

## Conservation E8: A Very Hard Demander

If the sexual E8 is a manifestly intense person who does not disguise his antisocial attitude and even seduces with his courage to be a bandit, and the social E8 is one who puts his power at the service of just causes, we can briefly describe an E8 of conservation as a hard person in his egoism—and we can understand something of the type thought of the aforementioned Henry VIII or Stalin, whose very nickname, which was given to him by his acquaintances in his youth, alludes to the hardness of steel.

The Granitic. Where does this type of person appear in literature? I have started other chapters of this book with some caricature of Canetti, and I will do so once more in the case of conservation E8, since I find it in the description that this author makes of the Granitic in his book “The Hearing Witness.”

The Granitic does not believe in evasions. Even murderers try to justify themselves and talk so much that people forget there's a dead body involved. If she could speak, everything would be seen in another light. Not that she takes pity on the victims, because how can a man allow himself to be murdered. But on the other hand it is good that there are crimes so that the murderers receive their punishment.

Like a nocturnal prayer, the Granitic makes her children repeat: “First my teeth are my relatives!” When they argue, she goads them until they patch up their argument over the violence. What she likes the most is watching them box; little interest in harmless sports. Of course, she's not opposed to boys swimming, but more importantly, they should box.

They must be rich and earn millions. No mercy for fools who allow themselves to be deceived. There are two types of men: tricksters and tricked, weak and strong. The strong are like granite, nobody gets anything out of them no matter how hard they squeeze them. It is best to never give anything. The Granitic would have made money, but she had children. It's their turn to do it now. Work is brutalizing, she tells them daily. Whoever has sight makes others work. The Granitic sleeps well, because she knows that she does not give anything.

Her door is always closed. There is no man who crosses her threshold. They saddle you with children and then forget to pay. They are not very skilled either, because they would not be trying all the time. If a true winner came, she would recognize it. But those never come because they don't have time. Only the slackers show up.

Granitic has never cried. When her husband went bankrupt, she was very angry with him. That is why she has held a grudge against him for eight years and when the children asked about him, she told them: “Dad was an idiot. Only an idiot ends up ruining himself.” The Granitic is not considered a widow. Her husband, who was a complete idiot, doesn't count for her, that's why she's a widow. In general, men are good for nothing. They are compassionate and let themselves be fooled. She doesn't let go, nobody takes anything from her, she could teach men a lesson.

The Granitic does not love reading, but has inflexible proverbs. When something harsh is said to her, she registers it instantly and includes it among her adamant proverbs.

Comefuego. We also find a brief caricature of this human type in the character of Comefuego, in *Pinocchio*, who, upon seizing the animated and talking doll that is Pinocchio, locks him up and uses him in his shows. All of this suggests the operation of a great egoism and the harshness necessary for exploitation, which becomes explicit when the giant says that compassion makes him sneeze.

King Claudius in "Hamlet." This type of rude, selfish, and distrustful person also appears in several of Chaucer's stories, and shortly after in Hamlet's King Claudius, who the spectators of the work (like Hamlet himself) gradually discover as the murderer. Claudius knows how to give the impression that "nothing is happening," resorting a lot to laughter, parties, and pleasure to hide reality—so much so, that in *La Roya!* A Shakespeare Company T-shirt was being sold during a Hamlet performance I attended, depicting Claudius simply with a crowned, smiling face.

We would say that, apart from the selfish satisfaction of their desires, lust in this human type takes the form of this superficial intensity of pleasures, designed to divert attention from interiority, which in this case hides their guilt. The supposed relevance of celebration and laughter implies the irrelevance of grief and doubts that seem to obsess young Hamlet, and the king tells him in an admonishing tone that death is something that must be accepted without making a mistake on an object of pathological attachment.

Kafka's father. But where, in the great literature, can we find a more detailed analysis of the psychology of this human type? Perhaps we could consider Kafka's father as a literary character, since the writer so richly describes him in the thick book entitled "Letter To My Father" (which he never dared to give to the one for whom he had felt crushed throughout his life). Dedicated to carnage, Kafka's father understood little of his son's motivations or needs, and it can be said that he crushed him without even realizing what he was doing, in such a way that Kafka would come to compare it to the way he crushes himself to a beetle. It is also through this crushing father due to his insensitivity that we can understand the monstrous and invisible authority that makes itself felt in works such as "The Trial" and "The Castle" as an omnipresent element that corresponds to that persecuted and impotent condition to which that we have come to refer to as the Kafkaesque.

Komarovsky in "Doctor Zhivago." Moving on to realistic fiction, we find in Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* a character named Komarovsky, who we first see helping the mother of a talented teenager named Larissa, who lives with her and assists her in her work as a seamstress. From the beginning, we perceive Komarovsky as one whose help to the mother serves as a pretext to overwhelm the girl, whom he makes his own through his power and authority. Zhivago will meet him when he is called to attend to her after Larissa herself has been shot by him at a party, wounding her in the hand, and the fact that he can get away with impunity from the place impresses us as an implicit acceptance on the part of Komarovsky of the justice of his aggression. There Zhivago meets her, who will establish a relationship with her until the development of the revolution separates them.

Komarovsky reappears near the end of the play, when Zhivago and Larissa have met again after untold suffering and believe they are now free to live their long-interrupted love; but Komarovsky, who has become an influential and powerful character, manages to take possession of her and at the same time keep her away from Zhivago, when he proposes to save them by taking them on a train to Moscow. Zhivago, distrustful of his intentions, does not even show up at the station, and will never see his love again.

Throughout this whole story, we perceive Komarovsky as someone who, with great power, allows himself to do what he wants, and in whom, it can be rightly said that his passion to achieve what he wants is the constant of his life.

Andrés Ascencio in *Arráncame la vida*. I now turn to the most realistic and clear portrait that I remember having found of a conservation E8, which is the one made by the Mexican writer Angeles Mastretta in her novel "Arráncame La Vida."

The protagonist is a Mexican general who practically seizes a girl and submits her to his tyranny, until she finds a way to free herself from him by committing a murder that leaves all readers happy. Next, I will present a summary of this book (also made into a movie), with the most pertinent quotes for understanding the character.

Andrés Ascencio, the protagonist, is introduced to us through his relationship with Catalina, the narrator, who is his official wife, with whom he has been living for almost twenty years. Of humble origin, with hardly any education, poor, the son of a muleteer father in a Mexican town, his life begins milking cows and distributing milk, until he joins the army, thrives in politics, and becomes an important man.

Andrés enters the service of a friend of his father, a muleteer like him, who had become a general. He knows how to make himself essential for the general, already of advanced age, and accompanies him to the capital, where he dies and where Andrés begins another life outside the town.

Through his story, we glimpse a piece of the history of the Mexican Revolution as the precise backdrop for our character to develop all kinds of fraudulent and violent actions. We see him ascend in his political career, in his social and economic level, going over any obstacle in the form of a person, political ideology, religious beliefs or affective ties of any kind. He lacks any type of complicity or bond of friendship and moves in relationships driven by his passion for power.

The family is a bargaining chip, it has a utility for him, it helps him make alliances or appear before public opinion in rallies and campaigns; they all play a role and are afraid of it.

Catalina is his official wife, but Andrés has many others scattered throughout various places, some of them with children that he places under Catalina's care. Until he reached seven. Catalina's life with Andrés goes from youthful love, since she married at fifteen, to the slow poisoning at the end. Catalina learns to organize a house with many people, service, formal or unexpected dinners and lunches. Learn to be an effective secretary, mother, and benefactor. Learn to stay next to an excessive, unpredictable, and arbitrary man. Until Andrés orders the assassination of the orchestra director, a man with whom she had fallen in love with. Revenge for revenge.

The novel ends when the protagonist goes to the same healer she had turned to at the beginning of her marriage for lack of pleasure, and this time, she gives her a tea whose abuse can be fatal.

Her name was Carmela... her husband was the one murdered at the Atencingo sugar mill... she didn't understand why I continued living with General Ascencio. Because she knew, because surely I knew, because we all knew who my general was. Unless I wanted to, unless I had thought, unless he brought me those black lemon leaves for my headache and other pains. The tea made from those leaves gave strength, but it was customary, and you had to be careful because taking it every day cured it for a moment, but in the long run it killed... He didn't seem to expect me to say anything. He finished speaking, got up, and left.

With nothing did Andrés lose the headache he had on that last visit to Los Pinos. One day I offered him Carmela's tea. He drank it primly against the superstitions of the peasants, and when the pain turned into a desire to go out into the street and confront Rodolfo, he stared at the empty cup:

"I'm sure it's a fluke, but what's wrong with it," he said.

"Not at all," I answered, serving myself a cup.

It was a dark green liquid that tasted of mint and epazote.

...Carmela's tea made me feel good too, but the next morning I didn't drink it. Andrés did want more, that morning and many others, until the day came when he could only have breakfast.

Andrés got up yelling curses... when the assistant entered with a summons from the Attorney General's Office.

"These are more assholes than bastards, as if I didn't know any of them."

He poured himself another cup of tea and went to bathe whistling...

I was not sorry to see him lose strength.

Before leaving he ordered his tea and invited me to a cup. I drank it slowly, hoping that the strange euphoria it produced would come little by little.

Matilde had not returned to the kitchen. He put the tea on the table, watched us drink it, and said to Andrés:

"You will forgive me for interfering, General, but you are taking those herbs very often, and they often do harm."

"What damage or what nothing. If it weren't for them I would have died already. They are the only thing that takes away my fatigue."

"But in the long run they hurt. I see that you are deteriorating."

“Not because of the herbs, Matilde. Don’t tell me you still believe those things?”  
Andrés answered before taking the last drink: “Look how rosy the lady is and she drinks it too.”

They left me alone with him. I went to sit on the edge of the bed.

“Do you want more tea?” I said serving it to him.

He got up to take it...

I walked to the window. Now die, I murmured while he continued talking to you until he fell asleep...

A while later he died.

Hanna in “The Reader.” I now return to the short novel *The Reader*, by Schlink, in which the protagonist (Michael, a social E5) describes an erotic adventure from his adolescence in which an older woman becomes for him not only a sexual partner, but someone who really likes to listen to him share the things he reads. In this chapter, we will use this woman who never talks about herself, and whom we later meet again as an inspector on a tram, as an illustration of conservation E8.

Both characters reappear years later, after the war, when the boy, who has become a lawyer, has the opportunity to attend a trial in which Hanna is accused of atrocities during the exercise of her work as a jailer in a camp. German concentration.

The following quotes from the work will allow us to better understand the personality of this woman from the beginning of the novel, and this will also serve as a synthesis of the story that is being narrated:

A woman came to my aid, almost rudely. She took me by the arm and led me to a patio, through a dark corridor... Next to the patio door was a faucet. The woman opened it, washed my dirty hand, then cupped her hands, scooped up water, and splashed it on my face. I dried myself with a handkerchief.

“Take the other one!”

Next to the faucet were two buckets; she took one and filled it. I took and filled the other one and followed her down the hall. The woman took a step forward, and the water splashed onto the sidewalk, carrying the vomit over the curb. Then she took the bucket from my hands and dumped another wave of water onto the sidewalk.

In the following encounter, Michael describes Hanna as having “high forehead, high cheekbones, pale blue eyes, full lips and smooth contour, no arch on upper lip, strong chin. A broad, rough face of an adult woman.”

“Wait a minute,” she said as I got up to leave. “I also have to go out; I will accompany you.” I waited in the hall. She stayed in the kitchen to change. The door was ajar. She took off her apron and was left with only a light green slip... She realized I was looking at her. She stopped just as she was going to reach for the other sock, turned to the door, and met my eyes. I don't remember what was in her look: surprise, question, understanding, reproach.

She had a very robust and feminine body, more exuberant than the girls I liked and sometimes stared at. I was sure she would never have caught my attention if I had seen her in the pool.

Years later I understood that what had captivated my gaze... had not been her figure, but her postures and her movements... And that was not what had captivated my gaze. She didn't pose, she didn't flirt. I don't remember her doing it any other time either. I remember that her body, her postures, and her movements sometimes seemed clumsy to me. It's not that she was clumsy. It seemed more like she was withdrawing into her body, leaving it to herself and at her own leisurely pace, indifferent to the commands of her head, and forgetting the outside world. It was that same forgetfulness of the world that I saw in her postures and movements when she put on her stockings. But then she wasn't clumsy, but fluid, graceful, seductive; a seduction that did not emanate from the breasts, the legs, and the buttocks, but was an invitation to forget the world within the body.

She had taken off her jacket, loosened her tie, and undid the top button, and was sitting at the kitchen table, a glass of milk in hand. Seeing me, she laughed, first holding back, choking, and then out loud. Pointing her finger at me, she slapped her other hand on the table.

“But boy, have you seen what you look like?”

Then I saw my face in the mirror above the sink and started laughing too.

“You can't show up at home like that. You're going to take a bath and meanwhile I'll shake your clothes.”

She walked over to the tub and turned on the tap. The water began to fall, steaming in the bathtub.

“Be careful when you undress, I don't want my kitchen to fill with charcoal.”

After hesitating for a moment, I took off my sweater and shirt. And I hesitated again. The water level was rising rapidly, and the tub was almost full.

“Are you going to bathe with your pants and shoes on? I'm not looking, kid.”

But when I turned off the faucet and took off my underpants, she just stared at me, completely unfazed.

I got up and got out of the tub with my back to her. Behind me, she wrapped the towel around me from head to toe, rubbing me dry. Then she dropped the towel to the floor. I didn't dare move. She got so close to me that I felt her breasts on my back and her belly on my buttocks. She was also naked. She put her arms around me and put one hand on my chest and the other on my stiff penis.

“You've come for this, haven't you?”

I liked that she lathered me and lathered herself, and she taught me to do it shamelessly, naturally, with possessive thoroughness. Also when we made love, she took possession of me quite naturally. Her mouth sought out mine, her tongue played with mine, telling me where and how she wanted me to touch her, and when she rode me to orgasm, I was only there to pleasure her, not share it. It's not that she wasn't cute and didn't give me pleasure, either. But she did it for fun, to play. Until I learned to take possession of it too.

"Out," she said, pulling back the duvet. "Get out of my bed. And don't come back until you start studying. Are you saying that going to school is for idiots? For morons? But what do you know? Do you know what it's like to spend the day selling tram tickets?"

"I start the day shift tomorrow. I leave at half past five. If you want, you can come home. But only if you start studying."

We were standing facing each other, naked, but she seemed even tougher than if she were wearing a uniform... I dressed as quickly as I could, waiting for her to say something. But she didn't say anything. When I finished dressing, she was still standing there, naked, and when I hugged her goodbye, she didn't flinch.

From her job as a reviewer, which she had been doing for a few years now, she liked the uniform, and the fact that the landscape was changing all the time and the ground moved under her feet. But she didn't like the rest. She had no family. Was thirty-six years old. She told me all of this as if it weren't her life, but that of another person whom she didn't know very well and didn't care much about either. Many times, when I asked her for more details, she said she couldn't remember, and she didn't understand why I was interested in what happened to her parents, if she had any siblings, how she had lived in Berlin, and what she had done in the army.

"You ask a lot, boy."

The same happened with the future.

"Read it to me!"

"Read it yourself, I'll bring it to you."

"You have a very pretty voice, kid. I feel more like listening to you than reading by myself."

"Ugh... I don't know."

But the next day, when I went to kiss her, she withdrew her face.

"First you have to read me something."

She was serious.

Hanna was listening very carefully. Her laugh, her contemptuous snorts, and her indignant or enthusiastic exclamations left no doubt that she was following the plot with interest and that she considered both Emilia and Luise to be silly little girls. The impatience with which she sometimes asked me to continue reading arose from her hope that they would stop fooling around.

"How can you be so stupid!"

"Playing hooky again?"

"I'm on vacation. Hey, what happened this morning?"

She opened the door and I followed her into the kitchen.

"How, what happened this morning?"

“Why did you act like you didn't know me? I just wanted to...”

“So I've acted as if I didn't know you?”

She turned around and looked at me coldly in the face.

“You were the one who played the clueless. How can you think of getting on the second carriage, if you have clearly seen that I was in the first...”

“And why do you think I take the Schwetzingen tram at four-thirty in the morning on the first day of vacation? If you don't realize it was to surprise you, you're blind. I thought you'd like it. I got on the second car because...”

“Poor. Get up at half past four, and go on vacation.”

I had never seen her so ironic. She shook her head.

“And I don't know why you wanted to go to Schwetzingen. I don't know why you act like you don't know me. It's your problem, not mine. And now you can go, if you'd be so kind?”

“Look, leave me alone. I've already told you that what you do is your problem, not mine.”

She had positioned herself so that the kitchen table was between the two of us, and her gaze, her voice, and her gestures treated me like an intruder, they were throwing me out of there.

“Seems? So it seems that you have offended me? You couldn't offend me even if you wanted to. And now, will you do me the favor of leaving? I come from work and I would like to take a bath and rest a bit.”

She looked at me imperatively. When I didn't get up, she shrugged, turned around, turned on the tub, and undressed.

In the end, I was even happy when she admitted that what happened in the morning had hurt her, that is, that it hadn't been as indifferent and insignificant to her as she had pretended.

“You forgive me?”

I nodded.

“You love me?”

I nodded again.

“The tub is still full. Come, I'll bathe you.”

Later I wondered if she had left the water in the tub because she knew I would come back. If she had undressed because she knew I couldn't get her image out of my head and that would make me come back. If only she had wanted to win in a little power play. When we finished making love, lying on the bed, I explained why I had boarded the second carriage instead of the first. And she took it as a joke.

When she became hard and cold, I begged her to put on a brave face again, to forgive me, to love me. Sometimes I got the feeling that she herself was mortified by her coldness and harshness. As if she missed the warmth of my apologies, protests, and pleas. Sometimes I got the feeling that she just wanted to impose herself and that's it.

The only discussion we had was in Amorbach. I woke up early, dressed quietly, and crept out of the room. I was planning to bring Hanna breakfast up, and I also wanted to see if I could find a florist open to buy her a rose. I left her a note on the nightstand. “Good morning! I'm going to get breakfast, I'll be right back,” or something like that. When I came back, she was standing in the middle of the room, half dressed, shaking with rage, her face white as paper. “How can you think of leaving like that, without saying anything!”

I put the breakfast tray and the rose on the bed and tried to hug Hanna.

“Hanna...”



“Do not touch me!”

In her hand was the thin leather belt that held up her dress. She took a step back and smashed me in the face with it. My lip burst and I tasted blood. It didn't hurt. I was terrified. She raised her hand again.

But she didn't hit me again. She dropped her hand and belt and began to cry. Her face was completely deformed. Eyes and mouth wide open, eyelids swollen from the first tears, red spots on cheeks and neck. Guttural croaks issued from her mouth, similar to the deaf cry she emitted when we made love. She was standing there, looking at me through her tears.

Hanna took two steps toward me, threw herself on my chest, punched me with her fists, grabbed me with all her might. So I was able to contain her. Her shoulders would contract, she would butt my head against the chest. Then she took a deep breath and snuggled into my arms.

“We had breakfast?” she said, pulling away from me.

“My goodness, how have you been, little boy!”

She grabbed a damp towel and wiped my mouth and chin.

“And the shirt, full of blood.”

She took off my shirt and then my pants, and then she undressed and we made love.

“Can you explain to me what happened? Why have you been so angry?”

We lay together, so satisfied and content that I thought that then everything would be clear.

“Can you explain to me, can you explain to me...”

“You always ask stupid questions. Is it nice to leave without saying anything?”

She was amused by the hero's adventures in Italy, with their disguises, confusions, entanglements, and persecutions. At the same time, it seemed wrong to me that she was a bum, that she did not dedicate herself to anything useful, that she did not know how to do anything and did not want to learn anything. She oscillated between those two feelings, and sometimes, hours after reading, she would still come up with questions like: “And what's wrong with the customs job?”

That discussion made our relationship more intimate. Now I had seen her cry; a Hanna who could cry was closer to me than a Hanna who was just strong. She began to show a more affable facet, which I was unaware of. She did not stop watching and gently caressing my burst lip until it was completely healed.

We started to make love differently. For a long time I had let myself be carried away by her, by her way of taking possession of me. Then I had also learned to take possession of it. From then on, we began to love each other in a way that went beyond simple possession.

I never knew what Hanna did when she wasn't working or with me. I asked her more than once, but she never answered me. We did not have a common world; she limited herself to granting me the space in her life that suited her.

“You ask a lot, kid.” Or she'd say, “You're always the same, Hanna this, Hanna that. You're going to waste my name.” Or she would recite to me: “Well, look, I have to sweep, I have to scrub, I have to wash, I have to iron, I have to buy, I have to make breakfast, lunch and dinner, and drink a glass of milk and go to the bed.”

Sometimes when I'd come in full of desire, Hanna would tease me: "What do you want? Your whole life in an hour?"

Hanna had been in a rather strange, variable, and despotic mood for days; it was obvious that she was under pressure, that something was terribly torturing her and making her more sensitive and susceptible than usual. She looked concentrated, self-absorbed, as if fighting so that the pressure wouldn't make her jump into the air. I asked her what was troubling her, but she rudely refused me.

The set of quotes I've reproduced so far allow us to understand the evolution of a relationship and also give us a rough idea of Hanna's personality, but only the sequel to the book shows us the extent to which she is capable of exceptional brutality, and only towards the end do we understand how much of his behavior has been determined by the shameful concealment of simple ignorance.

The boy who met her at the beginning of the novel is already a lawyer, and now Hanna is being charged for her inhuman cruelty as a guard in a concentration camp:

Hanna disagreed, and her lawyer had to convince her, under the judge's irritated gaze, to agree. She did not want to.

Nor did she admit having acknowledged, in a previous statement before the judge, that she had the key to the church. What's more, she was saying now: nobody had it; there was not even a "key to the church," but several, one for each door, and they were stuck in the locks. But that wasn't what the record of her statement before the judge, which she had read and signed, said, and Hanna made things even worse by asking why they wanted to blame her that wasn't hers.

She did not raise her voice, nor did she ask impertinently, but she did ask stubbornly; and it seemed to me that also with a confusion and a bewilderment that was palpable in her face and in her voice. She just wanted to complain that they were blaming her for something she wasn't guilty of, and she certainly didn't mean to accuse the judge of prevarication, but he understood it that way and reacted harshly.

Hanna wanted to set the record straight. When she believed she was being treated unfairly, she contradicted the court; instead, she admitted the accusations she considered justified. She stubbornly contradicted and openly admitted.

Hanna did admit to doing it, not by herself, but to the same degree as everyone else, and so willingly that the judge saw fit to go into detail about it...

"Didn't they know that the prisoners were being sent to their deaths?"

"Yes, we knew that, but every month they sent us new prisoners, and we had to make room."

"So, to make room, you said: 'You, you, and you go back to Auschwitz to be killed?'"

Hanna didn't understand what the judge meant by that question.

"Well, I... I mean... Let's see, what would you have done in my place?"

Hanna was seriously asking. She couldn't think of what else she should or could have done, and she wanted the judge, who seemed to know everything, to tell her what she would have done.

She wanted to know what she should have done in her situation, not to be told that there are things that should not be done.

But she was deep in thought.

“So I should... shouldn't... shouldn't have enlisted when I was at Siemens?”

The question was not directed at the judge. She was talking to herself, asking herself hesitantly, because she hadn't asked herself the question yet, and she doubted that it was the right question, and what the answer might be.

The same stubbornness that irritated the judge when Hanna contradicted him, irritated the other defendants when she agreed with him, for it was disastrous for their cause. But also for Hanna's.

Yes, she had favourites, always one of the younger ones, some weak and delicate boy. She put them under her protection and saw to it that they didn't have to work, put them up in more comfortable places and fed and pampered them, and at night she took them to her room. She told them not to tell what they did with her at night, and we all thought that... We were convinced that she had fun with them and then, when she got tired, she put them in the next shipment. But it wasn't like that; one day, one of the boys spoke, and we found out that she only made them read books to her, night after night.

Then Hanna turned and looked at me. Her gaze located me immediately, and I realized that she had known all along that I was there. She just looked at me. Her face asked for nothing, claimed nothing, affirmed, and promised nothing. It showed, that was all. I realized how tense and exhausted she was.

Hanna couldn't read or write.

That's why she wanted them to read aloud to her. That's why, during our bike ride, she had left all her writing and reading tasks to me, and that's why that morning at the hotel, when she found my note, she despaired, realizing that I hoped she'd read it and fearing being in evidence. That was why she had refused to be promoted in the streetcar company; Her weak point, which she could easily hide in the conductor position, would have come to light when she started training for the driver's position. That's why she turned down a promotion at Siemens and became a concentration camp warden. That is why she confessed to having written the report, so as not to be confronted with the graphologist. Was it also why she had spoken too much at the trial? Because she hadn't been able to read her daughter's book or the text of the accusation, and therefore she was unaware of the possibilities she had to defend herself and hadn't been able to properly prepare herself? Could this be why she sent her protégés to Auschwitz? To shut their mouths in case they found out her weak point? Was that why she chose the weakest? But was it possible that shame also explained Hanna's behavior during the trial and in the concentration camp? Would you rather be accused of a crime than pass for illiterate? Committing a crime for fear of passing for illiterate?... If Hanna's motive was the fear of being exposed, why did she prefer a harmless exposure, that of her illiteracy, to a much worse one, that of her crimes? Or perhaps she thought she could somehow get ahead without ever being exposed? Was she just stupid? And was she really so vain and evil as to become a criminal so as not to make a fool of herself?

And during the trial she was not hesitating between passing for illiterate or criminal. She did not calculate, she did not have a tactic. She simply took it for granted that they were going to punish her, and she did not want, on top of that, to be exposed. She did not watch over her interests: she fought for her truth, for her justice. And since she always had to hide a bit, and could never be completely frank, completely herself, that truth and that justice were lamentable, but they were hers, and the fight for them was her fight.

She must have been completely exhausted. She wasn't just fighting in court. She always fought, and had always fought, not to show others what she was capable of, but to hide from them what she was not capable of. A life whose advances were brisk retreats and whose victories were covert defeats.

Hanna was still fighting. She admitted what was true and denied what was false. She denied it with an increasingly desperate obstinacy. She was not shouting, but the intensity with which she spoke was shocking to the court.

She finally gave up. She only spoke when asked, and answered with few words or gave incomplete information; sometimes she seemed distracted. Now she sat when she spoke: it was as if she wanted to show that she had given up.

Yes, she was fighting for that, but she wasn't willing to pay the price of being exposed as illiterate. And it wouldn't seem right to her either that she betrayed, in exchange for a few years in jail, the image she had wanted to give of herself. That barter could only be done by her, but she didn't, so it was clear that she didn't want to do it. For her, her image was worth those years in jail.

But she looked ahead without seeing anything. An arrogant, offended, lost, and infinitely tired look. A look that did not want to see anything or anyone.

Hanna is sentenced to life in prison, and Michael does nothing with his realization that this might not have happened if her illiteracy had been known. Only, after a while, she starts sending him recorded tapes with new readings. She ends up learning to write, and she sends him letters with some comments about what she is reading or about her life; the first one is written with a blue pen that leaves smudges. Hanna had wielded it with a lot of energy; the writing is marked on the back of the sheet... At first glance, it might seem that it was a child's handwriting. But everything that the children's lyrics are clumsy and awkward, this one was violent. Hanna's hand wasn't trying to escape anywhere, and the only imperative was to keep going.

Michael never went to see her, however, until he is contacted by the prison warden, informing him that Hanna will be released shortly and that he should find her a place to live and a job. And so Michael does, and tells Hanna personally when he finally goes to see her. But his withdrawn, commitment-afraid nature disappoints Hanna almost immediately, so her initial joy at seeing him fades.

I saw the emotion on her face, I saw her glow with joy when she recognized me, I saw her eyes search my whole face. And when I got closer I saw them searching, asking, and immediately becoming insecure and sad, until the glow went out.

"I have always had the feeling that nobody understood me, that nobody knew who I was and what had led me to the situation I was in. And, you know what? When no one understands you, no one can hold you accountable either. But the dead do. They do understand you. They don't have to be there, but if they were, they understand you even better. Here in jail they were with me constantly. They came every night, even if I didn't always expect them. Before the trial I could still scare them away when they wanted to come."  
I hugged her, but it was like hugging something inanimate.

She spent many years living here as in a convent. As if she had come on her own foot to withdraw from the world, as if she had voluntarily submitted to the rules that apply in this house; the work she was engaged in, which was quite monotonous, she took it as if it were a kind of meditation exercise. With the other women she was friendly but distant, and they had a lot of respect for her. What's more, she had authority, they asked her for advice when there were problems, and when there was a dispute, she intervened and they all said amen. Until a few years ago she began to be abandoned. She had always taken care of her appearance, she was strong but slender, and extremely clean, very meticulous. But from then on she began to eat too much and wash too little; after a while she got fat and began to smell bad. And she didn't look sad or dissatisfied.

When the day finally came when Hanna was released and Michael came looking for her, she had just ended her own life: feeling that for her ex-lover she was just an obligatory burden, she preferred to hang herself.

How to understand it? We've already been told that Hanna is a person who knows how to get by on her own, and we also know that the E8 character is very autonomous; but also a conservation E8 is one who has no qualms about imposing his wishes on others. We are struck by Hanna's suicide as an expression that she refuses to feel a burden to anyone, and this in turn is presented to us as a sign that she has left behind the lust of her character through time and loneliness.

In the cinema we can find a good portrait of Henry VIII in "A Man for All Seasons" (Fred Zinnemann, 1966), and also Komarovsky in "Doctor Zhivago" (David Lean, 1965), as well as several films about Stalin and some about Diego Rivera.

In the film "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," based on the Tennessee Williams drama, there is not only a conservation E8 undergoing a transformation, but also a magnificent illustration of sexual E2 (in the character of Maggie, played by Elisabeth Taylor), while the role of Brick, her alcoholic husband, is conceived as a counterphobic E6, but not represented by someone of this character (because Paul Newman looks more like an E2). In this review, I will highlight what concerns the character they call Big Daddy, who is the father of Brick.

The film begins with Brick, who, very drunk, sets up obstacles in an empty stadium at night while imagining a large audience applauding him. He jumps over them and falls, breaking an ankle. During the rest of the film, we will see him lying down or with a crutch, and in the next scene he responds very aggressively to his wife for any collaboration proposal on this day when his father is coming home to celebrate his birthday.

Big Daddy, who is a man of great fortune, is ill, and the seriousness of his illness has not been communicated to him, which is known only to the doctor and Brick's older brother, who has come with his wife and children hoping to receive good health, part of the inheritance. Already at the airport, his family is waiting for him with the children organized in a small band that sings to their grandfather, and for a good part of the film they behave in a noisy way that supposedly celebrates their grandfather with joy and love, and that he can barely stand and is perceived as mendacious. This is the word that he uses over and over again in reference to the shameless way in which they stand out and compete with Brick, his favorite son, and to his way of seeing with reason, since the latter has succumbed to alcoholism and has not fathered a son, descendant.

Later, Big Daddy insists on seeing his son Brick, who has not only refused to go to the airport, but also hasn't come down to the living room of the house where the others gather. The doctor has already told him privately that his father has terminal cancer, and Brick tries to leave, but Maggie manages to stop him. Before the father arrives, the discussion between them deals with Skipper, Brick's great friend, whom he admired and who has taken his own life. Although we don't yet know what has happened, it is clear that Brick's anger towards Maggie dates from his friend's suicide, although for now Brick refuses to talk about it and even threatens her with his crutch for her insistence, although in his wish hitting her falls to the ground.

When Big Daddy enters his room, he receives treatment from his son similar to the one he has been giving his wife: in an aggressive and avoidant manner, Brick refuses to answer his questions, taking refuge in drink. The conversation is interrupted at some point by the arrival of the brother-in-law with his family and with Big Mamma, Big Daddy's wife, but he can't stand them for a long time and expels them with a harshness comparable to that of his son towards his own wife. Big Mamma comes out of the room telling Big Daddy that she has always loved him and that he has never believed in her love, even though she has come to love even his hatred and harshness.

The conversation between Big Daddy and his son Brick continues, and the father, who does not lack authority or strength, does not let him escape. Repeatedly, he asks why he drinks, and soon comes to the subject of Skipper's friend. "What happened to Skipper?" he asks, and Brick says, "Ask her." Maggie is then called into the room, and she tells the story of what happened: Skipper was angry and drunk for having done poorly at a football game, and when Maggie tried to calm him down (while Brick was in the hospital), he kissed her, and she thought she would do what was necessary to get her husband back.

Skipper didn't like her because he saw her as an obstacle in his relationship with Brick, who regarded her as a hero; and Maggie says that it's true that she wanted to get rid of Skipper, because she also considered him an obstacle, but nothing had happened between them after that kiss, since that would also have jeopardized her relationship with Brick. Maggie left feeling that even if nothing had happened between her and Skipper, it had been enough to lose her husband. Father and son listen carefully, and we find out that Skipper had called Brick at the hospital very afraid that he had let him down with his bad game in the game, and told him that he had slept with his wife. Brick had cut the line, and when the phone rang again he didn't want to pick it up, and that's when Skipper committed suicide.

Brick then admits that the disgust he feels is towards himself, and that is what he tries to drown with alcohol. But in the heat of the discussion, Brick reveals the truth about his father's health, which he does not know; and then the father wants to collect himself to digest this news, and he goes to the basement. The doctor also goes there, who warns him that the pain will be intense, and leaves him morphine to inject himself when he considers it necessary.

Now two things happen simultaneously: on the one hand, Big Mamma and her eldest son's family are in the living room, and he introduces her to the legal document he has drawn up regarding the inheritance, ensuring his priority on the grounds that he has complied with everything that the father has asked of him. On the other hand, Brick is found again with his father in the basement, which is a place filled with countless valuables that he has bought all over the world in response to his wife's wishes, especially during their honeymoon.

He begins this new encounter with Big Daddy by confronting his son again, because he wants to have a real conversation with him. Brick tells him once again that he is not interested in his inheritance, but now it is he who will bring Big Daddy to a greater truth about himself, angrily telling him that he has only known how to give things, but not love, and that he has needed a father, that he wanted it and not a boss who gave him things. He begins to bang against all those valuable objects, and his father does not stop him; He only explains that at the beginning of his life he had nothing, and that only through his efforts has he managed to build his empire. But Brick argues that he doesn't know the people who work for him in that empire, that he doesn't know their names, hasn't seen their faces, or knows anything about their lives. Big Daddy then tells him that his father had been a beggar and that he only left him an empty suitcase; and that he had died drunk, though laughing. But then Brick manages to make him see that, although he did not leave him wealth, his father had left him something more important: his happiness, which was his feeling that he had it with him. The father's expression lets us know that he has understood, and he admits that he did love his father.

Now, when Brick asks him: "What did he leave you?" Big Daddy answers: "Memories," and Brick corrects him: "No. Love."

Big Daddy is already in a lot of pain, but he refuses to use the morphine, preferring to bear the pain with lucidity. He tells Brick that they can help each other now, and that they can help each other up the ladder to begin with. They then join the others in the living room. The eldest son's legal papers fall to the floor in the middle of the argument between them, and Big Daddy picks up some to leaf through; the first thing he says is that there is a terrible smell of mendacity. "Isn't that right, Brick? Aren't you sorry?" and Brick agrees.

Maggie then tells Big Daddy that it's time for him to get his own gift, and announces that she's pregnant. Big Daddy is happy to hear it, and Brick confirms his lie, which we feel is his resentment behind him. Big Daddy says that he will meet with the lawyer the next morning to dispose of his estate, and before he leaves he explains that he will use the time he has left to meet the people who work on his property. On his way to it, he says to his wife: "Would you like to come with me?" and she naturally accepts, delighted and surprised.

The film ends in Brick and Maggie's bedroom, where she thanks him for his support and he tells her that it won't be a lie anymore (while locking the door and kissing her for the first time in the film).

Regarding the personality of Big Daddy, we can say that he is a man who has managed to survive and enrich himself thanks to his strength, his ability to command and his emotional independence, "made from nothing with no other help than God," but with a harshness that has made him implicitly cruel. As Brick tells him, he has possessed people and things without loving them. His transformation, however, has consisted of an ability to understand his limitations, accept the truths that the son he trusts tells him and, above all, in the recovery of love.