

# The Children *are* Sleeping in Sydney



Mihaela HERGHILIGIU

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THE CHILDREN ARE SLEEPING IN  
SYDNEY

Mihaela HERGHILIGIU

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*Dedicated to Jon Morrison,  
a real warrior*

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## Preface

The actual world makes a clear and brutal separation between the heart (understood as emotions, feelings) and mind (as rationality, the mental capacity to solve problems). I wanted to write a book in which to give – if not more importance to the emotional component of us, at least to balance these two, in the context of the heavy communication between people nowadays, although the development of technology contradicts my idea.

We lay too much emphasis on the brain reasoning capacities while reducing the importance of our own state of welfare. We're almost deconstructed as human beings, forced to live our lives by parts, not wholly, harmoniously; we find ourselves all the time in the situation to understand, not to feel, as if feelings would be something shameful, disgraceful and hard to live with.

My characters are simple people with 'unornamented' lives, but with complicated issues to confront and debate. They put into words their own fears and anxieties; they build an online, not a face-to-face relationship, the type of reciprocity intermediated by technology. This gives them the incredible chance of knowing each other on a soul level but, as time

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goes on, what technology helped them to do, it actually starts to destroy, so after three years they get to the point where they can no longer act like this. In other words, it is a love story between a patient of cancer, that is also the key person in one of the most powerful armies of the world, the Australian army, and a Romanian teacher. The voices of the characters mix with the voice of others and even with the voices of the conscience in an inside track through the meanders of the *psyche*.

It's a book about living the disappointment of not being able to build connections neither in real life, nor in the virtual one, about finding answers to questions such as the meanings of love and life, religion, philosophy and psychology, the scientific elucidatory approaches making room, but not interrupting the fluency of the heroes' discourses.

Caught online, one never knows who's talking to, who's counting his searches, following his interests, checking his exchanges of replies, analysing his posts. There's always a secret 'Eye' which sees everything and knows everybody. Getting in is dangerous, getting out of there is a challenge. It's still well there's that 'in-between' variant. Very soon, it is possible not to find it.

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# THE FIRST PART\*

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\*1 This is a stand-alone complete text, and a continuation is possible, but not guaranteed

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“Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, now that Ehud was dead. So the Lord sold them into the hands of Jabin, king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. Sisera, the commander of his army, was based in Harosheth Haggoyim. Because he had nine hundred chariots fitted with iron and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, they cried to the Lord for help.

Now Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time. She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her to have their disputes decided. She sent for Barak, son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him: «The Lord, the God of Israel commands you: *Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun, and lead them up to Mount Tabor. I will lead Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his troops, to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.*»

Barak said to her: «If you go with me, I will go; but if you don’t go with me, I won’t go.»

«Certainly I will go with you», said Deborah. «But because of the course you are taking, the honor will not be yours, for the Lord will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman.» So

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Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh. There Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali, and ten thousand men went up under his command. Deborah also went up with him.

Now Heber the Kenite had left the other Kenites, the descendants of Hobab, Moses' brother-in-law, and pitched his tent by the great tree in Zaanannim near Kedesh.

When they told Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, Sisera summoned from Harosheth Haggoyim to the Kishon River all his men and his nine hundred chariots fitted with iron.

Then Deborah said to Barak: «Go! This is the day the Lord has given Sisera into your hands. Has not the Lord gone ahead of you?» So Barak went down Mount Tabor, with ten thousand men following him. At Barak's advance, the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and army by the sword, and Sisera got down from his chariot and fled on foot.

Barak pursued the chariots and army as far as Harosheth Haggoyim, and all Sisera's troops fell by the sword; not a man was left. Sisera, meanwhile, fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenanite, because there was an alliance between Jabin, king of Hazor, and the family of Heber the Kenite.

Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him: «Come, my lord, come right in. Don't be afraid.» So he entered her tent, and she covered him with a blanket.

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«I'm thirsty», he said. «Please, give me some water.» She opened a skin of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him up.

«Stand in the doorway of the tent», he told her. «If someone comes by and asks you *Is anyone in there?* Say *No.*»

But Jael, Heber's wife, picked up a tent peg and a hammer and went quietly to him while he lay fast asleep, exhausted. She drove the peg through his temple into the ground, and he died.

Just then Barak came by in pursuit of Sisera, and Jael went out to meet him. «Come», she said, «I will show you the man you're looking for.» So he went in with her, and there lay Sisera with the tent peg through his temple – dead.

On that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan before the Israelites. And the hand of the Israelites pressed harder and harder against Jabin king of Canaan until they destroyed him.”<sup>1</sup>

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I promised to myself that I would never again write about love.

Love is the subject anybody would or at least could avoid. Some are joking around, others whisper in doubt, a few pretend they know anything about it. But nobody could know for sure if they truly lived it.

'Love' is as abstract as the motionless posture of the tree, a faded painting on the exterior glass of my window. One can see it, but it can't tell the exact substance, and why should a woody perennial plant be related to someone's feelings if it's just an entity with leaves? Why could it be seen with an aesthetic pleasure? What does it have to do with all of these? Is there any mechanism through which a tree makes us feel?

I was watching the branches in front of my window and just asking myself what they have so special that it could make someone feel, that's all.

Me face-to-face with a white paper means another type of relationship. A white paper is just a kind of foolscap. Paper could be easily associated with, for example, old patterns of thinking and rationality.

Me plainly facing a white paper makes me talk about trees, and these wooden structures should

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have something in common with feelings, with a particular feeling, love.

‘Her heart sank into her shoes as she realized at last how much she wanted him.’ (F. Scott Fitzgerald, ‘The Popular Girl’).

This is the first page. Maybe the second will be more promising. Let’s hope

xxx

Darling, if I write two pages a day and if you come, let’s say, in five months, this would make three hundred written pages.

The tree in front of my window will remind me that it’s October, then November, December, January and February. And, who knows?, it could also be March. I guess this is how the wooden entity with leaves relates to my feelings. As if I could know what the feelings are. I only know they are silent and come announced, something that reminds me of myself, of the Sundays hidden inside me, of all the stern Mondays. Me and the white papers have a conflictual relation, all the trees are deforming and creaking under the hurrying nibs doing schemes, calculations, summaries of important and essential, and less important ...discussions everywhere, every day. So many forests are sacrificed daily for our ‘visions’ and for our ‘politics’, and for our writing whims!

But who cares about ... shrubs? Let’s put the sheets on the shelves and into the files, and

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watch the trees lined up by the power of those magical spectacles on top of clever noses.

*It exists.* It comes out of nowhere, like a divine song we can barely hear, like an Autumn tree in all its splendor we could never reproduce.

xxx

When you're looking at me, I start saying poems and I think I'm living inside another realm, one of perfect beauty and serenity. Your eyes following me, only they make me.

xxx

There's nobody like you. I want to go deeper with you, I want to take you out of there and put you here, to have you closer, to get inside you. I take you down here as you wanted, words are writing alone from one another, I don't even know where I started. I just know I feel you and you feel me, and together we're knitting this, by one hand.

Writing until I feel your hand above mine, leading it and guiding the energy that flows through my fingers. It's not my power pressing the pen on the page, it's yours. I think your thoughts as mine, I transcribe your burdens and your solitude. In words we can recreate or put ourselves entirely. So we can save us for later, when we'll need what we saved.

I transcribe me and you here, taking for me the time to live you before leaving these words

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behind, abandoning them in this white levitation, in this floating embrace and loving bond. Words only need eyes to be seen, or voices to pronounce them. This frees them, releasing life and power from within.

xxx

‘Je t’aime parce que tout l’univers a conspiré à me faire arriver jusqu’à toi.’ (‘L’Alchimiste’, Paulo Coelho). But if this is a miracle or not, it is another story. The whole universe is miraculously scientific or scientifically miraculous. Like we’re related and secretly joined with everything around us.

From those millions I found you and I’m asking myself this question: ‘How?’ And why, when I needed you most, you turned up? Did you appear from inside my thoughts because you had been there all the time, never elsewhere? And why did I ask you? If I hadn’t, would I have known you exist?

xxx

In the sparkling notes of the twilight there’s always a meaning to be found. We don’t need to search for fantastic or for miracles, because they’re always next to us: the shining at the edge of a black cloud, a drop zigzagging on the transparent glass of a window, the tint of a falling leave...

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Lost inside metal and plastic we start to regret the Stone Age. The perfect symmetrical shapes around us don't resonate with the imperfection of material we're made of. The logic and mathematics everywhere can't mould the inside in perfect angles and lines. The rationality has nothing to do with the unexpected change in the direction of a wind breeze. We can't calculate in decimal places the importance of a word or of a fugitive look. And we can't foresee the exact number of our days.

xxx

All the trees in the world wouldn't be enough for the living inside the words we're writing on them. What is good for fire is good for words also. For the empty words, also. Trees could be blamed for making politics and laws. Trees for writing. And the empty time that's passing between the syllables, the clock hurrying towards midnight and making me doubt there could be something good in all of these. Just another day passed. How could it be transcribed here with all its life? Or maybe it is now the day is starting. Or maybe it never existed.

What would happen if all the libraries in the world would burn in a day? All the books burnt to ashes. How much would the Internet recuperate from all the lost knowledge?

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*The Author*

