

**Eternal Feminine and “Beautiful Category” in the Conception  
of Baroque by Eugenio d’Ors**

The concept of “eternal feminine” is one of the basic components of the Eugenio d’Ors’ concept of Baroque. The author borrows this term from the last lines of Goethe’s *Faust* and gives it a new universalist interpretation within his own theory of historical constants, in which eras of classics and baroque are represented as permanency elements among general vicissitudes of historical process. This particular universalist theory is based on constant binary opposition of related terms, which represent baroque and classicism and are called morphological pairs. Among them there is an opposition feminine-masculine where the first element represents baroque tendencies and the last one embodies classical values of ancient Mediterranean cultures. Eugenio d’Ors seems to be captivated by this generalized and abstract vision of the feminine and in many of his publications tends to develop and enrich this category by introducing new interpretations, thoughts and ideas.

The purpose of this article is to examine the peculiarities of the concept “eternal feminine” in earlier glosses by Eugenio d’Ors, as well as in his works of mature period, namely, in his essay “Baroque” and his last novel *True Story of Lydia of Cadaques*. In the gloss “The defeat and triumph of the woman” the notion of the feminine is closely associated with such typical baroque manifestations as internal contradiction of intentions, external dynamism and extreme saturation. The illustration of this tendency is found by the Catalan philosopher in the picture *Noli me tangere* by Correggio where he emphasizes the simultaneous action of the baroque double vector: “Magdalena, Lord, is at your feet. You accept her and you refuse her. You reach out to her and say: “Don’t touch me”. You show her the way to Heaven and you leave her on the Earth in her tender defeat”. This apparent confrontation of intentions seems to be proper to the whole phenomenon of baroque and the concept of eternal feminine as its inherent component. So, the common

baroque painting characteristics are used to create the global vision of notion of feminine as historical constant or eon.

However, the concept of eternal feminine as one of multiple representations of baroque phenomenon acquires surprisingly new interpretations in later glosses and literary works. To explore it d'Ors uses the concept of isolated person such as Daniel Defoe's Robinson, but in this case the protagonist is to be feminine. So it takes the form of a young woman living in isolation, as happens to the main character of epistolary novel *The Solitary of the Rocks* written by abate de Bray in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Being religious recluse, the protagonist needs every day communication in her voluntary solitariness and writes extensive letters to her confessor who answers her and makes this correspondence public. The contradiction is obvious and Eugenio d'Ors emphasizes the particularities of this "female Robinson" that most of all is a social creature and in her spiritual recluse she claims for the whole society attention.

Further we can see eternal feminine represented by rather s peculiar personage. The protagonist of the last d'Ors novel, Lydia, is a middle aged fisherwoman that embodies the idol of baroque constant and at the same time seems to reveal both to reader and author the particular vision of feminine social phenomenon of being woman among women (comadre). In 1923 being on vacation in Cadaques Eugenio d'Ors was strongly impacted by a rather strange manner of local women to dance sardana. That local variation of the dance was performed by the women only and was accompanied by choir singing like pagan rituals such as the Eleusinian mysteries in Ancient Greece or Isis cult in Ancient Egypt.

In *Baroque* the concept of eternal feminine is used as structural frame that apparently transforms this essay into a chivalric novel. The author falls in love with Beautiful Lady that is Category, a Beautiful Category, and tries to conquer her heart. In his philosophical essay D'Ors appeals to «the baroque sensualism» and emotional exaltation proper of the above-mentioned literary genre.

On the other hand, the opposite component of morphological pair masculine – feminine is not obligatory used to represent the classicism constant. The most notable case of such a deviation is the gloss *Wilderman* where the concept of baroque is

represented by a huge statue of savage, the symbol of comfortable and modern hotel. However, the logic applied to this very case is quite different and is based on the contrast between the modern civilization and old barbarous world.

Thus, the perception of Baroque by Eugenio d'Ors is strongly associated with the notion of eternal feminine in its multiple and multiform representations.