

From Widowerhood to a New Love Affair: A Study of David Lindsey's *The Color of Night*

N'ZAMBI-MIKOULOU Donald ¹, MOUKENGUE BOUEYA Wenceslas Crépin ² & MAKITA Samrey Kejlard ³

Université Marien Nguabi, Congo.

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Abstract: The exploration of David Lindsey's *The Color of Night* enables us to discover how the protagonist Strand goes from widowerhood to a new love affair with his sweetheart Mara Song after the death of Romy his first beloved partner. In fact, after the killing of the latter by her own brother named Schrade for stealing his money, the widower Strand finds it better to overcome his psychological pains from this mourning event by falling in love with Mara Song, a female character who refuses to betray him to the Foreign Intelligence Service on behalf of their love affair. With the help of some American soldiers trained to kill all those who are considered as a treat to the American nation, he ends up succeeding in avenging for his first wife's murder by killing Schrade. The author's account for this protagonist's love experience appears, in this regard, as a way for him to invite the reader to understand the fate reserved to all those individuals who consider embezzlement and murder as "an exit way" to succeed in life. For, one sees how Romy and Schrade finish up dying because of these two inhuman practices.

Keywords: Love, Embezzlement, Murder, Widowerhood, Revenge.

Introduction

This article examines the protagonist's love experience from his moments of love with his first wife Romy to his widowerhood and new love affair with Mara Song in David Lindsey's *The Color of Night*. Published in 1999, this novel tells the story of Strand's first wife Romy who is secretly assassinated by her own brother, Wolfram Schrade on behalf of his money stollen. While trying to find out the killer of his deceased sweetheart, Strand ends up falling in love with Mara Song, one of Schrade's collaborators who knows the truth about this mourning event. As a result, Schrade begins persecuting the couple for fear of being betrayed.

Our choice of *The Color of Night* for this exploration is particularly linked to David Lindsey's portrayal of his protagonist's new love affair with Mara Song after the death of his first wife. For, it is not always possible or easy for lovers to fall in love again after losing their first beloved partners. Marc Boom who initially scrutinized it, considers its author as a committed writer for extolling lovers to overcome the wounds from the death of their sweethearts by finding a new beloved partner: "For my part, David Lindsey deserves to be classified into the category of committed novelists, for instead of dealing with art for art's sake, he devotes his time to moralizing the reader through his protagonist's love experience"¹. The possibility to forget about the pain from one's beloved partner's unexpected death in order to find a new spouse capable of fulfilling one's desires, is therefore what urges us to concentrate on the answer to the following question: To what extent is *The Color of Night* the portrayal of the protagonist's widowerhood and post-widowerhood love experience? We hypothesize that David Lindsey's account for Strand's new love adventure with Mara Song after the loss of his first wife, attests of this male character's widowerhood and post-widowerhood love experience in the author's literary text.

Knowing that the novel examined is linked not only to the psychological feelings of beloved partners, particularly the protagonist and his new wife, but also to some other literary texts which are about love and death, we find it necessary to resort to the psychological approach and the intertextuality to conduct our analysis. The psychological approach which is the application of Freudian theories to all the literary process from the mind of the writer and the motives of the characters to the reaction of reader, enables us to examine the protagonist's psychological feelings during and after his widowerhood, for according to Krutch, "the criticism that employs this

approach assumes that an important part of the relationship between an artist and art is similar to that between patient and dream. (...) Psychology can be used to explain fictitious characters (Krutch, quoted by Scott Wilbur: 1962, 71-72). The intertextuality, however, helps us to demonstrate the presence of some literary texts in *The Color of Nights*, for this approach refers to "the fact that all texts are made out of other texts" (Abott: 2003, 94). According to Gérard Genette, "there is intertextuality by the effective presence of a text in another" (Genette: 1982, 8). As for Marc Eigeldinger, "intertextuality refers to an exchange, a dialogue existing between two or several texts" (Eigeldinger: 1987, 9). Similarly, Laurent Jenny argues that "intertextuality is a work of transformation and assimilation of different texts" (Jenny: 1976, 26).

Three main points are examined in this article: The first refers to Strand's love affair with his first wife named Romy. The second analyzes his episode of life during his widowhood. The last tackles his new love relationship with Mara Song.

1. Strand's love affair with Romy

In *The Color of Night*, David Lindsey's efforts to account for his characters' love affairs are evident through Strand and Romy. The first is the male character who falls in love with the second from the very first sight after spending so many years without being interested in love matters. The novel reads that their first encounter occurs in Belin while they are persecuting by her Romy's brother, Schrade who is determined to kill them mercilessly because of his money stollen:

I'd actually met Romy while Schrade was spying on the Russians for us. I was his case officer, and schrade was such an arrogant bastard that he often demanded I go to him in secret at his villa on Schwanenwerder, an Island in the Havel River in the Nikolassee district of Berlin. I saw Romy there many times and got to know her (TCN, p. 126).

In this passage, the author portrays Strand not as a simple lover who is eager to have Romy for wife, but more as a character who works in an organization in which Schrade acts as a spy. Romy's arrival in this organization called the "Foreign Intelligence Service (FIS)" is favoured by her brother Schrade who works as Strand's collaborator. This means that it is thanks to these characters' collaboration that Romy has a chance to come across a man of her life in the "Havel River in the Nikolassee district of Berlin". The novel reveals that instead of getting married in a rush as it is the case observed with the majority of young lovers, Strand devotes part of his precious time to going to Berlin to visit his partner in order to know her better. His visits to her are viewed as a way for him not to be mistaken in his choice of a woman to have for spouse. For, he is conscious of the fact that precipitation in love matter has often more drawbacks than advantages, as Jo-Ellan Dimitruis and Marck Mazzarella state: "Observing people properly takes time. Most people simply don't take enough time to gather information and reflect upon it. Instead, they frequently make critical decisions about people in a hurry, as if life was a game show in which quick answers scored more point" (Dimitruis and Mazzarella: 1998, 10). It is indeed by dint of applying this piece of advice given to all lovers that Strand's love affair with Romy starts to be evident in Geneva, lake Como and London:

When FIS took me off the Soviet project, the abrupt interruption of my meetings with Schrade forced Romy and me to acknowledge how strongly we felt about each other. We arranged our first secret meeting in Geneva. [...] Lake Como, London, wherever we felt we could successfully elude Schrade and the FIS for a few days (TCN, pp.126-127).

One understands that Strand's departure from "the Soviet project" enables him to meet secretly Romy in Europe where their love affair begins to bear fruits. For, the more they meet while avoiding to be caught by Schrade, the more they develop the feeling not only of loving each other, but more of living together as a couple all along the rest of their life. This is to say that the persecution made to them by Schrade who looks for his money stollen is to some extent half positive for them, because they see it as an opportunity to enjoy the full fruition of their love adventure. What reinforces Strand's love feelings for Romy is her intellectual abilities. Being known as a graduated in international economics and finance, he sees her as a good companion capable of boosting his projects. In the "Foreign intelligence Service", for example, she is considered as a pillar of Schrade's money laundering thanks to her capacity to manage things intellectually:

Anyway, Schrade's illicit profits were laundered by several money managers who worked for him. One of these was a woman named Rosemarie Bienert. Her history with Schrade Was ...complicated. She was brilliant, held university degrees in international economics and finance. He called her Marie. I called her Romy (*TCN*, p. 126).

The author's mentioned of Romy's intellectual knowledge in this passage is significant, for he certainly advises female lovers not only to rely on their physical beauty, but also to have something in their brain before getting involved in love matter. It is clear that the more a given young lady is instructed, the more she attracts men. This means that Romy's attracting-physical appearance and her intellectual background are the two positive elements which urge Strand to have her for wife. Unfortunately, their love affair as a couple does not go further because of their persecution by Schrade. In fact, in the author's narrative, this male character is presented as a business man who has connections with some characters who help him launder the money which makes rich. One of those characters is Romy who becomes his enemy after stealing his money:

Eventually Romy designed an astonishingly complex to divert some of the money she was laundering for Schrade, which the FIS was allowing him to launder in exchange for his skills in providing us with information. He was hesitated. Actually, she was able to divert huge amounts of it. Hundreds of millions (*TCN*, p. 128).

Through this passage, David Lindsey appears as a committed novelist for moralizing his readers through his denunciation of one of inhuman practices known as embezzlement. His presentation of Romy who is in love with Strand as an embezzler is a way to condemn such a practice which very often has regretful consequences. For, one sees how instead of living for years with her beloved partner, Romy ends up leaving him in a long period of widowerhood after her assassination by Schrade who thinks that his money is stolen by her:

So, after the funeral, after the horrible, soul-consuming afterbirth of death had passed and he was left with the silence and the solitude, he had returned to the rhythms of the water and the light to try to steady himself all over again. Even in Romy's absence, he found himself turning to her for help, to her idea of a proper ceremony for rebirth and a new beginning (*TCN*, p. 11).

What is worth knowing is that Schrade who is the main cause Strand's widowerhood is nothing else but a thief, because his wealth comes from the money he robs from different American and European organizations. Being conscious of this reality, Romy and her husband Strand find it better to divert a portion of "this dirty money" in order to start their own financial activities:

The money we stole from Schrade was money that was in the process of being laundered, money that was being 'streamed' through a byzantine scheme of 'filters', fake companies, banks, investment programs, markets, commodities, everything. Romy's job, as it had been for nearly four years, was to determine at what point Schrade's dirty money had passed through enough filter entities to keep it from getting traced back to Schrade's enterprises (*TCN*, p. 160).

In this passage, Strand and Romy are presented by the author as the culprits with regard to the money searched by Schrade. For, one sees how the two lovers end up confessing their wrongful act after enduring so many days of persecutions. David Lindsey's mention of this confession is a way to advise his readers to adopt such an attitude which consists in telling the truth whenever they think that they are wrong. For, he certainly means that telling the truth often frees more than telling lie. His account for Schrade's attitude towards Romy is not to be seen as a way for him to extoll violence against one's peer, but rather a way to let the reader discover what embezzlement may occasion to those who consider it as an exit way to become rich in life. For, the collapse of Strand and Romy's love affair due to this inhuman practice which is condemned in the majority of the world nations where justice reigns, should serve as a moral lesson to all lovers. In a word, what the author tells the reader through this account is that money gained illicitly does not profit, because one may see how Strand is shocked to find out that her beloved wife with whom he used to share secrets ends up leaving him widower after her killing by her own brother on behalf of money.

2. Strand's widowerhood

In *The Color of Nights*, David Lindsey accounts for Strand's widowerhood mainly through the latter's loss of his first wife Romy whose life is shortened mercilessly by her own brother for stealing his money. In fact, after spending much of their time together as a couple, Strand is heart-wounded to find out that his beloved partner with whom he used to share not only intimate secrets, but also projects capable of changing their life is no longer alive. The author describes this mourning event which puts Strand into a long moment of widowerhood by informing the reader about the strategy used by Schrade to discover the thieves of his money. It is actually thanks to the latter's use of his "best computer" that Romy is recognized as the culprit. This recognition is therefore what pushes Schrade to kill her in a personal car:

Moreover, Meret had only narrowly missed being in the car with Romy. They had invited Meret to spend the weekend with them at their beach house near Galveston Island, and the two women had planned to drive out Thursday night and set the place before Strand arrival late Friday. At the last minute Meret had decided to take her own car and run some errands first. They had decided that Romy should go on and Meret would follow shortly. Meret had found Romy's Land Rover in the tidewater stream. Death, such an alien idea to her in her youth, had stepped right in front of her face, so close that she could almost smell its breath (TCN, pp. 97-98).

What is worth mentioning is that Meret, the woman who works for Strand, is the first witness of Romy's assassination which happened when both of them and Strand plan to go to the beach near a place they usually call "Galveston Island". While Strand was supposed to join them on Friday, Meret who first decided to go shopping before following Romy is astonished and shocked to find her best friend dead in her car under water. Lindsey in his work of fiction, reveals that there was a chase car which pursued Romy:

Romy's car careened wildly in the turns of the narrow-paved lane, the chase car's headlights losing her just as she was sliding on the edges of the road. Marshland brush and sand dunes jumped in and out of the headlights, and then suddenly the chase car's lights were squarely on the Land Rover. Once, twice, three times the chase car accelerated and rammed into the rear of the Land Rover, the camera shuddering violently with the impact. In the illumination of the handheld spotlight, Strand could actually see Romy's head snap from the impact of each fierce jolt, and he could see her arms wildly fighting the steering wheel (TCN, p. 79).

In this passage, the author presents Romy's death not as the result of an accident, but as an assassination planned by Schrade who has trouble to continue living without his money stollen. What the latter ignores about his decision to kill Romy are the wounds inflicted on Strand who is not ready to live without her sweetheart. The sentence "Strand could actually see Romy's head snap from the impact of each fierce jolt" evidences the wounds of this male character who does not know how to overcome such a painful moment of his life: *"In a sickening instant Strand recognized his old Land Rover. Before he had time to make his mind work around that realization, a spotlight came on in the camera car lightning the back of the driver's head in the lead car just as she looked around. It was Romy"* (TCN, p. 79). Actually, what makes Strands traumatized about this tragedy is not only his awareness of being a widower, but more of his loss of dignity and value before his peers. For, he certainly thinks that some of the latter may have suspicions on him with regard to his love relationship with his deceased wife, because he still wonders about the culprit of such a terrible action:

Strand tried in vain to identify the local: highway markers and exit signs had been manipulated and deliberately blurred. The cars were American; that was all he could tell. The camera car stayed so far back behind its target that Strand couldn't tell anything about the driver or even how many people were in the car, and when the driver braked or switched lanes the tail and signal light caused a halo effect that obscured its identifying marks even more (TCN, p. 78).

Through this passage, the author portrays Strand not as a simple male character who has love for the deceased Romy, but more as a widower who is determined to find out his dead-beloved partner's murderer. For, the novel reveals that even after the funeral, he continues thinking about his lovely moments passed with his dead wife. As a

result, he finds himself left with silence and solitude:

So, after the funeral, after the horrible, soul-consuming afterbirth of death had passed and he was left with the silence and the solitude, he had returned to the rhythms of the water and the light to try to steady himself all over again. Even in Romy's absence, he found himself turning to her for help, to her idea of a proper ceremony for rebirth and a new beginning (TCN, p. 11).

As it can be seen, this passage brings evidence that Strand has become widower because of the killing of Romy. His widowerhood is a bit different from that of other widowers, because it is crammed with trauma. This trauma is therefore what urges him to avenge his wife. To do so, he starts suspecting Schrade to be the murderer of Romy, because he was the only one who was persecuting them for his money stolen: "After killing Romy in an initial burst of anger, Strand went on "Schrade realized it was a terrible mistake. He may never get the money if he kills all of us. In fact, he probably killed his best prospect for ever getting it all back. He spent the next year trying to track it all down" (TCN, p. 158). The fear to be killed by Schrade finally leads Strand not only to give the stolen money to the United States' Government, but also to decide to shorten Schrade's life, because he is also viewed as a thief for embezzling the same money: "I (Strand) wanted the money to be integrated into a legitimate legal framework subject to U.S. laws. I didn't trust an EU country to resist the kind of pressure that Schrade was capable of putting on them if it eventually came to that" (TCN, p. 161). It is indeed during Strand's widowerhood that the money searched by Schrade is given back to the American Government. One of Strand's objectives in giving back this money is to enable American authorities to reopen some institutions which have collapsed because of Schrade's embezzlement:

When it was all over, when we shut down the operation, we had taken a total of six hundred and two million from Schrade. "I set up a series of charitable trusts that established and administered schools and hospitals in the very countries where Schrade's drug and arms business have caused so much miserable hell" (TCN, p. 162).

In this passage, David Lindsey portrays Strand not as simple American character, but more as a true American patriot who has mercy on his nation's citizens. For, one sees how, instead of using the stolen money for his own interests, he finds it better to give it back to his government so that the latter in return may build some infrastructures which lack in their country. The author's presentation of this character as a good-hearted citizen is viewed as a way for him to advise the reader to follow suit, for he certainly believes that a patriot should always be loyal to his nation, as evidenced by Edgard Hoover in Julius Lester's *And All Our Wounds Forgiven*: "I am a patriot, a true American, and anyone who is a threat to it is my enemy" (Lester: 1994, 58). One understands that Strand's period of widowerhood is marked not only by his wounds from the death of his wife, but also by some of his positive actions towards the United States. For, instead of focussing his attention on observing the mourning of his deceased beloved partner, he also thinks of how to do good to his country by giving it the possibility to increase its economy through the money embezzled by Schrade. The latter's killing by Strand with the help of two professional hit men called "sharpshooters" attests not only of this male character's patriotism to the American nation whose economy was about to collapse because of embezzlement, but more of his revenge for deceased wife:

He (Strand) had known two professional hit men during his years in the intelligence business. They were, seemingly, unremarkable men, a little remote, perhaps, but one of them in particular he quite liked. The man was forty-three years old. Strand remembered, and he had grown up in the mid-western United States. He had been trained to kill when he had served in Vietnam, and when he'd finished his second tour in Southeast Asia, his superior officer had recommended his services to the Metsada (TCN, p. 423).

Through this passage, one understands that American soldiers are trained to defend not only their country, but also their counterparts' personal interests. For, one sees how they accept to take part in the killing of Schrade. "The participation of these soldiers in the fight against Schrade who is German, shows the solidarity of Americans to revenge for the murder of their sister" (Matondo, N'zambi-Mikoulou et al.: 2023, 531). This solidarity is certainly what pushed Marie Robin to write: "We are one family and together, we will face up to this attack that has killed our people. We weep but we are erect and dignified, and we will stand up to the enemy. We extend our condolences to the American people and share, in its pain, its desire for revenge" (Robin: 2020, 1061). The novel reveals that after the death of Schrade, the widower Strand whose heart

has been wounded for months, finally decides to fulfil the emptiness left by his deceased sweetheart in his heart by falling in love with another beautiful character named Mara Song. The author's portrayal of such a decision is viewed as a way for him to let the reader know that a man should not remain single after the death of his wife. For, it is always possible for him to overcome the pain of the past by choosing another partner. But this choice should not be made in a hurry. According to the African tradition, for example, a widower is supposed to observe at least forty-five days before getting engaged in a new love affair. In the author's fiction, Strands has gone beyond this period of widowerhood. This means that in the United States, widowers also observe such a period of widowerhood for the sake of their deceased partners, as demonstrated by Strand in the section below.

3. Strand's love affair with Mara Song

In *The Color of Night*, David Lindsey accounts for Strand's love affair with Mara Song many months later after Romy's funeral. This means that Strands is no longer ready to remain widower. In fact, after Mara's training course by the United States' organization called the Foreign Intelligence Service, both lovers find themselves attracted by each other and decide to share the rest of their life together as a couple. One of the missions imposed to Mara Song by this organization is to provide it with Strand's information. But after falling in love with him, she finds it impossible to betray her partner. For, she sees him as a true beloved partner capable of satisfying her needs even though he still thinks about his deceased wife: "*Strand was like a man who had been a heavy drinker all his life and was now suffering from damage organs. The past wasn't going to go away for that man, and it wasn't going to go away for Harry Strand, either*" (TCN, p. 89). What makes Strand appears as a drinker is the fact that he does not stop thinking about his beloved-dead wife. This means that his feelings of great sadness are caused by his wife's assassination:

The woman (Mara) in the black lucra tank suit came to swim laps beside him (Strand) in the long empty pool every day for twelve consecutive days. Either way, for nearly two weeks they shared the same water and the same silence and the same light. The twelve days they swam together were odd in just about every respect. Inevitably during that time their eyes connected briefly, but neither of them ever acknowledged the other. They never spoke (TCN, pp. 11-12).

This passage shows that Strand and Mara meet in a swimming pool where they spend twelve days without saying a word to each other because of their personal reasons. Their silence to each other implies that something burns in their hearts, for when Mara stops coming to the swimming pool, Strand begins to wonder about her absence:

Then she stopped coming. That had been over a month ago, and he hadn't seen her since. He had inquired about her. The swimming club was private and very discreet. The only thing he could learn about her was that her name had been listed as Mara Song, recently arrived in Houston from Rome. No address, of course, and no telephone number was available to him (TCN, p. 12).

Being aware of the absence of his prospective wife, Strand finds it better to inquire about her. For, he thinks that he can no longer do without her, as the narrator puts it in these terms: "*It didn't really make any sense. But he never swam now without thinking of her, thinking that at any moment she might suddenly be there*" (TCN, p. 13). It is only after a month that both lovers finally have the opportunity to meet again:

She obviously did not recognize him from those mornings at the pool a month earlier, and Strand decided to see how she would react to being reminded." You know," he said, "I think we've almost met before" [...] "I remember that," she said in dismay. Then happy relieved, she added, "Yeah, I do remember that. We swam together for about two weeks and never spoke a word. Strand smiled. She laughed, now even more relieved. That was you?" (TCN, pp. 27-28).

The swimming pool here stands for a peaceful place where the two lovers come not only to overcome their psychological wounds of the past, but more to enjoy the full fruition of their love relationship. The author's use of the sentence "Yeah, I do remember that, we swam together for about two weeks and never spoke a word" is indicative, for it tells the reader that Mara Song still remembers her first meeting place with her beloved partner who is eager to have her for wife thanks to her attractive-physical appearance and good manners. To understand

each other before getting married, they raise questions about their marital situations:

How long have you been married? She asked abruptly. He frowned at her, and she tilted her left hand back and touched her ring finger with her thumb. "Oh. It would have been four years... well, in July." She didn't move her eyes or speak. She died in an automobile accident. Almost a year ago. Her face fell. "I'm sorry. She was embarrassed. "No, that's all right." There was a pause. She was visibly uneasy. "This divorce," she said. "I find myself wondering how long people have been married." She shrugged. I'm sorry for your wife. My first husband died suddenly also, an odd heart condition (TCN, p. 27).

In this passage, one sees how Strand and Mara make a brief report of their dark past. Strand explains to Mara how he loses his wife when he says "She died in an automobile accident". Actually, Strand knows nothing about the truth related to his wife's death. He still has trouble to believe that she is killed by his brother-in-law. Similarly, Mara Song demonstrates that her husband is also dead not of an accident, but of his "odd-heart condition". Seeing the two lovers' accounts for their marital situations, one may confess that their fates mirror each other. For, it is only after the death of their beloved partners that each of them has decided to get involved in a new love affair in order to restart a new lifestyle:

She (Mrs Mara Reinhardt) told him of her first marriage. She and her husband both had been art teachers at the Farnese Academy in Rome, and after his death she had stayed on there. In a few years she had met and married Mitchell Reinhardt, and for four years she had endured a marriage that from its consummation [...] wobbling on unsteadily until it had become so shaky that no ballast could steady it, and she had filed for divorce (TCN, p. 29).

One understands that after her first husband's death, Mara Song gets married with Mitchell Reinhardt that she divorces four years later because of the difficulties she endures with him. It is quite clear that her being an artist like her husband urges her not to give value to the latter. The difficulties she claims to endure within their home are viewed as an alibi she finds to divorce him: "Tonight, instead of taking his drink into the court yard, Strand took it into the library, put on a CD of Lucia di Lammermoor, and took down all his books on the five artists who had created Mara song's drawings" (TCN, p. 52). The author's portrayal of this female character as a woman who dares to divorce her husband is a way to tell men to pay attention when it comes to getting married with female workers, for he believes that they are always up to something. This piece of advice given to men by the author intertwines with that of Sidney in Erich Segal's *Prizes*. After being victim of rejection and humiliation from his wife, Sidney warns his son Sandy not to fall in love with an actress for fear of being disappointed one day: "Hey, kiddo, he commented, I know how much you like her. But believe me marrying an actress is like jumping out of a plane without a parachute. It's exhilarating for the first few minutes, but pretty quick, you're gonna hit the ground with an awful thud" (Segal: 1995, 237). This quotation attests of Sidney's love for his son, for he prohibits him to have Rochelle for wife not because he hates her, but simply because he thinks that Rochelle is an actress and he is aware of actresses' attitude towards their husbands. In fact, after a long moment of stressfulness and exchange, Strand and Mara Song end up expressing their feelings of deep affection for each other, as evidenced below:

Harry, you know what I mean here. I'm very grateful to you for our friendship... For, you including me in your life. She took a deep breath. For me, it could easily go farther than this. It seems like we're at that point where this could become something else, something more (TCN, p. 59).

As it can be seen, Mara Song is the one who first expresses her love feelings for Strand, the man she now considers as a true companion for her. For, the sentence "for me, it could easily go farther than this" shows her readiness to become Strand's wife. However, Strand objects the fact of having sex before marriage: "But you don't want to do this yet. Or maybe ever". "It's not that I don't want to. It's that I'm afraid to if... Look, I don't want sex to complicate a friendship. If it's only going to be a friendship" (TCN, p. 59). Strand's hesitation for sex before marriage is viewed by Mara Song as a waste of time, because, seeing her age, she is no longer ready to be patient in any love affair:

I want to say something, Harry. "I'm forty-two. I don't want to pretend that I'm in my twenties, and I'm engaged in some sort of game here. One, I don't have the patience for it

anymore. Two, I don't have the time for it anymore. Three, I want you to know without having to be coy about it, that I like you very much, and, frankly, I don't want you to wander away before we get to know each other (TCN, p. 57).

It is because of her age and true love that Mara Song wants to convince Strand to accept her proposal. For, the sentence "I don't want you to wander away before we get to know each other" shows how she does not want to lose the man she loves deeply in her heart. Her eagerness to have Strand for husband finally leads them to discover some common points which enable them to love each other: "*They have met, discovered something in common, and fallen in love*" (TCN, p. 344). This quotation illustrates that both lovers are now in good terms about their relationship, as confessed by John Welwood who writes: "*When we reveal ourselves to our partner and find that this brings healing rather than harm, we make an important discovery-that intimate relationship can provide a sanctuary from the world of facades, a sacred space where we can be ourselves, as we are*" (Welwood, quoted by Bell Hooks: 2000, 32). Welwood believes that love can heal wounds which lie down in our hearts and change lies to truth when the feelings of attraction occur more frequently. That is to say that a given human being can see the world differently when he finds his true love. In *The Color of Night*, the author accounts for this reality through the way Mara Song becomes very close to her beloved partner:

When he arrived at the house in Sallustiano he went straight upstairs. Mara was just getting out of the shower when Strand walked into her bedroom. He started her "whoa," she said, "You scared me." She had stopped in the doorway of the large, white-tiled bathroom, still naked, drying her hair with a towel. Smiling, she came over to him and gave him a wet kiss. Her mouth was cool. She smelled of shampoo. "Now I feel better," she said (TCN, p. 109).

Here, one sees how Strand and his sweetheart become much tied, for they start visiting each other. Strand, for example, comes to Mara Song's house and gives her a kiss which finally urges them to have sex. The word "whoa" used in the above passage is very informative, because it stands for Mara Song's excitement after discovering the intimate part of her partner. It is indeed thanks to this discovery that she says it openly that "now I feel better". This utterance implies that the female character has long been waiting for this special moment. Such feelings of satisfaction which inhabit her spirit recall those of a male character in Leland Foster Wood's *Harmony in Marriage*: "*Let my love like sunlight, surround you and yet give you illumined freedom*" (Wood: 1995, 22). Through this quotation, one understands that love is an emotional world which can change people's thoughts and set freedom in their life. This is the case of Strand who feels better while seeing Mara's naked breasts:

He (Strand) undressed her (Mara) by the opened balcony doors above the palms, [...] when her dress fell away to the floor, she was naked. As he touched her waist, traced his fingers over the rise of her lips, and gently moved his hands up to cup her breasts. The feel of her was as new and erotic to him as the first moment he had ever felt a woman's naked breasts, that long lifetime ago as an astonished boy (TCN, p. 74).

The fact of showing her nakedness to Strand demonstrates that Mara Song is ready to do everything that Strand wants in order to show him how much she loves him. This love atmosphere which dwells in both lovers finally leads them to have sexual intercourse: "*Then, latter, there was the surreal sexual intercourse with her, she who was suddenly no longer Mara (...) All of this piled on top of his own emotions about her, emotions that have grown and matured during the last three months so he could have been capable of it. It was a bleak realization*" (TCN, p. 92). The sentence "It was a bleak realization" attests of the two lovers' satisfaction after their first sexual intercourse which reinforces their love for each other, as Mara Song confesses it in these terms: "*I love you, Harry*" (TCN, p. 279). This utterance viewed as a proof of Mara Song's love for Strand draws the reader back to what Leland Foster Wood says to lovers:

When the husband is able to make his wife feel supremely happy in his embraces and kisses, it is altogether likely that she will be able to go along with him to the complete realization of the marital experience, making it a high point of love for both. For, the husband the art of sexual love-making is to find the times when both can enter with splendid abandon into a passionate expression of their unity and also to discover the ways which are favourable to complete mutuality in this experience. (Wood: 1995, 62).

In this passage, Wood demonstrates that it is difficult for a woman to leave her husband if the latter is capable of satisfying her needs. This means that a man is supposed to take care of his wife appropriately so as to keep her for himself. It is only by so doing that women are able to protect their husbands, as evidenced by Mara Song who refuses to betray Strand after falling in true love with him: “I confessed that I’d fallen in love with you, but I didn’t know if I could just turn my back on the FIS, the U.S., all that. I didn’t want to be a traitor” (TCN, p. 277). This quotation shows that Mara Song is a secret agent who resigns from the Foreign Intelligence Service after refusing to betray Strand to this organization thanks to the kind of love she receives from him:

We don’t know where they are, Howard admitted, but I’m in communication with Mara Song. He told Schrade about the Internet exchanges, of Mara’s ambivalence, her desire to stay in touch. Schrade was motionless. This interested him. [...] Song is completely lost to us as an agent. Despite her communication she has no intention of living him, she has no angst or ambivalence. This is Strand. He’s using her to keep the FIS on hold. He doesn’t want to be out cut off from us. He’s up to something (TCN, pp. 282-283).

One sees here how Strand is persecuted by the Foreign Intelligence Service’s agents because of the money stolen which brought about his first wife’s assassination. Some of these agents are Howard and Mara Song. When the latter becomes irresistible to Strand’s physical appearance and good manners, she decides to give up her mission which consists in spying and convincing Strand to give back the stolen money to Schrade. The sentence “He doesn’t want to be out cut off from us” shows that Mara Song appears as an angel who comes to save Strand’s life from the Foreign Intelligence Service. The author’s efforts to portray his persecution by this organization are nowhere more evident than in the passage where he shows how Schrade and his colleagues are eager to have their money back: “I (Mara Song) was supposed to find out how much, where it was. How you (Strand) had taken care of it. Once they (FIS) had some basic information they were confident they could move on it. Seize it (...). They just wanted their money” (TCN, p. 249). One understands that one of Mara Song’s missions in the Foreign Intelligence Service is to find out the amount of the money stolen by Strand in order to give it back to this American organization. The author’s portrayal of Strand’s encounter with Mara Song after the murder of his first beloved partner appears as a way for him to inform the reader about the advantages of love. For, one sees how Strand’s life is saved by Mara Song on behalf of their deep love for each other.

Conclusion

At the end of this exploration, we have discovered that in *The Color of Night*, David Lindsey accounts for the themes of love and widowerhood mainly through Strand’s love affair with his first wife Romy who is mercilessly killed by her own brother Schrade for stealing his money. Then, he informs the reader about how Strand succeeds in overcoming his psychological wounds from this murder by getting engaged in a new love affair with Mara Song after observing a long period of his widowerhood. The author’s portrayal of Strand’s love experience appears as a way for him to advise lovers not to remain single after losing their first partner. For, he certainly means that finding a new partner is one of the ways to overcome such psychological pains. His account for Romy’s death and Schrade’s murder is viewed as a moral lesson he gives to all those who consider embezzlement as “an exit way” to become rich in life.

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