



Your Name and Other Heresies
 (“Numele tău și alte erezii”)

by **Ilinca BERNEA**
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A fictional book about the current confrontation between the West and the Middle East on London territory, about the contemporary Babylonia and the roots of the fear towards Islam, about the fractures in the Muslim world, about the fight for freedom borne by the people in the Middle East, about the political crisis in Turkey and the waste of freedom of those who have it.

A book about Western and Oriental sexual practices, in Contemporary West and Ottoman Renaissance. A book that explores feminine sexuality in detail. A book written in the first person, about transgressing boundaries and about forms of eroticism taken to the extreme, about tension, skulking and fighting, about desire, obsession and capitulation. An homage to profound instinctuality and human nature, uncensored by civilization. An erotic epiphany.

The novel resumes the theme from the essay work of Michel Onfray, “Le Souci des Plaisirs/Pour Une Erotique Solaire”, and elaborates it into an epic composition that takes place on two planes: one that refers to the present time and one that juxtaposes an epopee taking place in Ottoman Renaissance to this present.

Written from the subjective perspective of the author, in the first person, the book pursues both narrative threads, but in two different languages, composing, with an archaic vocabulary and style, the historical part, and in a post-modern literary formula, the part that describes the current reality.

It is a story about passion and melancholy and the stigmatization of pleasure, one with an existentialist stake, about the inexistence of borders between inner worlds, about the universality of human experience, about the absurdity of the notion of enemy.

A book with accounts and investigations of sexual experiences, which offers a wide range of interpretations to eroticism and its reverberations on different planes. A novel whose philosophical stake is infiltrated in the substratum of hyper-sensual scenes and descriptions and captivating tales, which even touch on the domain of medieval hygiene and medicine.

Ketevan, a young Georgian woman, attacked by a group of Crescent soldiers during the military campaign that resulted in the annexation of a piece of Georgia into the Ottoman Empire, is saved from being raped by an Ottoman Ameji, named Mehr, who secretly falls in love with her and, taking into consideration that the girl might initiate him in the study of a new chord instrument that had appeared in Spain and was called a guitar, he decides to take her as his slave and bring her along to Istanbul. Being already married to three other women and caring for a widowed sister, he has a hard time integrating the beautiful stranger into the family.

In parallel, five centuries later, the narrator's confession unfolds. The story begins when she, in full middle-age crisis, becomes the lover of a mysterious man who prefers to remain anonymous and with whom she has an uncontrollably erotic affair. Not having a clear biography and not knowing anything else about him except the fact that he is Turkish, she imagines all the adventures of the Mehr-Ketevan couple, to fill up the void that floats around his image. As she lives the most intense sexual experiences with him, which also serve her as a means of self-knowledge, the coup d'état and the repression of power in Turkey take place. He disappears, and for a while, she is convinced that he is a dissident of the regime from Ankara and he was arrested or is being chased by the authorities. As the twists and turns in the book make her confront an unwanted reality, a mutation in her consciousness and her feeling takes place and she rediscovers herself in an unexpected position, in which she is willing to cross boundaries, to make sacrifices, to accept compromises. The force of sexuality proves to be above morals, egos, the sense of self-preservation and any other desire.

In the present day, the plot and the action are also outlined through the relation between the storyteller and a close friend of hers, a Turkish woman who is being chased by the authorities and has taken refuge in London.

A few picturesque characters are part of the London scenery and the narrator's entourage: a couple of academic faces of stolid and blasé Englishmen, jovial Spanish people, waggish Turks, good-natured Indians, emigrants from the East covered in piercings and tattoos, drug users from all ethnicities and cultural media and last but not least, a romantic and funny Scot who comes to play a decisive role in her destiny and the fate of the story.

The story of the two Renaissance heroes ends tragically, due to the fact that the nations they belong to hate each other. The story taking place in the present day has an open ending, which the readers will discover on their own.