

Andreas Hochuli

HISTOIRES D'AMOUR

GUTS



As most people in the art world, I often think about projects that could be both conceptually interesting and financially rewarding. For the last five years I have been fantasizing about writing a romance novel that could be hugely popular and still summon themes that would deeply question our conceptions of life.

The main ingredients would obviously have to be work, love, money and power, the domains through which we seek salvation and transcendence. All these aspects would have to be reconciled after an initial period of antagonism, a blocked situation, a crisis, through some sort of *Aufhebung*, an unexpected resolution, to climax in **EXORBITANT BLISS**.

Questions of class and economics would have to be addressed, going through the different groups cohabiting in society, all with their own rules and *Weltanschauungen*. Trespassing the barriers between these different worlds is often at the base of the plots of romance novels, with a character entering forbidden circles and being confronted with new mores and codes of behaviour (**MŒURS HETERODOXES**). Class reproduction would mean dealing with **THE IDENTICAL**, an endogamy of sorts – if not genetic, cultural – waiting for pollination through **THE OTHER**, exogamy and its dangers of disrupting the given order, breaking the common **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**.

Ascension is the desired direction of social mobility, except in the case of perverse or pathologically idealistic individuals (**ANOMIE, SOLITUDE**). We would describe the integration of a character unsatisfied with their environment (**HALF-LIFE**) and entering a world that promises more freedom, glamour and better conditions for personal development. It would be the world of the leisure class, a class which benefits from the workforce of others (**VICARIOUS LEISURE**). Ethical questions concerning this exploitation would have to come up to convince the reader that it is all for the best and that the protagonist is not simply a class traitor. Thus this trespassing of social boundaries would have to be inscribed in the unravelling of an extraordinary destiny. At its source would be premonitory signs, very discreet marks of distinction, the embryo of a promise still dormant, foreseen only by few (**SUPERSTITION**), not yet fully a **PROPHECY**.

The meeting of two lovers and the confrontation between their peer groups would take place in a rather urban

environment, a closely-knit territory where symbolic borders are omnipresent. They would feel the urge to flee afar. An unfamiliar location could be introduced, with descriptions of an isolated and energetically loaded landscape possibly reminiscent of Monte Verità (Ticino, CH). The description should have truthful elements, providing information on the local geography, history and mores so as to activate desire and curiosity, attaching meaning and legends to the landscape (*couleur locale*). Some legendary names could be linked to it, Friedrich Nietzsche, Romy Schneider or a saint mistaken for a witch, with information provided by a reasonable and down-to-earth figure. A benevolent historian or a loquacious hairdresser, a potential friend and confidant (affective crutch).

The exotic location would be of perfect beauty and as all things beautiful, poisoned. A dark side would loom just underneath the surface. The locals could be hostile and laid-back in a mixture of modernity and isolation - the local Kebab place as only refuge (« **RURAL IDIOCY** », **BIGOTRY OF**

THE VILLAGE). Some kind of strange community would have its roots there, outside of town, afar from the exploitative forces at work in larger societies (**UTOPIAN COLLECTIVE**). The couple would be fascinated by this settlement's achievements and alternative lifestyle, but they would soon discover the ambiguity of its values, oscillating between a sincere quest for immediate happiness and potential evil (**EXORBITANT BLISS**). It would bring danger, both physical and psychological. Inclusion and exclusion. Free-will and coercion through discipline.

Our characters would only have a glimpse of such a place, preferring to live their love on their own terms in a fusional apotheosis (**APOTHEOSES FUSIONNELLES**). As with vacations and travels, the return to the familiar, slightly modified by the experience, is necessary. The wild flame would then either have to nourish a lifelong relationship, smoldering into banality and the dignity of age, or be the subject of a follow-up novel starting in bitterness.

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