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**THE NAIVE PICTURE  
AND UNBRIDLED WORLD IN THE STORY *LILIKA*  
BY DRAGOSLAV MIHAILOVIĆ**

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in the story *Lilika* by Dragoslav Mihailović**

**Abstract:** This paper deals with the motifs of eroticism in the story *Lilika* by Dragoslav Mihailović, in the context of the growing up and maturing of the young ten-year-old heroine. The erotic in this story is brought down to the level of pornography – animal instincts in the scenes of the girl's drunken mother and stepfather grabbing each other by the arms and legs in front of the child, slipping hands under the skirt, chasing each other with knives and pushing their tongues into each other's mouth. They stretch the sphere of eroticism to extremes, which is, in this case, thanatically tainted. And such a bestial life that is led by the stepfather and the mother is not far from true violence over the ten-year-old girl, who is beaten and tied to a bed by the parents; and apart from the physical abuse, whose effects are frequent blood spots and bruises under Lilika's eyes and uncontrolled night urination, there is an additional passive kind of violence towards the girl – ignoring and neglecting her. In a series of circumstances in which she finds herself unwillingly, there forms an inner framework of the heroine's unhappy childhood, whose basic problem was posed already at her very birth, and it is the question of her identity.

**Keywords:** Dragoslav Mihailović, infantile hero, naive, point of view, focalization, eroticism, delinquency, identity

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Dragoslav Mihailović is one of the most important writers of Serbian literature, a regular member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts,

a recipient of many rewards and recognitions, translated into several languages. Apart from short stories and novels, his voluminous writings include dramas, essayist-documentary-publicist books (such as the multi-volume *Bare Island (Goli Otok)*)<sup>1</sup> and several more biographical and memoir texts about the communist regime in old Yugoslavia. Three of his books were particularly important for Serbian literature – the collection of stories *Good night, Fred (Frede, laku noć)* (1967) and the novels *When Pumpkins Blossomed (Kad su cvetale tikve)* (1968) and *Petrija's Wreath (Petrijin Venac)* (1975), because they contributed to significant changes taking place by the end of the 1970s. Namely, Mihailović activated a whole arsenal of literary techniques, which were almost completely eliminated from Serbian literature between two world wars, and especially after WW2. According to a connoisseur of his work, until the time Dragoslav Mihailović appeared, “all that concerned peasant or small-town life in Serbia had stopped existing”, and then with him “all that Serbian prose had originated from came back in its full force”, because “he activated both thematically and linguistically, characterologically and psychologically, all that made the corpus of traditional values in Serbian literature.”<sup>2</sup> Two techniques are dominant in that sense – the first one is the revival of *skaz*, that is the way in which his heroes speak, after which, almost as a rule, follows *a tragic feeling of the world*, and the other one is the *language* which his characters use, and which is colourful, authentic, dialectically shaded or part of the urban slang. At the time of the revival of modernistic techniques, when the poetic and symbolic discourse was particularly nurtured, Mihailović, thus, introduced traditional tones which marked a change in the narrative paradigm. This course of action in his literature coincided with the time when Serbian/Yugoslav art, especially cinematography, witnessed the appearance of a completely novel concept known as *the black wave*. The art of *the black wave* marked the presence of themes from the dark social milieu of Serbian everyday life and showed peculiar ideological blasphemy in the context of socialist-dictated and conducted optimism aimed at modelling the world as “the best of all the worlds”.

The story “Lilika” was published in Mihailović’s first book, a collection of stories titled *Good night, Fred (Frede, laku noć)* illustrating almost all of the

<sup>1</sup> All quotations and book titles used in the paper were translated by Nataša Janković, PhD, English language teacher and interpreter of the Teacher Education Faculty in Belgrade.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremić Ljubiša. 2017. “Zapis o Dragoslavu Mihailoviću”. *Književni portret Dragoslava Mihailovića. Zbornik radova Savremena srpska proza* 29, ed. Vukašinović Veroljub. Trstenik: Narodna biblioteka “Jefimija”: 22.

above assertions. With the plot being set in the social periphery (here the life takes place in the shacks on the city outskirts) and a gallery of marginalized characters (cleaners, cooks, drivers, porters, laundresses, masons), the main thread of the storyline becomes noticeable, which is directed towards the world of “small”, “miserable”, “superfluous” people. This precisely creates a deeper symbolic meaning and a deliberate ironic distance in the context of the then current intention of building a society of “equality and justice for all”. This distance is especially deepened by the choice of the protagonist of this story, because the person in question is a 10-year-old girl who, utterly powerless, found herself in the circumstances that she tried to understand from her child’s perspective. Through the technique of monologue, she, namely, speaks in her own terms, with her own logic, her limited view of the world and a privileged psychological and perceptive perspective, which makes the image of a poor Serbian family and society as a whole in the second half of the 20th century even more complex. This form, in criticism and theory often called the *testamentary form* of narration/confession, has made it possible to put the reader in the position of a listener or witness, and thus to further emphasize the tragic position of the young heroine.

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It is hard to find a better testimony in Mihailović’s literary work to the suggestive effect of erotic/lustful, i.e. instinctive life, on the formation of a young personality than the story of “Lilika”. The heroine, after whom the story was named, is portrayed at the crucial moment of her life, just a day before being sent to an institution designed for correcting delinquent children from criminal environment. The compositional logic of the story corresponds to that compressed and psychologically charged moment, as both time and space are intertwined in it. Namely, at the beginning, as well as at the end of the story, Lilika is found in the neighbour’s wood shack, and the whole story lasts a few hours on a Sunday evening, just as long as Lilika’s confession does. Her account of the events from her child’s life is inversely proportional to the time and space crampedness, as her whole life unfolds before our eyes, from her birth to this, for her, fateful day. “I always come here,” says the heroine, “I come here and stay quiet.” “I like to watch the rain. I sit on the log next to the door and cover my knees with my dress so they don’t feel cold and then I watch the plop dripping from the roof. That’s funny and nice. I like it.”<sup>3</sup> Already from the circumstances that bring her to

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<sup>3</sup> Mihailović Dragoslav. 2017. *Frede, laku noć*. Belgrade: Laguna: 52.

“uncle Andra’s shack” (as she steals his key, sneaks in, and nobody knows about this habit of hers), we may conclude that this is a place of special importance for Lilika. She likes to huddle up here, to play, and this is where she has brought all her toys and dolls.

The story, however, reveals the heroine’s gradual relocation from the conventional space. First of all, as her mother went to work, she spent long days sitting alone at home, in some corner or on the old bed, but her forthcoming relocation (first in the communal yard, then in some outdoor space, such as cinemas, parks, pastry shops, markets and city streets), can be observed as a social and psychological separation. Gradually, as she grows and matures, the girl chooses such places that will take her as far away from home as possible, going intuitively towards a space which will bring her the feeling of fullness. The archetypical image of home represents a “vivid symbol of a man who has found himself and his stable and secure place in the universe,”<sup>4</sup> so the girl’s unconscious retrieval from her home is exactly an indicator of her elementary unrootedness, and thus her vulnerability, instability and unfulfillment.

It is interesting, in that sense, to observe the place of her favourite hide-out. A shack is a utility room, a storage room (that can rightfully be called a garbage dump), something that goes with a house, but never makes its essential part. Besides, that shack is not part of Lilika’s house, but their neighbour’s, and what we call a “house” is not a house, but rather a wooden hut knocked up in the city outskirts, which tells us that here we have a symbolic and multiple marginalization. The girl is dislocated from mainstream life in any sense – social, family, motherly-intimate. Gaston Bachelard warns us: “The mother and the house, here are the two archetypes [...] the intimacy of a well enclosed and well protected house quite naturally causes greater intimacy, especially the intimacy of a mother’s lap, and then of a mother’s womb.”<sup>5</sup> The dethroned intrauterine image, in the shape of the old neighbour’s wood shack, which becomes the girl’s only security and protection, speaks of something deeply wrong in the mother-child, child-family, and child-home relationships. This image is additionally emphasized by the name of the institution which the child should be sent to – the corrective institution, which multiply diffracts the indicated disturbed family values.

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<sup>4</sup> Trebješanin Žarko. 2011. *Rečnik Jungovih pojmova i simbola*. Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike: 235.

<sup>5</sup> Bašlar Gaston. 2005. *Poetika prostora*. Filipović Frida trans. Čačak-Beograd: Gradac: 86.

From a collage construction of events presented to us by the heroine herself, then, we discover the inner framework of her unhappy childhood, which we have only been able to predict so far. Her basic problem was posed at her very birth, and it is the question of her identity. Namely, she does not know who her father is, that is, the figure of the father in her consciousness was constructed from some vague presumptions resulting from her mother's avoidance to answer this question precisely, and from an indirect, accidental realization based on her neighbours' conversations about her father, who was, in fact, a guest at a hotel where her mother worked as a cleaner, hence, just a passerby. The one whom she currently calls dad is, in fact, the man who will trigger her relocation to the corrective institution, and his relationship with the girl's mother produces several deep motivational drivers for Lilika's behaviour, and her understanding of the world and interpersonal relationships.

Seen from the outside, this corrective institution came to Lilika as a punishment for the unbridled life that she leads, because she does not like school, does not study, is not accustomed to the school system, runs away from home and walks around the city outskirts, steals things from neighbours and market sellers, and is intellectually and hygienically neglected. The external moment of her characterization is also reflected on the formation of her consciousness about herself – as she says: “Everyone tells me that I'm stupid.” And she adds: “Everyone smacks me; nobody loves me; even our very lenient teacher who everyone calls Mommy, wants to love me like all the other children, but as it is, she can't either.” What kind of consciousness can a child develop when she receives such information from her environment, but a dual one: on the one hand, in her own childish way, she hurtfully accepts this “truth” about herself, but she also opposes it – by resisting her official name (Milica Sandić), because it implies the social aspect of her personality. She likes people to call her Lilika (this nickname came from the mispronunciation by a retarded boy Peca and his disability to properly pronounce her name) and this is the way in which she shows a deeply suppressed intimate relationship towards herself, as it is only in that name that a trace of somebody's affection and love can be found.

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But even before Lilika found herself living in at least some kind of family (she now also has a half-brother towards whom she builds a strong motherly relationship), the genesis of her exclusion from at least partly normal environment began with her mother's promiscuous behaviour while Lilika was

still very small. Namely, the mother often brought men to their home, which Lilika tried to understand and overcome in her child's vitalism:

My mom would put me in the evening to sleep down on the little mattress which I and my little Brother now sleep on or she would simply move me during the night so I would sometimes wake up in fear and shout mom get that man out of my bed I want to sleep hee hee silly me. But that was only in the beginning. Later I kept silent and watched what they were doing.<sup>6</sup>

Lilika later progressed in her art of watching to a certain level of understanding, because she noticed some regularities in their relationship; usually after a heated argument, mostly provoked by jealousy, a man and a woman make up:

On my little Brother's birthday my mom threw out of our home one woman Zorica who has no husband because my dad was looking at her. After that my dad and mom had a fight again and she started to throw plates and glasses and she chased him with a knife around the shack. And my dad ran in front of her and grinned are you crazy hee hee. But in the end, Mom and Dad always make up. Then my mom sits on his lap and says to him don't you do that ever again you hear me and she pushes her tongue into his mouth and my dad touches her under her skirt. After that they make me go to sleep and then they go to bed and I pretend to sleep and watch what they are doing. But that was only in the beginning. Now it's no longer interesting to me I'm no longer a little girl.<sup>7</sup>

It is astonishing, however, that in such scenes of basic instincts and passion, Lilika does not retreat, nor does she show any signs of trauma. Most often, contact with what is physical and what emerges from the zone of hidden, secretive and forbidden things, makes children retreat into themselves; they take it as a typical inner experience that they cannot name and which is on the verge of transgression, indignation and guilty feelings. Such scenes should cause feverish conditions that are later symbolically projected.<sup>8</sup> In Lilika, we do not see any confusion over what she sees; on the contrary – from the expected introvertedness, she is placed in the position of an interpreter of what is happening between a man and a woman (before the children at school, she recounts the scenes from her house and therefore gets sweets and

<sup>6</sup> Mihailović Dragoslav. *op. cit.*: 58.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*: 60.

<sup>8</sup> A proof of that are the heroes of Ivo Andrić's stories *Mila and Prelac* (*Mila i Prelac*), *Death in Sinan's Tekke* (*Smrt u Sinanovoj tekiji*) and *The Millhouse* (*U vodenici*), who retreat into themselves and into loneliness before bodily mysteries. More about can be seen in: Brajović Tihomir. 2015. *Groznica i podvig. Ogleđi o erotskoj imaginaciji u književnom delu Ive Andrića*. Beograd: Geopoetika.

food, by which her testimony turns into a lucrative trade). The girl, therefore, does not feel what represents the usual accompanying elements of sensible maturing – fear, caution and shame, which only proves the cruelty present in the family relationships, in her upbringing, and in the absence of love. With her pronounced self-awareness of “how she is no longer small”, in fact, we see active suppression, projection and a series of other defensive mechanisms that the child uses as protection from the animosity of the adult world.

However, what seems even scarier is that Lilika constantly finds herself torn between the need for her mother’s love and for showing love herself and continuous violence that she experiences at home. The rare affection, concern and mother’s care arouse in the girl the better part of her soul, as at those moments she calms down, does not wander, does not steal, and is obedient. But that same mother wants to get rid of her since she now lives in new matrimony. Lilika is like unwanted ballast, a testimony to her earlier uneasy life, which she subconsciously wants to suppress. That is why both destructive and self-destructive mechanisms conflict in her simultaneously, expressed through specific sadism, which the girl understands in the following way:

My mom doesn’t love me. My mom only loves my little Brother and my dad and nobody else [...]. And then I would do something again I would break a cup or something I’m terribly clumsy that’s what my mom says and then she would take my little Brother somewhere and my dad or my mom would smack me. And they would do it again and again until I peed myself [...] Then everybody would get around at our door and shout stop it stop it we’ll call the police and then my mom and my dad would let me go. But then my mom and my dad would remember again and then my mom would take my little Brother somewhere and my dad would tie me to the bed with a strap and would put a scarf over my mouth like this and would hit me and hit me with a stick and I couldn’t run away or scream or cry anymore. And nobody protected me anymore.<sup>9</sup>

This is how Michael Hanus, the psychiatrist and specialist for children’s and young people’s mental illnesses, explains the early psychological process between the child and the mother: “In the early mother-child relationship exchanges, which start before the birth of the child, instincts get enriched with psychological components and transform into various instinctive aspirations, and these, again, gradually diversify and turn into inclinations towards introjection and identification, which announce love – Eros, and inclinations towards projection and ejection, which lie in the essence of aggression, and

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<sup>9</sup> Mihailović Dragoslav. *op. cit.*: 59.

this is Thanatos.”<sup>10</sup> One part of internal destructivity, therefore, turns towards the outside world – it is sadism and is connected with Thanatos, the death instinct. When the instinct in question is that of internal destructivity, which is not projected outwardly, it is connected with Eros, the instinct of life, and that would be the primary erogenous mechanism. That the things are not that simply set in Mihailović’s story can be seen from the fact that Lilika’s mother was also deprived of mother’s love, and grew up in an Institution after she had lost her family in the horrors of the Second World War. Obviously, the mother is not capable of offering what she never had as her own family model. In a certain way, she becomes what Hanus calls a “dead mother”, who is a depressed mother, a psychically absent mother, who is not capable of caring for her child. Only at times, from deep inside her, some protective energy towards Lilika would speak for her, as a kind of instinctive pre-memory, but then it would be suppressed again very quickly in the conditions of rough, beastly struggle for her own elementary existence.

The forces of Eros and Thanatos, which so strongly control the mother’s life project themselves in most different ways – from a “suicidal” and implicit sexual episode with an unknown hotel guest, which carries its own burdening and frustrating moments in the context of a patriarchal and conservative social environment, through promiscuous and wanton behaviour before her own child and sadistic treatment of the girl, to starting a new, socially acceptable marriage, which witnesses exchanges of jealousy, passion, lust and motherly care for the younger child. The thanatic forces leave a trace on Lilika, too – in the form of delinquent behaviour, which brings her closer to the criminogenic environment – theft, escape, disobedience, speeches about massive self-destruction. The night when she announces herself, in the old uncle Andra’s wood shack the day before being sent to the corrective institution, Lilika symbolically breaks up with her childhood by burying her dolls. The instinct of death, which can be recognized in this attempt of hers to annul part of her life, is related to another, more concrete image of self-annulment, although it simultaneously reveals a childish, vitalistic, and victorious instinct of life and there, what we see in action is exactly what Georges Bataille means when he says that “eroticism is the confirmation of life even in death”:<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Anis Mišel. 1992. „Nagon života, nagon smrti“. Smrt, nasilje i seksualnost. Vuković Vera, trans. *Zbornik radova*. Čolović Ivan ed. Beograd: Plato: 137.

<sup>11</sup> Bataj Žorž. 2009. *Erotizam*. Čolović Ivan trans. Beograd: Službeni glasnik: 13.

Once when it was dark and my mom and my dad were sleeping and my poor little Brother had fallen a bit asleep I quietly got up and whispered into my little Brother's ear and now my little Brother your sister is going to die good bye. And I kissed him. Then I went quietly into the hall and I was terribly afraid that somebody would see I was going out to die [...] And then I cried so much. And I also kissed the shack and the door and the ground and I wanted to kiss something else as well but there was nothing else to kiss. And then I lay on the ground and I looked at the sky and it was so beautiful to live and then I said now may I die and may my little Brother get well and goodbye. And I closed my eyes. And then I waited and waited but nothing came [...]. And then I stood up and went back home.<sup>12</sup>

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What is the relationship between the concepts of love and eros in this story? It seems that Milica Sandić has lost any chance of experiencing that essential angelic experience of love and eros. Eros is here, said in Bataille's style, reduced to the eros of the body, not the eros of the heart. Freud may in this case be partly helpful: "We call our mother the first love object. Namely, we are talking about love when we want to put in the first place the spiritual side of sexual aspirations, and to suppress or for one moment forget the bodily or 'sensual' desires that are the essence."<sup>13</sup> The fact that Lilika is deprived of her mother's love indicates that she is deprived of any dimension of what Denis de Rougemont calls the "Eros that adores" as opposed to the "Eros that is a slave to instincts". Because what she grew up in is almost reflected in her experience of love. The episode with Peca in an empty shed, as well as the moments when Lilika watches from her bed what her mother does with unknown men show that "the eroticism of the body has something nasty, terrifying,"<sup>14</sup> hence, and precisely because she does not put in question the inner life of man, the body eroticism in this case becomes a suppressed, animal act. Here, in fact, is sparked the girl's inevitable exile from the infantile paradise, and a sinless world.

The erotic element is often mockingly reduced to a pornographic one – this can be seen in Lilika's perception of her neighbour Smilja, and in the girl's consciousness, the concept of eroticism is excluded in this kind of context:

And once I saw how auntie Smilja Peca's mother did it. Auntie Smilja is old and fat so I thought she didn't know how to [...] And Peca made a hole in the door with a nail and

<sup>12</sup> Mihailović Dragoslav. *op. cit.*: 73.

<sup>13</sup> Freud Sigmund. 2006. *Kompletan uvod u psihoanalizu*. Lorenc Borislav trans. Podgorica: Nova knjiga: 242.

<sup>14</sup> Bataj Žorž. *op. cit.*: 19.

he called me Lilika Lilika come when this man Sreja came to their place so we watched through that hole. Auntie Smilja's boobs were hanging like this and her hairs were grey and she waddled naked across the room like this and it looked nasty to me.<sup>15</sup>

The disgust towards the old woman's nakedness is opposed to the child's consciousness in which eroticism is associated with the beauty of the body, youth, and seduction. However, it is clear that in pornography, as well as in sexual "transactions", there is no seduction – "It's all a disenchanting form of the body, the same as sex is an abolished and disenchanting form of seduction, or the use value a disenchanting form of an object, or as the real, in general, is a disenchanting form of the world."<sup>16</sup> Animal instincts in the scenes of a drunken mother and father who grab each other by the arms and legs in front of the child, slip hands under the skirt, chase each other with knives, and push the tongue in each other's mouth, deflect in this case the sphere of eroticism to extremes, which Georges Bataille, again, claims to be actually the sphere of *power* without *violence*. Bataille will observe the erotic through the concepts of force and violence, taking them as metaphorical images of the dialectic process in which Eros and Thanatos are united. Bodily contact makes for constant energy flow in which man denies and confirms himself, that is, transforms from the state of discontinuity into continuity. However, what Bataille sees as force and violence is not far from real violence over the ten-year-old girl and the bestial life that is led by the stepfather and the mother, and apart from the physical abuse, whose effects are frequent blood spots and bruises under Lilika's eyes and night bed-wetting, there is an additional passive kind of violence over the girl – by ignoring and neglecting her.

It is interesting, however, that in the places where high-styled eroticism could also imply higher layers of the soul, it is grotesquely and quite contrarily reduced to the low. In her environment, the girl is surrounded by caricature figures and all that looks different is labeled:

There is one auntie Jelena living near our shack. She has lots of beautiful colourful dresses and a big white bag and nice high heels and beautiful legs and I like to watch her. Once she turned around and asked me why are you looking at me. And I said you are beautiful. And she laughed and opened her bag and gave me a hundred dinars [...] I like this auntie Jelena. They say she's a whore. And I think it's easy for her to be a whore when she's pretty [...]

<sup>15</sup> Mihailović Dragoslav. *op. cit.*: 60.

<sup>16</sup> Bodrijar Žan. 1994. *O zavođenju*. Ilić Dejan trans. Podgorica-Priština: Oktoih-"Grigorije Božović": 50.

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And my mom is not pretty so she can't be a whore. That's what I think [...] She has a big head and curved legs and bad teeth so she can't be a whore.<sup>17</sup>

The girl's experience of the term "whore" is reduced to something that is beautiful, because her unclear child's representation forms that image somewhere halfway between what is aesthetic and what is trivial and banal. However, here is applied focalization as a process that makes the relationship among the vision, the one who sees and what is seen more complex. For what she sees as beautiful, looks in the eyes of her neighbours like something damned and humiliating. Woman's body is reduced to the level of labelling, because anything in terms of high heels, short skirts, cleavages, or anything decorated with jewellery and makeup – is whorelike. This stereotype is partly motivated by the wickedness and spite of common uneducated people, because the attention that a woman gives to her jewellery, and her care for beauty is interpreted as a means that always serves the purpose of inviting and winning the attention of men. In Lilika, however, there is a little kernel being formed discretely, which guards her from the imposed triviality.

However, the essential thing here is that this imagery of a whore, which is reversed in the girl's consciousness, because the bodily and erotic values are annulled and banalized in her simple little world, is basically connected with the key motivation for the girl's exile from the family and her placement in a corrective institution – because each argument was reduced to the stepfather's "fear" that the girl would certainly become a whore and would bring a bastard to their home, and that the world would think it was his deed. She is *a priori* labelled as a whore, which, in the context of the girl's identity, is perturbedly perceived as an inability to reach higher layers of the soul. Her identity is, therefore, determined by a low social status in which the girl's role is seen from the very beginning, in the light of women's jobs – washing the laundry, taking care of the little brother, house chores. However, by trying to get rid of the violent family environment, she unconsciously becomes a delinquent and creates a doubled projection of her prematurely activated femininity. Firstly, through a motherly figure, which is seen in her over-emphasized tenderness towards her younger brother and dolls. The care for the dolls and playing with them – is both a psychic and physical preparation for life, imitating, simulating of the real world where the roles are clearly shared. In this game, her deep human needs are directly expressed, as well as her instincts for the gradual creation of the image of sensibility in the

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<sup>17</sup> Mihailović Dragoslav. *op. cit.*: 54.

profane and bestial environment in which she is growing. Hence, the moving scene where Lilika buries her dolls implies the purest relationship between eros and thanatos (in the etymology of the Serbian language the word *bury* also includes the meanings *to preserve, to put aside, to protect*), that is, the tight connection of eros with death, or, in Bataille's terms, it is the intuitive feeling for establishing deep continuity.

The other side of Lilika's femininity is projected through her own erotic figure. She has her first and early experience of sexual intercourse with a retarded boy in the empty shed. Here, too, sexuality is expressed in its deviant form, as Lilika unskillfully imitates the movements of an adult woman, which make the irrational boy reach the climax despite the absence of the concrete act. However, the essence of this erotic "excitement" reveals something that is also connected with self-destruction – with this act Lilika wanted to show her gratitude and compassion to the boy, feeling that he might be the only one who loves her, annulling by that her own self. A different kind of erotic excitement can be seen in the strong emotional and physical experience that the girl has in an encounter with a good-looking middle-aged man, Janko, from Lipnica, which can be seen in the shivering of her body, the jealousy and despair because of his marriage, the way she perceives his affection. In fact, what can be seen here is the trauma and longing for security that is translated into an erotic experience, and longing for a much older man is longing for a fatherly figure. That impossible and unfulfilled love maybe best reflects what Bataille claims when he says that all forms of eroticism lead to one point – the unity and mutual permeation, that is, it is the unconscious longing for reaching wholeness and eternity.

In connection with this is also the last scene of the story. It is sad how Lilika gets reconciled with the next-day exile to the corrective institution and in this reconciliation there forebodingly glints the identical motherly model: "And when I go there I will tell some man to make me a child. They love it I know. And if I don't like it I will close my eyes with my hands so I don't see anything. And then I will give birth to a little Brother."<sup>18</sup> The last violence that she will commit over herself will, paradoxically, turn out to be a potential consolation and something that makes sense. She will confirm her rebellious femininity through strong identification with the actress in a Hollywood film scene that will become the vision of her rescue. A seductress as an idol, and her vague quiver, made her often imagine herself in a film *mise-en-scène*:

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<sup>18</sup> Mihailović Dragoslav. *op. cit.*: 76.

with the wind in her hair, her eyes full of tears, in a red convertible, which speaks of the ultimate model of her identification completely opposite to her mother. Thus, in a cruel environment and a dysfunctional family, where the bizarreness of the soulless world is reflected in the images of blasphemous bodies of elderly women and men and stirring of low passions, in her own little childish and vitalistic way, Lilika opposes etherism to naturalism.

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