

INTERIOR MONOLOGUE
IN **AN** IMAGINARY BEDROOM
(Dramatic Spiral in one act)

OB-SCENE I

Neither yes, nor no. But rather an exceptional yes which I imagine in a stream of undulations under a velvet sheet. A bed with a mosquito net. A four-poster bed. The exceptional bedroom with pink curtains. A golden lampshade with a pyramid-shaped base on a polished circular mahogany table. An elliptic mirror. Bronze framing. Two exotic pictures. Impressionist paintings. The memory steeped in anxiety and anguish. Quite an apprenticeship. A long initiation into the alternation of exalting labors and fastidious chores. For her, in her rural illiterate mind, she was living in a magical space. Another realm. Another space. A uncanny universe. A foreign land. Without setting foot [getting] in a plane, or a boat, she was suddenly in the country of the whites. Another world with its own standards and etiquette. Another reality with its own views, tastes, odors, music, muffled sounds and silence. A heavenly enclave on the Haitian soil.

The traps of fiction
Where to start
what the heart cannot say

OB-SCENE II

Fetus once more inside a colossal belly. The effusions of tenderness and joy of her adoptive mother France-Mary. Words and gestures full of gentleness. The know-how and sensible presence of governess Emma, fluent in English, French, Creole. Bring together your knees and close your legs when you are seated even if there is no one around. Do the same when you are in bed. Sit down respectably at the table to eat. Straighten your spine, back and shoulders. Use your spoon, knife and fork in the correct way. Stop chewing your food noisily. Don't suck the bones. Don't fill your mouth. Don't drink water while eating. As a good Christian, say your prayers three times a day. Thank the Good Lord for your blessings. Good day good evening good night thank you excuse me I am hungry I am thirsty how are you I am very well I like my parents very much my mother France-Mary and my father Benjamin my name is Annette provisionally I am already called Annie and soon my whole name will be Annie-Mary Lyles. I am glad I am happy I am ecstatic I am delighted to be at the Holy Trinity Episcopal School I am a good Christian... In English and in

French, she repeated pell-mell all these farcical / [masqueradeful] nonsenses mumble-jumbled up with bourgeois hypocrisy, like a resigned parrot, an obedient copycat¹, a docile and naive double-faced girl.²

By inverting the shadow
A journey through time
I make out the light

OB-SCENE III

March, April, May and June of the year 1935. So many turnstiles and tortuous steps that the naive creole red-head risked getting lost by trying to find out who she was. To discover who she had really become. The constant vigilance of governess Emma. Her face like a mask. The skin of the body like a lining. Place of worry and fear, despite luxury and riches. Several excursions by car to Bois-Verna, Turgeau, Pétionville, Lalue, Champ-de-Mars and other noisy downtown districts. The hectic streets of the trading areas surrounding the MacDonald Company central station. The religious ceremonies at Holy Trinity church. The tedious soporific homilies of bishop John Lomy. The boring preachifying of the prefect of discipline Mac Onill. Horse-races, cinema and basketball games at the American Club. Without forgetting her mother Anne in Ravine-Sèche, little by little she felt affection for her new parents. The serene melancholy mixed with subtle joy which she perceived in the eyes of France-Mary. The enigmatic and friendly appearance of her adoptive father. Governess Emma and schoolmistress Lucienne patiently pursued their task of scholarly and social instruction. Her simultaneous initiation into English and French alphabets. Pronunciation. Reading. Writing. Arithmetic calculations with integers and prime numbers. The magic of symbols and signs on the dark green slate, the blackboard and the white paper. A game of mirages and illusions. Sand and dust enveloping the space and petrifying time in an invisible cocoon. And then, a spectacle of shadows and ghosts at nightfall.

The secret sources of desire, a sequence of reflections.
The invisible wall and without a cry

¹ Although this is more removed from the original parrot image “jacocotte”, I think this is the most natural figurative equivalent in English.

² Ici ce n’est qu’une traduction très approximative de bibinette. Néologisme de FE qui peut se décomposer en bi et binette (bi/ face ou double/ face), mais aussi peut se lire comme une déformation de midinette (jeune fille naive et sentimentale, vendeuse dans la couture—Parisian salesgirl, mais cette traduction n’est pas bonne car elle ne rend pas le sens de « jeune fille naive et sentimentale »)

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¹ En chambre imaginaire est calquée sur en chambre noire, donc je pense qu'il faudrait dire IN IMAGINARY BEDROOM pour rendre correctement le texte de FE.

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² Dans qqs rares cas, je pense qu'on peut changer l'impersonnel « le » pour un « votre », mais je suis d'avis qu'il faut plutôt utiliser la forme impersonnelle comme le fait FE. C'est un problème que j'avais déjà rencontré dans la traduction d'un texte brésilien, et ce fut la solution qui semble à beaucoup plu les lecteurs français. Aussi, je pense que la forme impersonnelle rend mieux la situation. Elle indique cette distance entre les deux personnages.

³ Je pense que copycat n'est définitivement pas adéquat. 1. Le rapport des haïtiens avec les chats est très différents de celui des Anglo avec les chats. 2. Traduire jacocotte (qui est un néologisme de FE) par un standard English word comme « copycat » rend très mal le texte de FE. Alors que le néologisme anglais ici proposé ROTE (mechanical, the use of memory usually with little intelligence, routine or repetition carried out mechanically or unthinkingly) + PARROT me semble aller tout à fait dans le sens du texte de FE et la pratique joycienne qui la sous-tend.

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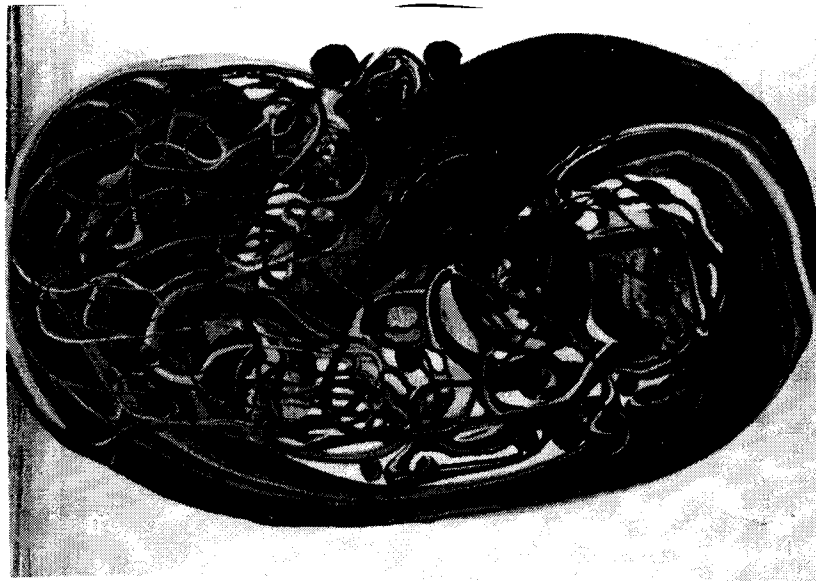
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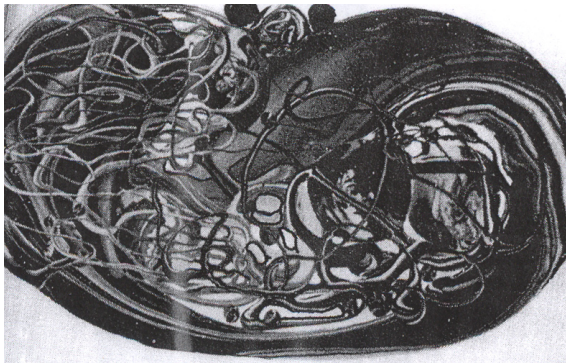
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