

Review of: "Nature and lineages in the novel LeMas Théotime of Henri Bosco"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

I give the highest qualification available to this work, as it provides a handful of very rich theoretical perspectives towards problems such as the linkages of collective traumas, compromises, and imaginaries with narrative geography in the West and beyond.

In such a context, for instance, the use of Jung's theories is precise although limited, yet not too simple to reduce the literary work of art to be a mere example of a (semi)positive theory; and, also, the neo- or post-romantic approach to nature I see here is innovative, yet so acknowledgeable in global cultures as to let me wonder about similar aspects in the New World, such as the violence which may be embodied in our nature and natural resources, while being human and organic simultaneously.

In general, my critique is simple, and can be expressed in a single question. May this local approach to a Western topophilia or geographic trauma constitute a microcosm of something else that goes beyond a local European border?

In such order of ideas, I wish there was a further development of the relation there is between *ethnopoetics* and oral traditions; so, it'd be likely to answer: how does this relate to pastoral determinism, and what has been developed since then with it outside the Old World?

I'll explain then my suggestion with one example.

It would be interesting to develop a notion as something already depicted on the paper, but only stated too tangentially: *how may space be a measure of time, and time a measure of space* Some measure that can be given in a walk on a path from one land or territory to another one.

In that stance, the physical distance between one family and the other may be explored as a way to tend to mobilize each other's point of view from one's vision to the other's; a rapture or a rupture of identity, and a way to acknowledge otherness.

That way, there may be a path—not only in the novel, but within it—, not to determine who's guilty of the crime, but to understand them, and forgive an unfair treatment as much as it's possible; and that lies in the spaces of the crimes understood as such.

However, I'm aware of how that may seem to go beyond the text itself on a first glance. I will then concentrate on the

current author's exegesis.

I'm interested in how you depict the pastoral working as an inverse romanticism, because it is not as if nature reflected the actual feelings of the subjects, but as nature was forced to accept the feelings of those characters, which they don't seem able to sublimate either. It is worth noting then that in the canon of Western mysticism or magical thought, that may be seen as a crime already, because it foresees an interest that goes beyond ethereal values.

Given that notion, it is also valuable to associate Blanchot and Bosco's mysticism of writing. In that particular case, also the Mallarmean idea of the writer as a medium engages the rewriting of myths by Bosco. However, we may ask if the writing of nature is a sort of new canon that we craft with Bosco particularly? And such development is given because what I see again is the Western temptation to force a sense of will on nature, and that is a mistake from the phenomenological and ecological point of view, as nature has no will but to preserve itself; while being also life, nature is all there is, and nothing we know of can go beyond it. Not even guilt, writing, enunciation, critique, or interpretation.

So maybe the spiritual drives end up being located right in that void space in the very pastoral writing? And such is the location of a human (un)intentional and non-personal crime in the novel itself: and again, the writing or reading of the pastoral novel is and represents that very crime too.

Thus, the work of natural art is then a crude performance of our Western contradiction, where we cannot give account of any reality at all; and no space can be understood by us, but what we measure with our personal time is to be allowed in a true experience instead.

Thus, the surface of Heidegger's *Vierung* (the quadrature) brings a (in)human aspect of nature and landscapes which is not divine, or human, but demoniac, wild, and animal. It may be linked thus to an utter otherness, as I perceive it to be a remanent of non-Western cosmologies.

So we can then ground ourselves in the frame of those Pagan or peripheric beliefs, where we may see non-Western notions such as the earth as a place for sin and rebirth —the Samsara—, and where we go beyond and within Christianity, while we can also connect and contrast such development with current ecocriticisms. May that lead to estimate then its further potential?

In that stance, how in the novel water is an expression of an omnipresent collective unconscious, and not just the pureness of life that we tend to idealize in the Western mainstream ecocriticisms, may leave some room for something beyond humanity as it is there, or here, or later.

There is an intent to grasp the writing of the natural and the (un)familiar as a whole, so contaminated that even water is an embodiment of the most complex and violent of human issues — a shared crime, a murder, and a sin —, which reminds me of Alfred Schmidt's wish for a total grasp of history and natural history.

So, I believe, in the local conflict there comes already some depiction of a microcosm of something more that is not foreseen in the first place, and we may then ask ourselves that way about the conflicts and simultaneous agreements of the Western civilizations to come, or already here? Our (dis)agreements with an imaginary East, maybe.

I value how the critique is viewed as a deployment of poetics, and poetics are understood as a deployment of critique, whereas the author may be seen as a total creator of their work, but is death/d to us too (as God). That's how the work of art still operates in a place as real as it is written; a place which is forbidden actually for us in the occult or in the light, and simultaneously inhabited by us, and our wishes.

In such a dynamic virtual and natural dimension, the rupture of the somehow positive notion of love is enhanced by the sacrificial; which, altogether, seems to rewrite the familiar values over and over, and lead us back to a past life where the names of all (dis)appear with the sound and the fury of guilt, fear, and pain.

Each flesh is then but a name, and each name is then but some flesh, and it is old blood and old money—not in a naïve but a quite violent way—all that keeps the families together, close enough to hurt the borders and each other, regulating and governing each other, while we satisfy just the basic needs and the most fabulous desires. Our implicit complicity of a crime, or maybe many, and some others to come; that secret which is never revealed quite enough.

So in the work we see more clearly how names work as new spells, while the way Jung is used shows a beautiful and proper balance between critique and theory, and mysticism and magical thought. And that's precisely why I miss a more proper account of the notion of *shade*; something that advocates and proves how the pastoral gives an account of internal conflicts, while nature embodies them.

But it is nature, the signifier, which prevails; not us, which we believe to be a meaning. The sense of the sign becomes then senseless for us, anesthetized; and nature may feel more than us, but we may be unable to get to its meanings.

Let us remember then that Jung's analysis seems to overcome that way the over-personalization within the Freudian canon, and that may be a key to understand this.

So many more questions may appear on the ground we are able to recognize now, and I'll list some:

Firstly, how are modern and supposedly secular values such as *loyalty* in European local contexts linked to more *primitive* notions, such as *revenge* or *hatred*? (The phrase "as these" is also grammatically correct but may be improved for clarity.)

Secondly, where is this local loyalty located? Is it not something that goes beyond a real(istic) space? Because I see there a notion that may be defiant to some still current idealization of what is local, in detriment of the global.

Thirdly, then, where does such *loyalty* lead as an emotion and, simultaneously, a way of law? And why are not such *loyalties*—values which are also parts of transactions, as money—more like what I would call *acourse*? Something as the liquid value water embodies in Bosco's work.

Thus, the Marxist notion of paganism as a rebellion of feudal power is and works as a revelation of capitalism's own—and new—face: because even the \$ sign—and the liquid money—is never as transcendental, flat, valuable, and conflictive as the ground we are to lay on. And paganism proves then how the linearity within Western values—and our *loyalties*—is too naïve not to be dangerous, and its potential to destroy will always be occupied by a unanimous and anonymous

subject: an *unknown murder*.

Then, murder as a way to block redemption, and the heritage as a shared social determinism that acts as a material curse, lead then to how paganism is what reveals the cultural contradictions of a local West.

We may see how Bosco's writing resembles the topic and the analysis. Secret paths lead us to *place* where guilt may be transformed into consciousness; a way to be truly aware of the natural surroundings.

And so on, following that path, beyond how Christianity is opposed to the pastoral, and Christianity is opposed to local gods, I see a way to *transcend*—or submerge ourselves—in a recognition of something more than just the curse of a single name for God: and maybe a more materialistic and plural notion of the Messiah and the Saints may make us understand how to (re)associate with our shared guilt. A new form of socialization beyond the rural and the loyal flesh and familiar paths.

Maybe that's how such deployment relates to the Western, or now global, current crossroads. And, if not only (with)in the text, for instance, in culture, may we then encounter there a scenario of deployment of an unfinished redemption, and the multiplicity of local gods and beliefs that may be already grounded in an archeology of the selves.

Such potential lays, again, on the ground, and may be a universal prospect to (re)relate (to) history, conflict, geography, and law, as nature may be recognized as a multitude of plural beings, flowing as rivers go to the Sea.

In such ground, also, the competitions between ancient families for the resources in those lands, and beyond, may not only explain certain attitudes that we might see as nonsense in certain beliefs or common practices even in the Global North, but it may expose the limits of such nonsense: what's the real *royalty*. Because it is not *pure* nonsense; it does have an explanation, but that doesn't mean it has to keep on going as it went, and goes on.

In short, I hope that a topic as simple as maybe the soil textures as ethnicities, enunciated as ways to decipher an (in)escapable difference and boundary, links to new paths to understand and critique the work of literary art as nature.

Lastly, but not least, thank you so much for inviting me to review this wonderful article. I'm quite pleased to give my advice and will be looking forward to any comment.