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WOMEN MIGRANTS IN ITALY: A DOUBLE PERIPHERALITY

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Abstract: After the fall of the communist regime, the *economic migration* increased significantly within the Romanian society, as people were seeking higher conditions of life in western countries. Being a major social phenomenon, the economic migration became a frequent literary theme in the postcommunist Romanian literature, as Sanda Cordoş notices. Whether fictional or autobiographical, the literary works on migration depict the multiple identity traumas that the emigrant subject generally suffers. Originating from a peripheral country and culture in Eastern Europe, Romanian migrants experience multiples *affects* such as profound *traumas*, due to the identity split that is generally accentuated by the hard conditions of work in the countries where they travel, and by the affective separation from their families. By analysing three contemporary novels, namely Dan Lungu’s *The Little Girl Who Played at Being God* [*Fetița care se juca de-a Dumnezeu*], Liliana Corobca’s *Kinderland* and Liliana Nechita’s *Bitter Cherries* [*Cireșe amare*], the present paper outlines the double peripheral status of women emigrants in Italy who are perceived in their marginality not only as Romanian migrants, but mainly as female ones in a masculine dominated society. These literary works emphasize the difficulties that women as mothers and wives encounter in a completely foreign western culture and the multiple traumas that they suffer together with the children who remain in a peripheral space and continually wait the return of the protective mother.

Keywords: economic migration, affect, trauma, women migration, peripherality

Starting with the 1990s, the Romanian economic migration increased significantly, Romania being recognized as a “source-country” in the context of the European migration system. The increase of migration within the Romanian society was mainly due to the lack of resources in the communist years, and to the lack of credibility towards the political regime (Horváth 156). The “isolation” imposed by the communism, “the poverty of the transition and the Western reluctance in the increase of immigration permissiveness”¹ (Sandu, *Circulatory migration* 2000) were considered the main factors that contributed to the Romanian international migration. Sociological studies carried out in the last two decades and based mainly on reporting figures of the 2002 population and housing census ascertain the amplitude that the Romanian international migration gained, as “a third of households have at least one person who has been or is abroad after 1989” (Sandu, *Temporary Residence Abroad* 17).

The sociological migration theories still do not have a very clearly established conceptual “canon”, but mostly “a frame of reference that initiates a set of theories and concepts” (Anghel, Horváth 39). Nevertheless, a conceptual evolution associated with the post-communist migratory phenomena could still be observed, in accordance with the social, economic, and political modifications within the society. If migration could be conceptually recognized before the fall of the communist regime as *involuntary, forced* or *political migration*, the terms applied after 1990 were those of *voluntary* or *economic migration*² (Anghel, Horváth 22), and mirrored, of course, the main reasons of migration. Moreover, based on the temporal frame for the departure, the terms suggested in theoretical studies are those of *permanent migration* which defines a temporally indefinite leaving of one’s native country, and *temporary migration* which implies a specific and definite period of living abroad.

¹ All Romanian quotes in the present paper appear in my translation.

² “*Economic migration* is considered a mobility process that has predominantly material reasons and is carried out according to the logic of maximizing some benefits: interested actors move between national labor markets, in order to identify and integrate in those locations or countries where the compensations for the same workload are considerably higher. On the other hand, *political migration* is a process of mobility in which actors engage in migration in the context of unfavorable circumstances created by political-administrative authorities (non-respect of fundamental rights, unfavorable treatment applied to minority categories, other similar practices) [“*Migrația economică* este considerată un proces de mobilitate care are rațiuni predominant materiale și se desfășoară potrivit logicii maximizării unor beneficii: actorii interesați se deplasează între piețele naționale ale forței de muncă, urmând să identifice și să se integreze în acele locații sau țări în care după același volum de efort compensațiile sunt considerabil mai mari. Pe de altă parte, prin *migrație politică* se înțelege un proces de mobilitate în care actorii se angajează în migrație în contextul unor circumstanțe defavorabile create de autoritățile politico-administrative (nerespectarea unor drepturi fundamentale, tratamentul defavorabil aplicat unor categorii minoritare, alte practici similare)”].

The temporary migration is considered “a non-permanent” one that “involves the returning to the country of origin or the continuation to another state” (Briceag, Corcevoi 69-75) and, therefore, it often becomes a *return migration*. The return to the country of origin is perceived both as an optimistic phenomenon that encourages, even though at a declarative level, the citizens’ coming back, and as a concerning one, especially because of the (re)adaptation difficulties that immigrants confront with at the returning and at the same time (re)integration in the social and economic system of the country.

If the socialist political regime did not usually allow the passing of borders, the process intensified after the fall of the communism, especially because of the individual economic crises caused by the post-communist period. István Horváth recalls the ideological reasons why the communist authorities were against the crossing of borders. Emigration was perceived as “a form of protest directed against the regime, considering that the emigration of a larger number of citizens symbolically discredits the regime and challenges its legitimacy (to those who remain and to the international audience) as a functioning political system” (Horváth 160). It is a fact that Romanian migration significantly increased during the 2000s:

After 1990 and the fall of communism, the Romanian authorities implemented a series of regulations that streamlined the mobility of the international labor force, both at the level of leavings from the country and at the level of entries. As a result of these regulations, migration reached its peak in 1990 when over 96 929 Romanians left the country. (...) During the period of economic restructuring in Romania (1990-2002), the number of jobs decreased, 3.5 million jobs disappeared, causing Romanians to emigrate to other countries in search of a job. (...) In 2007, once Romania joined the European Union, the flow of Romanian migrants within the European Union increased, with 3.4 million Romanian migrants being registered in the period 2007-2015, according to the *United Nations*³ (Anghelache, Niță 144-152).

³ “După anul 1990 și căderea comunismului, autoritățile române au implementat o serie de reglementări care au fluidizat mobilitatea forței de muncă internaționale, atât la nivelul ieșirilor din țară, cât și a intrărilor. Ca rezultat al acestor reglementări, în 1990 migrația a atins apogeul, s-au înregistrat peste 96 929 români plecați din țară. (...) În perioada de restructurare economică a României (1990-2002), numărul locurilor de muncă a scăzut, 3.5 milioane de locuri de muncă au dispărut, determinând românii să emigreze în alte țări în căutarea unui loc de muncă. (...) În anul 2007, odată cu aderarea României la Uniunea Europeană, fluxul migranților români în cadrul Uniunii Europene a crescut, 3.4 milioane de români migranți fiind înregistrați în perioada 2007-2015, conform *United Nations*”.

At the beginning, men were generally those who migrated because of economic reasons, that is, to procure a proper living for their families. But after 1990, women's economic migration increased significantly. Women usually left the native country to "create or reunite a family" (Pedraza 303-325). However, in the case of Romanian female migrants, they generally left not to reunite the family, and, therefore, the effect of their emigration was mainly the opposite. After the wife's or mother's leaving, families were generally broken up, as children, parents, and husbands were left behind with the purpose of gaining a better financial living for those remaining at home in Romania. It is claimed that women emigrated in already developed countries⁴ (Morrison, Schiff, Sjöblom 2-3) such as Italy, Germany or Spain, that could offer them better paid jobs. But the intriguing fact is that the natives in these countries perceived the immigrant's workplaces as peripheral, entailing "undesirable and difficult labors" (Horváth 166-167). This has usually placed the emigrant in a double minority in the western societies.

The traumatic social realities of economic migration became a frequent literary theme of Romanian literature after 2000. The exposure of migration in literature could be observed in the works of a few Romanian authors, either in narrative fictions that depict the entire process of leaving the country, or in autobiographical writings that expose the identity problematic of the migratory self. For instance, in his novel *The Little Girl Who Played at Being God* [*Fetița care se juca de-a Dumnezeu*], Dan Lungu exposes women's migration depicted in its peripheral status, together with the traumas of the abandoned child and family. Another author that presents the traumatic reality of the children left at home because of the female migration is Liliana Corobca. Her narrative *Kinderland* tells the story of Cristina, a twelve-years old girl, who becomes a substitute mother for her two younger brothers. She experiences a profound suffering, and her entire childhood is marked by abandonment, because the parents' both protective and financial care are missing. Both works are narrated from the perspective of the abandoned child. *The Little Girl Who Played at Being God* has even a polyphonic construction, as the traumatic experiences of the mother's migration are also presented by the objective narrative voice. The literary imagery of a temporary economic migration is also outlined in Liliana Nechita's work, *Bitter Cherries* [*Cireșe amare*]. The book is written as a set of

⁴ "By 2005 there were more female than male migrants in developed countries".

letters addressed to a distant friend and seems to be a migration diary depicting all the feelings and experiences that the peripheral auctorial voice experiences within the foreign Western country of destination.

These literary works present the affective traumatic experiences of the economic migration. The main characters and their femininity are perceived as entities that procure the welfare of their own family. They are the ones who leave the country, and not their husbands, to seek a well-paid job in an already developed country such as Italy so that they can offer a better financial living to their children and families. My analysis is focused on the above-mentioned literary works and the investigation follows the depiction of affects as both *noncognitive becomings* and *cognitive emotional* manifestations. The present paper is dedicated to affective forms and expressions of *trauma* that are emphasized not only in the crises that are experienced by the narrative self, but also in the difficulties of adjustment imposed by their minor positions as immigrant workers within the Western societies. Even though the discussed literary works are not created with the direct purpose of outlining the trauma of economic migration, it can still be observed through the exposure of different moods, feelings and perceptions of the narrative voices. I will approach the writing with and about trauma by following the model of Elspeth Probyn who theorizes the so-called *writing shame* (Probyn 2010), when coming to the shame experienced as an affect by the writer. Also, I will use Michael Richardson's term *writing trauma* (Richardson 2016) as the conceptual lens for the investigation of traumatic feminine migratory experiences thematically depicted in Romanian contemporary literature. Migration imposes itself as the action of *being affected*, since leaving the native country is perceived by the female characters as a profound source of affective traumas.

An example of such a writing with and about trauma is Dan Lungu's novel, *The Little Girl Who Played at Being God* (2018). One of the main characters is Letiția, mother of two daughters, who decides to emigrate to Italy to achieve financial stability for the entire family. Their economic difficulties begin when they must move in her parents' house, in order to save some extra money from the rent of their apartment⁵ (Lungu 6). This is a clear indicative of the economic nature of her

⁵ "They had all moved into the house where my mother had grown up when she was little, to have money for dolls, candies, and dresses. In their place, someone else lived in the block apartment, a man and a lady without children, whom she had only seen once" ["Se mutaseră cu toții în casa în care mama

migration. In *Kinderland*, the parents of Cristina, the feminine subjective narrative voice also migrated because of financial reasons, for “a year or two”, but those years do not seem to put an end to the migratory period: “that year or two seem never-ending”⁶ (Corobca 21). The mother works in Italy, and the father works in Russia, so that they can pay the family’s debts. If Rădița’s mother plans to return home after a few years of work which implies a temporary migration, Cristina states that her mother’s plans entail a permanent migration, as she hopes to buy a house in Italy and to move there with the entire family: “She dreams that they will both gather money for a house in Italy, and to take us all with her, to become Italians”⁷ (21). For the suffering child, moving to another country is not only a change of residence, but also a change of identity, which outlines the unconscious and instinctive identity bond between the interior self and the living space. Becoming Italians and thus being part of a Western culture also represents a hope for a better living, as they feel isolated and abandoned in their poverty condition as Romanian children. Trauma emerges also as the characters are not offered the possibility to return to the country, mainly due to financial reasons. They generally cannot afford to travel back for a simple visit because they send most of their savings to the relatives back at home or simply prefer to save up in order to fulfil their family’s long term material plans. The impossibility of a return, even as a short visit paid to the family, is perceived as a profound traumatic abandonment by the children.

When it comes to the duration of the departure, Liliana Nechita states in her autobiographical writing that she left the country temporarily at the very beginning, hoping to quickly gain a decent amount of money and then to return to her girls in the country. But the adaptation to the working conditions as *badante* was so hard, and at the same time profoundly traumatic, that it produced a complete identity rupture in her case. The authorial voice claims that she felt a complete loss of her own being in the first months spent in Italy: “I was nothing anymore. I was a zero walking around the world”⁸ (Nechita 11). When she eventually had the possibility to see her daughters for Christmas, she felt the strange incapacity of enjoying her stay in the country, as she could not identify anymore with the native space that she had already

crescuse când era mică, pentru a avea bani de păpuși, bomboane și rochițe. În locul lor, la bloc stătea altcineva, un nene și o tanti fără copii, pe care nu-i văzuse decât o singură dată”].

⁶ “acel an-doi nu se mai termină”.

⁷ “Ea visează să adune amândoi bani de casă în Italia și să ne ia pe toți cu ea, să ne facă italieni”.

⁸ “Nu mai eram nimic. Eram un zero care se plimba prin lume”.

left: “My Romania is an open wound! I miss the one I was there, but I can’t be the same anymore! In Italy I am, in Romania I was!”⁹ (192).

In their migratory process, the female characters experience a double peripherality: both as women in a poor financial condition, and as emigrants originating from an Eastern marginal country such as Romania. In addition, I claim that they suffer a double *domination*, in Bourdieu’s terms. Women migrants are not only depicted under the pressure of a *masculine domination*, because of their minority position as women, but they also experience the “employer’s domination” – either male or female – because of their peripheral status as housekeepers (it. *badante*). Their democratic rights as employees are completely disregarded, since they are seen solely through and reduced to a mandatory submissive position. This double form of marginality can be observed especially in the case of Dan Lungu’s feminine character, Letiția, and in Liliana Nechita’s autofiction.

On the one hand, when Letiția arrives in Italy, besides the fact that she already feels objectified (“Loredana handed her over like a package”), she is also asked by the employer to hide to the neighbours that she is from Romania¹⁰ (Lungu 22). As a Romanian worker in Italy in those years, she might have easily been perceived as a thief or a villain. Moreover, the owner, Signor Renato, is constantly avoiding to directly address her, as a sign of non-recognition of her human status or rights. The employers are even surprised when they find out that Letiția speaks French: “The two looked confused and then admiringly at her”¹¹ (28). Considering her Romanian origins, she was not attested as a person having proper educational skills. Letiția is not presented as suffering any physical abuse from her owners, but her Romanian friend, Laura, also a migrant, did not have the same favourable experience. One of Laura’s first employers tried to sexually abuse her while taking care of him: “For the first time he tried to pull me towards him with his sane hand, when I was above him, taking off his pyjama”¹² (161). At the same time, the second owner accused her of theft, without even thinking about checking the truthfulness of his accusations:

⁹ “România mea e o rană deschisă! Îmi e dor de cea care eram acolo, dar nu mai pot fi niciodată! În Italia sunt, în România am fost!”.

¹⁰ “La câteva zile după ce Loredana a predat-o ca pe un colet, Signor Renato a rugat-o, cât de poate de politicos, cum altfel?, să nu spună vecinilor că este din România, dacă e întrebată cumva”.

¹¹ “Letiția noastră, dragii mei, vorbește o franceză foarte bună, să ciocnim în cinstea ei. Cam exagera, dar așa spuse. Cei doi au privit-o nedumeriți, apoi admirativ”.

¹² “Pentru prima dată a încercat cu mâna aia bună să mă tragă spre el, când eram deasupra lui și îi scoteam pijama”.

“I think this Romanian of yours stole my pyjama... My favourite pyjama, the burgundy one”¹³ (342).

On the other hand, Liliana Nechita recalls a similar experience in her autobiographical letters. Since she was psychologically marked by the differences of living in Italy, her identity adaptation was even more difficult because of one of her first owner’s unexpected requirements. It seems that he was not looking only for a *badante*, but for a feminine presence in the house that could offer him even intimate relations in change for accommodation and a monthly income. “Women must pay with their own bodies for any help and any gesture of support. Things that were normal once are now paid dearly”¹⁴ (Nechita 172), states the autobiographical voice when relating the hard traumatic reality that women emigrants generally met with in a foreign country of destination such as Italy. As a migrant with a marginal job in the Italian families she worked for, Nechita claims that she was criticized even for the quantity of tea or food that she consumed. Therefore, she needed to make food supplies during the day when the employers could not see her: “I was taking care to stock up during the day. I used to take some bread, an apple, whatever I could in a napkin, and I ate them at night, in the dark, in my room”¹⁵ (40).

For Liliana Nechita, migration is perceived from the first instance as an identity crisis. She faces not only the difficulty of assimilating Italian as a language of circulation, but also the traumatic feeling of not being able to use anymore her native language Romanian. The female emigrant somatises the usages of the native language: “I speak Italian, I watch movies and the news in Italian, I enjoy their variety shows, we comment together on the fakeness of politicians, I read books in Italian, browse their magazines and newspapers, feed the cats and talk to them in Italian, but I dream in Romanian”¹⁶ (42). Even though she manages to adopt the foreign language, the feminine narrative voice misses using her native language in daily activities such as news watching or praying. Of interest in this linguistical adoption is precisely her prolonged desire of reading in Romanian and especially canonic national literature: “I want to get to see the news in Romanian, to read

¹³ “Eu cred că româncea asta a ta mi-a furat pijamaua... Pijamaua mea preferată, aia vișinie”.

¹⁴ “Femeile trebuie să plătească cu trupul lor orice ajutor și orice gest de sprijin. Lucruri care altădată erau normale acum sunt plătite din greu”.

¹⁵ “Aveam grijă în timpul zilei să-mi fac provizii. Îmi puneam într-un șervețel puțină pâine, un măr, ce puteam, și le mâncam noaptea, pe întuneric, în camera mea”.

¹⁶ “Vorbesc italiană, văd filme și jurnalul de știri în italiană, mă amuz la emisiunile lor de varietăți, comentăm împreună falsitatea politicianilor, citesc cărți în italiană, răsfoiesc revistele și ziarele lor, le dau mâncare pisicilor și le vorbesc în italiană, dar visez românește”.

Romanian books (I miss *Moromeții*) and to pray in a Romanian church, next to my children”¹⁷ (43).

Liliana Nechita’s emigration trauma could be also stated in her affective relationship towards food. For the subjective autobiographical voice, nutrition is not just a method of supply or survival, but an identity expression of her inner self. She states missing the Romanian food, as the traditional plates represent a strong connection that can be maintained with the country she comes from and dearly misses: “One of the things we miss here are the Romanian dishes. I haven't eaten anything of ours for a year and a half. The only plates I sometimes cook are rice with milk or noodles with milk (they don't eat something like this)”¹⁸ (54). Her affective split is perceived not only when it comes to different kind of plates, but also in smells, tastes, and spices. For instance, when the Italians’ preference for herbs such as oregano, basil, or rosemary is mentioned, the narrative voice outlines, in contrast, the lack of dill, onion or garlic and even sauce in some dishes¹⁹ (55).

When she leaves Romania, she experiences the departure as an emotional death due to the trauma caused by the leaving of the native country. Regardless of the place of destination, not being at home is experienced as a traumatic affective degradation: “At that moment I died inside (...) Your body may be anywhere, in Italy, in the mists of England, on the plains of Spain, the hands pick or wipe, the back bends, but once you have left your soul at home, there is death within²⁰” (10). The autobiographical voice perceives migration as a split of her native being: she experiences a separation between the body that travels and tries to face the unknown future of the emigration. and the soul that remains affectively connected to the home she is forced to abandon. What is of concern is that the feminine author perceives the same evolution of the relationship with the ones who remain in the country as Rădița, one of the narrative voices in Dan Lungu’s novel. Both literary works emphasize that, with the passing of time, the emigrant mother is reduced to an already known,

¹⁷ “Vreau să ajung să văd știrile în limba română, să citesc cărți românești (mi-e dor de *Moromeții*) și să mă rog într-o biserică românească, alături de puii mei”.

¹⁸ “Unul dintre lucrurile care ne lipsesc aici sunt bucatele românești. Eu n-am mai mâncat nimic de-al nostru de un an și jumătate. Singurele mâncăruri pe care mi le fac câteodată sunt orez cu lapte sau fidea cu lapte (ei nu mănâncă așa ceva)”.

¹⁹ “Brânzeturile sunt diferite, condimentele sunt altele. Ei folosesc mult oregano, busuioc, rozmarin, salvie, în schimb n-au mărar. Nu mănâncă ceapă sau usturoi, folosesc doar foarte puțin în mâncare. Nu fac mâncăruri cu sos, cum e tocănița la noi”.

²⁰ “În acel moment am murit pe dinăuntru (...) Trupul tău poate fi oriunde, în Italia, în cețurile Angliei, pe câmpiile Spaniei, mâinile culeg sau șterg, spatelile se încovoie, dar, odată ce ți-ai lăsat sufletul acasă, înăuntru e moartea”.

familiar voice on the phone: “You are nothing else but a voice on the phone”²¹ (16). The rupture that the departure imposes between the entity that migrates and the ones remaining at home is so deep, that the migratory self loses the tangible part of their being. They remain a simple familiar voice on the phone also because of the lack of other options of communication specific at the time, especially in some remote regions of the country. For those abroad communication was facilitated by mobile phones, but these were extremely rare for the burdened Romanian families who could barely afford a home phone.

The marginal position of the feminine characters is also outlined in the case of Rădița and Cristina, the two little girls depicted as subjective narrative voices in the novels of Lungu and Corobca, respectively. Both childish characters suffer the trauma of migration through multiple forms of abandonment. Rădița is left at home in the care of her grandparents who get in a physical impossibility of properly raising a child with the passing of years, but she is given a psychological method of escaping the traumatic reality through the playing at being God. The girl perceives her mother’s migration as a negative and deliberate departure, while being deeply affected by the father’s neglect and carelessness: “They didn’t leave her not even a note. Neither dad, nor Mălina”²² (Lungu 58). Her father together with the elder daughter move in the family’s apartment leaving Rădița in the grandparents’ house. The end of the novel depicts even an incestuous relationship between the two, a scene that the little girl is accidentally witnessing. The emotional impact of seeing them together is so profound that she tries once again to escape the harsh reality by repeating playful commands in mind, in her game at being God. But eventually even the game loses its effects upon the humans.

The abandonment is doubled through Cristina’s main character in *Kinderland*. She directly states that she is feeling alone and neglected by all the relatives and possible adults around who might help her in taking care of her two younger brothers: “No one brings us something to eat when we are craving or are in need”²³ (Corobca 75). In contrast to Rădița, Cristina is assigned the role of a substitute parent, being the only one in charge of raising her brothers. The child character is seen through her multiple efforts of procuring food for the three of them and some proper conditions for a minimal level of education. Cristina’s trauma comes mainly

²¹ “Tu nu mai ești decât o voce la telefon”.

²² “Ei nu i-au lăsat nici un bilet. Nici tata, nici Mălina”.

²³ “Nimeni nu ne aduce ceva de mâncare, atunci când avem poftă sau nevoie”.

from the difficulty of being herself a child with adult responsibilities without the care and love that the actual presence of a protective mother could offer: “At twelve, I make pies for my brothers. And we make rolls too, because it’s not hard at all, with leaves from the dough on top, as a decoration”²⁴ (57-58). If it had not been for her brothers whom she had to take care of, their financial condition would have imposed her to work with her mother abroad: “If I didn't have these two slimy brothers, I would have been in Italy a long time ago, with my mother. I would have also taken care of a child and I would have received 1000 euros per month”²⁵ (107).

The traumatic affective consequences of migration can also be observed in the corporeal expressions of longing for the maternal figure. In Rădița’s case, the departure of the mother is experienced as a rupture by the abandoned child. For her, the mother lacks consistency and is perceived as out-of-body by the child, only as a “wet voice” [*“Mama e o voce umedă”*] speaking to her from beyond the phone. “The voice” is the one sending money or packages, as the mother loses the physical contour of the face and even her specific smell: “mother has no face anymore, it’s got blunt”; “She didn’t smell anymore either, neither like perfume, nor like donuts, nor like nail polish”²⁶(Lungu 109). The child expresses her suffering through crying, which becomes an inner bodily reaction independent of her will. The same manifestation of feelings can be observed in Cristina’s situation. She is strongly moved by how much her brothers miss their parents and also by the fact that the boys do not even have the opportunity to spend their childhood together with the parents: “But me, when I see my brothers looking at the photos of the parents, I feel a ton of tears in my belly which, if I let them go, they would flood the whole village”²⁷ (Corobca 168).

To conclude, the feminine economic migration is portrayed in contemporary Romanian literary works as the experience of a double form of peripherality. Both the mothers who leave and the girls who are left at home suffer multiple forms of trauma, as migration is imposing itself in the first place through the affective manifestations of the self. If the women migrants experience abuses and constantly confront with identity crises, their rupture is doubled by the guilt that comes from the inevitable

²⁴ “La 12 ani, fac plăcinte pentru frații mei. Și colăcei facem, că nu-i greu, cu frunze din aluat deasupra, ca decorațiune”.

²⁵ “Dacă n-aș fi avut acești doi frați mucoși, de mult aș fi fost în Italia, alături de mama mea. Aș fi avut și eu grijă de un copil și aș fi primit 1000 de euro pe lună”.

²⁶ “mama nu mai are față, i s-a tocit”; “Nici de mirosit nu mai mirosea în niciun fel, nici a parfum, nici a gogoșele, nici a oă”.

²⁷ “Dar eu, când îmi văd frații privind fotografiile părinților, simt o tonă de lacrimi în burta mea, care, de le-aș da drumul, ar inunda tot satul”.

abandonment of the family in their native country. Eventually, the children left at home have to keep up with the parents' departure abroad, while trying to continue their existence in the peripheral native society they were born in.

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