has the potential to alter Canadian culture. Canada, being a Western country, has had anthropocentric attitudes and views in regards to the environment. Many Canadians view their relationship with the environment and its constituents as hierarchical, placing their needs above those of the environment. In moving away from the traditional Western view towards embracing the Indigenous conception of the environment, as described in Momaday’s essay, Indigenous cultures will ultimately impact Canadian culture. Integrating Indigenous teachings, beliefs and traditions into our conception of the environment as well as into our country’s policies and legislations would allow for cultural blending. As previously mentioned in this study, when Indigenous communities are involved in the transition toward sustainable energy, traditional Indigenous teachings are passed on and are implemented in

green energy knowledge. In return, these traditional teachings transcend Indigenous culture as they will come to influence environmental studies taught in universities and colleges.

To conclude, moving away from diesel for power in northern Indigenous communities will result in multiple and positive social consequences, such as improved water services, the elimination of certain health hazards, and the increased safety of individuals as well as the environment. [I]t will also allow for community and economic development. Overall, reducing the North's reliance on diesel will give these communities the opportunity to grow in ways that are necessary for members to lead prosperous lives. It will also pave the way for positive cultural consequences to develop. Involving Indigenous communities in these transitional processes will encourage and provide non-Indigenous people exposure to traditional ceremonies and knowledge. The transition from diesel to sustainable alternatives in itself promotes the beliefs of Indigenous culture and the views Indigenous peoples hold in relation to the land. Furthermore, this initiative has the potential to influence and change Canadian culture, as well as Western culture overall, as we move away from anthropocentric attitudes to an ecocentric view of the environment.

Though the Canadian government has declared its intention to work with Indigenous communities as well as to implement their traditional knowledge in the process of converting toward a low-carbon economy, one must stress how crucial it is that these northern community projects are realized. Investing in these clean energy projects marks a significant step toward Canada's reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. In the case of northern Indigenous communities, social poverty is associated with energy poverty. The cycle of poverty felt by this demographic must be addressed to begin reconciliation: the solution repeated throughout this study that could theoretically interrupt this cycle is providing these communities with reliable, sustainable sources of power. Moreover, as the threat of climate change is felt more than ever, Indigenous beliefs and attitudes could be the solution to address the problem. A cultural shift in

perception regarding our relation to the environment is needed if we are to slow down the ecological threat troubling our time.

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**Representing Women: The Making of a Gender in
Collective Imaginary**
**Représenter la femme : La construction d'un genre dans
l'imaginaire collectif**

Representing Romani and Travellers: Sexualized “Gypsy” Women and (Self-)Orientalism in *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* and *Gadjo Dilo*

By Solomiya Ostapyk

Abstract

Romani (Roma) and Traveller people make up significant minorities in many European nations, but they still endure discrimination and the continued effects of orientalism. This paper analyzes representations of “Gypsy” women in two audiovisual media: the reality television show *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* and the film *Gadjo Dilo*. *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* is produced by Channel 4 in Britain and by TLC in America, while *Gadjo Dilo* was directed by a man of Romani descent. Through this analysis, it becomes apparent that both the television show and the film sexualize and portray Roma and Traveller women from orientalist points of view. A comparison of these media makes it clear that while representations of an Other can be orientalist, self-representations are not necessarily free from orientalism and can in fact be self-orientalizing. The analysis of these media portrayals of Roma and Travellers illuminates the orientalist features of each and proves that orientalism can exist regardless of who is portraying whom.

Romani, Irish Travellers, and “Gypsy” Discrimination

Between 1000 and 1500 years ago, the Romani people began migrating towards Europe from their origins in Northwestern India. Today, around ten million Roma live throughout Europe (Bánfai et al. 1), and Roma populations exist in other continents as well. Although Irish Travellers, another people, share traditional nomadic lifestyles with the Romani, they constitute a separate ethnic group of Irish origin that diverged genetically around the mid-1600s (Phelan). And, as recently as 2017, discrimination towards both of these ethnic groups has been called “the last acceptable form of racism” (McGarry). Prejudice and stereotypes regarding Gypsy Roma Traveller people exist in literature, in film, and in media from both historical and more recent times. Despite their centuries-long existence throughout Europe, stereotypical or discriminatory views towards these two ethnic groups still hold strong.

“Gypsy Roma Traveller” is an umbrella term that includes several different traditionally nomadic groups of people. Some of these groups are bound together ethnically, while some represent collective lifestyle choices (Heaslip et al.). Overall, one can classify the ethnic groups under this umbrella as belonging to one of two ethnic minorities: either the Romani people, also called Roma, or the Irish Travellers. One may further delineate Romani based on their contemporary countries of origin, such as Welsh Romani and Spanish Romani, but all Roma belong to the same ethnic group that originated in India. Further, while the term “gypsy” enjoys prominence in popular culture, many consider it a racial slur. This term may refer to people of either of the two groups, or it may collectively refer to both groups at once. Not all Romani and Travellers take offense to this term, and certain policies and organizations do employ it in official discourse, but the word certainly has racist underpinnings (Gay y Blasco 297). At the same time, however, due to the prevalence of grouping Romani and Traveller people together as “Gypsies” throughout popular media, one may jointly analyze representations of these two peoples. In this paper, though, the terms Romani/Roma and Irish Traveller/Traveller will primarily describe these respective ethnic groups, while the term “gypsy” will be reserved for use in citations and in references to cultural products that employ this term.

Discrimination towards these peoples does not stop at a racist name. Although they have extensive heritage and histories in Europe, Roma and Travellers still endure prevalent stereotyping and racism at the hands of dominant populations in the countries in which they live. Some common stereotypes applied to “Gypsies” include that they are criminals and child-stealers; that they are mysterious, romantic, and seductive; that they lack education; and that Roma women tell fortunes and have supernatural powers (Sonneman). While some of these stereotypes might be perceived as less harmful than others, they all contribute to views of Roma and Travellers as inferior to non-Roma and non-Travellers, a hallmark effect of orientalism.

Orientalist Representations of “Gypsy” Women

Specifically, this paper will investigate orientalist representations of Roma and Traveller women in television and film. It will analyze representations of “Gypsy” women in the reality television show *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* and in the film *Gadjo Dilo* (“*The Crazy Stranger*”). *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* is a reality show produced by Channel 4 in Britain and by TLC (The Learning Channel) in America, while *Gadjo Dilo* is a film that portrays a Romani community and that was directed by a man of Romani descent. How do *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* and *Gadjo Dilo* represent Roma and/or Traveller women in terms of Edward Said’s theory of orientalism? Is there a difference between such representations in a mainstream reality show that portrays “Gypsies” as “Others” versus in a film in which the opposite is true? Through analysis of these two audiovisual media, it becomes apparent that both *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* and *Gadjo Dilo* sexualize and portray Roma and Traveller women from orientalist points of view. Consequently, a comparison of these media makes it clear that while representations of an Other can be orientalist, self-representations are not necessarily free from orientalism and can in fact be self-orientalizing. An analysis of these media portrayals of Roma and Travellers both illuminates the orientalist features of each and proves that orientalism can exist regardless of who is portraying whom.

My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding

Theoretical Approach

In *Orientalism*, Edward Said describes how representing a group of people as an “Other” implies their inferiority to a dominant group. Said’s discourse examines how the Occident has maintained hegemony over the Orient, the “Other” to the Western world, through a “collection of stereotypes, distortions, myths, and fantasies” about the Orient that characterize it as exotic and subordinate (Shabanirad and Marandi 22). Consequently, representing the Other in such a way –

from an orientalist perspective – implies that the Other is inferior to the dominant group portraying it. Furthermore, Said importantly emphasizes the nature of “such representations as *representations*, not as ‘natural’ depictions of the Orient” (Said 21). Orientalist representations of the Other do not strive for, nor do they succeed in, accuracy or faithfulness of representation. They rather serve to maintain the dominant group’s hegemony over the Other.

Said’s concept of representation of the Other aptly applies to the portrayal of Roma and Travellers in *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*. The ways in which members of these communities are depicted in the show align with orientalist modes of representation. After orientalizing the Roma and Traveller communities (“Gypsies”) as Others, the show portrays them in stereotypical ways that affirm their inferiority to non-members of these communities.

Secondly, the sexualization of the oriental woman has been a common feature of orientalist texts for centuries. By focusing solely on an “oriental” woman’s sexuality, the orientalist writer exerts dominance over her. For example, Edward Said describes how in his orientalist writings, French writer Gustave Flaubert takes his sexual experiences with one oriental woman, Kuchuk Hanem, and applies his resulting perception of her to all “oriental” women. As a result, “[w]oven through all of Flaubert’s Oriental experiences, exciting or disappointing, is an almost uniform association between the Orient and sex” (Said 188). Such continuous associations between Others and sex dampen and eventually erase their other qualities, reducing them to mere sexual objects. These representations do away with personalities or any more complex human characteristics that the Other may have and solely emphasize the Other’s sexuality for the Western gaze.

Such motifs of the sexualized female Other continue to circulate in present times. In “Picturing ‘Gypsies’: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Roma Representation,” Paloma Gay y Blasco identifies “predatory female sexuality” as one of the “master symbols in the Gadje [non-

Gypsy] conceptualisation of Gypsies” (Gay y Blasco 302). Thus, the motif of the sexually promiscuous “Gypsy” woman, a manifestation of the erotic female Other, remains abundant today. This portrayal exists both rampantly and complexly in *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*. Through the repetition of similar symbols or images that consistently highlight Romani and Traveller women’s sexuality, *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* echoes Flaubert’s incessant sexualization of the oriental woman. The show sexualizes female Roma and Travellers both overtly, such as by steering dialogue towards suggestions of promiscuity and the inappropriateness of clothing, as well as through more covert means, including through aspects of cinematography and the repetition of certain visual themes.

Orientalizing Romani and Travellers

My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding premiered as a television series in the UK in 2011, on British television broadcaster Channel 4, and ran for several seasons. The American version of the show, *My Big Fat American Gypsy Wedding*, premiered on TLC in 2012 and has since enjoyed an even longer run (“My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding” [IMDb]). This reality show follows members of Irish Traveller and/or Romani communities, either in Britain or in the United States, as they prepare for weddings and also for other major events such as first communions and birthday celebrations. However, it represents Romani and Travellers in problematic ways: specifically, after establishing them as “Others,” the show perpetuates stereotypes related to these communities. It orientalizes Romani and Travellers as Others through multiple means, including on the show’s website, in promotional clips for the series, and in narration in its episodes.

For instance, on the website for the American version of *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*, the description of the show highlights the supposed mystery and secrecy of Romani Americans: “From the most extravagant wedding gowns to explosive celebrations and the madness that follows, *My Big Fat American Gypsy Wedding* delves into the lives of America's most elusive

communities – the world of Romanichel⁴ [sic] and Roma gypsies” (“My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding” [TLC]). Evidently, this description aims to interest the website visitor and attract viewers to the show. However, it overtly and emphatically differentiates Romani American communities from the American majority; they are made exotic, secretive, and maybe even a little frightening for the dominant American population. Furthermore, narration in promotional material as well as in the show’s episodes also conveys that Romani and Travellers’ lives are full of mystery and insanity. Lines like “A spectacle like nothing else...their lifestyle will blow your mind” and “From the makeup to the miniskirts, from the heels to the hair...it’s the outrageous, it’s the unbelievable, it’s ‘My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding’” (Darby) clearly continue to sensationalize their lifestyles and practices, simultaneously implying their inferiority to non-Romani and non-Traveller populations. According to *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*, the Roma and Travellers belong to a very secret and bizarre group, despite being longtime residents of Britain or of the United States. In this way, the show characterizes them in line with Said’s concept of representation of the Other. They are “negative alter ego[s], alluring and exotic, dangerous and mysterious, always the Other” (Lau and Mendes 1). Put simply, in *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*, Romani and Travellers are orientalized.

Sexualizing Romani and Traveller Women

Consequently, establishing a group as an “Other” facilitates stereotypical representations of that group. Distancing and differentiating oneself from another group of people makes it easier to engage in processes of simplification and essentialism regarding that group – essentially, to apply traits possessed by a few members of the group to the group as a whole. This process of stereotyping exists in several regards in *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* as the show subscribes to multiple stereotypes associated with Romani and Irish Travellers.

⁴ Romanichals are a sub-group of Romani.

Perhaps the most notable orientalist feature of this reality television show, though, involves its representation of Roma and Traveller women: it continues a long tradition of sexualizing the female Other. The show is predicated on the stereotype of seductive and promiscuous Roma and Traveller women. It sexualizes women it portrays through both visual and auditory means, extensively focusing on their bodies, clothing, and overall appearances. Contrastingly, at the same time that it continuously highlights their sexuality, it talks about the strict moral codes that the women follow. These juxtapositions between physical appearance and apparent society-wide principles that forbid sexual contact before marriage create an ambiguous portrayal of the Roma or Traveller woman. According to *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*, she dresses provocatively and flaunts her sexuality, but at the same time, she must follow guidelines of extreme chastity. Because such juxtapositions between sexuality and chastity accentuated by the show portray “Gypsy” culture as contradictory and ignorant, they reflect a Western hegemony over Roma and Traveller people. Correspondingly, these simultaneous but oppositional representations are orientalist in that they fulfill a “Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Said 4). By characterizing the women and their culture in this way, *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* representationally manipulates their cultures’ moral codes. In so doing, it affirms dominance over Romani and Traveller groups. The show’s conflicting and sexualizing representations of women demean them and also portray them and their communities in general from an orientalist point of view.

Accentuating the Roma/Traveller’s Body

In an episode of the British version of the show that follows a twelve-year-old Irish Traveller girl as she prepares for her first communion, comments made by one of the show’s producers overtly sexualize the girl from behind the camera. In a dress shop, as the girl tries on her first communion dress for the first time, the producer remarks “That’s quite a short skirt,

would you be allowed to wear that in church?” Shortly after, she asks the girl and her older sister “If you don’t see it [the dress/skirt] as provocative, what do you see it as?” and the two Travellers simply respond “We see it as nice” (“Diamantes are Forever” 05:33-06:16). Asking these questions about the length and appropriateness of the Traveller girl’s dress without any precedent blatantly sexualizes the girl, not only drawing attention to her body but also arbitrarily depicting her as immodest due to the length of her dress. From the perspective of an outsider to the Traveller community – she is behind the camera, the Travellers in front of it – the producer sexualizes the girl, who has already been established as a Traveller Other. With this example, *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* suggests that because of their ethnicity, because of their established status as “Others,” Roma and Traveller women can and should be sexualized to entertain the non-Roma and non-Traveller viewers of the show.

Additionally, the camera’s gaze also contributes to *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*’s sexualization of Romani and Traveller women. The show often depicts female Roma and Travellers in tight, flashy, and/or short clothing, making the viewer believe that they very often dress this way. In reality, these sequences all take place at special occasions. Furthermore, Jensen and Ringrose illustrate the sexualizing movements of the camera in these types of scenes:

Gypsy Wedding repeatedly lingers over footage of young girls in their communion dresses, party-wear, and wedding dresses: every episode includes prolonged visual sequences in which the filmmakers’ cameras travel up and down the girls’ bodies, pausing dramatically at platform heels, bare legs, barely there mini-skirts, exposed mid-riffs, tight tank tops, and heavily made up faces. (376)

In these visual sequences, the camera intentionally draws the viewer’s attention to the women’s and girls’ bodies, eroticizing the female body and compelling the viewer to interpret the women’s dresses as provocative. And, importantly, it is the repetition of scenes of this sort that contributes

to their sexualization. More often than not, an event depicted in *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* is accompanied by camerawork that focuses on female bodies in ways depicted above. These scenes cause the viewer to associate “Gypsy” women with sexual promiscuity. Instead of focusing on these events as special occasions for the Roma and Traveller girls and women, the show causes “[t]he pleasures of playing, dancing, and experimenting with glamour at a community occasion [to be] called up for moral scrutiny” (Jensen and Ringrose 377). In *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*, the camera’s gaze often and deliberately objectifies female Roma and Travellers, covertly but unambiguously sexualizing them.

Contradicting Clothing and Morals

At the same time that it sexualizes these girls and women, *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* contradictorily depicts Romani and Traveller culture as having very strict morals vis-à-vis sexual conduct. By orientalizing these women’s chastity, the show simultaneously strengthens the sensationalism it generates by portraying them as seductive and promiscuous in the first place. For example, in the episode titled “Born to be Wed,” dressmaker for “Gypsies” Thelma Madine tells the camera that while “Gypsy” girls and women often dress provocatively, there is “definitely, definitely no sex before marriage” (03:06-03:32). Shortly after, voice-over explains that most Traveller girls must be chaperoned when they go on dates, even after getting engaged, and it also describes strict rules of courtship in which girls are not supposed to approach boys. However, this narration is paired with shots of Traveller girls wearing tight and revealing clothing (04:18-5:55). The show’s contradictory messaging regarding provocatively-dressed, sexualized Roma and Traveller women who simultaneously follow strict moral codes leaves the viewer confused about their culture, which is characterized as backwards and ignorant as a result. This tension between eroticism and conservative moral rules serves to further orientalize the women and Roma and Traveller culture.

What's more, *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* “never attempts to reconcile the sexy outfits with the strict moral code; it's simply left at being a paradox the audience can point fingers at” (Darby). By remaining emphasized but unaddressed, this contradiction between sexuality and morals clearly represents Roma and Travellers as inferior to non-Roma and non-Travellers: viewers can ridicule them for this supposed hypocrisy, which the show highlights. In an academic investigation of the show, Jensen and Ringrose clearly explain the results of this thematic contradiction. After affirming that while *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* plainly sexualizes girls and women, it offers at the same time “an account of strict moral codes around sex and of girls/women who are sexually repressed by Gypsy and Traveller culture,” they continue that “[t]he deliberate dissonance between the sensationalist voyeuristic footage from inside the communion and wedding parties and the accompanying voiceover about Gypsy and Traveller morality deliberately creates a space of contestation” (Jensen and Ringrose 376). This dissonance constitutes another way in which the show's representation of sexualized Roma and Traveller girls and women facilitates an orientalist perspective towards these groups. The show allows and even encourages the viewer to interpret the groups and their cultures as mysterious and erotic and, simultaneously, as backwards, inconsistent, and uneducated.

My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding show steers dialogue to subjects of promiscuity and sexuality related to female Romani and Travellers, and camerawork often and brazenly gazes at their female bodies. At the same time, though, it juxtaposes this sexualization with references to the strict sexual morals in “Gypsy” culture, characterizing this culture as contradictory and confused. All of these orientaling elements take place in a reality show produced by non-Romani and non-Travellers, or, in other words, by members of a hegemonically dominant group in relation to Roma and Traveller people. One might assume that, in contrast, cinematic *self*-representations of “Gypsies” would avoid such manifestations of orientalism and stereotypes. However, in an

analysis of representations of Romani women in a film by a filmmaker of Romani heritage, it becomes clear that hegemonically subordinate groups of people can similarly engage in processes of self-orientalism.

Gadjo Dilo

Theoretical Approach

While a dominant group can use orientalist modes of representation to portray a subordinate group, that subordinate group can also use *self*-orientalist modes of representation in portrayals of themselves, or self-representations. Due to the myriad effects and consequences of orientalism, one might think that the oriental subject strictly opposes orientalist representations of himself or herself, but this is not always the case. Accordingly, not all Roma and Traveller self-representations are free from orientalism. Stereotypes associated with these ethnic groups reflect centuries of oppression and discrimination towards them; so, although members of these communities have naturally worked to oppose such views and attitudes, there are certain cases in which they may internalize widely-used stereotypes about themselves. With consistent repetition of stereotypes about a certain ethnicity, people of that ethnicity may begin to normalize and embody the stereotypes and act in ways that fulfill them as a result. While self-orientalism may sometimes be used as a tool for regaining power, for taking ownership over stereotypes ascribed to one by a dominant group, “in the long run, [it] serves to perpetuate, and even to consolidate, existing forms of power” (Dirlik 114). Self-orientalism can serve as a form of resistance on the part of the orientalized as they attempt to reclaim ownership over their own representations, but it ultimately feeds into the power of the dominant group.

Correspondingly, the 1997 film *Gadjo Dilo* includes manifestations of Roma self-orientalism. The film’s director, Tony Gatlif, is of Algerian and Romani descent and grew up in a “Gypsy” community in Algiers. Some of his films explore themes and realities that affirm the

continued strong identity of “Gypsies” despite great persecution (“Biographie”). Due to the director’s ethnicity, experiences, and relationship with his Roma roots and also to his use of Roma actors in the film, one can characterize *Gadjo Dilo* as a self-representation of Romani people and culture. The film tells the story of a Parisian man who, while seeking the Roma singer of a song recording he carries with him, ends up in a Roma community in Romania. What unfolds is a story of two cultures coming into contact and aiming to understand one another. While the film does not represent the Romani in the same orientalist way as *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*, it nevertheless engages in a different, more covert genre of orientalism. In terms of its representations of female Romani, it reproduces elements of the orientalized and sexualized “Gypsy” woman trope, evidencing the presence of self-orientalism.

Self-Orientalist Representations of Romani Women

If orientalism involves a dominant group stereotyping and producing discourse that affirms the inferiority of another group – an “Other” group – self-orientalism exists when a subordinate group internalizes and acts in alignment with orientalist views that a dominant group has applied to it. Self-orientalism is a result “of the East’s representation and expression of itself from the eyes of the West and with the image which the West has fictionalised for it” (Feighery 271). In the case of *Gadjo Dilo*, the Roma community is “the East” that is represented according to characteristics that have been repeatedly ascribed to it by “the West.” While aspects of self-orientalism exist in relation to multiple characters in the film, both male and female, notable examples of self-orientalism occur in regards to Romani women. At several points in the film, Roma women are sexualized in ways not dissimilar to their sexualization in *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*.

Firstly, though, it is important to note the role-reversal between traditionally dominant and subordinate groups in this film to confirm that in *Gadjo Dilo*, the Roma are not “Other-ized”

as they are in *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*. In this film, the Frenchman, Stéphane, actually becomes the Other in relation to the Roma community. Members of the Roma community characterize him as foreign and untrustworthy and even as a thief (*Gadjo Dilo* 12:57-15:06). Because he is an outsider in this homogenous Roma settlement, Stéphane embodies the characteristics normally applied to a subordinate group in terms of the theory of orientalism. Although the French as an ethnic group traditionally possess hegemony over Romani populations, the film initially establishes Stéphane as the Other in a setting of numerically- and culturally-dominant Romani. This sort of “reverse orientalism” (McGregor 77) deliberately counters the rampant “Othering” of Roma people in popular culture and discourse. However, as analysis of the film’s portrayals of Roma women will reveal, *Gadjo Dilo* reflects certain orientalist modes of representation nonetheless – this self-representation of Roma people engages in self-orientalism.

Critics have highlighted, for instance, how, problematically, the film still represents Roma according to a traditional Western view: “Gatlif may be of Romani descent, but both the protagonist and the camera which follows him throughout are gadje [non-Romani], and it is through their lenses that events unfold and the Roma are seen” (Rutherford). Despite the director’s ethnicity, his articulated devotion to the Roma cause, and the fact that most Romani roles are filled by Romani people (Rutherford), *Gadjo Dilo* reproduces orientalist notions about Romani through its representation of Roma women. Although “Gatlif’s pedigree...assures us that this [film] is a ‘true’ picture” (Thompson), its portrayal of this group is in fact problematic in that it is not beyond the reach of orientalism. In short, the film’s self-representational qualities – which would presumably lend to authenticity – “hardly qualify as a solid defence against misrepresentation” (Rutherford). Although it does not portray Roma as “Others” to the same degree

as *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*, the film reiterates orientalist stereotypes of Romani people, notably that of the sexually promiscuous Roma woman.

Self-Orientalist Sexualization

Usually, it is other characters in the film that highlight and assume authority over Romani women's sexuality. Instead of producers, other behind-camera workers, or the camera itself sexualizing the women, Roma characters in the film partake in this traditionally orientalist act. Even during a scene that depicts women bathing and includes some nudity, the camera does not focus on the women's nakedness, but instead highlights the cultural and ritualistic natures of this quotidian task. In *Gadjo Dilo*, the sexualization of women is not very overt; however, it exists nonetheless in a different, self-orientalizing way, whether propagated by Roma villager characters or by Stéphane. Villagers sexualize their fellow women through direct references to Roma women's bodies and to their sexuality, portraying them as little more than sexual objects, and Stéphane's character also ultimately commodifies the Roma woman as a sexual object near the end of the film. While these actions and behaviours are certainly patriarchal, they also reflect orientalist views in that they sexualize the Roma women for the benefit of the "Western" gaze. In these ways, similarly to *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*, *Gadjo Dilo* sexualizes Romani women both explicitly and implicitly.

Sexualization through Speech

Romani villagers' sexualization of their fellow Roma women begins to occur early in the film. Soon after Stéphane arrives in the settlement, a village child refers to Sabina, the female protagonist, as a "slut" and a "whore" and says that "no one wants her anymore" because she left her husband in Belgium (*Gadjo Dilo* 31:59-32:04). In using these sexually-loaded terms to describe her, the child characterizes her as a sexually promiscuous woman with loose morals at the same time as he insinuates she is "ruined" for being a divorcée. In turn, this spoken

representation simultaneously leads to the impression that Roma women engage in indecent sexual relationships and that they are undesirable. Although he is part of the Roma community, the child's speech portrays Sabina as unchaste and immodest and sexualizes her from an orientalist point of view all the same. By highlighting and demeaning her sexuality, this speech, spoken by a Roma child himself, represents Roma women as inferior to non-Roma women by insinuating their undesirableness. In this way, this scene exemplifies Romani self-orientalization.

A little later on in the film, another scene similarly represents Roma girls and women as only worthy in relation to their sexuality. This scene involves a father worried about his daughter remaining a virgin as she prepares to travel to perform at a wedding. As she is about to leave, he “appears, flourishing ‘medical proof’ of her virginity and saying he will kill Izidor [the leader of the band she will perform with] if she does not return chaste” (Rutherford). On the surface, this segment of *Gadjo Dilo* seems intended to communicate that Roma culture follows strict morals, but it actually feeds into orientalist notions of female sexuality. The father's radicalness towards safeguarding his daughter's “chastity” conveys to the viewer that if she loses her virginity, she will lose her worth. This means of sexualization differs from those employed in *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* in that it also explicitly portrays male dominance, but it orientalizes the Roma woman nonetheless. The strict emphasis on the girl's virginity as a symbol of her worth reduces her to a sexual object and in fact mirrors the dissonance generated in *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* when the show portrays that “Gypsies” have strict morals in theory but are promiscuous in practice. This girl's father espouses the importance for women in their culture to remain celibate outside of marriage, but the viewer sees that not all Roma women in the film follow this moral code. This segment of the film represents another example in which this Romani-directed film internalizes the orientalist stereotype of the sexualized Roma woman and, as such, engages in self-orientalism.

Claiming a Sexual Trophy

Gadjo Dilo also sexualizes the Roma woman in a more discreet but also more insidious way. At the end of the film, Stéphane destroys the recordings of Roma music that he had meticulously produced, symbolizing the destruction of the orientalist cultural products that Westerners have historically displaced – brought home – from the East (McGregor 82). This scene therefore represents a transcending of orientalist modes of viewing and studying the “Other.” However, another fact of the scene prevents this rejection of orientalist thought. Although he destroys the recordings, Stéphane claims another cultural prize: a “Gypsy” woman. Andrew McGregor explains that “[e]ven though Stéphane destroys the recordings in an admirable gesture of cultural understanding, he nevertheless takes with him the most stereotypical cultural ‘commodity’ from the culture he has discovered and to many extents ‘conquered’ – the girl” (McGregor 82). Having entered into a sexual relationship with Sabina, one may presume that Stéphane will take her with him back to France. In this way, the film represents the Roma woman as the ultimate commodity for the Westerner to gain and use for sexual pleasure. Perhaps this commodification of the Roma woman as a sexual object to be attained by a man was unintentional, but the film nonetheless portrays Sabina “being claimed as a cultural, as well as a sexual, ‘trophy’” (82). At the end of *Gadjo Dilo*, Stéphane’s character characterizes the Roma woman as a sexual prize that he has obtained and can now bring home. Although this representation may have been unconscious and unintentional, it undoubtedly echoes historical, orientalist processes of claiming “oriental” cultural objects in addition to representing Sabina as a sexual force to be conquered. While these dual outcomes may be unintentional, they exist nonetheless, and this scene therefore constitutes another instance in which the film sexualizes the Roma woman and simultaneously self-orientalizes Roma people.

It is possible to identify instances in which *Gadjo Dilo* subverts stereotypes about Romani, but one can also recognize instances in which stereotypes ascribed to Romani, namely in terms of the sexualized Romani woman, have been internalized and reproduced. While director Tony Gatlif claims to offer an honest and real depiction of Roma life and culture, he does not succeed in avoiding stereotypes about Romani people that represent them from orientalist points of view. Consequently, as a self-representation of Roma people, the film engages in self-orientalism. In the film, Roma villagers sexualize their fellow women overtly through speech, and Stéphane claims a Roma woman as a sexual trophy of the “Orient” he has toured. While self-orientalism can sometimes serve as a strategy to reclaim power from a dominant orientalizing group, it most often ends up actually contributing to the dominant group’s power. The latter is certainly the case with *Gadjo Dilo*, as the film “leaves the viewer feeling entertained, but at the same time reassured about the centrality of his or her own personal and cultural identity, rather than feeling disturbed by the plight of the Roma” (McGregor 78-79). *Gadjo Dilo* aims to present a non-orientalist self-representation of Roma people, but its sexualization of Romani women clearly reproduces orientalist stereotypes, rendering it self-orientalist.

Conclusion

Despite the different circumstances surrounding their production, goals, and styles of representation, both *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* and *Gadjo Dilo* engage in orientalist portrayals of Romani and/or Travellers – of “Gypsies.” After establishing Roma and Traveller communities as “Others,” *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* sexualizes Roma and Traveller women both verbally and through the silent but powerful gaze of the camera. The juxtaposition of these sexualized women with descriptions of the strict morals common to their “Gypsy” societies further disparages and orientalizes Roma and Travellers by portraying their culture as confused and inconsistent. *Gadjo Dilo*, although a self-representation of Romani people, also aligns with

orientalist portrayals of “Gypsies.” While it should theoretically portray Roma non-stereotypically, it evidences the internalization of common stereotypes about “Gypsies” and reproduces the stereotype of the sexualized Romani woman. In reproducing and normalizing this stereotype of the sexualized Roma woman, the film clearly engages in self-orientalism: orientalism in self-representation.

Analysis of cultural representations using other concepts related to Edward Said’s theory of orientalism, such as exteriority and latent versus manifest orientalism, could surely provide further insight into the propagation of discrimination and stereotypes. For instance, *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* and *Gadjo Dilo* both include instances of latent (e.g. covert) as well as manifest (overt) orientalism. Further analysis of the different effects that these sub-types of orientalism have on an audience’s perspectives and attitudes towards Roma and Travellers could provide additional insight into how orientalist outlooks can be both formed and transmitted through audiovisual media. The trope of the sexualized “Gypsy” woman holds strong in popular culture, and only through deliberately conscious, non-orientalist representations of Roma and Traveller women may this stereotype eventually begin to lose traction in favour of more authentic, non-orientalizing portrayals of these women and their communities.

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Regards féministes : La représentation de la femme dans la chanson folklorique bulgare

Par Anna Pellerin Petrova

Résumé

Cet article porte sur le rôle et l'impact des chansons folkloriques dans la construction d'une identité féminine chez les populations des Balkans. À cette fin, un corpus composé de trois chansons folkloriques bulgares est étudié : *Delio le haidouk* (Излел е Дельо Хайдутин), *Tudora fait la sieste* (Полегнала е Тудора) et *Dragana et le rossignol* (Драгана и славей). Chacune des chansons est analysée selon la méthode du *close reading* ainsi que sous l'optique de la théorie féministe. Une telle recherche rend possible la comparaison de la perspective balkanique à la matrice hétérosexuelle dominante de l'Occident, permettant ainsi d'éclairer les pratiques sociales contemporaines des pays de la péninsule des Balkans.

Introduction

Les études culturelles s'intéressent aux manifestations quotidiennes de signification politique et sociale dans les artefacts culturels et médiatiques. En raison du caractère fondamentalement anglophone de ce champ d'études, moins d'attention est portée envers les cultures de la périphérie européenne, comme celles des Balkans (Volcic 333). Pourtant, cette région possède un important potentiel quant aux études culturelles, notamment grâce au folklore. Celui-ci façonne les identités ainsi que les rapports qu'entretiennent les membres d'une société. Le présent article se penchera donc sur la représentation de la femme dans les chansons folkloriques des Balkans, avec une attention particulière sur la Bulgarie. Il tentera de comprendre en quoi les chansons folkloriques des Balkans ont contribué à la construction d'une identité féminine. Afin de saisir la spécificité des genres dans la région des Balkans par rapport à la matrice hétérosexuelle dominante de l'Occident, il est nécessaire de faire le point sur certains concepts clés : la notion de folklore, les cultures des Balkans, et la théorie féministe.

Le folklore est intimement lié à la collectivité, au passé et à la ruralité. En effet, il fait habituellement référence aux expériences vécues par les paysans (Kremenliev 355). Dans les villages bulgares, chaque événement important était retenu sous forme de chanson. Les chansons se passaient ensuite de génération en génération, jusqu'à devenir la propriété de la communauté. D'ailleurs, les paysans chantaient souvent, avec ou sans instruments, et dansaient. La musique folklorique repose sur le talent naturel de certains individus qui connaissent le répertoire de la communauté et qui savent chanter. Le lien de proximité entre la réalité et la fiction ainsi qu'entre le travail et le repos caractérise la chanson folklorique bulgare, dont l'une des formes les plus significatives et anciennes est la ballade. Kremenliev dénombre trois types de chansons dans le folklore bulgare : les chansons au sujet d'expériences quotidiennes, ce qui inclut les thèmes de l'amour, des fiançailles, du mariage, de Noël, de la sécheresse, de l'hospitalité, de la nature, de l'humour, du travail et des enfants ; les chansons au sujet du surnaturel ; et les chansons au sujet du passé (358). L'histoire des cultures des Balkans est un important facteur à considérer, puisque de nombreuses influences politiques et spirituelles ont contribué à former l'art folklorique (Kremenliev 357 ; Buchanan 57).

La tendance orientaliste marque une séparation entre l'Europe de l'Ouest et l'Europe de l'Est, l'Autre. La péninsule des Balkans est située au Sud-Est de l'Europe. Bien que ses délimitations ne fassent pas toujours consensus, elle comprend généralement l'Albanie, la Bosnie-Herzégovine, la Bulgarie, la Croatie, la Grèce, une partie de l'Italie, le Kosovo, la Macédoine, le Monténégro, la Roumanie, la Serbie, la Slovénie et une partie de la Turquie. Si plusieurs de ces pays ont des racines slaves, leur situation géographique et leur histoire ont modelé leur culture différemment de celles des autres pays slaves de l'Europe de l'Est : la Russie, l'Ukraine, la Biélorussie, la Pologne, la République Tchèque et la Slovaquie. Ainsi, les Balkans se retrouvent isolés à la fois de l'Europe de l'Ouest, à la fois de l'Europe de l'Est, ce qui

témoigne de leur relation complexe avec l'Occident (Volcic 334). Certains auteurs remarquent d'ailleurs qu'une marginalisation et qu'une ghettoïsation des Balkans résultent de cette isolation (Todorova 180). L'histoire des Balkans est marquée par l'occupation ottomane, du XIV^e siècle au XIX^e siècle. La spiritualité et le mysticisme se sont répandus, le nationalisme s'est renforcé et les références nostalgiques au passé sont devenues communes (Kremenliev 372 ; Volcic 333). Si l'on comprend l'idée moderne de la culture comme ensemble de productions matérielles et symboliques d'un groupe donné, il est impératif de reconnaître qu'il n'existe pas de culture et d'identité uniques des Balkans (Todorova 176). Un certain discours persiste néanmoins sur la région, qualifié de « balkanisme » ou de « mentalité balkanique » par certains auteurs (Todorova 181). Selon ce discours, la culture des Balkans a une propension au mythe, et la société est excessivement machiste et orientée sur les hommes (Beissinger 408). Les traditions bulgares et macédoniennes se distinguent de ce modèle en cela qu'elles sont plus variées et qu'elles déconstruisent l'idée du héros masculin (Agoston-Nikolova 176).

La critique féministe est une théorie littéraire qui cherche à déconstruire l'opposition entre l'homme et la femme dans la société contemporaine (Culler 194). Pour ce faire, elle critique le modèle hétérosexuel qui dicte les identités et les cultures sur la base de cette opposition. La théorie féministe questionne également les idéologies masculines et phallogocentriques, les attitudes patriarcales, ainsi que les interprétations masculines de la littérature (Cuddon 273). En effet, elle se méfie des idées préconçues et généralement acceptées sur l'essence des femmes, leurs sentiments, leurs gestes et leurs pensées, ainsi que sur la place qu'elles devraient occuper dans la société. La théorie féministe est donc l'outil tout indiqué pour étudier les chansons folkloriques, permettant d'y déceler les caractéristiques attribuées aux femmes des Balkans.

Méthodologie

Le présent article étudiera un corpus composé de trois chansons folkloriques bulgares : *Delio le haïdouk* (Излел е Дельо Хайдутин), *Tudora fait la sieste* (Полегнала е Тудора) et *Dragana et le rossignol* (Драгана и славеят). La première relate un sujet historique, celui du haïdouk Delio, un leader rebelle de la fin du XVII^e et du début du XVIII^e siècle, dans les Rhodopes. La figure du haïdouk est significative dans le folklore bulgare, puisqu'il représentait la subversion sous l'occupation ottomane. Le haïdouk est perçu comme un symbole de courage et d'espoir dans les périodes sombres et difficiles (Kremenliev 373). Les deux chansons suivantes exploitent un thème plus doux : celui de la femme. Elles mettent de l'avant deux femmes, Tudora et Dragana, qui évoquent la nature, le miracle et l'amour.

Les textes seront analysés selon la méthode du *close reading*, ce qui permettra de faire ressortir les éléments mobilisés par le folklore pour décrire la femme. Ces éléments seront par la suite observés à la lumière de la théorie féministe, mettant en perspective en quoi le folklore façonne l'identité de la femme des Balkans, et en quoi les rapports entre les sexes d'aujourd'hui sont influencés par ce même folklore.

Analyse

Delio le haïdouk (voir Annexe I)

La chanson *Delio le haïdouk* est typique des ballades historiques bulgares du XIX^e siècle, où l'héroïsme d'un hors-la-loi anti-ottoman est mis en valeur (Buchanan 76). Elle est chantée par une soliste, accompagnée par une cornemuse. Le son profond et épais de l'instrument, avec des accents musicaux, enveloppe la voix de la chanteuse. Ce type de musique est caractéristique des Rhodopes, une région au sud de la Bulgarie. Dans sa forme, *Delio le haïdouk* est un cas du « rythme bulgare », phénomène musical propre à la Bulgarie, reconnaissable à l'hétérométrie des vers (Buchanan 63). En effet, les vers ne sont pas tous de la même longueur : la majorité sont octosyllabiques, tandis qu'une décasyllabe, deux ennéasyllabes et qu'une heptasyllabe se glissent

dans la chanson : С-Дум-бов-ци-и-с-Ка-ра-джов-ци (10 syllabes), В-се-ло-но-и-мам-две-ле-ли et Че-га-си-сле-зам-в-се-ло-но (9 syllabes), А-йе-не-ка-ба-да-йе (7 syllabes). Lorsque chantée, *Delio le haïdouk* traduit sa signification émotionnelle par le biais d'accents toniques, c'est-à-dire que la voix insiste sur certains éléments des paroles. Il s'agit ici des verbes comme « sortir », « dire » et « ordonner », ce qui renforce la position d'autorité de Delio. Enfin, les mots « tyran » et « oppresseur » sont particulièrement appuyés, lorsqu'il est question de décrire l'ennemi ottoman.

La glorification et le sentiment anti-ottoman se perçoivent d'autant plus dans le contenu de la chanson, notamment dans l'utilisation de certaines expressions. Par exemple, lorsque Delio prévient ses ennemis de ne pas convertir ses tantes à l'Islam, il fait appel à une métaphore : « Ne me les faites pas Turques » (dans la traduction anglaise, cette image se perd alors qu'on ne garde que les mots : « Don't you dare convert them »). Dans ce cas précis, l'expression « rendre turc », utilisée à la manière d'un verbe, signifie convertir. L'on y dénote un sentiment négatif, réducteur, de l'identité turque. L'insistance sur la possession, le « me » dans « ne me les faites pas Turques », évoque une objectification de la femme : elle est la propriété de l'homme. Cette caractéristique va de pair avec la soumission et la passivité, puisqu'il est présumé que les Turcs sont les seuls à agir dans la conversion, tandis que les femmes se laissent faire. S'il s'agit jusqu'ici des femmes bulgares, le même processus est mobilisé pour représenter la femme turque. En effet, Delio utilise les femmes pour formuler une menace à l'endroit de ses ennemis : « ne me provoquez pas, ou vos mères pleureront, et vos femmes encore plus ». Les femmes sont donc perçues comme passives, victimes, fragiles et sensibles. L'essentialisation de la femme s'accompagne de la femme comme métaphore de la société. Ainsi, la souffrance qui s'abattra sur les femmes dont les époux seront tués reflète celle dont souffrira la communauté. Outre cette représentation, la femme peut également jouer un rôle actif et positif. C'est le cas de Gulsum, la

bien-aimée de Delio. Cette dernière incarne une seconde figure, celle d'une femme protectrice et aimante. En effet, elle prévient Delio des dangers qui le guettent. Elle exécute ainsi une tâche valorisante, malgré son besoin de se faire rassurer.

Assurément, *Delio le haïdouk* livre un discours qui renforce symboliquement la hiérarchie des genres (Beissinger 404). En effet, l'on saisit la présence d'un modèle normatif du comportement de la femme qu'elle soit bulgare ou non. Selon ce modèle, la femme est soumise à l'autorité patriarcale ; elle est sans défense et nécessite donc qu'un homme vienne à son secours ; elle est victime, puisque si l'ennemi l'atteint elle, il atteint toute la société ; et elle est sensible, entre autres. Toutefois, l'interprétation de la chanson révèle une certaine contestation de ce rôle passif. La chanson est, comme beaucoup de chansons folkloriques bulgares, interprétée par une femme. Ceci lui confère une certaine liberté ainsi que du pouvoir. La chanson devient alors un médium d'empowerment social, puisque les femmes, dans un moment extraordinairement émotionnel, peuvent exprimer des sentiments qui autrement resteraient tus (Buchanan 85). Certes de moindre importance, le contrôle que la femme a sur un certain type de production folklorique reste néanmoins remarquable.

Tudora fait la sieste (voir Annexe II)

Tudora fait la sieste est un air d'amour, chanté par une chorale de femmes. Il emploie le chant diaphonique, un style typique en Bulgarie, dont deux notes de fréquences différentes caractérisent le timbre vocal (Buchanan 77). La polyphonie des voix contribue à l'harmonie de la chanson. *Tudora fait la sieste* est un texte composé de deux sizains et d'un dizain. Contrairement à la chanson précédente, celle-ci ne compte que des vers octosyllabiques. La chanson est rythmée par des répétitions, à chaque deux vers :

Полегнала е Тудора,
мома Тудоро, Тудоро,
под дърво, под маслиново,

мома Тудоро, Тудоро.

Повея ветрец горнинец,
мома Тудоро, Тудоро,
откърши клонка маслина,
мома Тудоро, Тудоро,
че си Тудора събуди,
мома Тудоро, Тудоро.

Ces épiphores répètent la séquence de mots « jeune fille Tudoro, Tudoro ». Par de souci de clarté, précisons ici que la transformation du « a » en « o » dans le prénom est un phénomène commun dans la langue bulgare, où le « o » traduit l'affection que l'on ressent pour la personne. D'ailleurs, la fréquence du son « o » dans la chanson crée un effet d'assonance.

La description de Tudora dans la chanson est symbolique : elle se trouve sous un olivier, symbole de l'éternel, de l'espérance et de la fidélité. Elle se réveille à cause d'une branche que le vent a fait tomber sur elle. Le vent est un élément signifiant l'esprit, la force et l'invisibilité. L'olivier représente donc son espoir de trouver l'amour, et le vent, la force qui la ramène à la réalité. Le bouquet de fleurs et l'anneau doré qu'elle imaginait sont des références directes à la galanterie et au mariage. Tudora est dans une position allongée, qui évoque la sensualité et la beauté de la femme. La douceur de la chanson et ses paroles permettent d'imaginer une jeune fille, puisqu'elle espère un « premier amour ». Son attitude languissante et rêveuse trahit son désir de trouver l'amour, et ce faisant, contribue à entretenir des rôles de genre. Ainsi, la femme doit faire preuve de patience et d'espoir, et aspirer au mariage. *Tudora fait la sieste* adhère donc à un discours social qui crée des attentes vis-à-vis des femmes. Celles-ci doivent se conformer au modèle dominant de la femme au foyer, de façon à contribuer à l'ordre social et à assurer la cohésion (Beissinger 404).

Si ce n'est pas le cas partout dans les Balkans, la performance du chant polyphonique est effectuée par des femmes, dans les traditions bulgare et macédonienne (Agoston-Nikolova 179).

Cet exercice musical se rapproche néanmoins de deux types de chanson que l'on retrouve dans l'ouest des Balkans, sur les territoires de l'ex-Yougoslavie (Krader 9) : la *ganga*, originaire de la Bosnie-Herzégovine, un groupe polyphonique composé de femmes ou d'hommes, où une personne mène et les autres l'accompagnent ; ainsi que la *rozgalica*, de la Croatie, un groupe où les voix chantent en canon, c'est-à-dire qu'un meneur chante et que les autres voix s'ajoutent à la sienne. Dans la pratique bulgare autant que dans ces derniers types de chanson, le fait de chanter en groupe renforce le sentiment d'appartenance que l'on ressent envers ce groupe (Petrović 331). Dans le cas de *Tudora fait la sieste* comme de *Delio le haïdouk*, le discours inhérent à la chanson réfère à la dichotomie homme-femme conventionnelle, ce qui entretient l'hétéro-normativité de la société. Toutefois, l'acte de chanter est significatif, et la liberté qu'ont les femmes d'y participer suggère une autre réalité, celle d'un espace pour les vies et les sentiments des femmes (Agoston-Nikolova 179).

Dragana et le rossignol (voir Annexe III)

La chanson *Dragana et le rossignol* suit le même modèle que *Tudora fait la sieste*. En effet, la chanson est composée d'octosyllabes et la forme des strophes est aléatoire :

Драгана седи в градина,
В градина под бял трендафил,
Гергеф шие, песен пее,
Над нея славей говори,
Я пей, да се надпяваме,
Ако ли ме ти надпееш,
Крилцата ми ще отрежеш,
Ако ли те аз надпея,
Косата ти ще отрежа,

Драгана надпя славея,
Славей си я жално моли:
Крчката ми да отрежеш,
Крилцата ми не отрязвай,
Дребни пилци съм измътил

Son style, moins riche que les chansons précédentes, est simple. Les références symboliques y sont toutefois nombreuses. En effet, les éléments comme le jardin, le rosier, la broderie, le chant, l'oiseau, les ailes et les cheveux sont tous indicateurs d'allégories. Au début de la chanson, Dragana se trouve dans un jardin et brode. L'emplacement ainsi que l'activité à laquelle elle s'adonne sont caractéristiques des sphères typiquement féminines : la maison et la famille (Beissinger 412). Le rosier sous lequel Dragana est assise est hautement symbolique. La rose est la fleur nationale bulgare, et la rose blanche, de surcroît, représente la pureté, l'innocence et le jeune amour. L'on peut en déduire que Dragana est jeune et belle. Combinées aux activités de broderie et de chant auxquelles elle s'adonne, ces caractéristiques font d'elle l'incarnation de la féminité. Dragana correspond à ce que le canon des genres s'attend d'une femme. Le rossignol, oiseau connu pour son chant, symbolise le charme et la poésie. Lorsqu'il initie le dialogue avec Dragana, le rossignol la met au défi de le surpasser en chant. Si elle gagne, il lui coupe les cheveux, et dans la situation inverse, elle lui coupe les ailes. Ces deux éléments font partie intégrante d'eux, c'est-à-dire que les cheveux de la jeune fille sont un symbole de sa féminité, autant que les ailes sont un symbole de l'oiseau. Dragana relève le défi et l'emporte. Le rossignol plaide et demande grâce, préférant se faire couper les pattes plutôt que les ailes. Magnanime, Dragana le laisse partir, la fierté d'avoir surpassé un rossignol au chant lui étant suffisante.

Certes, Dragana incarne la femme idéale du point de vue patriarcal : elle est féminine, jeune et pure. La chanson présente cependant un aspect de la femme jusqu'à présent ignoré : le pouvoir. En remportant le défi lancé par le rossignol, Dragana démontre non seulement qu'elle est capable d'exceller, mais aussi qu'elle est en situation de domination, puisque l'oiseau est à sa merci. En lui accordant ses ailes, elle fait preuve de confiance en elle-même et en son jugement.

La présence du dialogue entre la jeune femme et le rossignol rappelle d'ailleurs un élément important dans le folklore bulgare : le surnaturel. En effet, que Dragana puisse communiquer avec les animaux souligne le pouvoir mythique souvent conféré aux femmes (Agoston-Nikolova 177). À la lumière de ces remarques, il serait possible d'avancer l'hypothèse selon laquelle le rossignol symbolise l'homme, puisque ce dernier, à l'instar du rossignol dans ce cas, est traditionnellement associé à une idée de performance où la femme ne peut lui être supérieure. Lorsque la jeune femme remporte le défi et surpasse le rossignol en chant, l'on peut comprendre qu'il s'agit de l'affirmation des compétences féminines et de la valorisation de l'identité de la femme. La période des Lumières en Bulgarie a amené une nouvelle façon de percevoir les femmes. L'image du héros aux facultés quasi-magiques s'estompe pour laisser place à un portrait plus réaliste de la vie, ainsi que pour laisser aux femmes la place qui leur revient (Agoston-Nikolova 178).

Conclusion

En résumé, le présent article a étudié trois chansons folkloriques bulgares à l'aide de la théorie féministe : *Delio le haïdouk*, *Tudora fait la sieste* et *Dragana et le rossignol*. *Delio le haïdouk* prend la forme caractéristique des ballades historiques bulgares du XIX^e siècle, c'est-à-dire qu'elle est chantée par une soliste accompagnée de la cornemuse. L'hétérométrie de la chanson ainsi que les accents toniques permettent de mettre de l'avant la masculinité rigide de la figure du haïdouk. Celle-ci se remarque par l'objectification et l'essentialisation de la femme. L'on y voit que l'épouse joue un rôle avec plus de responsabilités, celui de protectrice. De façon générale, le discours de la chanson renforce la hiérarchie des genres. L'interprétation de la chanson, le chant lui-même, encourage néanmoins l'empowerment des femmes. *Tudora fait la sieste* est une chanson d'amour au style plus rythmé : les épiphores et les assonances du chant diaphonique font ressortir la féminité de la jeune fille. Les références à l'olivier, au vent et à la

sensualité de la femme rappellent qu'elle attend l'amour, se conformant ainsi au modèle de la femme véhiculé dans la société patriarcale. Ici aussi, l'interprétation de la chanson participe d'un acte d'indépendance et de rejet du système de domination masculine, puisque les femmes chantent en groupe, créant un sentiment d'appartenance dans le folklore. Somme toute, *Dragana et le rossignol* est une chanson qui mise sur la symbolique de la féminité. Ainsi, la femme apparaît comme belle, jeune et pure avec des symboles tels la rose blanche et le chant. Cette chanson accorde davantage de pouvoir à la femme que les deux précédentes, puisqu'elle l'autorise à prouver ses capacités à exceller, qu'elle la place dans une situation de domination où elle peut gracier quelqu'un, et qu'elle montre une femme aux pouvoirs surnaturels.

La critique littéraire féministe postule qu'il existe deux formes de lecture de textes (Doherty 40). La première est une lecture féministe critique, ou fermée, qui fait ressortir comment les femmes dans la littérature reflètent les contraintes de genre. Elle montre comment le pouvoir masculin est imposé sur la gent féminine. Selon cette lecture, les chansons du corpus étudié dans le présent article confirment la structure hiérarchique des genres, puisqu'elles décrivent la femme stéréotypée de la société patriarcale. La lecture féministe utopique, ou ouverte, cherche pour sa part à déceler les nuances dans la littérature qui permettent de nouvelles affirmations identitaires. Cette lecture rend possible une forme de résistance aux normes culturelles en place. C'est le cas des trois chansons analysées, où de variations dans la façon de représenter la femme et dans le chant lui-même traduisent une identité féminine forte qui se dresse en réponse à la structure dominante masculine.

Le présent article s'est surtout concentré sur la Bulgarie et sur la Macédoine en raison de leur approche différente de la question féminine. Ce faisant, le genre épique et les chansons du retour, nombreux dans le reste des Balkans, ont été évités. Ce type de chansons révèle un machisme et un système patriarcal encore plus intense que ceux vus par le corpus. Si l'on donnait

suite à la présente recherche, il serait pertinent de s'attarder à ce genre, qui produirait une analyse bien différente de celle effectuée ici.

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Annexe I

Излел е Дельо Хайдутин

Излел е Дельо хайдутин,
Хайдутин ян кесаджие,
С Думбовци и с Караджовци.
Заръчал Дельо, порочал,
Дериданскине айене,
Айене кабадаје,
—В селоно имам две лели,
Да ми ги не потурчите,
Да ми ги не почърните.
*Че га си слезам в селоно,
Мночко щат майки да плакнат,
По-мночко, млади нивести.*

Гюлсуме Дельо зароча:
-Чувай са, Дельо, варди са,
че ти са канят, Дельо льо,
Деридескимнем айене,
айене и кабадане,
леят ти куршум сребърен,
за тебе, Дельо, да превият.
-Гюлсуме, любе, Гюлсуме,
не са е родил чилюкън
дену ще Дельо убие!

Delyo the Hayduk has Gone Outside

Came out rebel Delyo;
rebel true grit;
with fellow Dumbovtsi and Karadjovtsi;
asking Delyo warning;
the oppressors and the tyrants;
I have two aunts in the village;
don't you dare convert them;
don't you dare convert them;
don't make me come for you;
your mothers will mourn you;
and more so your wives

Gulsum cautions;
Listen Delyo, be wary;
for they collude, Delyo;
the oppressors and the tyrants;
casting silver bullet for your demise;
Gulsum, my love;
Delyo's match hasn't walked the earth yet;

Annexe II

Полегнала е Тудора

Полегнала е Тудора,
мома Тудоро, Тудоро,
под дърво, под маслиново,
мома Тудоро, Тудоро.

Повея ветрец горнинец,
мома Тудоро, Тудоро,
откърши клонка маслина,
мома Тудоро, Тудоро,
че си Тудора събуди,
мома Тудоро, Тудоро.

А тя му се люто сърди,
мома Тудоро, Тудоро,
"Ветре ле, ненавейнико,
мома Тудоро, Тудоро,
сега ли найде да вееш!"
мома Тудоро, Тудоро.

"Сладка си съня сънувах,
мома Тудоро, Тудоро,
че ми дошло първо либе,
мома Тудоро, Тудоро,
и донесло пъстра китка,
мома Тудоро, Тудоро.
И донесло пъстра китка,
мома Тудоро, Тудоро,
а на китка златен пръстен!"
мома Тудоро, Тудоро.

Tudora has taken a nap

Tudora has taken a nap,
Lass Tudoro, Tudoro,
Under a tree, under an olive tree
Lass Tudoro, Tudoro.

A wind from the mountain blew,
Lass Tudoro, Tudoro,
And broke a twig of the olive tree,
Lass Tudoro, Tudoro,
And woke up Tudora
Lass Tudoro, Tudoro

She got very mad at it,
Lass Tudoro, Tudoro,
"You never-ceased-blowing wind,
Lass Tudoro, Tudoro,
Do you have to blow now!?!"
Lass Tudoro, Tudoro.

"I dreamt of a sweet dream,
Lass Tudoro, Tudoro,
That my first love has come.
Lass Tudoro, Tudoro,
And brought me a bunch of colourful
flowers,
Lass Tudoro, Tudoro,
And brought me a bunch of colourful
flowers,
Lass Tudoro, Tudoro,
A bunch of colourful flowers held by a
golden ring,
Lass Tudoro, Tudoro.

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