

Résumé in English of the thesis

Title : Rosetta Loy — The memory and the narration

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An Italian contemporary writer, Rosetta Loy (born in Rome in 1931) has been narrating her memories since her first book, *The Bicycle*, was published in 1974, until the present day. The aim of this thesis is to consider the act of narration and the use of memory to relate events and experiences in the past, based on the work of Loy.

The thesis, divided in four chapters. In the first chapter, by way of an introduction, I focus on the beginning of *The Bicycle*, as it is a prime example of the general characteristics of Loy's narratives, also to be found in her later works. In the first chapter of *The Bicycle*, the grammatical exceptions such as the omissions of verbs, punctuation marks, and conjunctions and the frequent use of gerund and noun phrase create a piquant rhythm in the narration and the past is effectively figured as a scene. These characteristics give readers impressions as if they are seeing the acts of characters in front of them.

What Loy narrates is the memory of her childhood during the Second World War (when the war was broke out Rosetta was eight years old and when it finished, she was fourteen). The remarkable thing is that she, who was brought up in a very conservative Catholic bourgeois family, narrates her own childhood always superposing the memory of the persecution of the Jews on it or vice versa. The reason why she decided to write about these two memories is that she still feels guilty about the fact that she and her family couldn't save their Jewish neighbors' lives. However, is it really possible for her,

who did not experience the persecution, to share Jews' plight and narrate their history?

In the second chapter, by referring to both the difference and the similarity of the narrations of the Jewish writers who experienced the persecution, and Loy, the legitimacy of this Roman writer's narration and the possibility of her sharing their experience will be discussed. In addition, the difference between the narration of the history included testimony and that of literature, the meaning of narrating personal experience, the possibility or the impossibility to convey the history of the Shoah to ones who did not experience, the fiction in narrating historical facts and the difficulty of the Jews to narrate their own experience will be examined. At the same time the way how the individual memory and the collective one are superimposed in Loy's narration will be analysed by focusing on the fear, the uneasiness, the doubt, the loss and the disappointment that Rosetta felt in her family surroundings sheltered from the war.

In the third chapter I examine how Loy narrated two memories making the theme of the persecution sharable to readers by pointing out how the readers feel out of place when they read the text and by analysing in detail various distortions which are distinguished in the unity of the text. I also point out Loy's architecture of the story in which **unaccountable mysteries** are written. To analyse this way of narration with mysteries, I choose two particular texts, *The Water Door* and *Hot Chocolate at Hanselmann's*. Why did Loy narrate adopting the frequent use of allegories, the complete reversal, the excess and the lack of information, the architecture of the story resembling that of a detective story? To respond to this question, I suggest reading Loy's text as if were reading the text of "*the fantastic*".¹ That is, I assume that in Loy's narratives readers find something in common with "*the fantastic*". First of all, referring to the reliable definitions of "the fantastic", the characteristics of this particular literary genre should be clear. Then, in Loy's text, the similarity should be identified. In this way, the author's intention of the narration with mystery will be known.

Additionally, I analyse the representation of another kind of distortion in Loy's narration, which is called in this thesis "*the scene of memory*", which is represented with the repetition of leitmotif and caught by regard. In "*the scene of memory*" the present is always haunted with the past and will never become the real past. Is this kind of past not itself the memory of the persecuted Jews? The past represented by Loy is the reality full of pains and trauma which will never be settled. In this sense, Loy's representation of memory is the opposite of Lalla Romano's which I analysed in my

¹ A genre of literature in which the author narrates the ultra-natural phenomenon and the incidents that are not possible in reality. It is called gothic roman in United Kingdom, conte fantastique in France, märchen in Germany. E.T.A. Hoffmann, Gautier, Mérimée, Poe, and others are well known about their works in this genre.

Master of Arts thesis. Here in this chapter, the relationship between the narrator in the first person and I-protagonist in Romano and Loy is analysed and the positions of the past and the present of the narrator will be distinguished.

Loy represents her unhappy memory of childhood to make it equivalence with the collective memory of the war. She could not superpose her happy memory on the collective unhappy memory. This attitude is based on her belief that she is not free from the crime committed on Jews. Thus, I assume all the distortions found in text are inevitable in Loy's narration and are represented as *contrappasso*². The author may have adopted this harsh punishment to narrate the history of Jews who had lost their god when they had been persecuted. This may explain why the atmospheres of *The Water Door* and *Hot Chocolate at Hanselmann's* are similar to the gothic world.

In the last chapter, referring to three texts published recently, I trace the transition of Loy's thought. Firstly, referring to *Hot Chocolate at Hanselmann's*, I discuss the theme of sin and forgiveness. In this text, Loy questions from which position we could share Jews' experience. According to her, we should judge not with pity but with justice. Loy says that it is not right to strain the meaning of pity and to have pity towards Jews, because the judgment with pity means to consider Jews victim. Secondly, I refer to *A Childhood in Fascist Italy*, with which Loy made her harsh and direct protest especially towards the Vatican. Thirdly, I refer to *Black is the tree of memory, blue the air*. Here a great change is noticed. In this work, for the first time, Loy narrated distant from the Jews' history and her autobiographical memory and gave her work a hope.

At the end of the chapter four, I analyse the message found in the title of *Black is the tree of memory, blue the air*. It is said the title is taken from a poem of Sylvia Plath. This fact gave me another hint to appreciate Loy's latest work. I read it paying attention to the characteristics of Plath's narratives and noticed some similarity between two writers. If I remember the Japanese translator's opinion that views Plath's universe on the same extended line of the gothic world, this similarity does not justify that in the chapter three I suggested "the fantastic" way of reading Loy's text in order to explain the mystery?

Since *The bicycle* was published, Loy has been narrating her individual memory superimposed on the collective memory of war. She is such a unique writer who continues to narrate on behalf of people who were deprived of their memory. At the age of seventy six, she is a militant writer who travels widely and is engaged actively in political actions to protest against the menace of hard-to-die fascism.

² A medieval conception in which the criminal receives the punishment equal to the crime.