



University of Ljubljana  
FACULTY OF ARTS

# ACTA

# NEOPHILOLOGICA

---

50. 1-2 (2017)

**ACTA NEOPHILOLOGICA**  
ISSN 0567-784X

**Editor-in-Chief / Glavni in odgovorni urednik:**  
Igor Maver

**Editorial Board / Uredniški odbor:**  
Anton Janko, Jerneja Petrič, Miha Pintarič, Frančiška Trobevšek-Drobnak

**Advisory Committee / Svet revije:**  
Henry R. Cooper, Jr. (Bloomington, Ind.), Renzo Crivelli (Trieste), Maria Renata Dolce (Lecce), Kajetan Gantar (Ljubljana), Meta Grosman (Ljubljana), Angelika Hribar (Ljubljana), Gail Jones (Sydney), Tom Ložar (Montreal), Mira Miladinović-Zalaznik (Ljubljana), Genaro M. Padilla (Berkeley), Tom M. S. Priestley (Edmonton, Alb.), Margarete Rubik (Wien), Naomi Segal (London), Neva Šlibar (Ljubljana), Wolfgang Zach (Innsbruck).

**Published by / Založila:**  
Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani / Ljubljana University Press,  
Faculty of Arts

**Issued by / Izdal:**  
Department of English / Oddelek za anglistiko in amerikanistiko

**For the publisher / Za založbo:**  
Roman Kuhar, dekan Filozofske fakultete / Dean of the Faculty of Arts

**Design and layout / Oblikovanje in prelom:**  
Jure Preglau

**Printed by / Tisk:**  
Birografika Bori d.o.o.

**Number of copies printed / Naklada:**  
200

**Price / Cena:**  
15,00 EUR

**Indexed in:** SCOPUS, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Emerging Sources Citation Index, Internationale Bibliographie der Zeitschriftenliteratur, MLA International Bibliography, ERIH PLUS

**This publication was supported by / Publikacija je izšla s podporo:**  
Slovenian Research Agency / Javna agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost RS

**Address / Naslov uredništva:**  
Filozofska fakulteta Univerze v Ljubljani (Department of English)  
Aškercjeva 2, SI- 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
Phone / Tel.: + 386 1 241 1334  
E-mail: igor.maver@guest.arnes.si



<http://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/ActaNeophilologica/>

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. / To delo je ponujeno pod licenco Creative Commons Priznanje avtorstva-Deljenje pod enakimi pogoji 4.0 Mednarodna licenca

# Contents

<b>Margaret Atwood's Postcolonial and Postmodern Feminist Novels with Psychological and Mythic Influences: The Archetypal Analysis of the Novel <i>Surfacing</i></b> . . . . .	<b>5</b>
<i>Andrejka Obidič</i>	
<b>Fortified Fiction: Writers and Drink</b> . . . . .	<b>25</b>
<i>Wojciech Klepuszewski</i>	
<b>The Black Madonna in the Italian American Artistic Imagination</b> . . . . .	<b>37</b>
<i>Elisabetta Marino</i>	
<b>An Australian Poet in Italy: A.D. Hope's Byronic View of Latter-day Italy</b> . . . . .	<b>57</b>
<i>Igor Maver</i>	
<b>Understanding South African Xenophobia Through the Prism of J. M. Coetzee's <i>Summertime 'Scenes from a Provincial Life'</i></b> . . . . .	<b>69</b>
<i>Polona Zajec</i>	
<b>The Iconic American Western in Film and Literature.</b> . . . . .	<b>83</b>
<i>Ali Shehzad Zaidi</i>	
<b>Children Without Childhood: The Emotionality of Orphaned Children and Images of Their Rescuers in Selected Works of English and Canadian Literature</b> . . . . .	<b>95</b>
<i>Irena Avsenik Nabergoj</i>	
<b>Names in Literary Translation: A Case Study of English Versions of the Slovenian Tale <i>Martin Krpan</i></b> . . . . .	<b>137</b>
<i>Darja Mazi – Leskovar</i>	
<b>Übersetzung oder Adaption: Fallbeispiel Jakob Alešovec (1842–1901)</b> . . . . .	<b>153</b>
<i>Tanja Žigon</i>	
<b>Die Darstellbarkeit des Bösen: Zu George Taboris Holocaust-Literatur</b> . . . . .	<b>173</b>
<i>Špela Virant</i>	
<b>Beatrix, un roman courtois au sein du cycle de la croisade.</b> . . . . .	<b>189</b>
<i>Tadeja Dermastja</i>	



# Margaret Atwood's Postcolonial and Postmodern Feminist Novels with Psychological and Mythic Influences: The Archetypal Analysis of the Novel *Surfacing*

Andrejka Obidič

## Abstract

The paper analyzes Margaret Atwood's postcolonial and postmodern feminist novels from the psychological perspective of Carl Gustav Jung's theory of archetypes and from the perspective of Robert Graves's mythological figures of the triple goddess presented in his work *The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth* (1997). In this regard, the paper focuses on the mythic and psychological roles embodied and played by Atwood's victimized female protagonists who actively seek their identity and professional self-realization on their path towards personal evolution in the North American patriarchal society of the twentieth century. Thus, they are no longer passive as female characters of the nineteenth-century colonial novels which are centered on the male hero and his colonial adventures. In her postcolonial and postmodern feminist novels, Atwood further introduces elements of folk tales, fairy tales, legends, myths and revives different literary genres, such as a detective story, a crime and historical novel, a gothic romance, a comedy, science fiction, etc. Moreover, she often abuses the conventions of the existing genre and mixes several genres in the same narrative. For instance, her narrative *The Penelopiad* (2005) is a genre-hybrid novella in which she parodies the Grecian myth of the adventurer Odysseus and his faithful wife Penelope by subverting Homer's serious epic poem into a witty satire. In addition, the last part of the paper analyzes the author's cult novel *Surfacing* (1972 (1984)) according to Joseph Campbell's and Northrop Frye's archetypal/myth criticism and it demonstrates that Atwood revises the biblical myth of the hero's

quest and the idealized world of medieval grail romances from the ironic prospective of the twentieth century, as it is typical of postmodernism.

**Key words:** Margaret Atwood, Canada, Edward Said's postcolonial theory, postcolonialism, Linda Hutcheon, postmodernism, feminism, Carl Gustav Jung's psychology, mythic/archetypal criticism, Northrop Frye, Joseph Campbell, Robert Graves

## 1 MARGARET ATWOOD AS A POSTCOLONIAL AND POSTMODERN FEMINIST AUTHOR

### 1.1 Introduction: 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman' and Major Influences on Margaret Atwood's Work

Margaret Atwood is one of Canada's most prominent and prolific contemporary novelists who have achieved international acclaim. She is also a celebrated Canadian poet, short story writer, national critic of cultural politics, cartoonist, watercolorist and environmental activist, who is greatly concerned with human rights. Owing to her impressively successful literary oeuvre and her critically praised, best-selling novels, she has received numerous prestigious literary awards. As a consequence, now in her seventies, she enjoys the privilege of being canonized not only in Canada, where she is a cultural icon and media celebrity<sup>1</sup> because of her keen public appearances on television, but also in the United States, where she is an American author whose creative masterpieces are taught at school on a regular basis or, sometimes, banned from it because of their nightmarish contents.

Margaret Atwood, daughter of an entomologist and professor of Zoology at the University of Toronto, was born in Ottawa in 1939 and spent an important part of her childhood in the wilderness of northern Ontario and Quebec, where her scientist father conducted research. As a child she was initially home-schooled by her mother, a nutritionist by profession. Greatly encouraged by her academically driven parents, she read books of different literary genres profusely from an early age and loved especially comic books, folk tales, myths, Andersen's and Grimm's fairy tales, which all significantly inspired her creative writing later on. In 1946, her family moved to Toronto, where she finally attended primary and secondary school regularly (full-time). She received a Bachelor of Arts in English (honors) and minors in philosophy and French from Victoria College,

---

1 According to York (qtd. in Howells, 2006: 37), Atwood has become a 'Thing'. On the one hand, she is celebrated and admired as a literary and media superstar, on the other hand, she is the target of nasty comments and hostile attacks of many journalists who trash her for everything she does in the public eye.

University of Toronto, where she became acquainted with Robert Graves's *The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myths* (1997)<sup>2</sup> and Jungian analytical psychology together with his archetypal theory of the collective unconscious. At the university, she also met the literary critic and professor Northrop Frye whose lectures about myth/archetypal criticism deeply influenced her as a student and writer. After winning a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, she pursued her graduate studies at Radcliffe College, Harvard University, where she received a master's degree in Victorian literature. At Harvard, she also started working on a doctoral thesis, however, owing to her busy schedule as a writer and editor at the publishing House of Anansi Press in the early 1970s, she didn't manage to complete the dissertation on 'The English Metaphysical Romance' of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Nevertheless, she reused the doctoral research material in her novels. She also taught creative writing and literature at several universities across Canada and the United States before she could make her living from professional writing.

## 1.2 Margaret Atwood as a Postcolonial Critic of Cultural Politics and Postcolonial Novelist

Atwood became of age as a writer in the second half of the twentieth century when Canada, as a post-war independent state<sup>3</sup>, was still struggling with the missing national identity owing to its colonial (i.e. cultural) subordination to the former British empire. In addition, its colonially conditioned mentality was gradually evolving from cultural into economic and political subservience to the fast-expanding capitalist market of the American superpower. Concerned with this national problem, Atwood greatly contributed to the theorizing of Canadian identity in the 1970s by writing a controversial literary and critical study *Survival*, published by the House of Anansi Press in 1972, in which she presented the typically recurring themes of Canadian literature because she wanted to prove to the skeptical Canadian readership that Canadian literature had its own literary tradition<sup>4</sup> and, according to her, it represented the expression of Canadian identity.

---

2 See also Robert Graves's *Greek Myths*.

3 Canada came into being as a Confederation in 1867, but it finally succeeded in becoming totally independent from the United Kingdom only in 1982 by way of the Canada Act.

4 When Atwood attended school in her youth and, later, when she studied English and literature at the university, Canadian literature was not on the syllabus. In the fifties, a lot of Canadian writers had to go abroad if they wanted to publish their books and be successful as authors because the book market simply did not exist or was too small in Canada where Canadian readers preferred to read American and British imported literature and magazines. From this perspective, they were not interested in buying and reading Canadian literary books since they were not conscious about

In her study, she also pointed out that Canada, as a nation, was still a colonial (i.e. cultural) victim of the former British master (i.e. victimizer) and was on its way to becoming the future victim of the neocolonial hegemony of the United States. In this regard, her political discourse, based on the victim/victimizer relationship, corresponded to the concept of dichotomy introduced by Edward Said's postcolonial theory (1978) since it confirmed Said's binary opposition between the superior, positive, colonizer and the (culturally, economically and political-ly) inferior and negatively represented colonial Other. In her decolonizing counter-discourse, Atwood further stated that Canada, as the colonial (i. e. exploited) Other, should reject the victim position<sup>5</sup> and the colonially oppressive British and American masters and become a creative non-victim. She also suggested that Canadian authors should no longer write books in which Canadian characters were represented just as passive colonial victims and failures, which was typical of post-colonial authors who imitated the negative discourse patterns of British colonial novels in the early stage of decolonization according to Homi Bhabha's concept of mimicry (1996).

From this perspective, Atwood totally subverts the British colonial canon of the nineteenth century in her postcolonial and postmodern feminist novels of the twentieth and twenty-first century since she, in terms of the postcolonial feminist theoretician and critic Gayatri Spivak (1988), allows her female (subaltern) characters to speak with an authoritative voice, and be active protagonists of her narratives. This was impossible in colonial literature of the nineteenth century because it was conventionally centered on, positively represented, male heroes,

---

themselves as Canadians. More specifically, they were not concerned with their national identity and some of them even believed that Canadian literature and its literary tradition didn't exist at all. However, Atwood, who wanted to become a poet and a writer, discovered that this wasn't the case in the library of Victoria College where she had access to Canadian poetry and its tradition and she finally learned about Canadian literature and its tradition at the library of Harvard University. This convinced her that Canada had its own distinctly shaped culture and national identity that was expressed in their literary tradition. By writing a guide about recurrent themes of Canadian literature in her critical study *Survival* (1972), which she helped to publish together with the House of Anansi Press, she significantly contributed to promote Canadian literature in her home country and abroad. In the second half of the twentieth century, the Canadian Council also began to financially support the Canadian book market and the publishers (the House of Anansi Press and Coach House) who focused on publishing Canadian authors and their – typically Canadian – regional themes. This gradually contributed to the development and booming of Canadian national literature, which also helped to forge the Canadian national identity.

- 5 In her study, Atwood distinguishes four 'basic' victim positions which gradually enable the oppressed victim to overcome the situation of crisis and evolve into a free individual: in the first phase, the victim is in denial, in the second phase, he/she acknowledges the fact of being a victim, but attributes this position to a higher power, such as God, Nature etc.. In the third phase, the person refuses it as unavoidable – and in the fourth phase, he/she no longer needs to participate in the Victim/Victimizer game because he/she has become a creative non-victim.



the European adventurous colonizers – although the male protagonist prevails even in Chinua Achebe's postcolonial patriarchal novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958 (2009)), written in the twentieth century. In this type of literature, especially in the colonial literary canon of the nineteenth century, female characters usually appeared in passive secondary roles of no importance. Since they were oppressed by the European colonial victimizer and the patriarchal system of their country, they were colonized two times as victims and, therefore, endured double colonization from the feminist point of view.

In Atwood's novels, however, her female characters no longer appear in such secondary roles, but are usually active heroines who, metaphorically speaking, struggle to survive the double colonization since they are still victimized by the North American postcolonial patriarchal society of the twentieth century and oppressed by their domineering partner, with whom they struggle for power in the battle between the sexes. In some cases, they are also stifled by relatives and members of the Canadian family, which is usually a trap from which the protagonists of Canadian literature cannot escape according to Atwood's critical study *Survival*.

Thus, her female protagonists are still victims, but – on their profoundly personal (i.e. psychological) journey of self-discovery – they seek their female identity or even the Canadian cultural and national identity like the unnamed heroine in the nationalistically oriented, cult, novel *Surfacing* (1972 (1984)). In their struggle, they become empowered as human beings and find a unique way to stay alive in harsh patriarchal and political environments. In this regard, some of the protagonists just survive like the unnamed handmaid in *The Handmaid's Tale* (1986) and Rennie in the Caribbean jail in *Bodily Harm* (1984), whereas others grow psychologically and evolve into an artist like – the unnamed illustrator in *Surfacing*, Joan, the writer and poet, in *Lady Oracle* (1987) and Elaine, the painter, in *Cat's Eye* (1989). More specifically, the last three heroines appear in Atwood's novels of female development in which the protagonist reaches self-realization in her artistic profession and conquers the status of a creative non-victim, as Atwood points out in her study *Survival*.

## 2 MARGARET ATWOOD AS A WRITER OF POSTMODERN PSYCHOLOGICAL NOVELS

The Canadian literary critic Linda Hutcheon, the author of *The Canadian Postmodern* (1990) and *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (2000)<sup>6</sup>, classifies Atwood as a postmodern novelist who is very versatile in

6 Linda Hutcheon is also the author of *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (2003) and *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* (1984).

reviving different narrative genres, such as a crime novel in *Bodily Harm*, a historical novel in *Alias Grace* (1996) and *The Blind Assassin* (2001), a detective story in *Surfacing*, a gothic romance in *Lady Oracle*, a science fiction (or dystopian) novel in *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Oryx and Crake* (2003), a fairy tale in *The Robber Bride* (1994), etc.. According to her and Howells (2000), Atwood further challenges the conventions of these genres so that she departs from the genre conventions or mixes different genres together within the same novel and, thus, creates a new hybrid genre by parodying the existing genre or genres in the novel like, for instance, in her novella *The Penelopiad* (2005). In this way, she revises ancient myths, legends, fairy tales, etc. and modernizes them by giving them a new meaning with a contemporary parodic or ironic twist from the point of view of the twentieth and twenty-first century, as it is typical of postmodernism.

In her novels, most of her postmodern female protagonists also appear as retrospective first-person limited narrators, who are no longer reliable story-tellers, while the endings of her novels are usually open and can be interpreted in several ways. In many of her works, such as *The Blind Assassin*, *Alias Grace*, *Life Before Man* (1996), *Bodily Harm* and *The Penelopiad* (2005), she experiments with multiple narrative perspectives and intentionally signals her method of narration to the twenty-first century reader, which is a distinctive feature of postmodern writing. For this reason, her novels, which often include a narrative framework, are usually classified as polyphonic metafiction. Atwood further infuses them with playful wit, satiric black humor, irony and literary allusions (intertexts) from other literary works, fairy tales and folk tales, which is characteristic of postmodern self-reflexive writing (i.e. fiction about fiction, conscious of itself – its fictionality – and allusively referring to previous literary works of fiction). From this point of view, Atwood's postmodern metafictional narratives emphasize the linguistic, discursive, social and ideological construction of reality according to Berger and Luckmann (1988) since they no longer correspond to external reality in realism or personal reality in modernism.

Regarding the narrative structure and technique, Atwood's novels are usually fragmented stories which no longer observe a linear timeline of traditional novels of realism. In these, the plot of the story typically started at the beginning, reached a turning point in the middle with the complication of events and was resolved towards the end, whereas in Atwood's postmodern novel, the reader usually follows the stream of consciousness – more precisely – the internal monologue of the main narrator and heroine who, in this double function, gradually recounts her life and slowly unveils the personal trauma of her childhood and adolescence by means of flashbacks. In this way, the grown-up protagonist revives and remembers the significant previous events that traumatized her in the past. Atwood, thus, scrutinizes the wounded psyche of her victimized heroines who have the moral

obligation to heal from their psychological trauma and resolve themselves as human beings. For this reason, her works are also analyzed as psychological novels according to Steals (1995) since they involve the protagonist's personal growth and individuation in terms of Jung's analytical psychology.

More specifically, Carl Gustav Jung (1961) was also the first to introduce the theory of archetypes. These are 'primordial images' of the collective unconscious and recurring patterns of potential psychological behavior that is transmitted through the unconscious from one generation to another. As far as this is concerned, all human beings are born with this type of inherited knowledge of psychological behavior, which the ancient ancestors expressed in myths. Furthermore, Jung, as the precursor of the Anglo-American myth criticism, together with the major archetypal critics – Northrop Frye (the author of *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957)), Joseph Campbell (Jung's follower) and Robert Graves (the author of *Greek Mythology* (1958)) – made a great impact on Atwood and, consequently, she used their archetypal ideas in her literary creations. For this reason, the characters in her novels embody the Jungian archetypes and correspond to Graves's mythological figures presented in his study *The White Goddess*. Therefore, the following part of the paper analyzes her literary characters and heroines according to Jung's theory (which deals with archetypes, such as the Jungian shadow<sup>7</sup>, persona, anima, animus, self, hero's mythic quest, trickster, archetypal pattern of death and rebirth,

7 In the work *Negotiating with the Dead* (2002: 35–37, 176–178), Atwood speaks about the process of writing and admits that she, as an artist, possesses a double personality like Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde. In this case, the dark side of her personality corresponds to the Jungian shadow. As she further explains, friends and family know her as Peggy, whereas the one who secretly writes for her is her shadowy evil twin, which she also defines as her doppelgänger and alter ego in terms of Jung's theory of archetypes:

By *two*, I mean the person who exists when no writing is going forward – the one who walks the dog, eats bran for regularity, takes the car in to be washed, and so forth – and the other, more shadowy and altogether more equivocal personage who shares the same body, and who, when no one is looking, takes it over and uses it to commit the actual writing. (Ibid. 35)

Who was I then? My evil twin or slippery double, perhaps. I am after all a writer, so it would follow as the day the night that I must have /.../ at best a mildly dysfunctional one /.../. (Ibid. 36)

You might say I was fated to be a writer – either that, or a con-artist or a spy or some other kind of criminal because I was endowed at birth with a double identity. Due to the romanticism of my father, I was named after my mother (Margaret); but then there were two of us, so I had to be called something else. Thus I grew up with a nickname (Peggy), which had no legal validity, while my real name – if it can be called that – sat on my birth certificate, unknown to me, ticking away like a time-bomb. What a revelation it was for me to discover that I was not who I was! And that I had another identity lurking out of sight, like an empty suitcase stashed in a closet, waiting to be filled. (Ibid. 36)

/.../ I caved

The /J/eckyll hand, the /H/yde hand, and the slippery double  
in to Fate, and embraced my doubleness. (Ibid. 36–37)

etc.) and Graves's classification of the triple goddess who is divided into the following three mythological images: 1. the innocent maiden Diana, 2. the sexually attractive or seductive Venus and 3. the evil, authoritative and destructive Hecate.

## 2.1 Atwood's Novels According to Jung's Theory of Archetypes and Graves's Mythological Images of the Triple Goddess

In Atwood's novel *The Edible Woman*, which is a witty satire, the heroine Marian MacAlpin<sup>8</sup> embodies Graves's mythological figure of the innocent maiden Diana and is victimized by her patriarchal domineering fiancé Peter, a prospective lawyer, who wants to fully possess her and annihilate her female identity after their marriage. She is also oppressed by the expectations of the Northern American contemporary consumer society (of the 1960s) which believes that university-educated women like Marian should leave their jobs and take care of their husband and children after being married. Thus, they should become devoted (sacrificial) slaves of the domestic household since the sexist patriarchal society of the sixties didn't allow them to have a career and fulfil themselves in their profession. From this perspective, Atwood's protofeminist<sup>9</sup> social satire, written in the late sixties, made fun of socially constructed myths of femininity which dictated how a woman should be and behave. For this reason, Marian feels that she is being exploited and consumed (eaten away) by the egotistic wishes of her fiancé and the ideological norms of the cannibalistic patriarchal society, which explains Atwood's humorous title of the novel as well. Although Marian wears a social mask of the Jungian persona archetype and, hence, acts to please Peter and her parents, she feels alienated from her inner self after her engagement. So, as a consequence, she becomes anorexic and refuses to eat.

In her witty novel, Atwood parodies and, thus, revises the conventions of a traditional comedy in which a young couple in love usually gets married after some obstacles are resolved between the parents of the spouses. In Atwood's anti-comedy, on the contrary, Marian betrays her fiancé by making love to Duncan – who appears in the Jungian role of her positive shadow archetype (alter ego) according to Gupta (2006: 22, 24, see also Grace 1980: 93, Macpherson 2010: 28). As far as this is concerned, he helps her see that she has become a passive victim. After this

---

8 According to Cooke (2004: 39) and Macpherson (2010: 26), Atwood intertextually refers to Marian as Alice from Lewis Carroll's fairy tale *Alice in Wonderland* in chapter 22 of *The Edible Woman*.

9 Atwood's novel anticipates the ideas of the second wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s. In this regard, Betty Friedan was the first to express the dissatisfaction of post-war women who had to stay at home as married mothers and give up their jobs in order to look after their family in her ground-breaking text *The Feminine Mystique* (1963).

realization, she calls off the wedding and, thus, regains her individual identity because she refuses to become a subservient wife. In Atwood's anti-comedy the ending is also reversed, since Marian's pregnant friend Ainsley gets married instead of her.

In the novel *Lady Oracle*, which is a witty anti-gothic satire, the heroine Joan Foster is victimized by her monstrous dominating mother Fran. She embodies Graves's mythological figure of the authoritative Hecate and the Jungian negative mother archetype, whereas Joan corresponds to Graves's figure of the innocent Diana since her wicked mother doesn't love and accept her as a fat little girl. Owing to her traumatic childhood experience, Joan has become alienated from her inner self and as a grown-up person develops different multiple personalities – which enable her to escape from her unloved self. In the public eye, she is a successful poet while she secretly writes costume gothic romances under the pen name of Louisa K. Delacourt and imagines to live the life of her gothic heroines. She is also a former fat child since she manages to lose weight with the help of aunt Lou, who embodies her good (surrogate) mother archetype, and she, thus, transforms herself into a beautiful slim woman, who incarnates Graves's seductive Venus. From this point of view, she also represents the Jungian anima – the ideal image of a woman in a male psyche, whenever she falls in love. She further fragments her personality by multiplication since she always invents a new personality for her new patriarchal lover, with whom she struggles for power, or she even tries to please her husband Arthur in the traditional role of a subservient wife. As an artist, she always finds a way to withdraw from her oppressive partners – who don't fulfill her desire of being loved – and usually escapes into her gothic world of fiction. According to Cook (2004: 92–93), Atwood intertextually refers to her as the *Little Mermaid* from the fairy tale of Hans Christian Andersen and, thus, identifies Joan's escapism with the mermaid's drifting around in Andersen's story.

In the end, Joan regains her lost identity and heals from her past trauma after confronting the ghost of her death mother since she realizes that her multiple personalities resemble the monstrous Hecate heads of her mother. According to Grace (1980), Joan is also a parody of Graves's triple goddess (Diana–Venus–Hecate) because of her multiple, intentionally exaggerated, personalities which make her character appear comic and larger than life in comparison to flat gothic heroines that Atwood parodies in her witty anti-gothic satire. In this way, Atwood revises the conventions of costume gothic romances since, according to Cooke (2004: 91), Joan is no longer a tragic (i.e. gothic) victim of unrequited love like “The Lady of Shalott” from Tennyson's ballad, to which Atwood intertextually refers to in her comic version, or a passive heroine who is conventionally saved by a gothic hero and marries him in a simplistic and predictable plot with a happy ending. On the contrary, Atwood's comic parody focuses on the idea that the protagonist Joan must actively resolve her problems on her own.

The novel *The Robber Bride* is another parody of gothic romances in which the heroines Charis, Roz and Tony seek their female identity since they are alienated from their inner self owing to their repressed childhood trauma. They are victims of the gothic villainess Zenia, the Jungian anima and Graves's sexually attractive Venus, since she steals their husbands by seducing them in the role of a femme fatale and discards them after a brief love affair. According to Atwood (qtd. in Steals 1995: 208–209), Zenia represents the ideal and dreamy image of a woman that the three heroines themselves long to be and their alter ego, the evil Jungian shadow, because she mirrors the evil side of their personality that they have learned to repress. However, in the positive role of their shadowy double, Zenia teaches them an important lesson since she makes them realize that they tried to please their husbands in the traditional role of a subservient wife, whereas their men ungratefully left them for her, their opposite, who refused to be dominated by them. Zenia, thus, makes them see that they were not saved by their marriage like passive heroines of gothic romances, but they actually saved their partners by marrying them because they took care of them. According to Howells (2000: 147) and Steals (1995: 198), Atwood's novel, thus, revises the conventions of the gothic genre and also parodies Grimm's fairy tale *The Robber Bridegroom*, in which the evil groom lures his prospective brides into the woods where he eats them. However, in Atwood's version, the man-eating role is reversed since Zenia replaces the villain of the fairy tale, as the title of the novel suggests, by seducing and sexually devouring the husbands of the three heroines. Thus, the cruel teacher Zenia, to whom Atwood (qtd. in Steals 1995: 200) intertextually refers as the biblical prostitute Jezebel and the Jungian trickster figure from folk tales, also forces them to face the psychological trauma from the past and relive their suppressed pain that enables them to eventually heal and regain their lost identity. According to Wilson (2000: 224), Zenia, like Joan in *Lady Oracle*, embodies all three mythological figures of Graves's triple goddess – the seductive Venus, the destructive Hecate, and the innocent Diana who immigrated to Canada in her childhood as a victim of Jewish persecution during World War II.

In the novel *Cat's Eye*, which is a fictive biography, the heroine Elaine Risley is victimized by Cordelia, who bullies her at school with the help of two schoolmates. Owing to her persistent verbal abuse, Elaine loses her identity (positive self-image) and becomes alienated from her inner self. According to Cooke (2004: 108, Gupta (2006: 120) and Steals (1995: 209), Cordelia represents her alter ego, the Jungian shadowy double, and embodies Elaine's evil potential. For this reason, in the second part of the novel, the two, who are twin souls, switch places. In reference to Cordelia, Atwood intertextually alludes to William Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear*, in which Lear punishes his daughter Cordelia because she doesn't show him her love the way her sisters Goneril and Regan do. More specifically, Cordelia uses Elaine as a scapegoat for her frustration at home where

she is physically abused by her dominating patriarchal father, who plays the role of king Lear. In his eyes, she is not worthy of his love since she is not as successful as her more accomplished and beautiful sisters Goneril and Regan. Furthermore, Elaine is a victim of Mrs. Smeath, who represents the puritanical Toronto with its strict moral rules of Christian behavior, since she treats Elaine as a sinner owing to her lack of religious up-bringing. According to Steals (1995: 186) and Cooke (2004:109), Mrs. Smeath, thus, embodies the Graves's evil and authoritative Hecate, who is conventionally played by the dominating grandmother in Canadian literature, as Atwood's points out in her study *Survival*.

In the second part of the novel, however, Elaine becomes Cordelia's victimizer and succeeds in transforming herself into an accomplished painter, whereas Cordelia gradually falls into despair that ends with her death. At the end of the novel, the middle-aged Elaine, who has healed her childhood trauma with the creative power of her artistic work, realizes that Cordelia was just her father's victim while Mrs. Smeath only observed the moral (bigot) convictions of society. Therefore, she forgives them and abandons her revenge. According to Howells (2000: 144–145), Atwood's novel is a bildungsroman like James Joyce's work *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. However, Atwood's narrative replaces the traditional role of a male protagonist with that of a female one and, thus, focuses on the heroine's psychological growth and artistic development from her childhood to maturity.

In the realist novel *Life Before Man*, which is a social chronicle, the heroine Elizabeth Shoenhof, her husband Nate and Lesje Green, her co-worker at the museum, are involved in a love triangle since Nate has a love affair with Lesje while Elizabeth is in a love relationship with Chris Beechman, also a college from the museum. However, Elizabeth and Nate stay together as a married couple owing to their children. They are, thus, trapped by their family, which is also a typical theme of Canadian literature according to Atwood's study *Survival*. In Elizabeth's case, the traditional roles between the spouses are reversed since she is the head of the family and, thus, unconventionally appears in the dominating role that is usually played by a patriarchal partner, whereas her husband Nate and lover Chris lean on her for emotional support in the pleasing role that is typical of a subservient wife. Although she possesses an aggressive male personality and knows how to survive in a tough urban environment, she is a victim of her tyrannical aunt Muriel, who embodies Graves's authoritative Hecate and represents Toronto's puritanical morality with rigid religious behavior like Mrs. Smeath in *Cat's Eye*. In spite of the fact that her aunt took care of her as a child who was psychologically traumatized by the sudden tragic loss of her mother and sister, Elizabeth feels alienated from her inner self in her adult life because she cannot forgive her aunt's strict religious and moral up-bringing in her childhood. For this reason, she cannot open up to her lover and really love Chris – who commits suicide in

order to punish her cold behavior. Even at the end of the novel, she cannot forgive her dying aunt because she has turned into her, the cold and authoritative Hecate figure. However, she unconventionally succeeds in getting out of the family trap (from which the Canadian literary character usually does not escape according to Atwood's study *Survival*) since she separates from her husband and decides to take care of her children without his help.

In the postcolonial novel *Bodily Harm*, which is a political narrative, the heroine Rennie Wilford is a victim of her dominating grandmother, who embodies Graves's authoritative Hecate figure and represents the rigid religious morality of Canadian bourgeois society like Mrs. Smeath in *Cat's Eye* and aunt Muriel in *Life Before Man*. Owing to her strict and traumatic up-bringing, Rennie, who is a travel journalist by profession, flees from Griswold and remains alienated from her inner self even in her adult life. In her symbiotic love relationship with Jake, she emotionally leans on him for protection and tries to please him. Jake, who is an accomplished designer and business owner, also makes her feel invincible since he embodies Rennie's ideal image of a man in her female psyche or the Jungian animus according to Gupta (2006: 101–102). However, she soon realizes that she has become a victim of his sadistic sexual games, in which he always plays the victor/victimizer, whereas she always ends up being his sexual slave. Moreover, she is a cancer survivor and, hence, decides to flee from her dull everyday life to the Caribbean islands. There, she recovers her lost sexuality with Paul, an American CIA spy agent and drug smuggler, but she ends up in Caribbean jail owing to her involvement in Paul's trading American weapons in exchange for Caribbean drugs. From this perspective, Atwood parodies and, thus, revises the predictable plot of gothic romances according to which Rennie should be conventionally saved by Paul, the gothic hero. Instead, in her political and anti-gothic novel, Paul turns out to be a villain and not Rennie's rescuer. In the narrative, Atwood also criticizes the American involvement in the violent politics of the Caribbean postcolonial dictatorial regime which suppresses the uprisings of the communist party and the human rights of their citizens with the help of the army and police. As far as this is concerned, Atwood further shows that, owing to the economic and political partnership between Canada and the United States, Rennie is automatically considered a political prisoner of the Caribbean totalitarian regime simply because she is a Canadian citizen. In her political novel, Atwood, thus, demonstrates how the totalitarian power politics of the Caribbean oppressive government and Jake's sexual power politics work. According to her, they both can do harm to innocent human beings like Rennie and get away with committing evil acts without punishment.

In the multi-perspective novels *Alias Grace* and *The Blind Assassin*, Atwood revives a historical genre since she depicts various historical events of the Canadian past in the background of both novels. More precisely, in *Alias Grace*, she fictionally



constructs the life of Grace Marks, a nineteenth-century Irish (immigrant) servant girl who was convicted of having helped to murder her employer Thomas Kinnear and his housekeeper and mistress Nancy Montgomery. Grace Marks is, thus, a historical figure (of Canadian culture) who was sentenced to life imprisonment and spent most of it in a lunatic asylum. In Atwood's fictionalized version, based on documented facts, Grace recounts her personal life story to Doctor Simon Jordan. He further tries to unlock her memory since she suffers from amnesia and cannot remember the double murder. From this point of view, she embodies the elusive Jungian trickster archetype because she reveals to the doctor just what has already been said about her during the trial. She, thus, remains an enigmatic figure till the end of the story since she keeps the reader wondering whether she is an innocent victim of circumstances or a cold-blooded murderer.

The novel *The Blind Assassin* is a mosaic (i.e. genre-hybrid) narrative like *Alias Grace*. More specifically, it is a family saga which is set in the Canadian fictional town of Port Ticonderoga and depicts Toronto's historic events of the 1930s and 1940s in the background of the novel. The heroine Iris Chase is a victim of her rich industrialist husband Richard Griffen, a sexual bully whom she marries when she is only eighteen years old in order to save her father, a button-factory owner, from bankruptcy. From this perspective, she embodies Graves's innocent maiden Diana because she sacrifices herself for the good of the family according to Cooke (2004: 148). In reality, her arranged marriage turns out to be just a trap in which she, as a young wife and virgin, is repeatedly abused by her violent patriarchal husband. He also rapes and impregnates her younger sister Laura, a minor, who is later incarcerated in a lunatic asylum and forced to undergo an abortion by Richard. For this reason, the revengeful sister Iris ruins her husband's political career by publishing a scandalous novel entitled *The Blind Assassin* about a supposed love affair between her sister Laura and the Communist agitator Alex Thomas – although the novel is really about her secret love affair with Alex. In addition, the rumors about Richard's sexual involvement with Laura, initiated by Iris, force her husband to commit suicide. She is also 'the blind assassin' of her sister Laura, as the title of the novel-within-the-novel suggests, since she informs Laura about the death of her beloved Alex and accidentally reveals to her that she had a secret (extramarital) love affair with him which brakes Laura's heart and causes her suicide.

Unlike the historical narratives *Alias Grace* and *The Blind Assassin* about the Canadian past, *The Handmaid's Tale* is a dystopian social satire and speculative novel (also science fiction) which refers to the fictive future of the United States. As Atwood's later dystopian trilogy (*Oryx and Crake*, *The Year of the Flood* (2012) and *MaddAddam* (2013)), it deals with a futuristic post-apocalyptic and nightmarish world which mirrors our (high-tech) society of today in an exaggerated way and, as a catastrophic vision of our future, it criticizes the evils already present in our contemporary world.

More precisely, in Atwood's Orwellian dystopia *The Handmaid's Tale*, the heroine Offred is a victim of Gilead's Christian fundamentalist regime in which she serves just as a surrogate mother for reproduction or a two-legged womb. In the role of a handmaid, she has no human rights and is assigned to the Commander Fred and his wife Serena Joy, a couple from the ruling elite, since they cannot have children owing to the toxic pollution of their technologically overdeveloped world. In her novel of the 1980s, Atwood recreates the strict moral and religious world of the seventeenth-century New England's Puritans and intertextually refers to the Puritan community described by Nathaniel Hawthorne in *The Scarlet Letter*. In his novel, innocent people are portrayed as prisoners oppressed by the rigid religious norms of their theocratic world from which they cannot escape like citizens in Atwood's dystopian world of Gilead's totalitarian theocratic republic (founded by the extremist American New Christian right of the 1980s on the east coast of the United States in the year 2000). However, the protagonist of Hawthorne's novel Hester Prynne manages to survive in the harsh religious surroundings because she refuses to die inside her inner self like Atwood's handmaid Offred – who tries to remember the life before the regime when she was a university-educated American citizen and a happily married mother. By remembering her past, she reconstructs her identity, which is a form of therapy that helps her survive and maintain her sanity. In her work, Atwood also intertextually refers to the biblical handmaid Bilhah – the surrogate mother for Rachel's baby in the Old Testament owing to Rachel's infertility. Bilhah's role is, thus, fulfilled by Atwood's protagonist Offred, who also embodies Graves's innocent maiden Diana in the forced sexual intercourse with the Commander, while the sterile wife Serena Joy fulfills the role of Rachel. In addition, Atwood's dystopia, published in 1985, criticized the conservative ideas of the American religious party of the 1980s since its members represented the puritanical values of America and were against contraception, abortion, pornography and homosexuals. They also advocated the traditional values of the patriarchal system according to which women should stay at home and look after their family. They, thus, wanted to force women to give up their basic human rights, as it is shown in Atwood's nightmarish narrative vision that can be compared to the existing world of Islamic religious fundamentalism of the 1980s.

In the multi-voiced and genre-hybrid novella *The Penelopiad*, Atwood parodies the *Odyssey*, Homer's original version of the Grecian myth about the adventurer Odysseus and his faithful wife Penelope. In her comic satire, the story is retrospectively told from the sarcastic and ironic perspective of Penelope, who also addresses the twenty-first century reader from the Grecian Underworld after her death, while her maids, who have no voice in Homer's original epic poem, sarcastically and ironically comment her unreliable metafictional narrative in different genres. More specifically, Atwood's mythological novella repeats the well-known

mythic story of Antiquity with the same literary characters, setting on Ithaca, major events and further continues Homer's original text by adding new events. As far as this is concerned, her parody gives prominence to the hanging of Penelope's twelve maids, which is only briefly mentioned in Homer's version as a minor event, while Atwood's Queen Penelope no longer appears as a faithful wife since she is rumored to have slept with her suitors during Odysseus's absence from home. In addition, she is viewed as a shrewd liar, who plays the role of the Jungian trickster archetype, like her husband. In her parodic revision of the Grecian myth, Odysseus is acquitted of having murdered Penelope's suitors and of having ordered the hanging of the innocent maids in the videotaped process (more specifically, a burlesque travesty) that takes place in the twenty-first century court of law. In her witty satire, Atwood ridicules the idealized heroic past of the epic genre and the double moral standard of the Grecian patriarchal ideology. As far as this is concerned, the immoral husband Odysseus was allowed to cheat on his wife on his mundane adventures away from Ithaca, whereas his wife Penelope, a rich aristocratic woman, had to remain faithful to him in order to be respected in his patriarchal kingdom where she just increased Odysseus's wealth by marrying him.

### 3 THE ARCHETYPAL ANALYSIS OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL NOVEL *SURFACING*

Atwood's novel *Surfacing* is a detective story in which the unnamed heroine (i.e. the surfer) searches for her missing father, a retired botanist, in the wilderness of Quebec. However, from a more personal and feminist prospective, she seeks her authentic inner self and her female identity which she lost owing to her past relationship with a patriarchal married man who forced her to undergo an abortion. For this reason, the novel corresponds to a psychological quest narrative since the surfer travels back in time and dives into the unconscious side of her psyche in order to remember and heal her past trauma. Her psychological journey involves a renovation of her personality according to Jung's analytical psychology and follows Joseph Campbell's monomyth about the hero's adventures presented in his work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1973). For this reason, her journey is a mythic quest as well. More specifically, Atwood's three-part novel corresponds to Campbell's three-part schema of the hero's separation from society in the first part, his initiation and later illumination (i.e. revelation of self-knowledge) in the second part and the return of the hero to civilization in the third part. It, thus, coincides with Campbell's mythic quest structurally and thematically.

Furthermore, the surfer also follows the mythic pattern of personal transformation which derives from the *Bible* (i.e. *The Book of Jonah*) and it is known as a

heroic quest which involves death and rebirth and Jung's personality renewal within the process of individuation. Moreover, the surfacer's quest for individuation, which coincides with Campbell's mythic schema, also corresponds to Frye's romance journey which describes the same transformation as the biblical story of Jonah. For this reason, Pratt classifies the narrative *Surfacing* as a novel of rebirth and transformation in her work *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction* (1981). In reference to the surfacer's archetypal journey, Atwood further alludes to Galahad's search for the holy grail in medieval quest romances which deal with the same biblical (mythic) pattern of personal transformation as well. Since the twentieth-century heroine of the novel revives the grail motif in her memory search of the aborted baby, Atwood's quest narrative also corresponds to the definition of a grail romance (also quest romance) according to Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*, as it will be demonstrated in the following paragraphs with the detailed analysis of the novel.

According to Frye, specifically, the surfacer's grail quest starts with a perilous journey into the dangerous Canadian wilderness, where she starts her inner search for her self and the external search for her missing father. This also indicates Campbell's first part of the hero's adventure – his separation or departure from society. In the initial phase, the surfacer is alienated from her parents, her inner self and emotions because she has suppressed the memory of her traumatic abortion and pushed it into the unconscious part of her psyche. In this regard, her initial psychological state corresponds to Frye's *agon* which indicates her conflict with the unconscious side of her self or the Jungian shadow. For this reason, she has also lost her identity and feels psychologically divided into two halves – the head, and the body which represents her heart and feelings – “The other half, the one locked away was the only one that could live; I was the wrong half, detached, terminal. I was nothing but a head.” (*Surfacing*, 102). She also perceives herself as a powerless and innocent victim of her previous dominating patriarchal partner, the married art teacher, with whom she had an affair. In the second phase of Campbell's initiation, the surfacer discovers her father's rock drawings which guide her to the lake where she dives into the water in order to find her missing father. However, at the same time, she figuratively dives into her unconscious realm where she discovers her psychological shadow: “My other shape was in the water, not my reflection but my shadow /.../” (*Surfacing*, 165). According to Christ (1976: 322), the lake offers her “redemption” (*Surfacing*, 16) since, under water, she finally faces her suppressed traumatic event and, thus, confronts the shadowy part of her self by acknowledging the death of her aborted baby – “/.../ dark oval, trailing limbs. It was blurred but it had eyes, they were open /.../ it was dead.” (*Surfacing*, 165). The dead baby also caused her emotional death, which corresponds to Frye's definition of *pathos*. Ironically, the lost baby represents her “evil grail” (*Surfacing*, 165) as well. Since she gains this self-knowledge with the

help of her father's guidance, she considers it his gift. At this stage, her self-revelation also indicates Campbell's illumination. However, his father's gift is not enough for her to heal her split. So, under the spiritual guidance of her dead mother, she also finds a picture of a woman with a baby inside her belly, which she considers her mother's gift, and decides that she will conceive a baby with her present non-patriarchal partner Joe. She, thus, makes love to him in the role of a goddess according to Frye (qtd. in Pratt 1981: 138) and Campbell's divine sexual union. During her intercourse, she heals her split by rejoining the two halves – the head with the body and integrates them as part of her selfhood:

I guide him into me, it's the right season, I hurry. He trembles and I can feel my lost child surfacing within me, forgiving me, rising from the lake where it has been prisoned for so long /.../ the two halves clasp, interlocking like fingers, it buds, it sends out fronds. /.../ I will be able to see it: it will be covered with shining fur, a god /.../. (*Surfacing* 190–191)

According to Pratt (1981: 157), her godlike baby is the re-found grail that represents her elixir of life and enables her psychological transformation or rebirth since she finds her authentic self and, thus, her female identity in the new regenerative role of a mother.

In the second half of Campbell's inciation, which he calls atonement with the divine parents, the surfacer leaves the lover Joe and her friends. She escapes into the wilderness, where she loses her sanity, becomes one with nature and reconciles with the memory of her drowned father, who was found dead in the lake, and her lost mother, who died of cancer long time ago. In a shamanic trance, she imagines to see the ghosts of her divine parents and forgives them for having died and having left her too soon. She realizes that they are no longer "gods" (*Surfacing*, 220) and lets go of their innocence which she attributed to herself as well – /.../ Our father, Our mother /.../ they dwindle, grow, become what they were, human. /.../ their totalitarian innocence was my own." (*Surfacing*, 220). According to Frye, the romance journey is based on the innocence and idealization which the hero usually attributes to his happy childhood and to the divine images of his good and spiritually guiding parents from childhood at the beginning of his romance story, whereas the end of his journey is usually indicated by the loss of his childhood innocence and idyllic past. This corresponds to surfacer's reconciliation with her dead parents who were just mortal beings and her disillusionment with the previous partner since she admits that she worshipped and idealized him as a god like her parents – although he was just an average person with flaws.

According to Grace (1980: 109), the surfacer's parents and her aborted baby represent her psychological conflict or the Jungian shadow which she resolves by

consciously confronting the loss of her dead baby together with the death of her parents. By letting go of their ghosts, she finally heals her divided self and achieves wholeness in the psychological process of Jung's individuation – although her personal growth and transformation will continue all her life. At the end of her journey, she also gives up the belief that she is a powerless victim – “/.../ above all, to refuse to be a victim /.../” (*Surfacing*, 222) – and, thus, conquers the non-victim position, as Atwood points out in her critical study *Survival*. In the third part of Campbell's schema, the hero conventionally returns to civilization and, in the protagonist's case, her non-patriarchal lover Joe comes to look for her in the Canadian bush in order to take her back to town since she has no other choice, as Atwood suggests at the end of the narrative – “/.../ withdrawing is no longer possible, and the alternative is death.” (*Surfacing*, 222)

## 4 CONCLUSION

As it was demonstrated in the archetypal analysis, the novel *Surfacing* follows the textual world of the heroic quest according to Campbell's (also Frye's and Jung's) mythic schema. Her quest also corresponds to the mythic pattern of personality renovation present in the *Bible* (and in medieval quest romances) since the protagonist (surfacer) imitates the biblical (mythic) quest in her contemporary world of the twentieth century. However, Atwood's version revises the ancient (mythic) story of the hero's quest by introducing a new ironic meaning according to which her heroine realizes with disillusionment that her adult life is full of deceptions and no longer idyllic like her perfect and happy childhood. In this novel, as in many other ones, Atwood subverts the traditional roles of colonial novels in which male protagonists appear in the main adventurous role. As far as this is concerned, the female characters of her postcolonial and post-modern narratives, which are often multi-voiced and genre-hybrid metafiction, no longer play passive figures in secondary roles of no importance, as it was typical of the nineteenth-century colonial canon. On the contrary, they mostly appear as active and positive heroines in search of their female identity and self-realization like the surfacer, the quester of *Surfacing*, who pursues her goal of personal transformation and, in her particular case, the male partner Joe plays the supportive role of a helper.

## REFERENCES

- Achebe, C. (1958) 2009. *Things Fall Apart*. New York: W. W. Norton.  
Atwood, M. 1972 (1984). *Surfacing*. London: Virago.

- Atwood, M. 1984. *Bodily Harm*. Toronto: Seal Books. McClelland and Stewart-Bantam.
- Atwood, M. 1986. *The Handmaid's Tale*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart-Bantam.
- Atwood, M. 1987. *Lady Oracle*. New York: Ballantine.
- Atwood, M. 1987. *The Edible Woman*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart-Bantam.
- Atwood, M. 1989. *Cat's Eye*. New York: Bantam.
- Atwood, M. 1994. *The Robber Bride*. Toronto: McClelland-Bantam.
- Atwood, M. 1996. *Alias Grace*. New York: Doubleday.
- Atwood, M. 1996. *Life Before Man*. London: Vintage.
- Atwood, M. 1996. *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*. Toronto: Anansi.
- Atwood, M. 2001. *The Blind Assassin*. London: Virago.
- Atwood, M. 2002. *Negotiating with the Dead: A Writer on Writing*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Atwood, M. 2003. *Oryx and Crake*. New York: Doubleday.
- Atwood, M. 2005. *The Penelopiad: The Myth of Penelope and Odysseus*. Atlantic: Canongate.
- Atwood, M. 2009. *The Year of the Flood*. New York: Doubleday.
- Atwood, M. 2013. *MaddAddam*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.
- Berger, P. L. & Luckmann T. 1988. *Družbena konstrukcija realnosti: razprava iz sociologije znanja*. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba.
- Bhabha, H. K. 1996. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Campbell, J. 1973. *The Hero with a Thousands Faces*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Christ, C. P. 1976. Margaret Atwood: The Surfacing of Women's Spiritual Quest and Vision. In *Signs* 2, no. 2, pp. 316–330.
- Cooke, N. 2004. *Margaret Atwood. A Critical Companion*. London: Greenwood Press.
- Frye, N. 1957. *The Anatomy of Criticism*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Grace, S. 1980. *Violent Duality*. Montreal: Vehicule Press.
- Graves, R. 1992. *The Greek Myths: Complete Edition*. London: Penguin.
- Graves, R. 1997. *The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Guha, R. & Spivak, G. 1988. *Selected Subaltern Studies*. Oxford: OUP.
- Gupta, R. 2006. *Margaret Atwood. A Psychoanalytical Study*. Berkshire: New Dawn.
- Howells, A. C. 2000. Transgressing Genre: A Generic Approach to Margaret Atwood's Novel. In *Margaret Atwood: Works and Impact*. Edited by R. M. Nischik. New York: Camden House, pp. 139–156.
- Hutcheon, L. 1990. *The Canadian Postmodern*. Toronto: OUP. 2000. *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

- Jung, C. G. & von Franz, M. L., eds. 1961. *Man and His Symbols*. New York: Doubleday.
- Macpherson, H. S. 2010. *The Cambridge Introduction to Margaret Atwood*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Pratt, A. 1981. *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction*. Brighton: The Harvester Press.
- Said, E. 1978. *Orientalism*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Steals, H. 1995. *Margaret Atwood's Novels. A Study of Narrative Discourse*. Basel: Francke.
- Wilson, S. R. 2000. Mythological Intertexts in Margaret Atwood's Works. In: *Margaret Atwood's Works and Impact*. Edited by R. M. Nischik. New York: Camden House, pp. 228.

Andrejka Obidič  
Ljubljana, Slovenija  
andreja.obidic@gmail.com



### **Psihološki in mitski vplivi v postkolonialnih in postmodernih (feminističnih) romanih Margaret Atwood: Arhetipska analiza romana *Na površje***

Članek raziskuje mitske in psihološke razsežnosti v postkolonialnih in postmodernih ter žanrsko hibridnih pripovednih delih Margaret Atwood v okviru arhetipske kritike, medtem ko analiza avtoričinega romana *Na površje* natančneje prikaže, kako Atwood mitske prvine v tem delu posodobi.

**Ključne besede:** Margaret Atwood, Kanada, postkolonialna teorija Edwarda Saida, postkolonializem, Linda Hutcheon, postmodernizem, feminizem, psihologija Carla Gustava Junga, mitska/arhetipska kritika, Northrop Frye



# Fortified Fiction: Writers and Drink

*Wojciech Klepuszewski*

## Abstract

Part of what is usually labelled as drink/ing studies comprises literature and the way drink is rendered in literary works. In many cases such works are written by writers who themselves are drink-dependent. This article focuses on such fiction and such writers, acknowledging American literature, extensively discussed in various studies, and bringing to the fore some British novelists who largely remain at the margin of critical interest in this respect.

**Key words:** Alcohol, literature, fiction, writers, addiction.

The fact that alcohol in many literary works flows in abundance inevitably leads to the question of the writer-drink-literature nexus. This particular junction may produce a variety of outcomes, though one has to bear in mind that while some writers' drinking propensity may trigger a literary representation, not every drink-dependent writer will necessarily write about addiction; conversely, a non-addicted writer may find interest in incorporating drink as a theme. Thus, the literary rendition may be utterly irrespective of the writer's habits, though of course, as the history of literature shows, the reverse is mostly true and when this is the case, literature becomes "an indirect outlet for the author to express ideas rooted in his own life experience." (Rostkoff 2002: 224). The most extreme variant of this peculiar life-writing brew are those writers who exemplify an organic fusion in this respect, meaning that what is a real-life feature is transposed to the fictional realm they create. In other words, each of these writers "transforms alcohol into ink" (Voelker 1997: 23), leaving a literary imprint of their own drinking habits. Obviously, this does not apply to writers for whom drink becomes an impediment, incapacitating their creativity or even leading to a complete writer's block, but to those who find some inspirational value in drink. This point is frequently discussed by scholars and critics, such as John Booth, the editor of *Creative Spirits: A Toast to Literary Drinkers* (1997):

The relationship between drink and writing is well established. It is all things to all writers: an encouragement, a support, a solace, a spur, an excuse. For some lucky individuals drink is liberating, galvanizing the imagination to life so the words pour, filling the white emptiness of the page. (1997: 1)

Much similar, but more empirically reinforced stance is expressed by the editor of *Drink to Me Only* (1982), Aland Bold, if only because of his great affection for both drinking and literary matters (cf. Smith 1983: 1697), the two collections of his poems, *Society Inebrious* (1965) and *A Pint of Bitter* (1971) being the literary outcomes of such fusion, and confirming Bold's expertise in the field:

There are few subjects authors are so eloquent about as drink: it not only loosens the tongue, its spirit constantly materializes on paper. Drink has inspired authors to spectacular feats of artistic invention; it has also encouraged a limitless loquacity or induced a wordless depression and despair. (1982: 1)

Bold's and Booth's anthologies are two examples of drink-themed compilations which allow the reader to become familiar with a large number of texts reflecting this particular literary and biographical aspect in poetry, drama, fiction and miscellaneous non-fictional pieces. There are also numerous critical studies, but they usually focus on American writers, with such legendary drinkers as Hemingway, Bukowski, McCullers, and Kerouac. Their novels reflect the authors' drinking

habits, most often in the form of protagonists who consume prodigious amounts of alcohol, as happens in Raymond Chandler's detective novels featuring Philip Marlowe, a typical barfly. Marlowe's preferred drink is bourbon, but as we learn from, for instance, *The Long Good-Bye* (1953), he is 'never fussy about drinks' (1978: 18), easily accepting brandy, or mixes such as a whiskey sour. Marlow represents a philosophical type of drinker, often making comments concerning the act of drinking with all its implications, a good example being *The Big Sleep* (1939), in which he explains that "you can have a hangover from other things than alcohol" (159). Raymond Chandler himself had a long history of drink dependence, with "blackouts, or alcohol-induced amnesia, when he drank heavily." (Hiney 1997: 62).

Whereas Chandler's protagonist is simply a detective who drinks heavily, in more extreme variants the main characters fall at the very bottom of the social ladder, as is the case in Stephen King's *The Shining* (1977) and its sequel *Doctor Sleep* (2013), the former featuring Jack Torrance, with an alcoholic history behind, while the latter his son Danny, who inherited this particular feature from his father and, unsurprisingly, is referred to as, "a drunkass alcoholic" (2014: 89). Sam Leith writes about both books being a reflection of King's struggle with addiction, and defines *The Shining* as "a book by a drinking alcoholic about an alcoholic in the grip of white-knuckle abstinence" and *Doctor Sleep* as "a book about a recovering alcoholic written by a recovering alcoholic." (2013). Stephen King's own achievement in the field of alcohol consumption is impressive, particularly if one considers his alcoholic "stunts" such as drinking "a case of 16-ounce beer cans a night" (Rolls 2009: 81). In his *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* (2000), Stephen King openly admits to being drink-dependent:

*Holy shit, I'm an alcoholic*, I thought, and there was no dissenting opinion from inside my head – I was, after all, the guy who had written *The Shining* without even realizing (at least until that night) that I was writing about myself. (2002: 88)

While some alcoholic writers left a noteworthy literary reflection of their drinking habits in fiction, others also contributed works of an autobiographical nature. The point in case is certainly Jack London's alcoholic memoir, *John Barleycorn* (1913), in which he writes of his addiction taking roots in the very childhood: "I was five years old the first time I got drunk" (1913: 16). A related type of fiction are 'recovery memoirs', such as *Asylum* (1935) by William Seabrook, a journalist and traveller who decided to spend some time at an asylum in 1933, to treat his acute alcoholism<sup>1</sup>, the record of which is left in *Asylum*. Considering that

1 Although Seabrook managed to stay sober for a while, there was a relapse into drinking which he described in his last book, *No Hiding Place; An Autobiography* (1942), one of the reflections there being an ominous projection of the finale to his own life: "What do drunkards do? They... drink... themselves... to... death." (1942: 385).

Seabrook was a travel writer, contributing short texts to *Cosmopolitan* and *Reader's Digest*, as well as writing numerous books, such as *Adventures in Arabia* (1927) or *The Magic Island* (1929), Ryan Holiday's definition of the memoir as a "travel book where the journey is inward instead of outward" (2015) seems most appropriate. In fact, *Asylum* is full of Seabrook's reflections on this particular self-exploration:

So long as any man drinks when he wants to and stops when he wants to, he isn't a drunkard, no matter how much he drinks or how often he falls under the table. The British upper classes were constantly and consistently mildly stewed, from father to son, in Parliament and Pall Mall for nearly the whole of the eighteenth century. It isn't drinking that makes a drunkard. I had drunk for years, enthusiastically, and with pleasure, when I wanted to. Then something snapped in me and I lost control. I began to have it when I didn't want it. I couldn't stop when I wanted to. (1935: 53)

At the time, Seabrook's book was famous enough to be noticed by another alcoholic writer, Francis Scott Fitzgerald, who mentions it in his 1936 essay "The Crack-Up" (cf. Wilson 2009:71). However, the real profusion of recovery memoirs appeared in the second part of the twentieth-century and continues to do so. There are numerous examples of such in America, to mention Caroline Knapp's *Drinking: A Love Story* (1996), *Note Found in a Bottle: My Life as a Drinker* (1999), written by Susan Cheever, whose father was John Cheever, an alcoholic writer too. In Britain, among the examples worth mentioning is the novelist known for his continuation of the Bond series, John Gardner, and his autobiographical *Spin the Bottle* (1964), and more recently, John Sutherland's *Last Drink to LA* (2001).

However, all of these, written by struggling alcoholics, belong to the realm of non-fiction. As far as fiction is concerned, at least fame-wise, nothing compares to Charles Jackson's *The Lost Weekend* (1944) and Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano* (1947), seminal books by writers who both took refuge in the bottle. Charles Jackson's *The Lost Weekend* (1944) features Don Birnam, a failed writer and alcoholic who is both comforted and confronted by alcohol. John Crowley asserts that the novel is a unique masterpiece of writing about alcoholic addiction, and that its "canny portrait of the alcoholic remains unsurpassed." (1993: 3). However, what made the book one of the most iconic renderings of the theme was the subsequent screening of the film version (1945), directed by Billy Wilder and awarded four Oscars. Paradoxically, it all started by accident:

Billy Wilder was on his way by train to New York for a holiday in the spring of 1944. He picked up a copy of Charles Jackson's novel *The Lost Weekend* at a kiosk during a stopover at Union Station in Chicago. Wilder sat up all night reading it. By the time he reached Pennsylvania Station in New York City the

following morning, Wilder had finished the book. He was convinced that it would make an engrossing movie. (Phillips 2010: 71)

The immense success of the film exceeded the interest in the novel as such. Blake quotes Jackson, who complained that people would tell him how much they adored ‘his’ film, with no mention of reading the book. (cf. 2013: xviii). Judy Cornes, in her study *Alcohol in the Movies, 1898-1962: A Critical History*, writes that the film version of the novel “allows us to experience viscerally the slow disintegration of a sensitive, intelligent writer” (2006: 126), which sound as if the film were a brilliant version of an average novel, rather than equally brilliant novel. From the present perspective, both the novel and its film adaptation seem equally harrowing with their picture of the main protagonist’s gradual fall into the drinking abyss. This process begins with Birnam having to fight the ever-growing shortage of drink supply (“one warm drop crawled like slow syrup through the neck of the bottle”; 1998: 40), only to reach the alcoholic nadir in the bout of delirium tremens, referred to as “a disease of the night” (154). However, these are the most glaring, almost clinical examples of alcoholism, but Jackson’s novel offers a whole range of alcoholic intricacies:

When the drink was set before him, he felt better. He did not drink it immediately. Now that he had it, he did not need to. Instead, he permitted himself the luxury of ignoring it for a while; he lit a cigarette, took some envelopes out of his pocket and unfolded and glanced through an old letter, put them away again and began to hum, quietly. Gradually, he worked up a subtle and elaborate pretense of ennui: stared at himself in the dark mirror of the bar, as if lost in thought; fingered his glass, turning it round and round or sliding it slowly back and forth in the wet of the counter; shifted from one foot to the other; glanced at a couple of strangers standing farther down the bar and watched them for a moment or two, critical, aloof, and, as he thought, aristocratic; and when he finally did get around to raising the glass to his lips, it was with an air of boredom that said, Oh well, I suppose I might as well drink it, now that I’ve ordered it. (Jackson 1998: 16)

Much as the protagonist of his novel, Jackson had a history of drinking and struggling with alcoholic addiction, resulting in joining the AA and being hospitalised at the beginning of 1950s. As Bailey notes in his biographical study, Jackson “was indeed Don Birnam, and only two episodes in *The Lost Weekend* were purely fictional (to wit: he never pawned his girlfriend’s leopard coat to get liquor money, nor did he stand up the hostess of his favourite bar because of an alcoholic blackout.”); 2013: 4). It is interesting to notice how the novel translates Jackson’s own alcoholic problems as a writer, with Birnam being both a tormented

alcoholic and an equally tormented would-be novelist. This is so because he is obsessed with writing a novel he wants to call “In a Glass” (“The Bottle” in the film version), obviously based on his autobiographical experience. More to the point, he also refers to other writers afflicted with alcoholic addiction, such as Fitzgerald (1998: 136-138).

In a similar vein, Jackson’s British counterpart, Malcolm Lowry, is “brilliantly insightful about the lure of alcohol” (Morrison 2013) in *Under the Volcano*. Much as *The Lost Weekend*, Lowry’s novel became a classic of the alcoholic genre, also additionally popularised owing to its successful film version directed by John Huston in 1984. Jackson’s and Lowry’s protagonists have much in common: they both have a gargantuan thirst to quench, suffer from auditory and visual hallucinations, and in both cases the readers can observe their final degradation. Otherwise, the two novels have different styles, their alcoholic methodologies, as it were, belong to two different worlds:

*The Lost Weekend* is a portrait of alcoholic psychology and occurs entirely within the mind of its main character, Don Birnam. In Malcolm Lowry’s however, Geoffrey Firmin’s morbid alcoholism is part of a metaphorical web that illuminates both his individual experience of alcoholism and the human condition in a modern world shadowed by looming disaster. (Pratt 2015: 803)

In fact, Jackson’s novel is a down-to-earth case study, almost a textbook for students of psychiatry, imbued with tiny details of alcoholic behavioural pattern, whereas *Under the Volcano* is allusive and metaphorical, if not mystical at times:

the Consul is engaged in a struggle of almost epic significance against dark, demonic, terrifying forces that are in large part represented or bodied forth by hallucinations. More heroic still, the Consul struggles not so much to avoid succumbing to the hallucinations as to make sense of them. Birnam’s intelligence, though acute, is applied to less titanic aims: mainly to finding the means, financial and physical, to go on drinking. (Gilmore 1982: 287)

Lowry’s novel is so much soaked with alcohol that Sam Jordison wonders whether there has been “a more alcoholic book than *Under the Volcano*?” (2013). It is, in fact, one of two novels Lowry managed to publish during his life, and one for which he is best known. It comes as no surprise that when a friend met drunk Lowry in London and asked him “what was next” he replied that he was working on “Under Under the Volcano.” (cf. Max 2007). In fact, Lowry did write another contribution to drink literature in the form of an autobiographical novella, *Lunar Caustic*, its source of inspiration being Lowry’s stay at a psychiatric ward of New York Bellevue Hospital in 1936. He continued revising *Lunar caustic* prior to his

death in 1957 (cf. Knickerbocker 1979: 291, 292), but it was published posthumously in the *Paris Review* (1963) by Margerie Lowry and Earle Birney. This dark and bizarre story features Bill Plantagenet whose choice of a drinking den is rather morbid and disturbing, for he “likes drinking in churches particularly” (1979: 296). Even after leaving the hospital where Bill was taken for detoxification, he returns to his ultimate alcoholic sanctuary to plunge back into addiction:

He entered a church he knew, gazing about him. In the painting above, Christ was being offered a drink; he stood a while in meditation. The thought even of vinegar sent the blood coursing through his veins. There was only one other person there, a woman in black, kneeling. Here was his opportunity. When so much suffering existed, what else could a man do? With a guilty, flurried, yet triumphant motion he took a long draught of whisky.” (345)

The part which seems a direct imprint of Lowry’s own alcoholic ordeal, and which probably reflects his own observations while in hospital is the depiction of the DTs, which Donald Goodwin, who specialises in medicine and writes extensively on alcoholic writers, considers a superb literary rendition (cf. 1994: 48):

He needed a drink desperately. He did not know whether his eyes were closed or open. Horrid shapes plunged out of the blankness, gibbering, rubbing their bristles against his face, but he couldn’t move. Something had got under his bed too, a bear that kept trying to get up. Voices, a prosopopoeia of voices, murmured in his ears, ebbed away, murmured again, cackled, shrieked, cajoled; voices pleading with him to stop drinking, to die and be damned. Thronged, dreadful shadows came close, were snatched away. A cataract of water was pouring through the wall, filling the room. A red hand gesticulated, prodded him: over a ravaged mountain side a swift stream was carrying with it legless bodies yelling out of great eye-sockets, in which were broken teeth. Music mounted to a screech, subsided. On a tumbled bloodstained bed in a house whose face was blasted away a large scorpion was gravely raping a one-armed Negress. His wife appeared, tears streaming down her face, pitying, only to be instantly transformed into Richard III, who sprang forward to smother him. (299)

Lowry and Jackson are undoubtedly two icons in the realm of drink literature, but there are numerous other examples worth critical attention. As American literature has been well documented in critical studies concerning drink-dependent writers and the way they depict alcoholism in fiction<sup>2</sup>, the British focus seems to offer more avenues that have not been properly acknowledged. The list of British

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, *Alcohol and the Writer* (Donald Goodwin, 1988), *The Thirsty Muse: Alcohol and the American Writer* (Tom Dardis, 1989) or *Writing Under the Influence: Alcoholism and the Alcoholic Perception from Hemingway to Berryman* (Matts Djos, 2010).

writers<sup>3</sup> who were alcoholics is impressive, though some of them remain obscure, while many others are largely neglected in this particular aspect. Of those British novelists in whose life alcohol played as important a role as in their fiction two names are often mentioned. The first one<sup>4</sup> is Evelyn Waugh, of whom his biographer, John Wilson, writes that “drinking detracted from his performance”, and that he “loved drunken abandon” (2001: 22, 28). Donat Gallagher, in his collection of Evelyn Waugh’s non-fiction, includes an essay entitled “Drinking”, in which Waugh gives an account of his early affection for alcohol: “It was at the university that I took to drink, discovering in a crude way the contrasting pleasures of intoxication and discrimination.” (1983: 609). This affection was to be continued in later years and is superbly reflected in *Brideshead Revisited* (1945), which was filmed in 2008, directed by Julian Jarrold. The novel portrays Sebastian Flyte, whose family is not only of an aristocratic descent but also devoutly Catholic, and Charles Ryder, of a rather opposite background. Both young men forge a kind of friendship with a much deeper undertone on the part of Sebastian, and both of them partake in alcoholic binges organised by Sebastian, whose appearances in the novel are best described in a phrase used by his sister, Cordelia: “Old Sebastian on the spree again” (2000: 289).

Another British novelist for whom “heavy drinking was a part of his life” (Booth 1997: 15) is Graham Greene. The drink theme in his fiction is particularly well-expounded in three novels: *The Power and the Glory* (1940), whose protagonist is referred to as a ‘whisky priest’, not without a reason of course; *Our Man in Havana* (1958), with its famous scene of Captain Segura and James Wormold playing a game of draughts with miniature bottles of Scotch and bourbon; and *The Honorary Consul* (1973), namely Charles Fortnum, an alcoholic whose “veins run with alcohol, not blood.” (2000: 44). Greene was exceptionally lucky with the film industry, because all the above were filmed, the first one as *The Fugitive* (1947, John Ford), a rather free version of the novel, the second and third under the same titles: *Our Man in Havana* (1959, Carol Reed) and *The Honorary Consul* (1983, John Mackenzie). Obviously, the fact that both Waugh’s and Greene’s novels have their film versions is conducive to their general appreciation, though at the same time, as the case of *The Lost Weekend* shows, it is often much to the detriment of the literary precursor’s reception.

Much less apparent in the drink context is William Golding, though he did struggle with addiction for a long time. In the review of Golding’s biography, Robert Douglas-Fairhurst underlines the following:

3 The Irish legacy of drink literature and drink-dependent writers offers enough material for a separate study; hence, it is not included here.

4 The missing name here is Kingsley Amis, because his overall contribution in the drink context, biographical and literary (including non-fiction) deserves a separate study. In fact, such work is now in progress (cf. Klepuszewski, Wojciech. *The Proof is in the Writing: Kingsley Amis’s Literary Distillations*. To be published 2017/18).



At no stage does John Carey refer to Golding as an alcoholic, but it is worth noting how often his account repeats the words “drink”, “drank” and “drunk”, creating a rhythm sadly suggestive of someone who may have enjoyed a drink but needed it even more. (2009)

Some of Golding’s fiction offers interesting drink themes, including the characters’ alcoholism, an example being *The Paper Men* (1984), whose protagonist, Wilfred Barclay, is an alcoholic writer. In fact, the opening pages of the novel immediately outline his bibulous nature:

I must interrogate the bottles. If it proved necessary, I must sneak out of the back door – no, the conservatory was quieter – get to the dustbin, ashcan, *poubelle*, whatever one chose to call it and, not to elaborate, count the empties. For the truth was that already I did not believe in the bottle still full but with the cork drawn. (1984: 9)

Interesting drink imagery can be found in *The Inheritors* (1955), a deeply disturbing novel in which the Neanderthals, Lok and Fa, discover the lure and the power of alcoholic drink:

His nose caught the scent of what they drank. It was sweeter and fiercer than the other water, it was like the fire and the fall. It was a bee-water, smelling of honey and wax and decay, it drew toward and repelled, it frightened and excited like the people themselves. There were other stones nearer the fire with holes in their tops and the smell seemed to come particularly strongly from them. Now Lok saw that when the people had finished their drink they came to these and lifted them and took more to drink. The girl Tanakil was lying in front of one of the caves as if she were dead. A man and a woman were fighting and kissing and screeching and another man was crawling round and round the fire like a moth with a burnt wing. (Golding 1981: 172)

However, among many numerous British writers who could be mentioned in the context discussed in this article, two figures deserve special attention, namely Jean Rhys and Patrick Hamilton, both recognised critically, though one could hardly call them mainstream writers, particularly Hamilton. Rhys and Hamilton are both sad figures, their lives entirely alcohol-ridden, their literary talent resulting in brilliant novels which remained forgotten for decades. Jean Rhys, after publishing some of her best novels, disappeared and indulged for years in solitary drinking, but was re-discovered and properly acknowledged. Rhys had a long and tragic history behind, alcoholism and prostitution included. As Elaine Savory writes in her study:

She gradually became a serious alcoholic and in middle age was arrested for disturbing the peace and was briefly confined in a woman’s prison for psychiatric

evaluation. Many assumed she had died when she disappeared from public view for decades, so when she reappeared, there was talk of a “reincarnation.” (2009: ix)

Rhys herself describes her daily routine as determined by the drink intake: “One day drunk, two days hung-over, regular as clockwork.” (quoted in Angier 1985: 92). In the drink context, some of her novels, particularly *After Leaving Mr Mackenzie* (1931) and *Good Morning, Midnight* (1939), offer interesting study material, with the main protagonists being vulnerable females, lonely and depressed in Paris, alcohol being of consolatory value, though the protagonist of *Good Morning, Midnight*, Sasha Jansen, is trying to drink herself to death thus establishing an escape route from her failed life:

I’ve had enough of these streets that sweat a cold, yellow slime, of hostile people, of crying myself to sleep every night. I’ve had enough of thinking, enough of remembering. Now whisky, rum, gin, sherry, vermouth, wine with the bottles labelled ‘Dum vivimus, vivamus. ...’ Drink, drink, drink. ... As soon as I sober up I start again. (2000: 37)

Even more disturbing is the case of Patrick Hamilton whose life perfectly matches his fiction. His alcoholic intake often amounted to three bottles of whisky daily (cf. Holroyd 2006: xx), which worsened his condition to such an extent that it disabled him from writing, leading to his death at the age of 58, cirrhosis of the liver being mostly to blame. Hamilton planned to write an autobiographical account of his alcoholism in *Memoirs of a Heavy Drinking Man* (cf. Jones 2008: 5), but this was never completed; instead, there is an imprint of his life left in numerous novels. His fiction, much as his life, is drowned in an alcoholic haze, with the characters forever frequenting bars and pubs. The most pathographical novel of all is *Hangover Square* (1941), in which George Harvey Bone’s obsession is so intense that drinking becomes part and parcel of his reasoning: “hadn’t he got something to drink and think about?” (2001: 139). The monumental trilogy published in 1935 as *Twenty Thousand Streets Under the Sky* is similarly disturbing, though at the same time heart-rending, the hub of the story being The Midnight Bell, a pub in which the main characters’ fortunes intertwine while drink flows in abundance.

Any discussion on the writer-drink-literature nexus is partly speculative, because it is difficult to quantify the extent to which fictional themes have their source in the writers’ own alcoholic background. However, in most cases, this personal background is reflected in fiction, which is as ‘fortified’ as the authors’ own lives: their personal stories, drinking patterns, and struggles with addiction conspicuously rendered in their novels. The fact that they are written from experience additionally validates their genuineness in the context of drink literature.

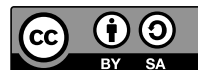
Apart from numerous American novelists who have been extensively discussed in critical studies, and such iconic alcoholic writers as Lowry or Jackson, there are writers whose lives and works in the alcoholic context, have either not been considered at all, or largely ignored, without full acknowledgement of their personal entanglement and contribution to the field of drink literature. This is particularly true as regards the British writers, many of whom perfectly fit the context. Jean Rhys and Patrick Hamilton are just two examples, but there are numerous other, to mention Henry Green, or Julian MacLaren-Ross. The short space of this article does not allow for a detailed analytical dissection of the writer-drink-literature nexus, but it does signal that there are still novelists and novels worth further critical recognition in this respect.

## REFERENCES

- Angier, Carole. *Jean Rhys*. New York: Viking, 1985.
- Blake Bailey. "Introduction to *The Lost Weekend*." New York: Vintage Books, 2013.
- Chandler, Raymond. *The Long Good-Bye*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with Hamish Hamilton, 1978.
- Chandler, Raymond. *The Big Sleep*. New York: Vinatage Crime/Black Lizard, 1992.
- Douglas-Fairhurst, Robert. "William Golding: the Man Who Wrote Lord of the Flies by John Carey: review." *The Telegraph*, 28 August 2009.
- Gilmore, Thomas B. 1982. "The Place of Hallucinations in Under the Volcano." *Contemporary Literature* 23: 285-305.
- Golding, William. *The Inheritors*. London: Faber and Faber, 1981.
- Golding, William. *The Paper Men*. London: Guild Publishing, 1984.
- Goodwin, Donald W. 1993. "Alcohol as Muse." *Dionysos*, Vol. 5 No 1, 1993, pp. 3-14.
- Greene, Graham. *The Honorary Consul: A Novel*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000.
- Hamilton, Patrick. 2001. *Hangover Square*. London: Penguin, 2001.
- Hiney, Tom. *Raymond Chandler: A Biography*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1997.
- Holroyd, Michael. "Introduction to *The Slaves of Solitude*." In Hamilton, 2006. xiv-xiv.
- King, Stephen. *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002.
- King, Stephen. *Doctor Sleep*. New York: Gallery Books, 2014.
- Knickerbocker, Conrad. 1979. "Foreword to *Lunar Caustic*." In, Lowry, 1979. 291-293.

- Leith, Sam. 2013. "Doctor Sleep by Stephen King – review." *The Guardian*, 30 September.
- London, Jack. *John Barleycorn*. New York: Century Company, 1913.
- Lowry, Malcolm. *Hear Us O Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place and Lunar Caustic*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979.
- Max, D.T. "Day of the Dead: Malcolm Lowry's mysterious demise." *The New Yorker*, December 17, 2007.
- Morrison, Blake. 2013. "Why do writers drink?" *The Guardian*, 20 July.
- Pratt, David C. "Role of Alcohol in Literature." In Martin, Scott Christopher. (Ed.), *The Sage Encyclopedia of Alcohol: Social, Cultural, and Historical Perspective*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: SAGE Publications, 2015. 798-804.
- Rhys, Jean. *Good Morning, Midnight*. London: Penguin, 2000.
- Rolls, Albert. *Stephen King: A Biography*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2009.
- Savory, Elaine. *Jean Rhys*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Seabrook, William. *Asylum*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1935.
- Seabrook, William. *No Hiding Place*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1942.
- Waugh, Evelyn. *Brideshead Revisited*. London: Penguin Books, 2000.
- Wilson, John Howard. *Evelyn Waugh: A Literary Biography, 1924-1966*. London: Associated University Presses, 2001.
- Wilson, Edmund (ed.). *The Crack-Up: Nonfiction by F. Scott Fitzgerald*. New York: New Directions Publishing, 2009.

Wojciech Klepuszewski  
Koszalin University of Technology  
klepuszewski@poczta.pl



### Okrepljena proza: pisatelji in pijača

Del tega kar je označeno za študije pitja zajema književnost in način na katerega je pijača opisana v literarnih delih. V mnogih primerih so takšna dela izpod peresa avtorjev, ki so sami odvisni od pijače.

**Ključne besede:** alkohol, književnost, proza, pisatelji, zasvojenost

ACTA NEOPHILOLOGICA  
DOI: 10.4312/an.50.1-2.37-56

UDK: 27.312.47:7+821(=131.1)(73)

# The Black Madonna in the Italian American Artistic Imagination

*Elisabetta Marino*

## **Abstract**

This essay sets out to explore the image of the black Madonna in Italian American artistic and literary expressions, providing thought-provoking examples of how this holy icon of universal motherhood has been persistently associated with the articulation of empowering strategies, with antagonism towards any kind of patriarchal restraints, with the healing of deeply ingrained divisions (of gender, class, ethnicity), and with the celebration of diversity in unity.

**Key words:** Black Madonna, Italian Americans, Patriarchy, Otherness

Over the centuries, considerable scholarly efforts have been devoted to unravel the mystery that surrounds the image of the black Madonna, whose category “appears to be an unstable one,”<sup>1</sup> as Melanie Rose Landman has underlined, after stating that “there is no definitive explanation for the blackness of black Madonnas.”<sup>2</sup> Mostly dating back to the Middle Ages, between the Eleventh and the Fourteenth centuries (even though some frescoes, paintings, and even a few sculptures can be ascribed to the first centuries of the Christian Era<sup>3</sup>), Bizantine-style icons as well as wooden, stone, and metal statues of the black Madonna (with Asian, European or African features) are to be found in 35 countries all over the world, according to a survey carried out by Ean Begg (a former Dominican priest and currently a Jungian analyst), who has compiled a valuable but still incomplete list of more than 450 representations of the dark Virgin with her holy infant, all renowned for their miraculous power.<sup>4</sup> This rather modest figure is probably underestimated for several reasons: first of all, the elusive definition of what a *black* Madonna really is (her skin colour ranges from pitch black to lighter hues of brown). Moreover, several images have undergone substantial transformations and can no longer be visibly identified as *black*; indeed, when the first or even later attempts at restoration were undertaken, a fair number of pictures and statuettes were not just cleaned: they were literally repainted, *whitened*. Since their complexion seldom reflected the predominant ethnicity of the sites where they were worshipped (mainly in Europe), due to the customary connections between darkness and sin, beauty/purity and the immaculate candour of a virgin,<sup>5</sup> their peculiar dusky colour was often rejected and denied, conveniently believed to be unintentional, accidentally caused either by the smoke of incense, candles and fires, or by layers of dirt and ashes, or even by the oxidation of some of the pigments used in old paint.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, it should not pass unnoticed that, despite the superficial

1 Melanie Rose Landman, “An Investigation in to the Phenomenon of the Black Madonna” (PhD diss., University of Roehampton, 2012), 7.

2 Ibid.

3 St. Luke, the Evangelist, was credited with painting the oldest and most truthful portraits of Mary, symbolically *darkened* with grief. Compare Monique Scheer, “From Majesty to Mystery: Change in the Meanings of Black Madonnas from the Sixteenth to Nineteenth Centuries.” *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 5 (2002): 1422.

4 Ean Begg, *The Cult of the Black Virgin* (New York: Penguin, 1996), 3.

5 Black Madonnas have been commonly perceived as *ugly* and imperfect. As Scheer recalls, J.W. Goethe, for example, voiced a sense of “esthetic disappointment” while looking at the “Moorish colour” and the Egyptian and Abyssinian features of some representations of the Mother of God. Scheer, “From Majesty to Mystery,” 1438. Even Karl Marx described black Madonnas as “the most disgraceful portraits of the Mother of God.” H.F. Peters, *Red Jenny. A Life with Karl Marx* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1986), 114.

6 Scheer, “From Majesty to Mystery,” 1418.

changes in their appearance, in popular imagination these church-whitened icons are still revered and almost defiantly referred to as *black* Madonnas.<sup>7</sup>

Numerous black Madonna sanctuaries and pilgrimage sites are located in Italy,<sup>8</sup> especially in the Southern regions, where the vast majority of immigrants to the US came from. Nostalgia for the cherished homeland of one's ancestors mingled with an unbending devotion to Catholicism may be regarded as two of the most evident and plausible reasons for the surprising interest in Black Madonnas displayed – as it will be shown in this essay – by several Italian American scholars, artists, and writers, through their critical inquiries, creative projects, and fictional as well as non fictional narratives. As Edvige Giunta has highlighted, however, especially Italian American women authors (but also some of their male counterparts) assert in their works “their power to rewrite Catholicism and, blending it with old and new mythologies, employ it as a vehicle for self-exploration and artistic affirmation.”<sup>9</sup> Remarkably enough, Italian American artists and intellectuals have not been drawn towards the sorrowful, silent, meek and selfless image of the *mater dolorosa*, emulated by so many domestic angels appeared in their ancillary position.<sup>10</sup> Quite the opposite: they seem to have deliberately elected as their collective and individual protective icon an ancient, potent, and enigmatic female figure, whose curious and puzzling colour seems to correspond to the dark complexion of the newcomers from Sicily or Calabria, who exhibited on their faces “a different kind of white than those of the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture,”<sup>11</sup> in the words of Fred Gardaphé, and therefore resisted assimilation (or, as one may be tempted to define it, annihilation) into the melting pot.

Given what has been argued to far, this essay sets out to explore the image of the black Madonna in Italian American artistic and literary expressions, providing thought-provoking examples of how this holy icon of universal motherhood has

7 This is the case of the *black* Madonnas of Lucerna, Avellino, Chiaramonte Gulfi and Montenero, to name a few.

8 According to Mary Beth Moser, there are 125 Black Madonnas in Italy but, in her view, the count is constantly rising. Mary Beth Moser, *Honoring Darkness. Exploring the Power of Black Madonnas in Italy* (Vashon Island, Washington: Dea Madre Publishing, 2008), 128.

9 Edvige Giunta, *Writing with an Accent. Contemporary Italian American Women Authors* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 104.

10 Compare the essay by Mary Jo Bona entitled “*Mater Dolorosa No More? Mothers and Writers in the Italian/ American Literary Tradition.*”

11 Fred Gardaphé, *Leaving Little Italy: Essaying Italian American Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 6. The most infamous epithets usually hurled at Italian Americans were WoP (without papers, a reference to the status of illegal immigrant), Dago (a corruption of the Spanish name Diego), and Guinea, “a reference to inhabitants of a coastal area in Western Africa as the ‘Guinea Negro.’” Salvatore J. LaGumina et al., *The Italian American Experience: an Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 319.

been persistently associated with the articulation of empowering strategies, with antagonism towards any kind of patriarchal restraints, with the healing of deeply ingrained divisions (of gender, class, ethnicity), and with the celebration of diversity in unity. Some of the most comprehensive investigations into the history and significance of black Madonnas – carried out (not by chance) by two American scholars of Italian ancestry, namely Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum and her disciple Mary Beth Moser – will provide the necessary information to contextualize and support the analysis of relevant artistic productions and literary texts.

A “womanist/feminist cultural historian,” as she often describes herself,<sup>12</sup> since the beginning of the 1990s, Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum has been actively engaged in researching and uncovering the meaning of black Madonnas, primarily focusing on the Italian scenario. By delving into vernacular traditions (i.e. the history/herstory of subordinated *Others*, of those who have been left out and marginalized), in her pioneering study entitled *Black Madonnas: Feminism, Religion & Politics in Italy* (1993), she maintains that “Black Madonnas may be considered a metaphor for a memory of the time when the earth was believed to be the body of a woman and all creatures were equal.”<sup>13</sup> As Chiavola Birnbaum points out, the unusual colour of black Madonnas is actually “the ancient colour of regeneration,”<sup>14</sup> reminiscent of the different shades of brown of the fertile Earth. Besides, it recalls the primordial Dark Mother nurturing all creatures, belonging to a time before history, when communities were classless, and humans were not alienated from one another and from nature.

As Chiavola Birnbaum remarks in her volume, after visiting many sanctuaries in Italy dedicated to the Black Madonna, she realized that most had been built on (or, at least, in the proximity of) heathen temples and holy sites consecrated to primeval Goddesses: among them, the Phoenician Astarte, the Sicilian Ibla, the Egyptian Isis, the Anatolian Cybele, the Roman Ceres or, in Greek mythology, Demeter, one of whose many names was Melaina, the Black One, “in a clue to the origin of black Madonnas.”<sup>15</sup> Hence, in her view, cultural hybridity, dynamism, and syncretism (whose corollary is the “mixing [of] pagan and Christian beliefs”<sup>16</sup>) are all attributes inextricably linked with the cult of the black Madonna.

The historian also places a strong emphasis on the powerful nature of this

12 See, for instance, the back cover of her seminal volume entitled *Black Madonnas: Feminism, Religion & Politics in Italy*.

13 Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum, *Black Madonnas: Feminism, Religion and Politics in Italy* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 3.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid., 37.

16 Ibid., 51.



feminine icon of the sacred: a close examination of popular, unofficial prayers and peasant rituals (including those aimed at dispelling the evil eye, *malocchio*) reveals that the black Madonna is widely acknowledged as the most effective figure in providing emotional and physical support, as well as in exorcising evils, fiercely chastising offenders, and redressing wrongs.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, Chiavola Birnbaum observes that in Italy, the sanctuaries of brown and black Madonnas are unmistakably “located in areas known for religious heresy and characterized by politics of equality and justice,”<sup>18</sup> the latter being “the central value that emerges from studying the earth mother;”<sup>19</sup> “for me,” comments the scholar, “the image of black madonnas [...] counters racism and sexism and connotes nurturance of the ‘other’ in contrast to the violence toward the ‘other’ that has historically characterized established religious and political doctrines.”<sup>20</sup> Consequently, the *whitening* of black Madonnas (which implies a profound subversion of their nature) is interpreted by her as a calculated attempt on the part of a patriarchal institution such as the Roman Catholic Church to control and subdue their undermining potential, thus “reduc[ing] the Madonna to a great saint embodying virginity and obedience.”<sup>21</sup>

Following in the steps of her friend and mentor, Mary Beth Moser has offered her valuable contribution to casting light on the mystery of black Madonnas. In her *Honoring Darkness. Exploring the Power of Black Madonnas in Italy* (a volume that combines scholarly erudition and personal recollections), she further investigates the origins of the dark colour of sculptures and portraits,<sup>22</sup> by highlighting the possible connection between the black Madonna and the bride featured in the *Song of Songs*, who portrays herself as black but beautiful: “nigra sum sed formosa,”<sup>23</sup> a sentence that is also inscribed on the base of the statue of the black Madonna of Tindari (a small village which is part of the municipality of Patti, in Sicily). Quoting the studies of Margaret Starbird, Moser also notices that the dark-skinned Mother may be identified with Mary Magdalene, “the ‘other’ Mary,”<sup>24</sup> while her child could be the fruit of her unrecognized union with Jesus

---

17 Ibid., 139.

18 Ibid., 33.

19 Ibid., 23.

20 Ibid., 12.

21 Ibid., 40. Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum further deepened her analysis in the second part of her volume entitled *Dark Mother: African Origins and Godmothers* (San Jose: Authors Choice Press, 2001), 115-248.

22 Moser also mentions the already listed *unintentional* reasons often cited for the dark colour (dirt, paint deterioration, and smoke). Moser, *Honoring Darkness*, 4.

23 Ibid., 5. Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum had also hinted at this bond. Chiavola Birnbaum, *Black Madonnas*, 40-41.

24 Moser, *Honoring Darkness*, 6.

Christ. In the Italian peninsula, the archaic cults of the African Goddess Isis, of the black Goddess Artemis of Ephesus, of Demeter, of Cybele (the Great Mother of the Gods), of Hera, of the Goddess Mefiti (“an Italic divinity who dispelled evil spirits”<sup>25</sup>), and of the indigenous Vitulia (often assimilated to Hera) somehow all merged with the adoration of the black Madonna. Moser also reminds her readers that the Sumerians worshipped the great Goddess Inanna, known for her dark visage, while Hindus have a deep reverence for dark Kali who, like the black Madonna, is both a creator and a destroyer. Besides being the emblem of “the primordial darkness before light,”<sup>26</sup> therefore, the colour black is unquestionably linked with majesty and power: as the scholar emphasizes, in fact, “one of the most notable characteristics about Black Madonnas is their power.”<sup>27</sup>

The large number of *ex-votos* in fulfillment of vows bears witness to the enormous influence exercised by the dark Mother of God when supplicants appeal for her intercession.<sup>28</sup> Some of the miracles listed by Moser, however, reflect the Madonna’s “potentially dangerous power,”<sup>29</sup> namely her unusual willingness to punish with great force any form of abuse or violation of her sacred person (as when her very blackness was teased and her authority belittled).<sup>30</sup> In time, these stories have been altered and some of the most problematic aspects (especially those concerning the divine Mother’s anger) have been strategically erased: as Moser elucidates, “perhaps, like the alteration of the dark color of the images, the elimination of the details of the stories is a kind of an ‘emotional whitening,’ a gradual removal of the Madonna’s ‘full’ range of power, including those we might consider to be negative.”<sup>31</sup>

Finally, like Chiavola Birnbaum, also Moser devotes ample sections of her volume to what may be termed the *hybrid* nature of the black Madonna (“[she] crosses boundaries of time, geography, ethnicity, class, and religion”<sup>32</sup>), and to her

---

25 Ibid., 18.

26 Ibid., 15.

27 Ibid., 3.

28 As Moser underlines in another essay, “the clear message is that these powerful Madonnas can be called upon in the hour of need. No request is beyond her capacity.” Even though many have been stolen or lost, over ten thousand *ex-votos* are displayed in sanctuaries dedicated to black Madonnas in Italy. Mary Beth Moser, “Blood Relics: Menstrual Roots of Miraculous Black Madonnas in Italy,” *Metaformia: A Journal of Menstruation and Culture* (2005), accessed January 2, 2017, <http://www.metaformia.org/articles/blood-relics/>.

29 Moser, *Honoring Darkness*, 84.

30 For a full list, see pp. 80-82. See also Maria Famà’s poem entitled “The Black Madonna of Tindari,” analyzed in the conclusive part of this essay.

31 Ibid., 79.

32 Ibid., 127.

inclusiveness, her extraordinary capacity to upset hierarchies, to bridge the divides, and to blur cultural borders in the name of equality and justice: “the Black Madonna,” concludes Moser, “has traditionally been worshipped by those who were ‘other’ and not of the dominant culture.”<sup>33</sup>

Removed from their motherland, ostracized by the dominant society, often unfairly treated, disempowered, and stigmatized, many Italian American immigrants have frequently resorted to the protection of the black Madonna (a mythical traveler through cultures and identities, just like them) to overcome traumas and heal deep wounds. As Italian American writer Maria Terrone explained, when asked about the importance attached to black Madonnas by the Italian ethnic communities across the US, “instead of the Madonna being on a pedestal, this version is real and approachable.”<sup>34</sup> Evidence of popular devotion may be gathered by observing, for instance, the cult of the black Madonna of Tindari in the New York metropolitan area, around Manhattan’s East Thirteenth Street. As Joseph Sciorra has pointed out, on September 8, 1905, a group of Sicilian immigrants from Patti (near Messina) celebrated the first festival in honour of the black Madonna in New York. The following year they commissioned a stucco statue inspired by the famous wooden sculpture, as well as establishing the Pattese Committee for the Most Holy Virgin of Tindari (*Comitato Pattese alla Vergine SS. del Tindari*). The statue was soon offered to the church of the Salesian fathers on the Twelfth Street, but it was unexpectedly declined;<sup>35</sup> hence, it was stored in a basement until 1913, when a small storefront chapel was created at 447 East Thirteenth Street.<sup>36</sup> The chapel remained in existence until the late 1980s; since most of the original community members had passed away, the committee was dissolved, money was donated to the sanctuary in Tindari, and one of the devotees was entrusted with the statue. Interestingly enough, however, in 2004 a younger generation of Italian Americans, including artists (such as B. Amore and Annie Lanzillotto) and scholars (George Guida and Joseph Sciorra, among others), started a new tradition: every September 8, they meet where the storefront chapel used to be,

33 Ibid. Moser observes that marginalized individuals and groups, such as the *femminielli* (transsexuals), are particularly devoted to her. In her 2007 volume, Małgorzata Oleszkiewicz-Peralba, another prominent scholar who has devoted time and efforts to the study the black Madonna, defined her as “the great equalizer,” adding that “before her, gender, race, class, and ethnic origin are not debilitating distinctions but a foundation of strength.” Małgorzata Oleszkiewicz-Peralba, *The Black Madonna in Latin America and Europe, Tradition and Transformation* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 11.

34 Maria Terrone, e-mail message to author, December 10, 2016.

35 As reported in Sciorra’s article, “the ecclesiastical authorities did not encourage the yearly street festivals.” Joseph Sciorra, “The Black Madonna of East Thirteenth Street.” *Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore* 30, no. 1-2 (2004): 16.

36 It could accommodate up to twelve people.

now a gay bar called Phoenix; they chat, drink beer, dance *pizzica*, celebrate the black Madonna, and discuss current political and social issues. In Joseph Sciorra's words, they are "adopting and transforming the religious and cultural legacy of those early twentieth century immigrants in the service of the ongoing journey in search of self, community, and the divine."<sup>37</sup>

The same spirit informs the work of Alessandra Belloni, dancer, percussionist, performance artist, and author of a folk opera entitled *Il viaggio della Madonna Nera* (the voyage of the black Madonna), completed in 1991. When Luisa Del Giudice interviewed her, in 1997, the artist highlighted the pivotal role the black Madonna had played in her personal awakening, besides underlining the miraculous power of the universal Mother as a communal healer: "the *fascinating* thing about the Black Madonna [is] that... she has the power to heal even people with serious social problems, drug problems, alcoholism."<sup>38</sup> In the same interview, Belloni meaningfully described the black Madonna as a "*contemporary*"<sup>39</sup> figure, close to her worshippers and perfectly aware of the evils that affect modern society. It is not surprising, therefore, that the memory of the dark Virgin, as symbolically representing the Earth, is entwined with current ecological concerns in the artist's imagination: "the Madonna, the Great Mother Earth [...] who is ecologically dying... [...] We're destroying it."<sup>40</sup>

From performing to visual arts: Gian Bachero is probably one of the most striking Italian American painters who have dealt with the theme of black Madonnas. Interviewed by Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum, he focused on the multicultural, hybrid nature of the Dark Mother, almost perceived as a transnational subject; thus, in his view, the blackness of the Madonna of Tindari is "Indian-Brazilian, Ethiopian, Spanish, Gypsy, Southern European, but yet [she] could be of India."<sup>41</sup>

37 Joseph Sciorra, "Black Madonna Chapel and Phoenix Bar," accessed January 2, 2017, <http://www.placematters.net/node/1416>. Joseph Sciorra has also curated the travelling exhibition entitled "Evviva la Madonna Nera!: Italian American Devotion to the Black Madonna," promoted by the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute. The exhibit, designed by visual artist B. Amore, consists of three triptychs examining the following themes: "La Madonna Nera in Italy and Europe," "La Madonna Nera in the New World," and "La Madonna Nera Rediscovered." For further information: <http://qc.edu/calandra/evviva-la-madonna-nera-italian-american-devotion-black-madonna>.

38 Luisa Del Giudice, ed., *Oral History, Oral Culture, and Italian Americans* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 236.

39 *Ibid.*, 237.

40 *Ibid.*, 236-237. Every year, Alessandra Belloni leads a pilgrimage to the sacred sites of the black Madonna in Southern Italy, as a sign of devotion to her inspirer. [http://www.alessandrabelloni.com/voyage\\_of\\_the\\_black\\_madonna\\_tour\\_in\\_southern\\_italy/](http://www.alessandrabelloni.com/voyage_of_the_black_madonna_tour_in_southern_italy/)

41 Chiavola Birnbaum, *Black Madonnas*, 42. One of the most noteworthy paintings by Gian Bachero is entitled *Black Madonna of Italy*.

What is more, “she is Third World but mother of all,”<sup>42</sup> a daring statement that aims at unsettling stereotypical perceptions, at dismantling the very notions of center and periphery, while investing everyday life with a sacred meaning.

As far as literature is concerned, the three volumes of the series entitled *She is Everywhere! An Anthology of Writing in Womanist/ Feminist Spirituality* (published in 2005, 2009, and 2012) certainly deserve to be mentioned. Celebrating the Divine She in all her manifestations (the black Madonna is just *one* of them), these anthologies feature short stories, poems, excerpts of novels, recollections, critical pieces, illustrations and artwork by women artists across the world, including well-known Italian American authors such as Louisa Calio<sup>43</sup> and Marguerite Rigoglioso.<sup>44</sup> Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum is the editor of the first volume and the co-editor of the second; the third anthology was co-edited by Mary Beth Moser<sup>45</sup>. As Chiavola Birnbaum wrote in her *Note on the Style* for *She's Everywhere, Vol. 1*:

In my view we can be considered *seers and seekers* who remember our oldest mother, a black woman of Africa, as well as look forward to a new world formed by her values. Some of us think of ourselves as *midwives* helping give birth to a new time when justice with compassion, equality, and transformation – like the “*she*” in our title – are everywhere.<sup>46</sup>

One of the most poignant and ground-breaking narratives featuring the black Madonna is probably *No Pictures in My Grave: A Spiritual Journey in Sicily* (1992) by Susan Caperna Lloyd, who is also a filmmaker and a photographer. This memoir chronicles the author’s quest for identity (as both an Italian American and a woman), as well as being a captivating travelogue, a hybrid genre in itself that, according to Valentina Seffer, “bridges documentary narrative and personal experience, the encounter with the Other with the exploration of the self.”<sup>47</sup>

---

42 Ibid.

43 Louisa Calio is a writer, a multimedia performance artist, and the author of two poetry collections: *In the Eye of Balance* (1978), and *Journey to the Heart Waters* (2014). She has also written an autobiographical novel which has not been published yet: *Lucia Means Light*.

44 Marguerite Rigoglioso has published two acclaimed critical studies: *The Cult of Divine Birth in Ancient Greece* (2009), and *Virgin Mother Goddesses of Antiquity* (2010).

45 The second co-editor, Mary Saracino, is the author of a novel entitled *The Singing of Swans* (2006), whose controversial main character, Ibla, worshipped the Black Madonna with fervid devotion.

46 Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum, ed., *She is Everywhere! An Anthology of Writing in Womanist/ Feminist Spirituality, Vol. 1* (Bloomington, IN: IUUniverse, 2005), xxii.

47 Valentina Seffer, “Identity on the Threshold: the Myth of Persephone in Italian American Women’s Memoir” (PhD diss., The University of Sydney, 2015), 100. Edvige Giunta has described the volume as “a complicated feminist search in which personal story, myth, and history overlap.” Edvige Giunta, “Persephone’s Daughters.” *Women’s Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 33 (2004): 770.

Caperna Lloyd first travelled to Italy (the land of her forefathers) in 1983, when she was struck by the Easter Procession of the Mysteries (*Misteri*) in Trapani (Sicily). Her religious and personal pilgrimage allowed her to reconnect with her grandmother Carolina Caperna who, as the author notices in a letter addressed to her, placed on the opening page of her travel account, was “a grieving Madonna and long-suffering mother,”<sup>48</sup> who even resembled “the Pietà”<sup>49</sup> the moment her husband died in her arms. As the writer soon realized, however, Carolina Caperna, “an immigrant Madonna surrounded by her *portatori*”<sup>50</sup> (the male family members, in need of her protection<sup>51</sup>), was actually a powerful woman, who had bravely left her country in search for better prospects, just like the Madonna during the Easter Procession, actively striving to restore her happiness by looking for her lost son through the streets of Trapani. As Mary Jo Bona has argued, Caperna Lloyd’s numerous pilgrimages to Sicily have enabled her to “revise the mother dolorosa role written into the script of an Italian woman’s life;”<sup>52</sup> the patriarchal ideal of womanhood embodied by the submissive and obedient Virgin Mary, is therefore replaced with an icon of self-empowerment: the black Madonna, a new model for the writer.

The narrative opens with a chapter entitled *Processione*. Before moving to Trapani to watch the Mysteries, the author witnesses another procession in the nearby city of Marsala, and she is immediately captivated by the Madonna, so different from the passive and mournful figure she was familiar with, due to her Roman Catholic upbringing: “she was dark and angry. She was powerful and struck me as more like Demeter than Mary.”<sup>53</sup> In her effort to foster a more woman-focused society, Caperna Lloyd offers a revolutionary interpretation of Christ, identified by her as Persephone: “after all, one of Persephone’s names, in the early Greek language, meant ‘saviour.’”<sup>54</sup> Once in Trapani, she finds out that, the *processione* is “not really the

48 Susan Caperna Lloyd, *No Pictures in My Grave: A Spiritual Journey in Sicily* (San Francisco: Mercury House, 1992), ix. The book is dedicated to the author’s mother, “in memory of Grandmother Carolina.” *Ibid.*, v.

49 *Ibid.*, ix.

50 *Ibid.*, 9. *Portatori* are carriers of platforms bearing the statues of saints during processions.

51 The book’s title actually refers to an insightful episode in Caperna Lloyd’s life. When her grandmother passed away, her father decided to place a picture of himself and his son in the coffin, so that the blessed soul of his departed mother could continue to nurture the men of the family. After feeling left aside and deserted (she was literally *not* in the picture), the writer eventually realized that she could act as her own protector, being an independent and self-sufficient woman. When her time arrives – as she ironically remarks – she hopes to “rise up and be free,” with no one to care for, with no pictures in her grave. *Ibid.*, ix.

52 Mary Jo Bona, *By the Breath of Their Mouths: Narratives of Resistance in Italian America* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2010), 57.

53 Caperna Lloyd, *No Pictures in My Grave*, 3.

54 *Ibid.*

story of Christ's death. It is about his Mother, Mary:"<sup>55</sup> in the vernacular version of the biblical events, the Madonna seems to hold a central place, forcefully rejecting her traditional subordinate position. Incidentally, it should not be overlooked that in a variant of this chapter, published one year before (in 1991) as a short story, the Madonna of the procession in Trapani is also depicted as "dark, Moorish-looking;"<sup>56</sup> in truth, only her mantle is black. Mesmerized by the scene before her, Caperna Lloyd longs to take active part in the *processione*, refusing to play the role of the mere spectator. Being a woman, however, she is denied this privilege which, on the other hand, is easily granted to both her husband and son, on account of their gender. Throughout the subsequent chapters of *No Picture in My Grave* the author undertakes a long journey, meaningfully on her own, which takes her to ancient archeological sites (where the Dark Mother was venerated), and to the sanctuary of the Black Madonna of Tindari, where she finally regains her *potenza*, the power she (like many other women) had progressively lost in a male-dominated world:

Women like my grandmother had a primitive strength in their blood. Were they all, at heart, Amazons ... or Cybeles, Demeters, or Black Madonnas? But in a patriarchy and, especially in Carolina's loss of her roots by coming to America, they had forgotten the real depth of their power. [...] Ultimately, with this Madonna and my journey to Sicily, I seemed to look into the uncharted world of my own soul.

I left the Sanctuary and, with the other pilgrims, felt strengthened.<sup>57</sup>

Caperna Lloyd's memoir follows a circular path and it ends where it had begun, with the *processione*. Only this time the author is given the possibility to re-write her own story with a different conclusion: no longer an observer, she miraculously manages to get invited to carry one of the heavy platforms, thus accomplishing the demanding task with precision, power, and grace, just like the other *portatori*. As she proudly states in the very final page of her volume, "I had become the Goddess I had sought. And it seemed right and proper that she had rejoined the world of men."<sup>58</sup>

Multimedia artist Chickie Farella<sup>59</sup> has acknowledged both Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum and Susan Caperna Lloyd as essential sources of inspiration for her

55 Ibid., 10.

56 Susan Caperna Lloyd, "No Picture in My Grave: A Woman's Journey in Sicily." *Italian Americana* 9, no. 2 (1991): 250. The short story's title places an even stronger emphasis on gender issues: it is a *woman's* journey, not a *spiritual* one.

57 Caperna Lloyd, *No Pictures in My Grave*, 140-141.

58 Ibid., 188.

59 I take this opportunity to warmly thank Chickie Farella for allowing me to read her manuscript.

work entitled *Ciao Giulia*, a still unpublished manuscript, even though two long excerpts were released in 1999 and in 2011.<sup>60</sup> In her opinion, the recurring presence of black Madonnas in Italian American literature (especially in the output of women writers) may be explained by noticing the pivotal connection that binds them with authors who grew up in a patriarchal context, namely a history of *darkness*, *abuse*, and *shame*:

the common thread is usually patriarchal abuse, physically and/or mentally during childhood and/or marital relationships. Adding insult to injury these women including myself have been assuming the blame and responsibility FOR this abuse. [...] For example, I get a nasty beating from a boyfriend...I wake up on the floor with him kneeling over me with his hands cupping his crying face and a nose full of snot saying... "Why do you always make me have to beat you?" [...] Eventually, we will get sick and tired of being sick and tired of the blame and shame for the *darkness*. There is a point when female victims who carry and pass MITOCHONDRIAL ENERGY, have a CHEMICAL MEMORY JOG inducing an AWAKENING in us to take ACTION through our INTUITION.<sup>61</sup>

In *Ciao Giulia*, the black Madonna (an emblem of resistance, nurturance, and healing) vigorously helps the protagonists to carve their way out of tragedy.

In the first published excerpt, Carmie and her cousins Jackie and Gina, three Sicilian American women from Chicago, decide to leave for a black Madonna pilgrimage in Sicily, organized by a women's group insightfully called Demetra. They are planning to conclude their journey in Comiso, to attend a march against a nuclear missile plant and domestic violence which, on March 8, 1983, is supposed to gather women from all over the world. In Farella's narrative, devotion to the black Madonna is coupled with both the responsibility for *the safeguard of the planet's* ecological equilibrium (given the correspondence between the Dark Mother and the Earth that has already been observed in previous sections of this essay), and the peaceful battle for women's rights and dignity. Quoting a provocative passage of the story, "*women, like all oppressed peoples, like the slaves, like black people today are in revolt. It is a revolt without bloodshed and without death because we are life.*"<sup>62</sup> Moreover, the pilgrimage enables every protagonist to come to terms with the personal struggle each of them is going through: Carmie is facing cancer, Jackie is grappling with repressed memories of child abuse, Gina is anxious to break free from an overprotective and stifling home environment.

60 The first one is entitled "Ciao Giulia," the second, "Castration or Transformation? (from *Ciao Giulia*)."

61 Chickie Farella, e-mail message to author, December 11, 2016.

62 Chickie Farella, "Ciao Giulia." *Voices in Italian Americana* 10, no. 1 (1999): 150.



In the second published excerpt, Farella delves into the theme of justified anger, another attribute of the black Madonna. Giulia (a background character in the first story) is raped by Antonio, the man chosen by her father and brother for an arranged marriage. The three Sicilian Americans, therefore, chase after the offender, only to find him inside “the oldest Marian sanctuary in all Italy, Santa Maria Adonai, where Christians hid in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century to escape persecution;”<sup>63</sup> it goes without saying that the ancient shrine, located in Brucoli (near Syracuse), is dedicated to the black Madonna. Pointing a knife at the rapist’s penis (as if she intended to castrate him) right in front of the image of the holy Mother, Jackie seems to perform an alternative, cathartic ritual which, far from coming across as ruthless and blasphemous, is endowed with the miraculous power to transform all the participants (hence the title “Castration or Transformation?”): Antonio, repentant of his crimes, begs for forgiveness, while the three girls (who obviously refrain from indulging in the very violence they want to be rid of) feel purified, relieved, and healed. The story ends with a song, a sort of new choral hymn glorifying active womanhood:

Siamo donne We are women  
 Siamo tante We are many  
 Siamo stufe We’ve had it  
 Tutti quanti!  
 Tutti quanti!  
 And that means all of us.....all of us!<sup>64</sup>

In his 2006 article on Louisa Ermelino’s *The Black Madonna*, Dennis Barone defined the novel as “a transitional step,” leading the author “from male-centered narrative to a female centered one.”<sup>65</sup> The heroines of the novel set in New York are, in fact, three Italian American women, Teresa, Magdalena, and Antoinette, three Madonnas with a child (or a step-child, in the case of Madgalena) who, in turn, are profoundly devoted to the dark Mother of God (each of them cherishes either a small statue or a sacred image of the black Virgin Mary).

In her volume, Ermelino looks into the most curious and mysterious qualities of the black Madonna which, as Sigrid Ulrike Claasen has underlined, “appear

63 Chickie Farella, “Castration or Transformation? (from *Ciao Giulia*),” in *Reconstructing Italians in Chicago: Thirty Authors in Search of Their Roots and Branches*, eds. Dominic Candeloro, and Fred Gardaphé (Chicago: Italian Cultural Center at Casa Italia, 2011), 202.

64 Ibid., 208.

65 Dennis Barone, “We’ve always Been Different: Louisa Ermelino’s Spring Street Trilogy and Italian American Women’s Writing,” *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 48, no. 1 (2006): 25. Ermelino’s debut novel was entitled *Joey Dee Gets Wise* (1991); *The Black Madonna* is her second novel.

in the form of paganism, in particular the superstitious belief of the evil eye.”<sup>66</sup> But it is not just the folkloristic, almost humorous side of the Italian *malocchio* and *fattura* (incantation) that captivates the writer’s imagination (Antoinette, for instance, firmly believes that Teresa, the mother of sickly Nicky, is always on the verge of casting a spell on her son Jumbo, because he is so healthy and big). What the author really wishes to explore is the possibility to employ vernacular religion as a “safety net”<sup>67</sup> (borrowing the expression from Theodora Patrona), providing the female characters with the necessary tools to fight for justice and equal opportunities. Hence, Zia Guinetta, one of the Italian protagonists of the story who lives in the village of Castelfondo (in Lucania), successfully uses witchcraft mixed with devotional practices (prayers to the black Madonna of Viggiano) to catch a good husband, Zio Carmelo. This singular combination of orthodoxy and paganism<sup>68</sup> actually saves her from need and humiliations, meaningfully perpetrated by an official representative of the Roman Catholic Church: “Zia Guinetta had been the housekeeper of a local priest who took her in when she was orphaned as a young child. She had cooked his food and cleaned his house and aborted his babies, until the day she saw Zio Carmelo coming home from the fields.”<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, another authoritative member of the patriarchal institution (a friar) is held responsible for Magdalena’s mother desertion of her family: he had lured the poverty-stricken woman into sin by showing her his selection of French wines, and “a room where sausage and cheese hung on ropes from the ceiling.”<sup>70</sup> As the story proceeds, young Magdalena becomes Zia Guinetta’s pupil and disciple, besides turning into the most faithful follower of the black Madonna once settled in the US, as the wife of Amadeo (Zia Guinetta’s Italian American nephew<sup>71</sup>).

As Theodora Patrona has emphasized, “the final part of *The Black Madonna* foregrounds the beginning of a new era: intermarriage as a social reality and the dismantling of the ethnic ghetto.”<sup>72</sup> Jumbo, now grown into a huge but simple-heart-

66 Sigrid Ulrike Claasen, “The Black Madonna Figure as a Source of Female Empowerment in the Works of Four Italian-Canadian Authors” (PhD diss., Université de Sherbrooke, 1997): 18.

67 Theodora D. Patrona, “The West in Italy/ Italy in the West: Italian American Women Writers and the Ethnic Heroine,” in *The West in Asia and Asia in the West: Essays on Transnational Interactions*, eds. Elisabetta Marino, and Tanfer Emin Tunç (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2015), 81.

68 The black Madonna commands her to sacrifice a black goat and to wear a sliver of the animal’s thigh-bone around her neck. Louisa Ermelino, *The Black Madonna* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 114.

69 Ibid., 89-90.

70 Ibid., 131-132.

71 Zia Guinetta had actually pushed her nephew into the marriage with the much younger Magdalena to secure her grip on Amadeo’s American money, thus protecting her own interests.

72 Patrona, “The West in Italy/ Italy in the West,” 85.

ed man, falls in love with Judy, a Jewish girl, a despicable *mazzucriste* (a Christ killer) according to Antoinette and Teresa. The two women hope that Magdalena's "dark power"<sup>73</sup> will succeed in breaking their newly-formed union; however, she simply replies that she will "pray to the Black Madonna for Jumbo's happiness."<sup>74</sup> Ermelino here introduces another distinctive quality of the black Madonna, namely her tremendous ability to create bonds, to unblock channels of communication, to build bridges across the community divides. As a result, the narrative ends with the dawning of a new, multicultural society, incarnated in Jumbo and Judy's child, whose name and identity are both meaningful and fluid: Sol, *Solomon*, for his Jewish relatives, Sal, *Salvatore*, for the Italian side of the family.

The black Madonna is also remarkably present in the works of male writers. A long chapter entitled "The Black Madonna" is included in Tony Ardizzone's 1999 much-praised novel: *In the Garden of Papa Santuzzu*. "Arguably the most radical"<sup>75</sup> section of the volume, in Mary Jo Bona's opinion, the chapter is narrated in the first person by Anna Girgenti, the daughter of Luigi, one of Papa Santuzzu's seven children who, one by one, had emigrated to "the marvelous new land [that] was called *La Merica*."<sup>76</sup>

Following her mother's death in childbirth (she had delivered a stillborn child and had passed away a few hours later), Anna shares years of misery with her father, until such time as he decides he can no longer care for an adolescent daughter.<sup>77</sup> Anna is then sent to an orphanage where, after some time, she experiences visions of the black Madonna, for seven consecutive days. This "dark and beautiful woman"<sup>78</sup> – "her face as dark as a womb"<sup>79</sup> – appears to her wearing simple clothes ("a plain brown cloak [...] like any common girl"<sup>80</sup>) to announce the beginning of a new order:

There are three orders to time through which the world must pass before its end [...]. These orders of time correspond to the three faces of God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. During the first order of time, she said, the world was created and governed by the Father. During the second, it was redeemed by

73 Ermelino, *The Dark Madonna*, 228.

74 Ibid.

75 Bona, *By the Breath of Their Mouths*, 34.

76 Tony Ardizzone, *In the Garden of Papa Santuzzu* (New York: Picador, 1999), 8.

77 He nearly kills her when he mistakes her menstrual blood for a sign of deforation.

78 Ibid., 247.

79 Ibid., 255. Only the first time she appeared with her dark, thick lipped, and curly child.

80 Ibid., 251. Only when the priests are watching she shows herself "wearing her blue robe as well as a gold, multipointed crown." Ibid., 254.

the Son. The world was now entering the cusp of its third and final order, to be perfected and ruled by her.<sup>81</sup>

In Ardizzone's narrative, therefore, the black Madonna refuses to be viewed simply as the chosen vessel of redemption: conversely, she takes an active role and proclaims herself part of the holy Trinity: "I am all of these things, all at the same time. Jesù and I are twin souls, and one with God the Father."<sup>82</sup>

As Christina Marrocco has elucidated, however, "for Catholicism, a monotheistic and patriarchal belief system, the idea of a female deity as creator is profane."<sup>83</sup> Anna Girenti's words are, therefore, harshly questioned by the church hierarchy in a lengthy and disconcerting passage that allows Ardizzone to explore issues of gender, ethnicity, and class. Anna's only advocate is, not by chance, a young and "dark priest,"<sup>84</sup> who tries to defend her from the accusations of blasphemy, heresy, hysteria, delirium, and madness. Thus showing all his contempt for the poor, one of the white-haired priests wonders: "Why would the Holy Mother reveal her most sacred personage to *someone like this?*"<sup>85</sup> Then, another priest passes a sexist remark, aimed at demeaning the Madonna as a woman: "Mary can hardly be thought of as equal to Jesus since she was born a mere woman."<sup>86</sup> Finally, the skin-colour of the Virgin Mary is ridiculed and despised in a thoroughly racist and disturbing dialogue:

"The girl further claims that the spirit's face was coloured! She herself called it a Black Madonna!"

"A Coloured Madonna?" the second priest said.

"She'd have us believe the Blessed Virgin was coloured?" the third priest said with a laugh. "A Negro?"<sup>87</sup>

When the dark priest challenges them, by recalling the tradition of black Madonnas in Italy, one of the archbishops sarcastically replies: "I met a local priest who made it his business to uncover statues of this so-called black-faced Madonna and have them repainted white"<sup>88</sup> or destroyed as "false idols."<sup>89</sup>

---

81 Ibid., 255.

82 Ibid., 256.

83 Christina Marrocco, "The Evil Eye in Italian American Literature: Magic, Religion, Gender, and Rhetoric" (PhD diss., Northern Illinois University, 2011): 199.

84 Ardizzone, *In the Garden of Papa Santuzzu*, 257.

85 Ibid., 256. The emphasis is mine.

86 Ibid., 258.

87 Ibid.

88 Ibid., 259.

89 Ibid.

In Ardizzone's novel, however, the sincere belief of subaltern people prevails, and a sense of justice (often connected with the icon of the black Madonna) is restored. Eventually, the miraculous *Madonna nera* of the orphanage is acknowledged, at least in popular devotion ("Not even the Pope will be able to paint her face white"<sup>90</sup>). As for Anna Girgenti, she takes the vows and moves to Africa, the mythical land of the Dark Mother of all; as she explains towards the end of the chapter, "more than once I saw the Madonna in the face of the beautiful Eritrean people for whom it was my blessing to care."<sup>91</sup>

Sicilian American poet Maria Famà has dedicated two poems to the black Madonna of Tindari, both included in her 2013 collection entitled *Mystics in the Family*. Her interest in the Dark Mother of God was ignited when she was a child:

I grew up with images of the black Madonna of Tindari all around me. In fact, I remember one gift my grandfather gave me when I was a little girl. It was a little night light with the image of the black Madonna of Tindari with her statement written at the bottom NIGRA SUM SED FORMOSA. My maternal grandfather, Pietro Guaetta, when visiting his sister, Antonia, in Sicily, picked this gift out especially for me. This little gift fired my imagination. The black Madonna of Tindari was our powerful protector. [...] As an adult, I learned of other black Madonnas in Italy and other countries who are always advocates for the poor and the abused.<sup>92</sup>

In the poem entitled "The Black Madonna of Tindari," Famà delves into the subject of xenophobia, by offering an example of how the black Madonna "took gentle/ vengeance"<sup>93</sup> on a pilgrim who had dared to mock her dark complexion: "I traveled so far to see someone blacker than me!"<sup>94</sup> The poem continues with the distressing – albeit only temporary – disappearance of the baby in her arms, miraculously transported to a patch of land in the middle of the sea. In the conclusive words of the poem, "The Black Madonna of Tindari taught/ that racism is a sin."<sup>95</sup>

"I am not White," the second poem, stems from Famà's awareness of her deeper roots, of her intimate connection with the peoples of Africa (as a Sicilian), and with the African American experience (as an Italian American). As she observes,

---

90 Ibid., 269.

91 Ibid.

92 Maria Famà, e-mail message to author, November 10, 2016.

93 Maria Famà, *Mystics in the Family* (New York: Bordighera Press, 2013), 13.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

Growing up in the USA, one is always part of and surrounded by black culture. From the earliest days of the USA, African American culture has been a powerful influence although black people were enslaved and discriminated against even when freed. Their struggles to gain civil rights in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century had a significant influence on Americans, most especially artists, scholars, intellectuals, and those people committed to justice. My grandparents and parents, as immigrants, were horrified to observe the injustice against black people here in their adopted land.<sup>96</sup>

Hence, in her poem Famà remembers how “Sicilians left for other lands/ trying to escape poverty, injustice;”<sup>97</sup> she recollects the time when they were called “coloured,” and were “lynched in the South.”<sup>98</sup> She also recalls the sad moment when, marginalized and ashamed of themselves, Italian Americans strived to annihilate their ethnic identity and stayed quiet, standing apart “from those darker sisters and brothers.”<sup>99</sup> In the very last lines, however, the image of the black Madonna of Tindari, apparently forgotten by the newer generations, reappears as an active and powerful instrument of individual and social reform, as a compelling reminder that we all originated from the same dark womb of Mother Earth. Inspired by this potent icon of justice, equality, nurturance, and healing, the poet can light-heartedly celebrate her hybrid self and proudly state: “I am Sicilian/ I am not white.”

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ardizzone, Tony. *In the Garden of Papa Santuzzu*. New York: Picador, 1999.

Barone, Dennis. “We’ve always Been Different: Louisa Ermelino’s Spring Street Trilogy and Italian American Women’s Writing.” *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 48, no. 1 (2006): 19-30.

Begg, Ean. *The Cult of the Black Virgin*. New York: Penguin, 1996.

Birnbaum, Lucia Chiavola. *Black Madonnas: Feminism, Religion and Politics in Italy*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993.

Birnbaum, Lucia Chiavola. *Dark Mother: African Origins and Godmothers*. San Jose: Authors Choice Press, 2001.

Birnbaum, Lucia Chiavola, ed. *She is Everywhere! An Anthology of Writing in Womanist/ Feminist Spirituality, Vol. 1*. Bloomington, IN: IUUniverse, 2005.

96 Maria Famà, e-mail message to author, November 10, 2016.

97 Famà, *Mystics in the Family*, 14.

98 Ibid.

99 Ibid.

- Bona, Mary Jo. "Mater Dolorosa No More? Mothers and Writers in the Italian/American Literary Tradition." *Voices in Italian Americana* 7, no. 2 (1996): 1-19.
- Bona, Mary Jo. *By the Breath of Their Mouths: Narratives of Resistance in Italian America*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2010.
- Claasen, Sigrid Ulrike. "The Black Madonna Figure as a Source of Female Empowerment in the Works of Four Italian-Canadian Authors." PhD diss., Université de Sherbrooke, 1997.
- Del Giudice, Luisa, ed. *Oral History, Oral Culture, and Italian Americans*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Ermelino, Louisa. *The Black Madonna*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001.
- Famà, Maria. *Mystics in the Family*. New York: Bordighera Press, 2013.
- Farella, Chickie. "Ciao Giulia." *Voices in Italian Americana* 10, no. 1 (1999): 139-154.
- Farella, Chickie. "Castration or Transformation? (from *Ciao Giulia*)." In *Reconstructing Italians in Chicago: Thirty Authors in Search of their Roots and Branches*, edited by Dominic Candeloro, and Fred Gardaphé, 201-208. Chicago: Italian Cultural Center at Casa Italia, 2011.
- Gardaphé, Fred. *Leaving Little Italy: Essaying Italian American Culture*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004.
- Giunta, Edvige. *Writing with an Accent. Contemporary Italian American Women Authors*, New York: Palgrave, 2002.
- Giunta, Edvige. "Persephone's Daughters." *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 33 (2004): 767-786.
- LaGumina, Salvatore J., Frank J. Cavaioli, Salvatore Primeggia, and Joseph A. Varacalli. *The Italian American Experience: an Encyclopedia*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Landman, Melanie Rose. "An Investigation in to the Phenomenon of the Black Madonna." PhD diss., University of Roehampton, 2012.
- Lloyd, Susan Caperna. "No Picture in My Grave: A Woman's Journey in Sicily." *Italian Americana* 9, no. 2 (1991): 245-267.
- Lloyd, Susan Caperna. *No Pictures in My Grave: A Spiritual Journey in Sicily*. San Francisco: Mercury House, 1992.
- Marrocco, Christina. "The Evil Eye in Italian American Literature: Magic, Religion, Gender, and Rhetoric." PhD diss., Northern Illinois University, 2011.
- Moser, Mary Beth. *Honoring Darkness. Exploring the Power of Black Madonnas in Italy*. Vashon Island, Washington: Dea Madre Publishing, 2008.
- Moser, Mary Beth. "Blood Relics: Menstrual Roots of Miraculous Black Madonnas in Italy." *Metaformia: A Journal of Menstruation and Culture* (2005), accessed April 25, 2017. <http://www.metaformia.org/articles/blood-relics/>.
- Oleszkiewicz-Peralba, Małgorzata. *The Black Madonna in Latin America and Europe, Tradition and Transformation*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001.

- Patrona, Theodora D. "The West in Italy/ Italy in the West: Italian American Women Writers and the Ethnic Heroine." In *The West in Asia and Asia in the West: Essays on Transnational Interactions*, edited by Elisabetta Marino, and Tanfer Emin Tunç, 79-91. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2015.
- Peters, H.F. *Red Jenny. A Life with Karl Marx*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986.
- Saracino, Mary, and Mary Beth Moser. *She is Everywhere! An Anthology of Writing in Womanist/ Feminist Spirituality, Vol. 3*. Bloomington, IN: IUiverse, 2012.
- Scheer, Monique. "From Majesty to Mystery: Change in the Meanings of Black Madonnas from the Sixteenth to Nineteenth Centuries." *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 5 (2002): 1412-1440.
- Sciorra, Joseph. "The Black Madonna of East Thirteenth Street." *Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore* 30, no. 1-2 (2004): 14-17.
- Sciorra, Joseph. "Black Madonna Chapel and Phoenix Bar." Accessed April 25, 2017. <http://www.placematters.net/node/1416>.
- Seffer, Valentina. "Identity on the Threshold: the Myth of Persephone in Italian American Women's Memoir." PhD diss, The University of Sydney, 2015.
- Williams, Annette Lyn, Karen Nelson Villanueva, and Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum. *She is Everywhere! An Anthology of Writing in Womanist/ Feminist Spirituality, Vol. 2*. Bloomington, IN: IUiverse, 2009.

*Elisabetta Marino*  
University of Rome "Tor Vergata"  
marino@lettere.uniroma2.it



## Črna madona v italijansko-ameriški umetniški imaginaciji

Študija raziskuje podobo črne madone v italijansko-ameriški umetniški in književni produkciji. Navaja pomenljive primere, kako je bila ta sveta ikona univerzalnega materinstva nenehno povezana z artikulacijo strategij opolnomočenja, z nasprotovanjem vsakršnim patriarhalnim omejitvam.

**Ključne besede:** črna madona, italijanski Američani, patriarhalnost, Drugost



## An Australian Poet in Italy: A.D. Hope's Byronic View of Latter-day Italy

*Igor Maver*

### **Abstract**

The article examines the classicism of the poet A.D. Hope, especially in relation to his fascination with the work of Lord Byron, notably *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and its sections set in Italy in Rome. Hope's insistence on the European source of Australian literature in the classical antiquity found expression in several of his poems in direct intertextual references to Byron's work.

**Keywords:** Australian poetry, lord Byron, A. D. Hope

*In memory of Veronica Brady (1929–2015), a  
great Australian scholar and friend, and of our  
happy hours on the Ljubljana river in Ljubljana,  
tasting the bounties of food and drink and enjoying  
the urban landscape while talking of Oz.*

A. D. Hope (1907–2000) is usually described as an Augustan poet, because of his frequent usage of allusions from classical, Graeco-Roman and the later neo-classical English literary traditions, as well as because of his insistence on the explicitly formalist poetic manner. To be sure, Hope in his poems tried to revive the classical poetic ideal, although the unabashed identification with Lord Byron's (anti) hero Childe Harold also shows just one aspect of his admiration of the 'Byronic hero': his mordant satirical wit. The long epistolary poem "A Letter from Rome" (Hope 1972), written upon A. D. Hope's visit to Rome as part of his first European 'Grand Tour' in 1958, is, in fact, based on a pre-text, which therefore serves as an intertextual model as well as a formal impetus, Byron's work *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (Byron 1957 edition). Parallels between the two poetic *œuvres* are to be found especially in the last Canto IV of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. The last two Cantos are usually considered to be more analytical and objective than the first two, which are typically Byronesque, narcissistic and subjective.

In "A Letter from Rome" Hope in *ottava rima* depicts Italy through the 'historical' eyes of Lord Byron and the later Victorians — John Ruskin, Walter Pater, Robert Browning, Henry James and, like the discontented Byron, complains about the obvious "barbarian" behaviour and indifference of the present-day Italians. The poem's epigraph is thus very much to the point:

"Rome, Rome! thou art no more / As thou hast been!"  
That Roma *non è più come era prima*  
Which Byron heard the Roman workmen sing  
Gives scope to write on anything at all  
Since Romulus and Remus built their wall.  
(“A Letter from Rome”)

It is significant to note that the quotation in Italian used by Hope is almost identical with the one in Byron's letter to John Hobhouse (Venice, January 2 1818): "And when we ourselves, in riding round the walls of Rome, heard the simple lament of the labourers' chorus, *Roma! Roma! Roma! Roma non è come prima! ...*"

The author, A. D. Hope, does not comprehend Rome historically, but in a romanticized, partly fictitious, preconceived way, where the past is considered very much part of the present, as was typical of the Victorian admirers of Rome in the

previous century. It may be worth noting that such eclecticism is also typical of Hope's own age, i.e. postmodernity, and literature produced within the postmodern paradigm (Cf. Krevel 2016, 177-180).

Identically, Australian visitors' response was in the 19th century "colonially and provincially predetermined" as regards the pre-formed images of spirit and without a proper connection with reality (Pesman 1983). The 'reality' they saw was the English/classical slanted one. Hope, an Australian, is essentially doing the same thing so brilliantly in poetry some 130 years later, although clad in an ironical stance. The image of Italy was for these visitors clearly ambivalent; they were suddenly confronted with two Italies, the country of Art and Beauty, and on the other hand the "barbarian" country of contemporary Italians, supposedly disinterested in art. A. D. Hope is clear on this point:

And Italy from which the West arose,  
Falls prey to new but more barbarian foes        ...  
Surely no sadder irony than this  
Which brings that noble, intellectual voice  
To drown in trivial and distracting noise.  
("A Letter from Rome")

Hope, a poet and an Australian, on Italian ground for the first time from the Antipodes, attempts to discover his real, "lost ego," although, to his great surprise, he finds that technocratic, industrialized Italy cannot be what he has been looking for. This dichotomy can be observed in the entire Hope's poetic opus, namely the vision of Art that is being endangered by modern, overtechnicized civilization. In the process of the reinterpretation of the classical ideal, ancient Greece and Rome are regarded by him not merely as the source, but also as the cradle of European culture: "Athens perhaps begot, Rome was the womb."

The last Canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* recounts Byron's journey to Rome in 1817 and in an elegiac tone tells of classical antiquity and the fall of civilizations:

The commonwealth of kings, the men of Rome And even since, and now,  
fair Italy!  
Thou art the garden of the world, the home Of all Art yields, and Nature can  
decree; Even in thy desert, what is like to thee?  
(Canto IV, 26)

The most pungent lines suggest Byron's scheme of changing generations, with a gradual decline in all kinds of standards. In Byron's case there is a glimpse of the fall of Athens and Rome, with a hint that London may soon follow, as well as

Sydney and Melbourne that agonize in a ‘cultural cringe,’ as we on the other hand learn from Hope.

The fourth Canto of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* is symmetrical: in form it constitutes a kind of debate between Art and Nature in two almost equal parts, the first being concerned with Venice and the journey to Rome, the second with Rome itself. The two are completed by a coda, Byron’s famous apostrophe to the ocean, which also found an expression in Hope’s verse.

The ruins of Rome almost inevitably suggest the themes of grandeur and decay, the triumph of time, of the transcendence of human limitations by Art. Art and Nature are contrasted and blended in the landscape of mighty ruins. In this poetic discussion Byron is particularly concerned with literature, sculpture and architecture (Jump 1973). Lord Byron’s *Don Juan*, which was humorously introduced by A. D. Hope in Hector Munro’s *Don Juan in Australia* (1986), also features Nature’s ambivalence and the possible ultimate reconciliation between Art and Nature; the ruin in particular is a significant Romantic object of human contemplation, for it visibly demonstrates the power of time both to conquer and to transform the monuments of human greatness.

Oh Time! the beautifier of the dead,  
Adorner of the ruin, comforter  
And only healer when the heart hath bled ...  
(Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage)

Sea imagery is in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* frequently combined with that of wreckage and destruction. The ocean assumes the metaphorical value of the passage of time and change. Byron towards the end of the work apostrophizes the ocean in a visionary mood (“the type and symbol of eternity”) and contrasts the sea’s sublime permanence with the inevitable fall of empires and civilizations:

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee  
Assyria-Greece-Rome-Carthage-what are they?  
Thy waters wash’d them power while they were free,  
And many a tyrant since, their shores obey  
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay  
Has dried up realms to deserts — not so thou;  
(Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage)

A. D. Hope maintains that his retelling of the last strophes from *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* (“Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean — roll!”), entitled “The

Ocean to Lord Byron” as a proof of his fondness to rely on Byron’s poetic models, sprang out of his ‘ecological’ awareness: “It was after finding that it was impossible to sit on the delightful beaches of the Algarve without getting fouled with pellets of ships’ oil and disgusted by the garbage strewed about by tourists that I meditated the ocean’s reply”.

Byron’s original statement, on the other hand, expressed the typical Romantic communion of Man with the paramount element — Nature (“I love not Man the less, but Nature more”), while in Hope’s ecological answer it is transformed into a modern Man’s physical ‘destruction’ of Nature, “spreading wastes less horrible than Man’s:”

There’s pleasure in those pathless woods no more,  
 The woods themselves are cut for pulp or scrap.  
 As for the raptures of the lonely shore,  
 Pick any place you like upon the map,  
 The tourist trade has caught it — view the lap  
 Of Ocean ankle-deep in trash and cans.  
 Nor can the deep sea music match the crop  
 Belched from transistors. Time and circumstance  
 Wreak havoc and spread wastes less horrible than Man’s.  
 (A.D. Hope, “The Ocean to Lord Byron”)

According to René Wellek until the end of the 19th century the notion of classicism had rarely been used (Wellek 1970; also Žigon) and English neo-classicists did not call themselves that. T. S. Eliot’s contentions in the essay “What is a Classic?” (1944), however, are strongly reminiscent of some of those A. D. Hope expressed in “A Letter from Rome.” In it he describes his return to the ‘source,’ for he sees ancient Italy as a cultural, physical and metaphysical cradle of European civilization from which, by extension, the Australian civilization has gradually also emerged.

Yet here am I returning to the source. That source is Italy, and hers is Rome, The  
*fons et origo* of Western Man;  
 Athens perhaps begot, Rome was the womb,  
 Here the great venture of the heart began.  
 Here simply with a sense of coming home I have returned with no explicit plan  
 Beyond a child’s uncertain quest, to find Something once dear, long lost and  
 left behind.  
 (A. D. Hope, “A Letter from Rome”)

Ancient (pagan) gods and myths are in “A Letter from Rome” aestheticized, used in a playful, allegorical manner. The superscription onto Byron’s model *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* is explicitly stated by Hope. Prior to his departure to Italy he had carefully read Byron’s work (“which is sometimes no more than Baedeker in verse”), whose (anti)hero he identifies with on his journey.

I’ve just re-read Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage, Which offers, almost equally combined,  
The shrewd, the silly, the noble and the sage,  
The stamp of genius and the touch of sham ...  
And one specially is in my mind  
The limping man, the legend of his age.  
(A. D. Hope, “A Letter from Rome”)

On the pilgrimage Hope just as “the limping man” tries to find the lost “primordial link,” which is why he is instinctively drawn to lake Nemi in central Italy, to the place of the alleged Diana’s grave with the holy oak and its Golden Bough:

It ends with Nemi and the Golden Bough What instinct led him there? I like  
to think What drew Byron then  
Is what has drawn me now ...

The allusion is, of course, to the bulky anthropological study of ancient myths by Sir James G. Frazer (*The Golden Bough*, 1890), who postulated the principle of the cultural exchanges and the oscillations in fertility and sterility, the rise and fall of civilizations. Hope uses the ‘myth’ in the scenes depicting the legendary priesthood of Diana’s shrine by the lake.

There’s nothing now at Nemi to evoke Sir James G. Frazer’s memorable scene  
The sleepless Victim-king, the secret oak; A market garden spreads its tidy  
green  
Where stood Diana’s grove, no voices spoke ...

However, the evocation of the myth causes some sort of inexplicable tension due to the fact that there is nothing left by the lake that would remind him of the past or Byron’s visit. The “force” and “insistence” is felt by Hope as fate, which is according to him quite different from Byron’s “calm and cherished hate.” A. D. Hope in “A Letter from Rome” refers to his “obsession,” with the ritual “baptism” in lake Nemi, which signifies a symbolic initiation of an Australian (poet) into the system of European ur-myths. They appear to him as more or less inexplicable

entities, but he persuades himself that he has to perform “Europe’s oldest ritual of prayer;” he wades into the water to be baptized.

I seemed constrained, before I came to drink  
 To pour some wine upon the water’s face,  
 Later, to strip and wade out from the brink ...  
 I was possessed, and what possessed me there  
 Was Europe’s oldest ritual of prayer.  
 (A. D. Hope, “A Letter from Rome”)

Byron’s original description of the lake as an ‘objective correlative’ is this:

Lo, Nemi! ravell’d in the woody hills  
 So far, that the uprotting wind which tears  
 The oak from his foundation, and which spills  
 The ocean o’er is boundary, and bears  
 Its foam against the skies, reluctant spares  
 The oval mirror of thy glossy lake;  
 (Lord Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*)

Throughout his poetic career Hope had been writing poetry which drew upon the resources of European mythology, particularly ancient Greek mythology and literature (Cf. Kramer 1979). He remembers “the beginnings of mythology between the ages of four and five” (Hope 1976). Hope further contends that the most characteristic phenomena of the modern world — high technology, industry, science, entrepreneurialship — do not offer a good possibility to create new myths but rather hasten the development of “the aristocratic art of satire” (Hope 1965), which Hope explicitly cherished (e. g. his brilliant mock-epic *Dunciad Minor*). Still, the poet’s experience at lake Nemi near Rome, though clearly important and visibly effective, is not particularly striking to the reader of “A Letter from Rome” and is in fact less impressive than other parts of the poem which have so far been quoted, for example the ‘*fons et origo*’ section. It has none of the conviction of Wordsworth’s ‘revelation’ poems and hardly matches the strength of Byron’s meditation inspired by Lake Nemi at the end of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*.

In Australian criticism simple caricatures frequently emerge, portraying Hope in bold apodictic strokes as neo-classical, Parnassian, anti-modernist, and the like. Such categorizations, however, do point to the one indisputable element of Hope’s poetry, namely that it is essentially “strategically restless and subversive”

(Wallace-Crabbe 1990). In quite a few of his poems, (e. g. "Conquistador," "The Kings," "Flower Poem"), however, there are Decadent and *fin-de-siècle* undertones. Critics have for the past twenty years found Hope the architect and the purveyor of neoclassical ideas in Australian poetry, but how to explain, then, the 'romantic agony,' the agony of the divided soul in his poems, particularly the *penchant* towards modelling some of his satirical poetic pieces on Lord Byron's verse: this applies, for example, to "A Letter from Rome" or his satirical Byronesque rhymes in the introductory verses to his friend Hector Munro's mock-epic *Don Juan in Australia* (Hope 1986). The link that seems to be particularly strong between Byron and Hope is not in the Romantic traits, but rather in the scintillating satirical impulse, which is essentially characteristic of both poets.

Lord Byron's early work shows that his self-esteem was shattered when *Hours of Idleness* were savagely attacked by the influential *Edinburgh Review*. Byron's counter-attack on literary critics in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* owed more to the tradition of Aleksander Pope's *The Dunciad* than to that of his Romantic contemporaries, for he greatly admired the 18th century satirist Pope; on the other hand, it is also known just how much A. D. Hope appreciated Pope. Byron is said to have admired "Gifford inordinately, and Pope almost to idolatry, yet his own tastes were really quite different from either" (Yarker 1975). Every satirical description of the world implies an ideal one: every assault on the way things are depends upon the understanding that they can be better. Satire thus somehow springs from the divided self or the Romantic divided soul to be found both in Byron and Hope. The exaggerated, mock-epic, burlesque satiric style which achieves its major effects by exploiting the contrasts between radically different levels, the heroic and the commonplace, is an important element linking the poetry of Lord Byron to that of A. D. Hope.

Byron's *Don Juan* is indeed very much indebted to Augustan poetry, although in some views not so much in the part represented by Alexander Pope but by that of Jonathan Swift (England 1974). One may question with enough reason, why Byron chose satire, on account of which he is today even more highly valued than for his explicitly Romantic pieces, satire as an important mode of expression, especially in the 'English' Cantos of *Don Juan*, which are rich in satirical relevance and resonant with literary allusions? One possible answer may be found in the fact that 18th century satire was rather static, while the overall Romantic feeling and *Zeitgeist* was dynamic: Byron, in using a somewhat 'Romanticized' satire, thus tried to find a *modus vivendi*, a poetic form that should give his well-loved form of satire a sense of flow and clearcut forward movement. In this respect the standards of Popean satire were accommodating and flexible enough to embrace new experiences, those of Byron and, much later, those of an ardent admirer of his, A. D. Hope. The poetic paradox of Byron and



Hope cannot be better exemplified for, even if the subject-matter is Romantic, the (satirical) mode and mood of their verse tend to be Augustan. It is paradoxical that Hope's strong subjectivity and Romantic personal choice be clad in classical values, which is, in fact, his true classicism.

Another possible line of comparison between Byron and Hope could be drawn with respect to the Byronic hero phenomenon. Peter L. Thorslev (1962) classified, on the one hand, 18th century hero types (the child of nature the hero of sensibility, the gothic villain), and Romantic hero types (the noble outlaw, Faust, Cain, Satan and Prometheus) on the other. Hope's heroes, however, do not fit into any of these categories. The complex Byronic hero, a curious mixture of those mentioned, is the direct ancestor of many of the pessimistic or nihilistic heroes and philosophical rebels to be found in French Romantic and Decadent literature, who frequently occur in Hope's verse.

The persona of *Don Juan* does retain many of the characteristics of the Byronic hero which is why it is no coincidence that Hope took him as a model in his introduction to Hector Munro's mock epic *Don Juan in Australia* (Munro 1986). He is sceptical and defiant, but as the poem develops, it takes on specific characteristics, especially because Don Juan becomes strongly tolerant for all his satirical wit. Hope namely finds it impossible to properly introduce Lord Byron's *Don Juan* to "the ocker world," strongly ridiculing Australia as "an arid wasteland of its sporting scene:"

HECTOR, MY FRIEND, you strike me dumb with wonder,  
 You who so late and neatly cooked the goose  
 Of the philosophers, now turn to plunder Lord Byron's *Don Juan* to introduce  
 His hero to the ocker world 'down under,' Where, in vain Hope's of playing fast  
 and loose  
 You bring within the range of observation  
 Love, politics and Woman's Liberation,  
 Sunbaking and, contriving not to bore,  
 The arid wasteland of its sporting scene,  
 Feats that might well have tasked the Burlador  
 Of Seville, if like little Wilhelmine,  
 He asked "What do they love each other for,  
 Since 'having sex' is what they really mean?  
 For love below the Line's a thing of snatches  
 To make a nice break between cricket matches.

(A. D. Hope, Introduction to Hector Munro's *Don Juan in Australia*)

A. D. Hope's literary affiliations with Lord Byron's poetry are, thus, at least threefold, as exemplified by his long epistolary poem "A Letter from Rome," Introduction to Munro's *Don Juan in Australia*, and Byron's works *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan*.

First, Hope's 'Romanticism' is comparable to the mood of *Childe Harold* in his palimpsestic superscription of Byron's original texts. Byron's frivolous sensibility does not emanate from Hope's verse, but it is significant to note that both poets possibly felt they were self-imposed 'outcasts' from their respective societies. The second contention is that A. D. Hope relied on an exaggerated, Baroque classicism, typical of the late Victorian period, classicism that remains on the level of sheer decoration, ornament and form, whereas the content may well be Romantic. In the third place it can be maintained, *mutatis mutandis*, that the Popean satirical value of Byron's and Hope's verse is possibly the strongest link between their literary achievements, one that instructs us about their own position in native lands, about Byron's 'physical exile' from the shores of Albion and Hope's deliberate 'spiritual exile' from Australia, which enabled them both to take a critical attitude towards their homelands, respectively.

The central emphasis in A. D. Hope's poem "The Damnation of Byron" is on the man-woman relationship, a theme not entirely absent also from "A Letter from Rome," in which it takes the form of a rather banal contemporary love story between Louise, an American student of art history, and the native Italian Alessandro. Hope's nihilistic experience of eroticism, reduced primarily to its sexual aspect (e. g. the *femme fatale* figure), is in some ways again reminiscent of Byron's stance. In "The Damnation of Byron" Hope as early as 1934 prophetically anticipated his own creativity. Indeed, on the grand Shakespearean stage of life he has daily performed his *Don Juan*, doomed to the searching, lifelong artistic 'pilgrimage' of Childe Harold:

Through the Infernal Fields he makes his way  
 Playing again, but on a giant stage,  
 His own *Don Juan*; pursuing day by day  
 Childe Harold's last astonishing pilgrimage.  
 (A. D. Hope, "The Damnation of Byron")

## LIST OF WORKS CITED

Byron, Lord. 1957 edition. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, in The Poetical Works of Lord Byron*. London: Oxford UP, 179-252.

- England, A. B. *Byron's Don Juan and Eighteenth-Century Literature*. 1974. London: Associated University Presses, 1974. See also Paul G. Trueblood, *Lord Byron*. 1969. New York: Twayne.
- Hope, A. D. *Collected Poems 1930-1970*. 1972. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 129-148. All subsequent references are to this edition.
- Hope, A. D. *Native Companions*. 1976. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1976, 10.
- Hope, A. D. *The Cave and the Spring*. 1965. Adelaide: Rigby, 1965, 67, 91.
- Wallace-Crabbe, Chris. 1990. True Tales and False Alike Work by Suggestion: The Poetry of A. D. Hope, *Australian Literary Studies*, Vol. 14/4, (October), 415.
- Jump, John, ed. 1973. *Byron: Childe Harold's Pilgrimage and Don Juan*. London: Macmillan.
- Kramer, Leonie. 1979. *A. D. Hope*. Melbourne: Oxford UP.
- Krevel, Mojca. 2016. Navzočnost v času: *A Tale for the Time Being* in postmoderna paradigma, *Primerjalna književnost*, Vol. 39/2, 173-189.
- Munro, Hector. 1986. *Don Juan in Australia*. Hawthorn: Hudson.
- Pesman, Roselyn. 1983. Australian Visitors to Italy in the 19th Century,"- Gianfranco Cresciani ed. *Australia, the Australians and the Italian Migration*. Milan: Franco Angeli Editore, 137.
- Thorslev, Peter L. 1962. *The Byronic Hero*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Wellek, René. 1970. The Term and Concept of Classicism in Literary History, *Discriminations — Further Concepts in Criticism*. New Haven: Yale UP, 55. Cf. also the study of Hope's classicism by Noel Macainsh, The Suburban Aristocrat: A. D. Hope and Classicism, *Meridian* 1, (May 1985), 19-29.
- Yarker, P. M. 1975. Byron and the Satiric Temper. John D. Jump ed., *Byron: A Symposium*. London: Macmillan, 78.
- Žigon, Tanja. Dunajčanka v Ljubljani: medkulturno delovanje Hedwig pl. Radics-Kaltenbrunner. *Dve domovini* (2012): 36, 157-168.

Igor Maver

University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Igor.Maver@ff.uni-lj.si



## **Avstralski pesnik v Italiji: byronovski pogled na sodobno Italijo A. D. Hopa**

Članek intertekstualno raziskuje klasicizem v poeziji avstralskega pesnika A.D. Hopa, še posebej v povezavi z delom lorda Byrona *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* in odseki tega dela, ki so postavljeni v Italijo.

**Ključne besede:** avstralska poezija, lord Byron, A. D. Hope

*The author acknowledges the financial support from the Slovenian Research Agency (research core funding No. P6-0265).*

## Understanding South African Xenophobia Through the Prism of J. M. Coetzee's *Summertime 'Scenes from a Provincial Life'*

Polona Zajec

### Abstract

The xenophobic violence and discrimination that greets African migrants in post-apartheid South Africa highlights a social and political issue that threatens the idea(l) of the open pan-African society. The article looks at this xenophobia through the lens of J. M. Coetzee fictionalized memoir *Summertime 'Scenes from a Provincial Life'* and tries to develop a new understanding of South Africa's relationship to the African 'other' – or to the 'other' Africa, relevant not only in the context of postcolonial studies but also in a more global perspective on social and cultural responses to processes of migration.

**Keywords:** South Africa, xenophobia, J.M. Coetzee, post-apartheid, postcolonial studies, migration

As the most developed country on the continent, South Africa is often referred to as the 'Europe' of Africa in terms of being the desired final destination of thousands of people. Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani, a Nigerian writer, claims that South Africa served as an inspiration to the rest of Africa: "White people or no white people, it was an African country; it was an African star" (Nwaubani 2015). People migrate from all parts of the African continent to South Africa because they are fleeing political oppression or conflicts in their home countries. They seek economic opportunities and a better life that can only be offered to them there and not in their home country. Many wish to study at the high quality educational institutions in South Africa. Or sometimes, it is a combination of all of these.

However, one cannot overlook Nwaubani's use of the past tense when she talks about South Africa as the African star since the relationship between the refugees, asylum seekers, and the host population is strained because of the socio-economical environment in South Africa, with high unemployment, poor service delivery and economic inequality. Since the fall of the apartheid system in 1994 there have been continuous xenophobic attacks on foreigners. The destruction of immigrant-owned property, burning down their small shops, roadside stalls, and even their houses, became common practice and culminated in the 2008 riots that started in the township of Alexandra on the outskirts of Johannesburg. In these xenophobic raids over 60 people were killed and over five thousand people were forced to flee their homes (Nwaubani 2015). Many ended up living in refugee camps as they were afraid of re-integration and some even decided in favor of voluntary deportation to their home countries.

Seven years passed and little changed. Between 2008 and 2015, approximately 350 people had been killed (Blood at the end of the rainbow). As foreigners are seen as scapegoats for the decline of South African economy, in 2015 between March and May, another wave of xenophobic attacks hit the country that left seven people dead and thousands displaced and fleeing their homes again (World Report 2017). Government and public schools are reluctant in admitting or accepting refuge and asylum seeker students (UNHCR Operation in South Africa 2). The 2016 Amnesty International's Annual Report on South Africa noticed that "Police used excessive force against protesters. Torture, including rape, and other ill-treatment of people in police custody continued to be reported. Xenophobia and violence against refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants resulted in deaths, injuries and displacement. Many incidents involved the targeted looting of foreign-owned small businesses in townships" (South Africa 2016). In 2016, in Pretoria, 12 migrants were seriously injured and hundreds displaced in a mob raid against them, and in the Western Cape the looting of foreign businesses was prominent during the whole year.

In general, the attacks are most common in urban areas in Gauteng, Kwazulu-Natal, the Eastern and Western Cape, and especially in townships of Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. Nevertheless, the violence has now spread and has become common practice in urban and rural areas across the land. In order to limit the attacks Amnesty International suggests “educating civil servants on the rights and documentation of foreign nationals; strengthening the capacities of institutions managing migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers; ensuring leaders make responsible public statements; and education campaigns in schools to promote cohesion” (South Africa 2016).

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the South African Department of Home Affairs, in 2015, there were above 300.000 refugees and around 800.000 asylum seekers in South Africa (2015 UNHCR). The majority of refugees originate from Zimbabwe, Somalia, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi and Cote d’Ivoire (UNHCR Operation in South Africa 1). According to Statistics South Africa 2016 Community Survey the population of South Africa is 55.7 million, including 1.6 million people born outside of its borders, which equals 2.8% of its population (Grant, Pampalone and Brodie). However, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) reports that the number of international migrants living in South Africa is 3.24 million, or 5,8% of the entire population (Grant, Pampalone and Brodie). Due to the lack of concrete statistical information other humanitarian organizations give information that, additional to official figures, the number of undocumented migrants alone is around two million (Brodie). Altogether, there could be between five and six million foreigners in South Africa, either legally or illegally.

Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu’s post-apartheid dreams seem far from reality as South Africa’s diversity is seen more as a source of division than richness and strength. In response to the 2015 attacks Tutu stated: “Our rainbow nation that so filled the world with hope is being reduced to a grubby shadow of itself. The fabric of the nation is splitting” (Blood at the end of the rainbow). Stuart Hall’s theory of articulation highlights that things are always made to mean in a certain context. Different things convey different meanings in different times or situations. By putting themselves in opposition to other Africans, South Africans instate themselves as the centre, as an ideal to which Africa should strive. In South Africa, the African ‘other’ is presented as non-human, almost bestial. These dominant articulations of superiority construct realities with material effects. Xenophobia in modern South Africa serves as a good example of how fast people are willing to forget the past when it suits them.

During apartheid many South Africans were forced to flee the country to other parts of Africa because at home they were discriminated. Now, when the tables

have turned, many makwerekwere, as foreigners from other parts of Africa are derogatorily called, are fleeing their war-torn countries to seek sanctuary, and South Africans could be the ones offering safe haven; instead, they discriminate and work against them (Zajec 48). Almost everybody in Africa has an opinion about South Africa. On the one hand, because so many of the African countries were involved in the struggle against the apartheid regime, today's reality as its final result, is disappointing. On the other hand, South Africans feel like they have been fighting for their rights and freedom for so long, only to see and feel like someone else is reaping its fruits.

John Maxwell "J. M." Coetzee is probably the most famous living South African writer. His 2009 Booker Prize shortlisted fictionalized memoir *Summertime* 'Scenes from a Provincial Life' offers an interesting insight on South Africa in the 1970's. With the apartheid regime in full swing one can already sense the origins of xenophobia gripping the nation today. For the fictional John Coetzee the National Party never cared or set out to save their 'civilization' as "Behind a smoke-screen of patriotism they are at this very moment sitting and calculating how long they can keep the show running (the mines, the factories) before they will need to pack their bags, shred any incriminating documents, and fly off to Zürich or Monaco or San Diego," because there "under the cover of holding companies with names like Algo Trading or Handfast Securities they years ago bought themselves villas and apartments as insurance against the day of reckoning" (5-6).

In *Summertime*, characters describe their experiences with John, Coetzee's fictional alter ego. Sophie, his lover and fellow lecturer at the University, describes that John was not interested in the liberation of the blacks under apartheid, thought he was sympathetic to the cause. She claims he was a fatalist and had utopian visions for the 'New South Africa' that couldn't have come true. Broadly speaking "a discourse of the 'New South Africa' involves concepts such as democracy, deracialisation, reconciliation and unity. Economically, it conveys notions of reconstruction, development and upliftment. Socio-politically, it is aligned with building the nation, and nationalism is a vital element of the discourse" (Harris 177).

Edward Said once noted that the capacity of imperial narratives to reinvent themselves, barely disguised, in the political and economic executives of globalism and new world orders, should be a constant source of concern and attention (Featherstone 170). The fictional John disclosed to Sophie his romanticized version of Africa, something that has for him been lost long ago in Europe; "His philosophy ascribed to Africans the role of guardians of the truer, deeper, more primitive being of human kind [...] What his position boiled down to [...] was old-fashioned Romantic primitivism. In the context of the 1970s, of the liberation struggle and the apartheid state, it was unhelpful to look at Africans in his way" (Coetzee 231). It was a role they were no longer willing to play.



South Africa's political transition to democracy has exposed the unequal distribution of resources and wealth in the country. In the post-apartheid era people's expectations have been raised and the disillusionment that followed resulted in discontent and indignation. People are now more conscious of their deprivation than ever before. Tshitereke notes that "This is the ideal situation for a phenomenon like xenophobia to take root and flourish" (qtd. in Harris 171). When the state represents undocumented, and also documented, African immigrants as parasites to the system, they are seen as the ones blocking the post-1994 national re-building process (Harris 176).

Thus, xenophobia can be understood as the product of social transition, as a defence against the anxiety induced by 'the unknown' (Hobsbawm 264). It can also be seen in the light of South Africa's search for an identity going from "a past of racism to a future of nationalism" (Harris 175). Xenophobia is a central feature of nationalism since it is "a form of violence and violence is the norm in South Africa" (Harris 180). Throughout history violence and nationalism go hand in hand as "The struggle to create the nation-state is a struggle for the monopoly of the means of violence. What is being created - a nation state - is itself a means of violence. The triumph of a particular nationalism is seldom achieved without the defeat of alternative nationalisms and other ways of imagining peoplehood" (qtd. in Harris 182).

In *Summertime* John assesses that "politics [...] brought out the worst in people and also brought to the surface the worst types in society" (Coetzee 228). Despite this, he believes that people "will never abandon politics because politics is too convenient and too attractive as a theatre in which to give play to our baser emotions. Baser emotions meaning hatred and rancor and spite and jealousy and bloodlust and so forth," and sees politics as "a symptom of our fallen state and expresses that fallen state" (Coetzee 229). South Africans may just be adopting the culture of violence they were experiencing during apartheid. This is a culture in which interactions and relations are resolved in a violent instead of non-violent manner, "a culture in which violence is proffered as a normal, legitimate solution to problems [...] as a legitimate means to achieve goals particularly because it was legitimized by most political role-players in the past" (Harris 179). For John "Nothing is worth fighting for because fighting only prolongs the cycle of aggression and retaliation" (Coetzee 230). The experience of hostility may generate further hostility through the deployment of coping strategies such as isolation, superiority and bitterness. Exclusion, alienation, and hostility operate in a complex, ongoing spiral and, as Julia Kristeva comments, "just because one is a foreigner does not mean one is without one's own foreigner [...] As enclave of the other within the other, otherness becomes crystallized as pure ostracism: the foreigner excludes before being excluded, even more than he is being excluded" (qtd. in Harris 181).

As apartheid has left deep scars in the minds of South Africans, their dominant groups define national legitimacy by stigmatizing foreigners. Using the strategy of excluding foreigners, they conquer and preserve their political power. While the common enemy 'apartheid' is defeated, the threat of outsiders has re-emerged. Because the victims of the socio-economic inequality and poverty cannot reach the richest that hold power, they react to the ones closest to them using high unemployment, competition for jobs, for education, even for women, as excuses to justify their attacks. Harris calls this the scapegoating hypothesis of xenophobia (171).

Xenophobia can also be seen as a consequence of apartheid South Africa's seclusion from the international community (Harris 172). Because apartheid isolated its citizens from nationalities beyond, foreigners represent the unknown to South Africans. With the political transition, however, South Africa's borders have opened up and the country has become integrated into the international community. This has brought South Africans, after a long period of international isolation, into direct contact with the unknown, with foreigners. John comments that the National Party felt like foreigners "held the Afrikaners in contempt and would turn a blind eye if they were massacred by the blacks, down to the last woman and child" (Coetzee 5). Therefore, "Alone and friendless at the remote tip of a hostile continent, they erected their fortress state and retreated behind its walls: there they would keep the flame of Western Christian civilization burning until finally the world came to its senses" (Coetzee 5).

According to Harris's isolation hypothesis, the interface between previously isolated South Africans and unknown foreigners creates a space for hostility to develop, since: "When a group has no history of incorporating strangers, it may find it difficult to be welcoming" (qtd. in Harris 172). In the novel Sophie notes how South Africans are isolated from the rest of the world and show "little or no interest in the rest of Africa: Africa was a dark continent to the north, best left unexplored" (Coetzee 222). Consequently, discussing foreigners appears as a very uncanny topic surrounded by mystery, by a fundamental disturbance that defamiliarizes, challenges beliefs and assumptions, producing alienation effects. Contemporary xenophobia can even more prominently be seen through the prism of internal isolation, the isolation of South Africans from South Africans, as a consequence of apartheid. The brutal environment created by apartheid with its homeland systems and enormous emphasis on boundary maintenance has impacted people's ability to be tolerant of difference (Harris 172). Harris emphasizes that "Due to the creation of strict boundaries between South African citizens, as well as between the country and other nations, South Africans might be unable to accommodate, and indeed tolerate difference" (173).

While differences exist, how differences are categorized is always a result of politics and power and not a question of biology. These dominant articulations,

generalizations, and stereotypes that are commonly offered regarding Africa and African foreigners offer insight into the hostility that meets this group and show how opinions can be manipulated. Africa above their country is seen “as ‘the troubled north’, a vague space marked by wars, woes and poverty. In this way, South Africa is divorced from the rest of the continent. Africa appears as a negative space ‘out there’, totally separate from the space ‘in here’ [...] a negative collective force without specific form or identity thereby representing an easy object of blame and anxiety” (Harris 175). This is mirrored in the words of Coetzee’s fictional father who has nothing but disdain for the continent to the north of them; “Buffoons is the word he uses to dismiss the leaders of African states: petty tyrants who can barely spell their own names, chauffeured from one banquet to another in their Rolls-Royces, wearing Ruritanian uniforms festooned with medals they have awarded themselves. Africa: a place of starving masses with homicidal buffoons lording it over them” (Coetzee 4).

The state’s and the media’s negative attitude towards black foreigners, and the use of the language of ‘contamination’, convince people that they threaten the nation by endangering its ability to provide resources, employment possibilities, and the levels of crime. They set up images of Africans as carriers of disease, especially the HIV/AIDS epidemic with South Africa being the country with the highest HIV prevalence in the world and almost six million people infected, and more recently Ebola. As such “the African foreigner is represented as a physical disease that literally threatens the body politic with contamination” (Harris 176). Neocosmos similarly looks back on apartheid’s anti-rural and pro-urban characteristics that “ruralized and devalued black lives [...] whilst urbanizing and valuing white lives [...] The post-apartheid state simply shifted this rural/urban binary opposition to Africa/South Africa, such that Africa is perceived as rural and backward and South Africa as urban and modern” (Matsinhe 298, cf. Maver 2013).

Frantz Fanon observed that the colonized have distorted views of themselves thanks to the colonial past. Bearing this in mind, Matsinhe describes that “longer than elsewhere in Africa, in South Africa one was born into, and became part of, a colonizing figuration, born of a colonial birth, living a colonial life, and dying a colonial death” (300). However, in the novel, Martin, who describes meeting John in 1972, while they were being interviewed for a job at the University of Cape Town talks about this legal, but illegitimate presence in South Africa: “We had an abstract right to be there, a birthright, but the basis of that birthright was fraudulent. Our presence was grounded in a crime, namely colonial conquest, perpetuated by apartheid. Whatever the opposite of native or rooted, that was what we felt ourselves to be” (Coetzee 209–210). Martin considers his position as a South African as even slightly comic since his ancestors “had tailored away, generation after generation, to clear a patch of wild Africa for their descendants, and what

was the fruit of all their labours? Doubt in the hearts of those descendants about title to the land; an uneasy sense that it belonged not to them but, inalienably, to its original owners” (210).

Nevertheless, the long colonial past can be closely linked to the idea of South African exceptionalism, where South Africa is presented as a kind of European outpost. Lazarus writes that “For most whites in South Africa, of course South Africa was not really in Africa at all. It was a “Western” society that just happened, accidentally and inconsequentially, if irritatingly, to be situated at the foot of the dark continent” (610). This entitlement of the white settlers is especially clear in the case of the so-called ‘original Cape colony’. John, “Like many whites [...] regarded the Cape, the western Cape and perhaps the northern Cape along with it, as standing apart from the rest of South Africa. The Cape was a country of its own, with its own geography, its own history, its own languages and culture” (Coetzee 232). In this mythical Cape, Africans were seen as aliens. John echoes Lazarus’s thinking as “he had no feeling for black South Africans [...] They might be his fellow citizens but they were not his countrymen. History - or fate, which was to him the same thing - might have cast them in the role of inheritors of the land, but at the back of his mind they continued to be *they* as opposed to *us*” (Coetzee 232; emphasis added).

Matsinhe speaks of a ‘social unconscious’ when the colonized fantasize of becoming the colonizer (301). The idea was perpetuated as far as claiming that because of the high level of industrialization, or the highly valued democracy, South Africans are different, even having lighter skin than other Africans, and will be able to solve their own problems not following in the footsteps of doom of other African states. Replaying past experiences, the weaker groups “measure themselves with the yardstick of their oppressor [...] always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others [...] And once the ideals of the oppressor become the aspiration of the oppressed, the oppressed has become a cultural clone of the oppressor” (Matsinhe 302). It might be that South Africans merely adopted the only pattern ever known to them. A pattern, where you can be either the oppressor or the oppressed, and there is no middle way.

However, identification with the oppressor goes hand in hand with self-hatred and self-destruction. Fanon wrote: “I am a white man. For unconsciously I distrust what is black in me, that is, the whole of my being” (qtd. in Matsinhe 302). Such thinking can lead to anger and violence, directed either towards oneself or to ‘the other’ since “Aversion to those who resemble the self externalizes self-contempt, and projects negativity of self accrued through generations of vilification to the other. From this point of view African foreign nationals are feared, hated and distrusted not because they are different, but because they resemble the former victims of apartheid” (Matsinhe 302). Freud called this the ‘narcissism of

difference', when the contempt for 'the other' is within us, especially if 'the other' resembles us (Matsinhe 309).

The legacy of apartheid, the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic, ignorance and illiteracy, poverty, growing inequality, the growing number of shanty towns and townships, or the increasing rape and crime rates are just a few problems South Africa is facing. In this light, the idea of South Africa as the richest, economically and technologically powerful, and most educated state on the continent is surprising. However, drawing on Marx's 'commodity fetishism' asserting that through practical experience inverted experience is born, Hage points out that the collective 'we' can experience what 'I' on itself never could (201).

'I' can be uneducated, poor and weak, but 'we' can still be wise, rich and strong. People always strive to be just as the "people who within their communal milieu represent the best of the best" (Hage 201). This process of selection comes with a negative side effect - repression. While creating a perfect 'racialized community', one must suppress negative, unpleasant, underdeveloped members and focus only on the brilliant ones. Hage emphasizes that "along with the positive anesthetization of the self comes the process of negatively aestheticizing the other, the one who is being racialized as inferior" (202). In this sense, "one systematically represses the whiteness of the other and the non-whiteness within the self to end up with a white self and a non-white other [...] through this selective aestheticization, racialized thought manages to create a sense of absolute difference between self and other" (Hage 202). Matsinhe explains the ideology of *makwerekwere* as externalizing internal oppression seeking "to make visible the invisible object of fear" (310). For him, the roots of such an ideology are found in "the psychological realm of ego-weak characters who construct their identity by denigrating others [in need of] scapegoats to externalize what cannot be sublimed" (qtd. in Matsinhe 310).

In *Summertime*, John Coetzee dreamed of "a day when everyone in South Africa would call themselves nothing, neither African nor European nor white nor black nor anything else, when family histories would have become so tangled and intermixed that people would be ethnically indistinguishable" (233). While his wishes might be too optimistic it is important to observe that what might at a first glance seem as a very specific and local problem in South Africa, can also be seen in a more global context, as the problems they are facing are universal. The history of violence and discrimination against African migrants in post-apartheid South Africa describe what has become a social and political issue that threatens the idea(l) of the open pan-African society. The idea to look at xenophobia through the lens of one of the most established contemporary South African writers and to develop a new understanding of South Africa's relationship to the African 'other' – or to the 'other' Africa – is relevant not only in the context of postcolonial studies but also in a more global perspective on social and cultural responses to

processes of migration. How a continent, and within it a country, is packaged or stereotyped, transcends a simple postcolonial frame when the main players are put on a global stage. South Africa's case study can provide global signifiers, give a humanizing perspective, and serve as a human rights narrative overreaching a simple hatred of foreigners looking forward, using the mistakes of the past as learning steps for the future.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "2015 UNHCR country operations profile - South Africa." *UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)* 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2016. <<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e485aa6.html>>.
- "Blood at the end of the rainbow: South Africa's poor are turning on those even more downtrodden". *The Economist* 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2015. Web. 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2017. <<http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21649429-south-africas-poor-are-turning-those-even-more-downtrodden-blood-end-rainbow>>.
- "South Africa 2016: Refugees' and migrants' rights". *Amnesty International Annual Report*. 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2017. <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/south-africa/report-south-africa/>>.
- "South African Events of 2016: Accountability for Xenophobic Attacks on Foreign Nationals". *Human Rights Watch*. 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2017. <<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/south-africa>>.
- "UNHCR Operation in South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland Factsheet". *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*. Pretoria: UNHCR, 2015.
- "World Report 2017: South Africa". *Human Rights Watch*. 11<sup>th</sup> of April 2017. <<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/south-africa>>.
- Adjai, Carol, and Gabriella Lazaridis. "People, State and Civic Responses to Immigration, Xenophobia and Racism in the New South Africa." *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 15.2 (2014): 237-255.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1992.
- Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995.
- Barth, Fredrik, ed. *Ethnic groups and boundaries: the social organization of culture difference*. Long Grove: Waveland Press, 1998.
- Bennett, Andrew, and Nicholas Royle. *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2009.
- Bertens, Hans. *Literary Theory: The Basics*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.

- Bhabha, Homi. *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Blom, Jan-Petter. "Ethnic and Cultural Differentiation". *Ethnic groups and boundaries: the social organization of culture difference*. Ed. Barth, Fredrik. Long Grove: Waveland Press, 1998. 74-85.
- Brodie, Nechama, ed. "Where do South Africa's international migrants come from?" *Africa Check* 11<sup>th</sup> of April 2017. <<https://africacheck.org/factsheets/geography-migration/>>.
- Brubaker, Rogers. *Ethnicity Without Groups*. Cambridge/Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Butler, Anthony. *Contemporary South Africa*. Houndmills/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Chrisman, Laura. "Nationalism and postcolonial studies." *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Ed. Lazarus, Neil. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 183-198.
- Clark L. Nancy, and William H. Worger. *South Africa: The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*. Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2004.
- Coetzee, J.M.. *Summertime: Scenes from a Provincial Life III*. London, United Kingdom: Vintage Publishing, 2010.
- Crush, Jonathan, ed. "The Perfect Storm: The Realities of Xenophobia in Contemporary South Africa". *Migration Policy Series 50*. Cape Town: Idasa, 2008.
- Danso, Ransford, and David A. McDonald. "Writing Xenophobia: Immigration and the Print Media in Post-apartheid South Africa." *Africa Today* 48.3 (Fall 2001): 115-137.
- Darby, Phillip. *The Fiction of Imperialism: Reading Between International Relations and Postcolonialism*. London and Washington: Cassel, 1998.
- Davenport, T.R.H., and Cristopher Saunders. *South Africa: A Modern History*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Houndmills/London: Macmillan Press LTD, 2000.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. London: Pluto Press, 1952.
- Featherstone, Simon. *Postcolonial Cultures*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005.
- Grant, Laura, Pampalone, Tanya, and Nechama Brodie. "How Many International Migrants are there in SA?" *Africa Check* 11<sup>th</sup> of April 2017. <<http://africacheck.org/factsheets/data-migrants-numbers/>>.
- Grünkemeier, Ellen. *Breaking the Silence: South African Representations of HIV/AIDS*. Rochester, NY: James Currey, 2013.
- Hage, Ghassan. "White Self-racialization as Identity Fetishism: Capitalism and the Experience of Colonial Whiteness". *Racialization: Studies in Theory and Practice*. Ed. Murji, K., and J. Solomos. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. 185-205.

- Harris, Bronwyn. "Xenophobia: A new pathology for a new South Africa?". *Psychopathology and Social Prejudice*. Ed. Hook, Derek, and Gillian Eagle. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2002. 169-184.
- Helgesson, Stefan. *Transnationalism in Southern African Literature: Modernists, Realists, and the Inequality of Print Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Hobsbawn, E.J. "Ethnicity and Nationalism in Europe today". *Mapping the Nation*. Ed. Balakrishnan, G. London: Verso, 1996. 255-266.
- Klotz, Audie. "Borders and the Roots of Xenophobia in South Africa". *South African Historical Journal* 68.2 (2016): 180-194.
- Kosew, Sue and Dianne Schwerdt, ed. *Re-Imagining Africa: New Critical Perspectives*. Huntington, New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2001.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Strangers to Ourselves*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.
- Lazarus, Neil. "The South African Ideology: The Myth of Exceptionalism, the Idea of Renaissance". *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 103.4 (Fall 2004): 607-628.
- Maver, Igor. Teju Cole's Nigeria and the Open Cities of New York and Brussels. *Acta neophilologica* (2013): 46, 1/2, 3-11, 117.
- Matsinhe, David Mario. "Africa's Fear of Itself: the ideology of *Makwerekwere* in South Africa". *Third World Quarterly* 32.2 (2011): 295-313.
- Misago, Jean Pierre, Freemantle, Iriann, and Loren B. Landau. *Protection from Xenophobia: An Evaluation of UNHCR's Regional Office for Southern Africa's Xenophobia Related Programmes*. Johannesburg: UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2015.
- Nwaubani, Adaobi Tricia. "Xenophobic violence: South Africa's identity crisis". *BBC News*. 7<sup>th</sup> of May 2015. 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2016. <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-32580807>>.
- Quayson, Ato. "Symbolization Compulsion: Testing a Psychoanalytical Category on Postcolonial African Literature". *University of Toronto Quarterly* 73(2) (2004): 754-772.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. London: Penguin Books, 1985.
- Smith, Andrew. "Migrancy, hybridity, and postcolonial literary studies." *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Ed. Lazarus, Neil. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 241-261.
- Steinberg, Jonny. "Security and Disappointment: Policing, Freedom and Xenophobia in South Africa". *Br J Criminol* 52.2 (2012): 345-360.
- Storey, John. *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*. London: Pearson Longman, 2009.
- Wisker, Gina. *Key Concepts in Postcolonial Literature*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.



Young, Robert J.C. "Postcolonial Remains". *New Literary History* Vol. 43, No. 1 (2012): 19-42.

Zajec, Polona. *Literary Responses to an Epidemic: Representations of HIV/AIDS in Post-Apartheid South African Fiction*. Saarbrücken: LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, 2016.

*Polona Zajec*

Vienna

polonazajec@gmail.com



## Povzetek

Ksenofobično nasilje in diskriminacija, ki pričakata afriške migrante v Južnoafriški republiki po padcu apartheida, opozarjata na socialni in politični problem, ki ogroža idejo odprte (pan)afriške družbe. Članek obravnava to ksenofobijo skozi objektiv J.M. Coetzeejevih fiktivnih spominov *Summertime 'Scenes from a Provincial Life'* in poskuša razviti novo razumevanje južnoafriškega odnosa do 'drugih' Afričanov ali 'druge' Afrike pomembno ne samo v okviru postkolonialnih študij, ampak tudi zaradi globalnega pogleda na družbene in kulturne odzive na migracijske procese.

**Ključne besede:** Južnoafriška republika, ksenofobija, J.M. Coetzee, post-apartheid, postkolonialne študije, migracije



# The Iconic American Western in Film and Literature

*Ali Shehzad Zaidi*

## Abstract

This essay examines representative stories of the American Western genre in both film and literature in light of various literary influences, including *The Bible* and classical epics such as *Gilgamesh*, *The Iliad*, and *The Odyssey*. These stories relate the dynamic tensions of characters caught between righteous and unrighteous anger, between home and longing for the road, and between the imperative to survive and the impulse to sacrifice oneself for others.

**Keywords:** American Western, The Western, *Gilgamesh*, *High Noon*, *Hombre*, *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, *Shane*, "The Tin Star," *Unforgiven*

The Western is a genre that explores our relationship to the land, community, and self. Generally regarded as unique to the United States, the Western has literary forbears that share its epic representation of the themes of friendship and anger. This essay examines four iconic stories of the American West, as portrayed in two novels, a short story, a movie script, and their film incarnations. In these stories, violence may serve to restore a fragile social order or alternately convey the rage inherent in a corrupt society.

*The Bible* is a dominant influence in the genre of the Western. The hero of the Western is sometimes given to the kind of retributive justice described in *The Old Testament*: “eye for eye tooth for tooth” (*Exodus* 21:24), but often shows forbearance under provocation, heeding Jesus’ admonition to turn the other cheek. However, when compelled to fight, the hero wreaks terrible vengeance on his enemies in order to uphold the communal good and redress injustice. At such moments of courage and self-sacrifice, the hero appears semi-divine. Friendship has a special place in stories of the *The Old Testament* such as the one between Jonathan and David (*1 Samuel* 18-20). *The Old Testament* condemns unrighteous anger in such passages as *Psalms* 37: 7-8 (“Cease from anger, and forsake wrath. / Fret not yourself; it does nothing but harm; / For evildoers shall be cut off; While those who wait upon the LORD shall possess the land”) and *Proverbs* 15:1 (“A gentle answer turns away wrath; But harsh words stir up anger”).

The epic *Gilgamesh* is another literary precursor of the Western. Its earliest extant texts are from around 2100 BC (Mitchell 5). *Gilgamesh* represents the transition of humanity from a savage to a civilized state. This epic prefigures the tension within the cowboy, between the longing for freedom and his search for home and community. The taming of the West implies the taming of men; and this very process defines *Gilgamesh*. When Gilgamesh, the king and protector of the city of Uruk, hears of the approach of Enkidu, a savage and powerful man of mythical powers and proportions, he sends a priestess, Shamhat, to tame Enkidu through her love-arts. Enkidu’s formidable powers are attenuated through the sexual pleasure that he experiences with the priestess after which Enkidu’s “life-force was spent, / his knees trembled, he could no longer run / like an animal, as he had before... he knew that his mind had somehow grown larger, / he knew things now that an animal can’t know” (*Gilgamesh* 79). The eponymous hero-king vanquishes Enkidu in a ferocious battle after which they become best friends. Their archetypal rivalry and friendship anticipates the male bonding seen in Westerns.

The Homeric epics, composed about the eighth century BC, also anticipate the narratives of violent masculinity in the Western. *The Iliad* does not glorify war. Instead the epic portrays warriors as petulant, childish, and given to self-destructive rage during the Greek siege of Troy, as can be seen in the epic’s opening passage:

The rage of Achilles – sing it now; goddess, sing *through* me  
 the deadly rage that caused the Achaeans such grief  
 and hurled down to Hades the souls of so many fighters,  
 leaving their naked flesh to be eaten by dogs  
 and carrion birds, as the will of Zeus was accomplished. (*Iliad* I: 1-5)

Rage is Achilles' vulnerability, symbolized by his heel, the only part of his body in which an arrow can kill him, hence the expression *Achilles heel*. The Trojan War reaches a turning point when the Trojan prince Hector slays Patrocles a close friend of the Greek warrior Achilles. This prompts Achilles to join the war and kill Hector, whose corpse he drags behind his chariot. Although he does not possess the self-mastery that characterizes the archetypal hero, Achilles nonetheless returns Hector's corpse to his grieving father, King Priam. Another Homeric epic, *The Odyssey*, tells of the survival, endurance, and resourcefulness of a Greek king who embarks on a ten-year journey home after the Trojan War. The opening lines of *The Odyssey* characterize its hero:

Tell me, Muse about the man of many turns, who many  
 Ways wandered when he had sacked Troy's holy citadel;  
 He saw the cities of many men, and he knew their thought;  
 On the ocean he suffered many pains within his heart,  
 Striving for his life and his companions' return. (*The Odyssey* I. 1-5)

Odysseus possesses the divine restlessness of the cowboy who is at the same time drawn to family and community.

A famous short story that dramatizes this tension between yearning for freedom and duty to community is John M. Cunningham's widely anthologized "The Tin Star" which first appeared in *Collier's Weekly* in 1947 and which pays homage to its literary ancestors. This tale of an aging sheriff, who dies in a showdown with a recently pardoned criminal and his gang of outlaws, was reincarnated in the film *High Noon* (1952) which won four Academy Awards. "The Tin Star" opens *in medias res*: "Sheriff Doane looked at his deputy and then down at the daisies he had picked for his weekly visit, lying wrapped in newspaper on his desk. 'I'm sorry to hear you say that, Toby. I was kind of counting on you to take over after me.'" As the story unfolds, the reader learns that Jordan, an outlaw that Sheriff Doane had sent to jail, has been freed early and is on his way to town where he is likely to provoke a duel with the sheriff. Doane intends to lay the daisies on his wife's grave. Flowers symbolize life's beauty and evanescence (Ferber 74-76). The daisies, which "were drooping markedly" as the sheriff leaves his office and heads for the cemetery, anticipate his death ("Tin Star" 214).

The sheriff is handicapped because he suffers from gout, making it difficult to handle his gun, and because the residents of the town are too afraid to assist him. The mayor comes to the office to persuade the sheriff to leave town rather than face death. Shortly afterwards, a second deputy named Staley stops by to tender his resignation. Doane is resolved to stay but laments his thankless job: "They don't even hang the right ones. You risk your life catching somebody, and the damned juries let them go so they can come back and shoot at you. You're poor all your life, you got to do everything twice, and in the end they pay you off in lead. So you can wear a tin star. It's a job for a dog, son" ("Tin Star" 209). Toby as well harbors no illusions about his job, which he describes as "trying to keep the law so sharp-nosed money-grabbers can get rich" ("Tin Star" 209), yet the deputy, like his boss, refuses to quit in the face of mortal danger. Theirs is the timeless lament of the public servant who longs for freedom but is compelled to protect his community, a dynamic tension that harkens back to the characters in *Gilgamesh* and the Homeric epics.

During the office scene, the sheriff remarks to his deputy "Maybe the pen changes a man" ("Tin Star" 211). The line refers both to the sheriff's forlorn hope that Jordan might have become reformed during his time in jail, and to the writer's craft that made "The Tin Star" exemplary in its genre. Because he represents the law, Sheriff Doane must restrain his anger, in keeping with the lessons imparted by *The Bible* and *The Iliad*. When Doane reaches his wife's grave in a cemetery at the town's outskirts, Jordan shows up to goad him into a fight. When asked if he had any objections to Jordan being in town, Doane declines the challenge, saying "You haven't done anything, Jordan. Except get drunk. Nothing to break the law" ("Tin Star" 215). Jordan continues to taunt him, setting the stage for the showdown in town during which an already wounded Sheriff Doane will take a bullet in the back and give his life to save his deputy. With the threat to the town removed, Toby immediately assumes the role of his savior and mentor when he becomes the new sheriff.

Throughout the story, Sheriff Doane is attuned to the presence of larks that soar above the squalor of the violent town like ethereal beings. The lark symbolizes the inner sense of freedom and integrity that enables Douane to endure his job. The sheriff tells his deputy,

It's all for free. The headaches, the bullets and everything, all for free. I found that out long ago... But somebody's got to be around and take care of things... I like it free. You know what I mean? You don't get a thing for it. You've got to risk everything. And you're free inside. Like the larks. You know the larks? How they get up in the sky and sing when they want to? A pretty bird. A very pretty bird. That's the way I like to feel inside. ("The Tin Star" 210)

These words convey the sense of a man who is confined by his job but who remains spiritually free and who is at peace despite the stress of the upcoming show-down. The image of his outstretched hands suggests that Doane is a Christ-figure:

Doane's eyes came again to the flowers, and some of the strain went out of his face. Then suddenly his eyes closed and he gave a long sigh, and then, luxuriously, stretched his arms. "Good God!" he said, his voice easy again. "It's funny how it comes over you like that." He shook his head violently. "I don't know why it should. It's not the first time. But it always does." ("The Tin Star" 212)

The words "It's not the first time" suggest a recurring pattern of suffering for the sheriff who finds solace in the beauty of the natural world.

The lark is associated with yearning and ascension to heaven (Ferber 104-05). Doane's ability to rise above bitterness and self-pity into a realm of love recalls the words of Shakespeare's famous sonnet:

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,  
I all alone beweep my outcast state,  
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,  
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,  
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,  
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,  
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,  
With what I most enjoy contented least;  
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,  
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,  
Like to the lark at break of day arising  
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;  
For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings  
That then I scorn to change my state with kings. ("When in disgrace")

The lark augurs glad tidings, abundance, and the lifting of earthly burdens (Palmer 212). The image appealed to the Romantics: Shelley and Wordsworth both wrote poems titled "To the Skylark" in which the skylark embodies happiness and light. When, at the cemetery, the drunken Jordan takes aim at the lark in an effort to show that he is sober enough to fight, he mumbles, "Damn it, I can't see!" when he misses it ("The Tin Star" 215). Jordan's words recall both his failure to kill the lark as well his own wretched spiritual state. At the end of the story, Douane's last words are about a "pretty bird" – the lark – as he sacrifices his life for Toby, his deputy, a friend who will carry on his legacy.

In the film *High Noon* (1952), the stakes are higher for the sheriff since he is newly married and has even more reason to quit his job. The sheriff defers domesticity just long enough to fulfill his task. Despite the cowardice of the townspeople and his isolation in the face of danger, the sheriff fulfills his destiny and rids the town of the criminal gang. At the climax, his wife intervenes with a shotgun to save her husband's life, ferociously shooting a gunman in the back, against her own Quaker principles. The sheriff tosses his badge aside in disgust but only after he has accomplished his bloody task. Like other Hollywood films produced in the midst of the Cold War, *High Noon* performs an ideological function by turning a pacifist into a violent heroine. The film lacks the rich symbolic depth of "The Tin Star" in which the sheriff's sacrifice lends the story poignancy and meaning.

Jack Schaefer's novel *Shane* (1949) is another trailblazing story about a reluctant gunslinger, set in Wyoming in 1889, a time when the end of the open grazing range was in sight. The renowned A. B. Guthrie Jr. wrote the screenplay of the 1953 film by the same name. The novel received critical acclaim while the film received an Academy Award for cinematography. The eponymous hero is in every sense the very opposite of the braggarts who like to fight. To the rancher's men, he initially seems like a peaceful cowhand, but Shane soon proves that he too can brawl and handle a gun. Shane refuses to be provoked, containing his anger, but he will resort to violence when he must.

In the novel, we see the mysterious protagonist of *Shane* through the eyes of Bob Starrett who was a boy at the time of the story but a man at the time of its telling. Shane appears seemingly from nowhere and strikes up a friendship with Bob's father, Joe Starrett, one of several homesteaders who had come into conflict with a powerful rancher named Luke Fletcher. Shane is the kind of archetypal cowboy that Philip Ashton Rollins describes as "a man with guts and a horse" and who possesses the reserve that, according to Rollins, typifies the cowboy (66-67). Shane's monosyllabic, and almost certainly pseudonymous, single name, heightens the man's mystery. As Rollins points out, in the West it was customary "to accept at face value whatever name the stranger or acquaintance cared to put forth as his own" (68).

Shane is invited to remain with the Starrett family and he soon becomes a close family friend. Marian, Joe's wife, is attracted to Shane and the novel dramatizes her inner struggle through dialogue, such as in this exchange between Marian and Joe:

"Do you think I don't know, Marian?"

"But you don't. Not really. You can't. Because I don't know myself." (*Shane* 203)

The novel also leaves much to the reader's imagination with regard to the facial expressions in the scene in which, after the brawl with Morgan's men, Bobby hears his mother exclaim, "Did ever a woman have two such men?" (*Shane* 202). The



narrator, the adult Bobby, then relates how “The two men stared at her and then at each other in that adult knowledge beyond my understanding” (*Shane* 202). Shane’s ferocious combat with Joe Starrett over who would get to fight Fletcher’s men recalls the epic combat between Gilgamesh and Enkidu. Shane becomes Joe’s true friend and will risk his life to protect his host and the homesteaders.

The novel conveys Shane’s rootedness in the land through his language, such as when he tells Bobby, “Fletcher has made this a straight win or lose deal. It’s the same as if he’d kicked loose a stone that starts a rockslide and all he can do is hope to ride it down and hit bottom safe” (*Shane* 206). His language has an earthy, pictorial character that creates a vivid connection to place that is epitomized in the reference to the stump that cannot be budged despite Joe’s strenuous efforts. Shane overcomes the allure of domesticity in order to fulfill his calling. Shane safeguards the homesteaders but declines to stay on, in part because he has killed several men which would bring down the law on him. Ever a man of mystery, Shane disappears into the mountains from which he had emerged, ready to resume, like Odysseus, his wanderings.

Owing in part to the nature of the medium, the film departs from Jack Schaefer’s novel in small ways. In the film, Joe Starrett’s son is named Joey possibly to convey the son’s resemblance to a father who is trusting and simple and good. The film’s visual power is apparent from the outset when Joey aims his unloaded rifle at a deer only to find Shane in the sights. This dramatic moment suggests all at once Shane’s hunted aspect, a sense of menace, and the element of surprise. The film achieves the same effect in the novel, that of Marian as an unknowable woman, not so much through dialogue as through what is left unspoken. After the ferocious fight in which Shane knocks Joe unconscious, Marian and Shane shake hands and exchange looks. Is Marian’s expression that of a wife thankful that a stranger has prevented her husband from dying in a shoot out? Or is her look that of a complicit lover?

In the film, unlike in the novel, Joe and Shane manage to budge the stump. The moment is emblematic of the friendship and power that enables them to overcome Fletcher’s hired men after a series of bloody encounters. Like the novel, the film bonds the viewer to the land. In a funeral scene, the land is almost sentient as the camera sweeps across the mourners with a mare that is suckling a foal in the foreground and snow-clad Wyoming mountains in the distance. The film preserves a sense of mystery as Shane rides off into the twilight, transfigured by the moonlight. The film masterfully furthers the Shane legend and complements the novel.

The desert is more than just a decorative backdrop in Elmore Leonard’s novel *Hombre* (1961) and in its film version (1967) by the same name. Water is a precious resource whose scarcity spurs the dramatic tension. The suffering of the thirsty travelers parallels that of the Apaches who have been banished to a

reservation where a corrupt government agent, the aptly named Dr. Favor, has stolen the funds that might have provided for their bare subsistence. The film's opening scene, absent in the novel, prefigures both the role and fate of the central character, John Russell, a white man who had been raised among the Apaches. As Russell and a fellow Apache look on, a black stallion leads a herd of horses towards a water hole. When the horses begin to drink at the water hole, Russell bars a gate to trap the horses inside the corral. Russell will be trapped by circumstances when he leads a group of travelers to safety in the desert at the cost of his own life.

In the novel, the MacLaren girl, who had spent several months as a captive of the Apaches, provides insights into the motivation and character of Russell. She also serves as a bridge between the world of white Americans and that of the Apaches. She refuses to side with Dr. Favor against Russell when Favor tries to hold on to the saddlebag under the pretense that "It's my money." Upon hearing this, the MacLaren girl bursts out: "Your money. After you stole it! We're supposed to side with you to protect money you stole" (*Hombre* 95). Her absence from the film detracts from our understanding of Russell, for in the novel, it is the MacLaren girl who gives Russell hope for a future of moral renewal.

The film preserves some of the novel's best dialogue, such as when Favor utters a richly evocative line just before he takes Mendez's shotgun: "Where money is concerned you don't know anybody" (*Hombre* 122). His words reveal more than just his own greed. They also anticipate our discovery of the hidden motive that compels Russell to risk his life, namely, the starving Apaches on the reservation. Another instance of engaging dialogue is when Russell tells his companions to watch out for Dr. Favor: "If he tries to leave with nothing, shoot him once," "If he takes the saddlebag, shoot him twice. If he picks up the water, empty your gun" (*Hombre* 100). In the film, Russell delivers the line deadpan. However, the film necessarily omits the subsequent reflections of the first person narrator, Carl Allen, a former employee of a nearby stagecoach company: "(I have thought about those words since then and I am sure Russell was having a little fun with us when he said that. Part serious, part in fun. But can you imagine joking at a time like that? That of course was the reason no one even smiled. He must have thought we were dumb.)" (*Hombre* 100-101). This last sentence recalls a key narrative technique of many American Western writers, namely the use of a first person narrator whose limited understanding of the events at hand compels the reader to engage more deeply with the story to help create its meaning. Though somewhat myopic, Allen comes to sense the measure of Russell's sacrifice for his people.

The film expertly uses dialogue and the starkly barren landscape to characterize the mysterious John Russell. In a desert scene, Jessie, the former caretaker of the boardinghouse that Russell had promptly sold upon assuming ownership, tells Russell: "You haven't moved a muscle in the last hour. Don't you ever get tired?"

Don't you ever get hungry? Don't you ever get thirsty? Are you for real?" (Ritt). Her words allude to the man's strange persistence which, we will learn, arises from a quest for justice. The travelers misjudge Russell when he declines to surrender the money in exchange for the life of Mrs. Favor. To the MacLaren girl in the novel and Jessie in the film, Russell appears callous, even inhuman, towards the woman tied up by the bandits and baking in the hot sun when he says "Go ask that woman what she thinks of human life. Ask her what a human life is worth at San Carlos when they run out of meat" (*Hombre* 161).

Russell had maintained his cool in the waiting room as he awaited the stage coach. He had refused to intervene when a gunslinger intimidated a passenger to give up his ticket. This is because acting in anger would have interfered with his larger purpose and much greater justice. In the end, Russell saves the life of Mrs. Favor but loses his own. Both the film and novel heighten Russell's mystery by sparing us the formulaic last words of a dying hero. The fatally wounded Mexican asks to be told the name of the man that he just killed, affirming Russell's grandeur. The survivors will safeguard the money and bring Dr. Favor to justice, having learned that Russell had never intended to steal it. In *Hombre*, violence ultimately proves restorative, tracing the outline of a man whose courage was forged in the raw injustice meted out to indigenous people.

*Unforgiven* (1992), a commercial success that won four Academy Awards as well as critical acclaim, was directed by Clint Eastwood who had been given its unproduced film script a decade earlier. This bleak film is an unforgiving portrait of Wyoming in 1881. It subverts the devices associated with the Western, undercutting the notion of the redemptive power of violence. The film strips the American West of its Hollywood glamour, revealing that region to be violent and unredeemed.

*Unforgiven* opens with a harrowing scene in which a cowboy repeatedly slashes a prostitute with a knife. In the aftermath of the crime, the sheriff arrives and attributes the deed to "hardworking boys that was foolish" and had gotten carried away. Impunity, we soon discover, extends to the sheriff himself. Sheriff Daggett is a sadistic brute who rules the town of Big Whiskey unchecked. The prostitutes cannot expect justice from the authorities. Their haggard faces reveal longstanding sadness and despair. The women are trapped in a loveless world. They are slaves to the saloon owner and the raunchy cowboys who take their pleasure with them. The bitter women offer a one thousand dollar reward to whoever kills the two men responsible for harming the unfortunate girl. "Just because we let them ride us as horses, doesn't mean we have to let them brand us as horses," one prostitute exclaims (*Unforgiven*).

Will Munny, a former hired killer, hears about the reward from a young man nicknamed the Schofield Kid. Will ekes out a living as a pig farmer, an occupation

perhaps best suited to his erstwhile profession. His wife is dead and he has two children to support. The Schofield Kid pretends that he has killed five men, believing that a history of violence raises his stature. Will does not romanticize murder. He recalls that his deceased wife had cured him of wickedness. Will had nearly been killed in one encounter. "I thought I was dead," Will recalls, "but I found out I was just in Nebraska" (*Unforgiven*).

The Schofield Kid, ever eager for a fight, is fascinated by Will's gun slinging past, and asks Will if he had been scared during one of his notorious fights. Tellingly, Will replies, "I can't remember. I was drunk at the time" (*Unforgiven*). In this fashion, *Unforgiven* conveys an anti-heroic vision of the American West. The film exposes the falsification of the American West through the mythologizing of violence. An awe-struck biographer discovers the complications of truth when he hears another version of English Bob's life story from Sheriff Daggett, who had driven the gunslinger out of town. Unlike formulaic westerns in which killing appears as a kind of sport, *Unforgiven* reminds us that killing is unnatural and that fear accompanies violence. Will readily confesses, "Everybody can be scared. If he wasn't scared then he just wasn't no carpenter" (*Unforgiven*). This allusion to Jesus confirms fear as human.

We soon discover in this film that violence is not a regional pastime, but a national pathology. The passengers in the train headed to Big Whiskey discuss the assassination of President James Garfield which took place in 1881, the year of the events in the film. English Bob uses the occasion to pick a fight. He tells the passengers that in England, as opposed to the United States, it would be considered uncivilized to shoot persons of substance. Violent death, English Bob declares, ought to spare the affluent. He proposes that the United States would be better governed by a king. His provocative remarks are meant to provide an opportunity for Bob to show off his shooting skills.

Together with the Schofield Kid and his former partner Ned Logan, Will hunts the two cowboys responsible for slashing the girl. Logan no longer has any taste for killing and pulls out of the deal. Nonetheless, Will and the Schofield Kid manage to avenge the prostitute and collect the reward money. The financial windfall comes at a terrible price. Logan is caught and tortured to death by Sheriff Daggett. Will risks all to avenge his friend in a shoot out that, out of sheer luck, culminates in the death of the sheriff and several of his cronies. In a memorable scene, Will responds to Sheriff Daggett plea, "I don't deserve to die this way," saying "deserving has got nothing to do with it" just before he kills him. The violence in the film is as nightmarish as that in *The Iliad*.

There is a wistful sense of possibility when the slashed girl meets Will. But the two are not destined to love. There is no place for love in their world. After the murder of the two cowboys that had slashed the prostitutes, angry townsmen

hurl a brick through the window of the saloon, shouting “murdering whores.” The girl will live out her life trapped and unloved. Will, it is said, made his way to San Francisco, escaping the unrelieved grimness of the American West. The meaning of the title of *Unforgiven* extends beyond lives of its unredeemed characters to indict a corrupt society that deserves to remain unforgiven. The film memorably strips violence and the American West of glamour, revealing deep underlying human sorrow.

The archetypal patterns that give the American Western transhistorical significance continue to remerge in other guises as we explore new frontiers such as in space travel or in virtual worlds. The themes of friendship, courage, self-mastery, violence, redemption, community, and wanderlust that are the enduring legacy of the American Western are also integral to ancient literary traditions. In reaffirming our bond to the earth and to others, the American Western deserves to remain etched in our collective cultural memory.

## WORKS CITED

- Cunningham, John M. “The Tin Star.” In *The Western Story: Fact, Fiction and Myth*. Ed. Philip Durham and Everett Jones. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975: 209-22.
- Ferber, Michael. *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*. Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Gilgamesh*. Trans. Stephen Mitchell. New York, Atria, 2004.
- High Noon* (film). Dir. Fred Zinneman. Stanley Kramer Productions, 1952.
- Hombre* (film). Dir. Martin Ritt. Twentieth Century Fox, 1967.
- Homer. *The Iliad*. Trans. Stephen Mitchell. New York: Free Press, 2011.
- Homer. *The Odyssey*. Trans. Albert Cook. New York: W. W. Norton, 1967.
- Leonard, Elmore. *Hombre*. New York: William Morrow, 2012 (1961).
- Palmer, Jessica David. *Animal Wisdom*. London: HarperCollins, 2001.
- Peoples, David Webb. *Unforgiven* (film script), 1984. Eastwood The World Wide Web Page. <http://www.clinteastwood.net/filmography/unforgiven/script/unforgivenscript.txt> (Accessed 20 Sept. 2016).
- Rollins, Philip Ashton. *The Cowboy*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997 (1936).
- Schaefer, Jack. *Shane*. Ed. James C. Work. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984.
- Shakespeare, William. “When in disgrace with Fortune and men’s eyes.” In *Literature: Craft & Voice*. Ed. Nicolas Delbanco and Alan Cheuse. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012: 843.

*Shane* (film). Dir. George Stevens. Paramount Pictures, 1953.

The Old Testament: An American Translation. Ed. J. M. Powis Smith. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927.

*Unforgiven* (film). Dir. Clint Eastwood. Warner Brothers, 1992.

*Ali Shehzad Zaidi*

State University of New York at Canton

[zaidia@canton.edu](mailto:zaidia@canton.edu)



### **Ikonični ameriški western v filmu in književnosti**

Prispevek raziskuje žanr ameriškega westerna skozi reprezentativne zgodbe v filmu in v književnosti. Te zgodbe prikazujejo dinamično notranjo napetost junakov, ki jih po eni strani vleče domov in ki po drugi strani vseeno hrepenijo po odhodu v širni svet.

**Ključne besede:** *Ep o Gilgamešu, Iliada, Hombre, Točno opoldne, Shane*

# Children Without Childhood: The Emotionality of Orphaned Children and Images of Their Rescuers in Selected Works of English and Canadian Literature

*Irena Avsenik Nabergoj*

## Abstract

This article deals with literary depictions of social, political, cultural and religious circumstances in which children who have lost one or both parents at birth or at a later age have found themselves. The weakest members of society, the children looked at here are exposed to dangers, exploitation and violence, but are fortunate enough to be rescued by a relative or other sympathetic person acting out of benevolence. Recognizing that the relationship between the orphaned child, who is in mortal danger, and a rescuer, who most frequently appears unexpectedly in a relationship, has been portrayed in narratives throughout the ages and that we can therefore speak of it as being an archetypal one, the article focuses especially on three novels by Charles Dickens – *Oliver Twist* (1837–1839), *David Copperfield* (1849–1850) and *Great Expectations* (1860–1861) – and in *Fugitive Pieces* (1996) by Canadian writer Anne Michaels. Charles Dickens earned the reputation of a classic writer through his original literary figures of orphaned children in the context of the rough capitalism of the Victorian era of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Such originality also distinguishes Anne Michaels, whose novel *Fugitive Pieces* portrays the utterly traumatic circumstances that a Jewish boy is exposed to after the Germans kill his parents during the Holocaust. All the central children's lives in these extreme situations are saved by generous people, thus highlighting the central idea of both selected authors: that evil cannot overcome good. Rescuers experience their selfless resolve to save extremely powerless and unprotected child victims of violence from life-threatening situations as a self-evident

moral imperative. Through their profound and deeply experienced descriptions of memories of traumas successfully overcome by central literary figures in a spirit of compassion and solidarity, Charles Dickens and Anne Michaels have left testaments of hope against hope for future generations.

**Keywords:** Charles Dickens, emotions, memories, Anne Michaels, holocaust, orphaned children, rescuers, trauma, adoption, the victory of good.

## INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the number of academic studies on the nature, role, education, and social position of children throughout history has increased, and there has been a parallel increase in fiction about children and about childhood. The history of children and childhood has birthed a new research area that offers critical insights into the human past by aligning itself with the global emphasis on interdisciplinary aspects as well as on contemporary social experiences. Thus, historians, beginning in the early 1960s, began to be interested in life experiences of the past, as revealed by family relations, religious experiences, various forms of education, along with experiences from working life, sports and leisure, and other areas. Adding their voices to historians' have been scholars from especially anthropology and sociology. Children and adolescents who, with rare exceptions, were excluded from active politics have become visible in studies focusing on family, school, as well as children working in factories and fields.

Investigating the presence of children in history became an exciting area for new social research in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the fruits of which studies were first extensively unveiled in the three books of the *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood: In History and Society* (2004). Edited by Paula S. Fass, this monumental work includes no less than 445 expert articles dealing with childhood under various aspects in both historical and social terms; it has significantly changed the vision of history, while providing insights into how our ancestors thought about children in the past. Some other recent studies are relevant.<sup>1</sup>

Such research has turned to extremely diverse material that had previously been overlooked, including registers and wills, in poetry, novels and other works of literary fiction, in the thoughts of various philosophers and psychologists (from Plato and Aristotle through Erasmus, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau,

---

1 Cf. Coveney 1967; Pollock 1983; Cunningham 1995; Banerjee 1996; van der Geest 2004; Immel 2006; Stearns 2006; Georgieva 2011. A particularly crucial aspect of childhood is gender, and many new insights into childhood were made in terms of gender in the 1970s and 1980s. Cf. Prim. Fass 2004, Volume 1, xi–xv (Preface).



Sigmund Freud, John Dewey and Jean Piaget); in diaries, pictures and photographs; in games and in many other material and immaterial forms from the past. Researchers are striving to understand children around the world, and their research thus extends to various parts of the world, all the way to Africa, Latin America, China, India and Australia; they also take into account great religious traditions, such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam, but also the early church fathers and the innovations of Protestantism, even as they pay attention to intercultural perspectives when it comes to names, sexuality, adolescence, and so forth.

In the West, childhood is presented in an in-depth manner that dates from ancient Greece and Rome, through the Middle Ages, through early modern Europe and European colonialism, right up to the modern world. Also considered are historical circumstances that are strongly reflected in fiction about children and childhood, including revolution, oppression and war.<sup>2</sup>

In this article, we proceed from the image of the child and childhood as an important literary theme, albeit while limiting ourselves to the image of the orphaned child in modern English and Canadian literature. Two authors who depicted orphans in particularly trying socio-political circumstances are the focus of this article – namely, Charles Dickens, who depicts children given over to criminals in poor parts of London, and Anne Michaels, who depicts the trials and tribulations of a young Jewish boy who experienced the violent death of his parents during the Holocaust.

## THE CHILD AND CHILDHOOD AS A LITERARY THEME

In the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, researchers increasingly discovered the crucial role childhood plays in defining and shaping culture. In 1960, the French historian Philippe Ariès, in his work *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime*, published in English in 1962 as *Centuries of Childhood*, encouraged historians to think about childhood (“as an invention, a historically driven phenomenon, not a transcendent category”). He argued that before the 17<sup>th</sup> century childhood was invisible and that European society gave shape to childhood as part of a wider process of social differentiation.<sup>3</sup> This raises the fundamental question of what the concept of childhood actually means. In dealing with different aspects of childhood, researchers usually define this word in relation to its opposite, adulthood.

2 The main research direction of looking various aspects of childhood is determined by attempts to answer the question of what *childhood* means. Researchers have most often defined this word in relation to its opposite, *adulthood*. Some have tackled the question of the essence or nature of childhood.

3 See Fass 2004, Volume 1, xi–xii; Georgieva 2011, 10.

By “childhood” they denote an earlier period of human life in which we acquire experiences and adopt behaviours that prepare us for the adult period of “active” life. Though the duration of childhood is not fully defined, it is also known that the concept of childhood has changed over the centuries – a change that also literary fiction has documented. From the treasure trove of world literature this article looks more closely at works of English and Canadian literature.

Childhood has long been one of the central themes in English literature. We see its presence in lyric poetry of the Elizabethan period, in such Shakespeare plays as *Richard III*, *King John*, *Macbeth*, *The Winter’s Tale*,<sup>4</sup> and in John Dryden and Alexander Pope. The importance of the subject of childhood greatly increased with the rise and development of the novel, gaining prominence through the 18<sup>th</sup> century; in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries it has stimulated seminal works that have proven crucial for a critical understanding of the literary production of individual periods. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, also literature aimed at children was produced.

From the 18<sup>th</sup> century forth, the child was either a subject or an object of popular writing. This writing mirrored the dichotomy of childhood, which was a symbol of growth and development on the one hand, and of the regression and ignorance of the world on the other. Authors such as James Janeway (*A Token for Children*, 1671–72), disseminated the doctrine of original sin through the 17<sup>th</sup> century. They created a moralistic, religiously-oriented vision of childhood that was based on the theory of man’s “Fall” and original sin, and looked on children with pessimism. At the same time, childhood was seen as the most decisive period in shaping the foundations of spirituality and constructing true faith.

In contrast to this type of thinking, 18<sup>th</sup>-century thinkers promulgated intellect and ratio as the highest of virtues. This century became a period of transition in which childhood became the highest symbol of the purity of nature, reason and the soul, as well as of the triumph of human congenital delicacy. Contrary to the thinking of previous centuries, childhood was perceived more positively and soon became a popular subject of the sentimental novel. The poverty and misfortune of innocent, virtuous children who possess a clear inner insight was the subject of many literary works of writers such as Elizabeth Bonhôte (in her 1769 *Hortensia, or, The Distressed Wife*). During this period, the idea emerged that in childhood the concepts of imagination, sensibility and nature were combined into one. In the literary representations of childhood, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his novel *Emile* (1762)<sup>5</sup> proved strongly influential. Sentimentalism appeared not only in literature of the 18<sup>th</sup> century but also in literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for example, in works by the writer George Eliot (1819–1880).

---

4 Cf. Partee 2006.

5 Cf. Georgieva 2011, 11.

The theme of childhood in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was a prominent one in many authors. To mention just a few of them: William Blake (1757–1827), *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1789, 1794); William Wordsworth (1770–1850), “Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood” (1807) and “We Are Seven” (1789); George Gordon Byron (1788–1824), *Don Juan* (1817–1824); Charles Dickens (1812–1870), *Oliver Twist* (1837–1839), *David Copperfield* (1849–1850), *Great Expectations* (1860–1861); Thomas Hardy (1840–1928), *Jude the Obscure* (1895), Charlotte Brontë (1816–1855), *Jane Eyre* (1847); Henry James (1843–1916), *What Maisie Knew* (1897) and *The Turn of the Screw* (1898); Lewis Carroll (1832–1898), *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871), and *Sylvie and Bruno* (1889–93).

Important literary works about children and childhood also emerged in the United States and Canada, for example, in the works of Mark Twain (1835–1910) and William Faulkner (1897–1962). Twain’s novels *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) deal with stories of child-birth, the isolation of children in society and the pursuit of freedom in the face of social conformism. In *Light in August* (1932), meanwhile, Faulkner describes the poverty-stricken life of the orphan Joe Christmas.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the subject of childhood became popular in a number of very different genres, from C.S. Lewis’s (1898–1963) descriptions of childhood – however indirect – during wartime, to works composed by children themselves, even Anne Frank’s (1929–1945) *Diary of a Young Girl* (1947).

Among more recent North American authors, we pay special attention here to Anne Michaels (1958), who in the novel *Fugitive Pieces* (1996) addresses the issue of saving a Jewish child named Jakob during the Holocaust, after the Nazis killed his father, his mother and his sister Bella. Michaels crafts the novel by focusing on the emotionally harrowing experience of the murder of the Jewish family and the story of the child, whose life was saved by Athos, a Greek archaeologist.

In the (necessarily limited) space of this article, we limit ourselves to assessing the literary renderings of child orphans in Victorian England in the three afore-mentioned Dickens novels, while also considering the emotional motivation for rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust as well as Jakob’s emotionally-coloured memories, as depicted by Anne Michaels in *Fugitive Pieces*. Thus, we concentrate on the literary representations of child orphans who are saved by a benevolent adult. In the relationship between a helpless child and a rescuer, we see profound emotional bonds that go beyond the meaning of a single life story and that are, rather, a universal symbol of “hope against hope” in the most fragile of life’s situations. Memories of traumatic childhood events engender deep feelings towards acts of sacrifice, which entails genuine human inclinations towards compassion and love.

## ARCHETYPAL IMAGES OF THE CHILD-ORPHAN AND THEIR RESCUERS

Louie W. Attebery, basing his insights on the similarities of structure and content he discerned in life stories of orphaned children and their rescuers, makes use of Jungian archetypes, among them, also that of the orphan:

Let me posit the notion that the orphan is one of these archetypes without now examining the rich psychological or emotional ontogeny of it. The orphan may be described as having lost physically or emotionally one or both biological parents and being endangered as a consequence; moreover, he usually seeks and finds companionship of some kind. He is frequently isolated from his place. Then depending upon how deeply he partakes of the heroic archetype – we are reminded by Jung that “clear-cut distinctions and strict formulations are quite impossible in this field” – the orphan may set himself to doing heroic deeds. Typically, as the orphan matures he experiences either an apotheosis or an atonement, in the sense of being re-united or re-identified as belonging and no longer alienated. In the beginning the orphan is likely to be innocent, i.e., *nocence* has not yet replaced ignorance; he does not willfully and knowingly sin. (Attebery 1970, 206–207)

Among ancient examples, Attebery cites the Bible stories of the “orphan” Adam after his expulsion from paradise, of Joseph of Egypt, whose brothers sold him into slavery, and of Moses, who was saved from certain death by the Pharaoh’s daughter.

Such rescuer figures appear throughout all periods of human history and culture. We even talk about the archetypes of the child–rescuer relationship. Among the most famous examples of such an archetype is the biblical example of Moses, who, like all Hebrew boys, was sentenced to death by the Pharaoh. He was, however, saved by the Pharaoh’s compassionate daughter, who violated her murderous father’s command and thus exhibited a vanquishing nobility that transcended all racial, social and cultural limitations (Exodus 2:5–10).

The example of Moses, who was condemned to death by a nationalistically-minded ruler but who was saved through an act of natural kindness that has universal value, ideally fits the common ancient tradition of the ancient Middle East. According to this tradition, widows and foreigners received special protection from the supreme deity and great kings, meaning that providing such protection was considered a general injunction for all people. In Mesopotamia the protector of the weak was the god Shamash, in ancient Egypt it was the sun god Re or Amon-Re, in ancient Israel it was the Yahweh. As Charles Fensham argues,

Yahweh is described in Old Testament literature as the protector of the weak par excellence. With direct apodictic style of command and prohibition Yahweh

takes the weak under his protection. This is one of the important ethical doctrines of the Old Testament, but definitely not unique in comparison with conceptions in neighboring cultures. The only basic difference is that Yahweh is regarded as the only protector. He is even placed in opposition to the gods of foreign nations and hailed as the only true Supreme Judge of the world (Ps. 82). (Fensham 1962, 137–138)

Kings in all the civilizations of the ancient Middle East were considered direct representatives of God on earth. Because kings and lesser nobility often failed to observe the commandment to protect the weak, prophets arose to explicitly remind them of their task. The prophetic voice in Deuteronomy 10:17–18 says, “The Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing.”<sup>6</sup>

The prophet Isaiah, meanwhile, beseeches the following: “Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow” (Isaiah 1:17). The prophets’ words apply not only to rules but to all people. A profound awareness of the need to protect the weakest members of society is also prevalent in the Wisdom tradition. In Proverbs 23, 10, the anonymous author says, “Do not remove an ancient landmark or encroach on the fields of orphans, for their redeemer is strong; he will plead their cause against you.”

Collective societies did not foreground protection of the weak, such as widows and orphans – hence the importance of morally-aware prophets and other humane individuals. Charles Fensham emphasizes that displaying such humanity towards the weak was “a common policy” in the ancient Middle East and notes that it reached its peak in the prophetic message of the Hebrew Bible:

In the Israelite community this policy was extended through the encouragement of the high ethical religion of Yahweh to become a definite part of their religion, later to be inherited by Christians and Muslims. (Fensham 1962, 139)

## THE ORPHANED CHILD IN SELECTED WORKS OF ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE

The generous and noble rescuers of orphaned children in literature, which are often a reflection of real life in a depersonalized and often criminal society, are

---

6 The Bible quoted in this article is *The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books: New Revised Standard Version*. Nashville: Nelson, 1989.

the foremost examples of this ancient moral tradition.<sup>7</sup> Among modern American instances, Attebery lists Huck from Twain's novel *Huckleberry Finn*. William Blake (1757–1827) is the first major English literary creator to address the theme of the orphaned child. Blake's strongly symbolic poems show the contradictions between the time when the child experiences the immediacy of life from a state of innocence and when the child grows up to encounter the trials, suffering and brutality of society, and asks rhetorical questions. Particularly interesting is his depiction of a critical judgement of the role of patriarchal protectors, where, rather than natural intimacy, social and religious conventionality are at play, including in connection with various types of abusive behaviour towards children. Mariam Radhwi summarizes Blake's basic views on the role of human nature and the natural environment as follows:

Besides the natural world, nature in Blake's *Songs* includes human nature. *Innocence* focuses on innocent human nature and promotes a positive outlook of life, to the extent of accepting injustice and misery and emphasizing human love. *Experience* stresses humans' darker side, such as jealousy, hatred, and their potential for destruction. (Radhwi 2011, 217)

The poet George Gordon Byron (1788–1824) most concretely manifested his views on childhood in his great epic *Don Juan* (1817–1824). The poem's hero is an idealised individual of great talent, albeit one who despises society and social institutions. Don Juan is depicted as a wealthy orphan who suffers under a protective mother striving to keep him pure and to shelter him from maleficent influences. The character of Don Juan points to Byron's pessimistic character:

The hero here, Don Juan, is a precursor to modern existentialists, who argue that the feelings, thoughts, and emotions of the individual are where meaning is to be found. An existentialist worldview can lead to a nihilistic one – in other words, a world-view in which nothing has meaning. In *Don Juan*, for instance, Byron seems to believe that humans constantly live under the burdens of despair, emptiness, and futility. (DeRouen 2011, 245)

The English novelist and poet Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) wrote very critically about Victorian society. Most of his characters are tragic individuals who struggle in the clash between their passions and their social circumstances. In the novel *Jude the Obscure* (1895), Hardy focuses his social criticism on the matter of sexuality and marital life. The main character of this novel is the orphan Jude from

---

7 The relation between helpless, unprotected children and a benevolent rescuer strongly evokes the New Testament allegory of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10,30-35). Cf. Welch 1999; Gribble 2004; Roukema 2004; James 2007. Cf. also the excellent article on the nature of empathy: Cavanagh 1995.

the English countryside who dreams of an academic career. He travels to the city, which is most alluring to him, but soon has a love affair with Arabella, who is in search of a husband. When Arabella finds out that Jude will not be able to satisfy her material expectations, she leaves him. Jude then enters into a love affair with his cousin Sue, with whom he lives in an extra-marital relationship and has children. Not least on account of his conflicted nature, a series of critical situations occurs that precludes him from entering university.

Through Jude's story Hardy aims to show how social circumstances lead to homelessness, a nomadic existence, unemployment, poverty and ruin. The circumstances of the novel show "that class structure and moral code are not solely affecting the protagonists from without, but they are rather a part of the collective subconscious within the individual" (Schaes 2011, 512). The course of the story demonstrates that

[a]lthough there seems to be nothing more desirable to both of them than being together, there are always events preventing this – up to the tragic ending. Why this has to be, the novel refuses a definite answer, but there is far more to it than foreshadowings of dark hereditary family pathology. The novel reaches deeply into the psychology of its protagonists and offers various explanations and hints. (Schaes 2001, 512)

The question is whether social circumstances are truly the main reason why the dream of a young person cannot be realized. In this case, does the main reason not lie in the contradictory character of the protagonist himself, in the rash decisions and in the lack of purity such as that one sees in the character of Oliver Twist? If Jude did not have the fortune that Oliver Twist did, namely, of finding a rescuer who acts out of pure love, and a reliable advisor, it cannot be merely the result of social circumstances, but also of his inner strength in terms of achieving a stable life.

The American writer Mark Twain (1835–1910), in his novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884, 1885), describes the adventures of the boy Huckleberry Finn, who became an orphan when his mother died and his father left him. He was adopted by the Widow Douglas. Throughout the work, the motif of the intense loneliness of an abandoned boy is repeated. Twain's next novel, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), has Tom as the main character:

The major character is Tom, who stands for the resourceful, clever, and courageous American adolescent who loves to break rules, face the unknown, and give full play to his impulses. Accompanied by Huck Finn, Joe Harper, and Becky Thatcher, he has to confront Injun Joe, who, in the end, is trapped in a cave and dies. Tom is supported by his generous aunt Polly and the townspeople. (Sorop 2011, 1085)

In both works the author describes the adventures of an abandoned child by highlighting the child's innocence. The child acquires life experience through situations that he does not choose himself, though each child also encounters people who show compassion and mercy.

William Faulkner's (1897–1962) novel *Light in August* (1932) is the story of Joe Christmas and his life path, on which he encounters both cruelty and understanding. His mother dies during childbirth, and with her death the child is struck by the cruel path of homelessness. When his grandfather Eupheus found out years before that his daughter had run away with a man and become pregnant, he did not want her to keep the baby. Thus, after the daughter's death in childbirth, he took the boy to the door of an orphanage, leaving him there on Christmas day (hence the name Christmas). Joe Christmas experiences a difficult life path of social isolation, which is made all the more so difficult because he is of mixed race. How cruel racial discrimination in the American society of his time was is shown when the white woman Joanna Burden was allegedly murdered because she did not cohort with white people but with black people. According to the judgement of the people, only a black man could have committed this murder. Parallel to Joe Christmas's story is that of the poor girl Lena Grove, whose parents died when she was twelve years old. She was rejected by her acquaintances after she became pregnant, though unmarried, and when the father, Lucas Burch, left her; however, others are merciful towards her in her time of distress:

Society, as this novel shows, can be cruel and heartless, particularly toward individuals who do not conform. But, as seen with Lena, that is not entirely true. Ultimately, the human heart has enough compassion so that society will not destroy itself. (Cornell 2011, 427)

## THE ORPHANED CHILD AND HIS RESCUERS IN THREE DICKENS NOVELS

In three of his novels – *Oliver Twist* (1837–1839), *David Copperfield* (1849–1850) and *Great Expectations* (1860–1861) – Charles Dickens depicts in a similar way the figure of an orphaned child who is saved by good people from his brutal environment of heartless oppressors. In all three novels, Dickens reveals the obvious contradictions brought about by rough capitalism: on the one hand are ruthless owners of factories and estates, on the other, impoverished workers. The mass poverty of the majority of the population had serious consequences for many families, but the most affected were children who had prematurely lost their parents. In an atmosphere of unscrupulous capitalism, they experienced especially harrowing



destinies. In the novel *Oliver Twist*, Dickens writes in the shadow of the publication of the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834, joining his voice to those of those who protested on behalf of the poor and to their defenders.

The story of the novel *Oliver Twist* depicts the harrowing life story of the eponymous boy of unknown birth whose identity is not revealed until near the end of the narrative. After the boy's mother dies in childbirth, Oliver is sent to a miserable orphanage, where he is often beaten. From there he is moved to an adult home, and after a while, Mr. Sowerberry, an undertaker, takes him on as an apprentice. After Oliver suffers an unbearable situation also during his apprenticeship, where he is beaten, he flees from the countryside into the unknown. For a while, he wanders the poorer quarters of London and survives by begging, until he is noticed by Jack Dawkins, nicknamed "the Artful Dodger," and introduced to his "benefactor," the Jewish exploiter Fagin. Fagin, in whose company are also the Artful Dodger, Bill Sikes and Sikes's loved one Nancy, earned his living through money brought to him by orphans whom he had steal and prostitute for him. Fagin and the members of his gang also attempt to turn Oliver into a thief, but Oliver is resolute and firm in his sense of what is honest, so they are unsuccessful in this.

When one day the Artful Dodger and Charley Bates rob old Mr. Brownlow of his handkerchief in front of a book stall, the Artful Dodger and Charley Bates manage to escape, while Oliver, who only happened to be with the young thieves, is captured and brought before the magistrate. Mr. Brownlow senses the boy's honesty and protects him, taking him into his care. But Fagin's gang tracks Oliver down and abducts him. They constantly endeavour to corrupt him, but the boy remains equally good in spite of all these experiences.

When Bill Sikes needs an agile assistant because he wants to break into a house, Fagin assigns this role to Oliver. On the night of the burglary, when Oliver has to climb into the house through a tiny window and open the house for the others, the butler Giles shoots him. The burglars Sikes and Toby Crackit flee in panic, leaving Oliver alone on the doorstep. But the owners of the Maylie household see innocence in the gentle child, protect him again and take him into their care; Oliver becomes very emotionally tied to his benefactors. However, the leader of the gang Fagin and Monks, also a member of the London criminal world, continue to pursue Oliver. Monks even attempts to erase all traces of Oliver's birth, receiving from the leader of the house in which Oliver lived a gold locket that belonged to Oliver's mother; he throws it into the river. In this way he, as Oliver's half-brother, wants to acquire all of the property that belonged to Oliver's father. When Nancy, who has in the meantime moved to Oliver's side, reveals Monks's secret to Rose Maylie, Sikes murders her with a knife on discovering her betrayal.

But the prosecution of Fagin's gang soon follows. Sikes hangs himself, and all the other members of the gang of burglars are caught. Of the young thieves, only

Charley Bates repents. Fagin is sentenced to death by hanging, and the other boys are sentenced to forced labour. The novel ends happily. Oliver is adopted by the generous Mr. Brownlow, who uncovers the secrets of Oliver's roots. It turns out that Rose is the younger sister of his mother Agnes, meaning that she is Oliver's aunt; Monks disappears from Oliver's life and succumbs to a life of debauchery and crime. Diana Chlebek notes:

Dickens's treatment of the themes of childhood, survival, and work are among his greatest accomplishments in this work. *Oliver Twist* was the first British novel to focus on the character of a child and to give the English pauper child a voice. It thus has a special status in the history of British literature and culture. (Chlebek 2011, 341)

One side of reality is the unsustainable situation in a Victorian society that exploited poor children to serve the profits of the landowners, while depersonalizing them, closing all doors to them that might lead to a normal development and future, meaning that many children ended in misery. In extreme cases of being unprotected and in danger, the other side of reality is shown: compassion for the weakest that awakens in generous people who turn out to be rescuers and saviours. Oliver, however, is not depicted as just any orphan but as an exceptional example of an "angelic" child. That is precisely the decisive factor in why the "saviours" recognized in him a person worthy of trust and generosity. Generous people enter the picture when a child – a pure-hearted orphan – is most in need of compassion and a loving companion. That is why, the family hearth of the rescuers, so to speak, reveals the most profound of humanitarian emotions, which Dickens shows most subtly in this literary narrative.

Oliver's nobility is seen throughout the novel; it is reflected not only in his rejection of Fagin's criminal ways, but also in the boy's contact with various people and in the purity and good-heartedness of his thinking. For example, there is the scene in which Oliver, a few days after the failed attempt to break into a house, lies wounded by the house. The Maylie family takes pity on him, takes him in and thereby protects him against the hand of justice. In chapter 29, the author presented two ladies from this family: one old, the other young, the 17-year-old generous orphan, Miss Rose Maylie. It seems that the girl – an orphan, like Oliver – is portrayed with a similar subtlety in terms of her good-hearted, generous and gentle character, which may further reveal his strong affection for the poor, especially to orphans.

In chapter 33 the writer describes the circumstances of a sudden illness that befalls the orphan Rose. Oliver is compassionate and stands by her side. It seems inconceivable that she might die, and he tells Mrs. Maylie: "I am sure – certain

– quite certain – that, for your sake, who are so good yourself; and for her own; and for the sake of all she makes so happy; she will not die. Heaven will never let her die so young” (Dickens 2008, 258). John Gordon reads Oliver’s belief that Rose cannot and must not die as an infallible law of kindness: “Oliver’s intuition cannot be wrong. His instinctive sense that Rose will live comes from a clairvoyant core. He knows this, and in knowing he effects it – works, in the physician’s word, ‘a miracle’” (Gordon 2011, 22–23).

In the final chapter Dickens describes a few moments from the lives of good people, from the lives of those who remain happy through all ordeals: Mr. Brownlow, who adopted Oliver and truly came to love him, and his late mother Agnes. Dickens concludes his book with a description of the happy and affectionate love which Oliver has received: “I have said that they were truly happy; and without strong affection, and humanity of heart, and gratitude to that Being whose code is Mercy, and whose great attribute is Benevolence to all things that breath true happiness can never be attained” (Dickens 2008, 439–440).

The personation of the Good in the character of Oliver Twist evokes the category of those exceptional personalities we like to deem charismatic. Dickens shows this charisma through aesthetic approaches that provide a sense of the functioning of the transcendent and the sublime. The figure of Oliver evokes the rich European tradition of art that arrives at the sublime. David Ellison, in his book *Ethics and Aesthetics in European Modernist Literature: From the Sublime to the Uncanny* (2004), addresses the complex relationship of ethics and aesthetics in the literature of Romanticism and Modernism. Stephen Jaeger, meanwhile, in his book *Enchantment: On Charisma and the Sublime in the Arts of the West* (2012), masterfully deals with cases that reveal the possibilities of artistic representation of the charming, the charismatic and the sublime in texts and images.<sup>8</sup>

Dickens’ work *David Copperfield* is one of the first novels to show with such psychological profundity and with such great sympathy the thoughts and feelings of the child in his development from early childhood to adulthood. It begins with the description of the idyllic childhood of the young boy David who, born six months after the death of his father, had a rather sanguine existence with his loving mother and the servant Clara Peggotty.

But the happiness of his early childhood is destroyed through his mother’s second marriage, to Edward Murstone, who is not inclined to the child. He sends David to Peggotty’s relatives in Yarmouth. When he returns, he is subjected to the emotional and physical cruelty of his new father, who also tyrannizes David’s

8 Roland F. Anderson, in the article “Structure, Myth, and Rite in *Oliver Twist*” (1986), uncovers in the novel *Oliver Twist* a possible influence on the author of the biblical Eden whereby Christian spirituality subtly merges with the world of the fairy tale to lead to a happy end for the main hero.

poor mother. When David tries to stand up to him, he is sent to the Salem House boarding school run by the sadistic teacher Creakle.

When David's mother also dies, Mr. Murdstone sends him to work at a wine merchant in London. But David's landlord Wilkins Micawber is arrested for debt and sent to jail for several months. During this time nobody cares about David, so he decides to escape from London. He finds refuge in Dover with his only cousin, the eccentric, but kindly Aunt Betsey Trotwood. In spite of Murdstone's attempt to regain custody over David, she does give him up but provides a normal life and good education for him. He is sent to a better school under the leadership of Dr. Strong, who is found of instilling honour and self-confidence.

David becomes a successful and respected writer. His first marriage to the lovely but naïve Dora Spenlow is an unfortunate one, as she dies soon after the wedding. After his wife's death David lives for a time in Switzerland, and after returning to England he meets his second wife, Agnes Wickfield. The love is mutual. In his marriage with the benevolent and wise Agnes he finds true happiness and the two have five children. In the novel *David Copperfield* (which was his favourite of his novels), Dickens includes so many memories of his own unhappy childhood that the story is redolent of autobiography. Diana Chlebek notes,

[t]he book's opening chapters are remarkable for the way they depict David's child's-eye view of his immediate environment, especially through the eccentricities of a toddler's thought processes. The adult narrator also vividly recalls the emotional abandon that his childself shares with his young mother, who assumes the role of a delightful playmate rather than that of a dependable parent. Although David's early years appear idyllic, the narrator emphasizes the insecure foundation of his childhood by describing his anxieties about his dead father and his uncanny child's observations about his mother's frail and unstable nature. (Chlebek 2011, 334–335)

In the novel, Dickens paints a subtle picture of the natural need of a child for emotional benevolence in his darkest moments of childhood, at a time when he lost the replacement family of the Micawbers who gave him a room, care, but above all emotional support.

David shows a sign of adulthood when he is able to decide to travel, on foot from London, to his aunt in Dover. His aunt Betsey becomes his true rescuer, for she adopts him and provides him with a stable life with the possibility of unhindered education. David's fortunate salvation with his benevolent aunt is all the more emphasized because many of the other children David knew were broken by life because they did not find a rescuer in childhood who might provide them with moral and material support. The consequences in their later life are shown as

emotional anxiety and incapacity for harmonious marriage and for the stabilization of their careers.

In the novel *Great Expectations*, the story of which takes place in Kent and London from the beginning to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Dickens penetrates deepest into the psychology of the orphaned child in his personal growth and development from earliest childhood on. The main character of the novel, a seven-year-old orphan named Pip, lives with his older sister and her friendly husband, Joe Gargery, a blacksmith by profession, after the death of their parents. When one evening before Christmas at the cemetery he cries for his parents, whom he never knew, he meets the convict Magwitch. At Magwitch's request, Pip brings him food, but the prisoner is soon caught. Magwitch has to go into exile in Australia, but at all times he maintains a very deep and emotional attitude towards the orphan Pip.

When he visits the wealthy Miss. Havisham, Pip falls in love with her adopted daughter, Estella, who is cold and spiteful. Nevertheless, he falls in love with her and dreams that he will become a wealthy gentleman who will be worthy of her. At first, he feels that Miss. Havisham is very much inclined to him, though at some point Pip must recognize that she aims for him to be a lowly worker in the family business. However, in the forge, Pip is unhappy and strives to improve his lot. One day the rich lawyer Jaggers appears with the unusual news that a secret benefactor has left Pip a great fortune. Pip has to depart immediately for London and begin his education there. He himself assumes that his secret hopes have come true and that his secret benefactor is old Miss. Havisham, and that she wants him to marry Estella.

In London, Pip meets the young Herbert Pocket and Jaggers's clerk Wemmick. The education continues under the mentorship of Matthew Pocket, Herbert's father. A few years later, Pip finds out that his benefactor was not Miss. Havisham but Magwitch, who was once guilty of a crime and sentenced to deportation to Australia. Pip's friendliness, when he was still a child, prompted the convicted person to dedicate his life to making a gentleman of Pip with the help of the wealth he earned in Australia.

The story of Pip's childhood shows no sign of hope at the start. In contrast, Magwitch in exile maintains a very strong hope, reinforced by his emotional relationship with Pip. At some point he breaks the law and returns to England. Estella disappoints Pip's hopes of getting married, and marries Bentley Drummle.

Pip realizes that he has set his hopes on people who could not fulfil them, and that he has rejected his true benefactor Magwitch, whose sadness Pip mitigated after the convict was rejected by his homeland. In this emotional state, he makes a plan to help Magwitch escape, though Magwitch loses his life in the attempt. Dickens's descriptions of the contrast between Pip's expectations of Miss. Havisham and Estella on the one hand and the resistance to the convict Magwitch

on the other lead Pip to the recognition that happiness is not guaranteed by those who live in prosperity but by those who themselves have been deprived in one way or another.

## **EMOTIONALITY OF CHILDREN DURING WAR AND MEMORIES OF POST-WAR TRAUMA**

The emotionality of children during a period of war is as complex a phenomenon as that of human nature at all times from birth to death. Anthropologists, psychologists and researchers, as well as artistic performers, creators of human life, culture and religion and people from many other professional and scientific fields provide many general insights into the matter. The world of the emotions, which in various shades and contrasts are reflected in the war situation in interpersonal relations, are perhaps most suggestively revealed in a number of autobiographies, diaries, memories and fictional literary works. A general study of the theory of children's emotionality in war situations is discussed in *Children and War: A Historical Anthology* (2002). This book offers a historical context for periods when children were caught up in war. It shows them at home, during their active participation on the front and in other circumstances.

Affiliation with a race, nation, culture and religion significantly increases the complexity of children's emotionality during the trials and tribulations of war on account of cultural, religious, educational and other surroundings. The emotionality of children is also strengthened by the appearance of rescuers who, in attempting to rescue children, also themselves enter into conflict situations. To better understand the literary approach of the Canadian author of Jewish heritage Anne Michaels in the next section of this paper, here we devote particular attention to the aspect of the emotionality of Jewish children in the period of the war as well as to their memories of trauma after the war.

Jeffrey T. Zalar, in his article "Holocaust" (2004), cites the various emotional and spiritual shocks suffered by Jewish children during the period of the Holocaust: hunger, sickness, forced labour, murder and the loss of parents. Older children took care of younger children. Parents attempted to hide their children from the Nazis in barns, pantries, basements, coal containers, cupboards, in walls, chimneys, forests, caves and elsewhere. Forced labourers attempted to hide their children in factories. Some children were hidden, under the threat of death, by non-Jews who claimed them as their own, and hundreds were hidden in Christian schools and monasteries. In each case the children experienced fear and loneliness.

The most radical Nazi killing campaign was during the occupation of Russia in 1941. For this destruction the Nazis organized a reserve army and police and

paramilitary groups of non-Jewish residents. In the initial phase of the Second World War, the Nazis left the children alive after killing their parents, placing the children in local buildings. Because this led to an unbearable and uncontrollable situation with orphans, they started to massacre them. Elsewhere during the occupation of Russia they recruited the healthy ones for forced labour, but immediately killed the sickly, and later they also killed their parents. After 1942, the Nazis deported also Jews from Western European to the East. Most of the children were killed or murdered in gas chambers upon their arrival in the camps. Healthy and slightly older children were sent to concentration camps for forced labour. At the concentration camp in Auschwitz, about 3000 twins were abused for horrific medical experiments under the guidance of SS doctor Josef Mengele.

The complexity of emotionality felt by Jewish children is shown in the collection *Jewish American and Holocaust Literature: Representation in Postmodern World*, which was edited by Alan L. Berger and Gloria L. Cronin (2004) – especially in Berger’s chapter “Hidden Children: The Literature of Hiding” (pp. 13–53). Three years later Diana L. Wolf published her important study about: *Beyond Anne Frank: Hidden Children and Postwar Families in Holland* (2007). In the same year Mark M. Anderson’s article “The Child Victim as Witness to the Holocaust: An American Story?” (2007) appeared.

Berger, in his contribution “Hidden Children: The Literature of Hiding,” explores the various aspects of searching for identity experienced by children who lost their parents in the Holocaust and who had to go into hiding at rescuers’ because of the great danger of being discovered by the Nazis. These children experienced great trauma, since they became orphans. They lived in constant fear and only a small percentage of the children was fortunate enough to survive:

Approximately 1.5 million of the 1.6 million prewar Jewish child population in Nazi-occupied Europe were murdered. This means that only 6 to 7 percent of Jewish children lived through the Shoah. Hidden in a variety of places including farms, barns, cellars, pigsties, convents, and monasteries, their hiding experience invariably robbed them of their childhood. (Berger 2004, 13)

From Stacy Cretzmeyer’s *Your Name Is Renée* (1999) and Elisabeth Gille’s *Shadows of a Childhood* (1998), Berger asserts:

Four themes emerge from these written works: fear of abandonment by parents and by God; the psychic disorientation imposed by a new identity necessitated by the invention of a life history in order to survive; silence and a lack of understanding of why this happened to them; and a search for justice. While these themes do not receive equal weight in the works under discussion, each form a part of the mosaic of the legacy of hiding. (Berger 2004, 13–14)

Among children who saved themselves by hiding in their rescuers' hiding places, the question of identity proves particularly complex. The saved Jewish children found themselves in paradoxical circumstances, since they were torn from their original family circle and moved into an environment that was mostly not Jewish, but Christian. In the case of Christian rescuers, there was often an internal struggle between feelings of pure altruism and inherited anti-Jewish prejudices. Somewhat older children still recalled Jewish rituals from within family circles and from the broader environs of the Jewish community. In the Christian environment of their new parents they were now witnessing Christian rituals, a Christian religious view, and an ambivalent attitude towards Jews. The consequence of this was that some Jewish children sooner or later reclaimed their Jewish identity, while other rejected Judaism and accepted Christianity.

Ella Mahler, in "About Jewish Children Who survived WW II on the Aryan Side," (p. 49) cites the example of the nine-year-old Jewish girl who exclaims, "The Jewish God killed my parents. He burned my home. Jesus Christ saved me."

The great danger that the Nazis and their collaborators might discover the children in their hiding places forced the parents (if they were still alive), the rescuers of the children, and the children themselves to consciously and unconsciously remain silent about their existence:

Hidden children had to embrace silence, seek memory, and comprehend their identity in a morally distorted and chaotic world bent on their destruction. Discouraged from speaking about their experiences after the war, the hidden children continued their silence.

Many hidden children have an understandably ambivalent relationship to Jewish identity. Being Jewish during the Holocaust meant being a target of murderers and being deprived of elemental happiness. Being driven into hiding because of their Jewish birth meant concealing their true identity. (Berger 2004, 15)

The other side of the truth about the subsequent traumas of Jewish children who had been in Christian hiding places was the intolerance of the Jewish community itself towards children that converted to Christianity. For example, Saul Friedländer relates that he was "beaten by Jewish children because they thought I was different from them. So I belonged nowhere" (Friedländer 1979, 45).

Just how self-understood it was that those involved in the hiding of Jewish children kept silent about their existence is especially dramatically confirmed in the number of death sentences of rescuers who were discovered. Elisabeth Gille, in her novel *Shadows of a Childhood* (1998), highlights on the example of Léa Lévy, a girl with a Jewish name who was hidden by nuns in Bordeaux the dangers to which rescuers were exposed. This Jewish girl went to their school soon after the Nazis arrested and deported her parents:



The child's rescuer, Pierre, is himself the brother of Sister Marthe, one of the convent's nuns. Shortly after Léa's arrival, Pierre is murdered by Nazis. Additionally, the author underscores the hardships faced by all parties in the hiding situation. For example, both Léa and the nuns had meager food rations, inadequate clothing, and lived under constant stress owing to the omnipresent danger of raids and arrest. (Berger 2004, 23)

It is also understandable that the emotionality of children who were saved through hiding bred a galvanized sense of justice which manifested itself in the post-war period. Children thus affected very closely followed post-war judgments against Holocaust perpetrators and were clearly on the side of justice. It is therefore even more obvious that their psychological trauma was never completely overcome.

At the end of his chapter, Berger summarizes some important effects of the intense emotionality of children who were saved by going into hiding, and of all the others who participated in saving them:

Memoirs by hidden children attest to their determination to move out of the shadows and into the light of shared experience. Furthermore, these memoirs are an attempt to retrieve a fragment of their lost childhood in spite of the trauma that accompanies memory. (Berger 2004, 27)

Another important emotional effect is the recognition of the power of kindness shown by rescuers:

Because they were chosen for life and not selected for death, their testimony leads us to examine the actions of those whom Lawrence Baron terms "the moral minority," those who engaged in rescue behavior. What prompted those who helped? Can their behavior be emulated? Is altruism an innate or a learned behavior? What of the religious ambiguity felt by certain of the helpers?

... Goodness is a greater mystery than evil. Recognizing that one person's actions can literally save a life prompts us to seek alternatives to following genocidal orders. Moreover, by recognizing goodness we develop a more genuine and far-reaching understanding of the nature of heroism and the heroic. ... (Berger 2004, 27)

In an emotional aspect, we are most shocked by the opposition between the workings of evil and the goodness of the heart. It is shocking to recognize the immense extent of abuse of children carried out by individuals or groups:

What greater abuse can be visited upon a youngster than murdering his or her parents and sending the child away from all that is familiar and nurturing?

Nazism was in fact a deadly assault on the notions of parenting and childhood itself. It is important for hidden children to work through their Holocaust memories and thus learn how to mourn their losses. Further, it is also vital to acknowledge that children who were abused in their hiding homes do not necessarily become abuser themselves. Perhaps the most important legacy of hidden children will occur when people who hear their testimony seek to build a moral society that cherishes, rather than murders, children. (Berger 2004, 28)

Diane L. Wolf, in the book *Beyond Anne Frank: Hidden Children and Postwar Families in Holland* (2007), describes a few examples of Jewish orphans in the periods during and after the war in the Netherlands. A sociologist, the author is more interested in the real stories of traumatized children than in the idealized diary of Anne Frank. She attempts to make the survivors come alive in the search for a new identity during the post-war period. The book is based on the testimonies of 70 Jews who survived the Holocaust by hiding out in non-Jewish families in the Netherlands. She summarizes the basic content thus:

Hidden children were given up by their parents, usually as young children some as young as a few hours old, often to strangers who delivered them to non-Jewish Dutch families. They were openly or clandestinely hidden anywhere from one night to several years. Most children hid in more than one place, yet quite a few experienced the stability of being in one family for a long period. Their time in hiding was a period of danger when they were forced to adopt new identities that did not reflect their Jewish past and to adapt to the ways of a new family. In some cases, these children formed strong emotional attachments to their hiding families and felt it was the best period in their childhood; in most cases, however, close attachments did not develop. (Wolf 2007, 329–330)

Because these children were taken in and hidden during the war, these children experienced more severe trauma after the war than during it. At that time, the real trauma began for them, as children experienced a double identity in their conflicted interests, and they were also affected by post-war anti-Semitism, which also in the Netherlands showed a different face than that which can be read from Anne Frank's diary.

## **THE EMOTIONALITY OF AN ORPHANED JEWISH CHILD IN ANNE MICHAELS'S NOVEL *FUGITIVE PIECES***

The contemporary Canadian poet and writer Anne Michaels was born in 1958 in Toronto, Canada, the daughter of a Polish Jewish father. She gained the attention of the international public through her poetic style which maintains a balance

between technical precision in presenting stories and profound meditation marked by a strong sense for humanity. Her works have been translated into more than forty-five languages and she has received a number of international awards, including the Orange Prize, the Guardian Fiction Prize, the Lannan Award for Fiction and the Commonwealth Poetry Prize. She became most famous with her novel *Fugitive Pieces* (1996), which was well received by critics and literary historians.

In *Fugitive Pieces*, her first novel, Anne Michaels engaged with a complicated range of interrelated questions. These questions relate to history, the role of the environment in which one lives, identity, pain and grief: “All of the pieces are in some way related to the tension between ambition and survival, in all senses of the two concepts – artistic, psychological, spiritual, and literal” (Wiman 2001, 90). She lay the foundations for her future works in her first prose effort, in which she examines the relationship between history, memory and questions about how people remember past events and how they can, through love, overcome traumatic mental and spiritual conditions. Victoria Nesfield and Philip Smith, in their article “Holocaust Literature and Historiography and Anne Michaels’ *Fugitive Pieces*” (2013), argue that

Anne Michaels’ *Fugitive Pieces* is a work of historical fiction in the genre of Holocaust literature. This genre is problematic in that writers (either “survivors” or those who were not there) are compelled to engage with the events of the Holocaust whilst lacking the authority to do so. Michaels uses fiction as a means to examine the multitude of ways in which events can be communicated and given meaning. She does not present history in binary terms of “truth” and “untruth” but as a battleground over the meanings with which recorded events are imbued. The preservation of meaning in events requires not only alternative historiographical works, but alternatives to hegemonic historiography such as music and geography. (Nesfield and Smith 2013, 24–25)

At the heart of this poetic novel in two parts are two heroes, both Jewish and of Polish heritage: Jakob Beer and Ben. The point of departure in terms of memory in the first part is an event that took place in Poland in 1941, when the Nazis killed the parents of seven-year-old Jakob Beer and took away his sister Bella; Jakob hid himself before running into the woods near the archeologic site of Biskupin. There he was found by the Greek geologist Athos Rousoss and smuggled away to the rescuer’s home in Greece, on the island of Zakynthos, where the two somehow survived until the end of the war, when he and Jakob Beer moved to Toronto, Canada. There, Athos received a post as a lecturer, while Jakob devoted himself to studying. After Athos’s death Jakob moved into Athos’s parents’ home on the island of Idhra and wrote down the memories that had prevented him from sleeping. Jakob dies in 1993 in a car accident in Athens.

The hero of the second part of the novel is the Jewish Canadian professor Ben, who is an admirer of Jakob's poetry. Ben gets to know Jakob Beer through his professor Maurice, with whom he is friendly. He makes such a strong impression on Ben that he begins to become interested in his work. That helps him uncover suffering such as that with which Jakob had to deal in the past. Ben is also marked by the weight of the Holocaust, though he has his wife Naomi standing by his side. After Jakob's death Ben travels to the island of Idhra and searches there for Jakob's diaries, which serves as a basis for *Fugitive Pieces*.

With her novel, Anne Michaels recalled the memory of the precious lives and the suffering of many Jews, such as Jakob Beer, his sister Bella, and his mother and father, Ben and some others. Many lost their lives in the Holocaust, and only a few, through the help of exceptional persons the likes of the Greek geologist Athos from Anne Michaels's novel, managed to escape certain death. These generous people, through their love as well as material and spiritual help, sought to provide the survivors with security and help them overcome overwhelming memories, maltreatment, and thus to start a new life.

Alongside these preserved memories there are many diaries, manuscripts, testimonies and memoirs that were lost or destroyed during the Second World War; "Some of these narratives were deliberately hidden – buried in back gardens, tucked into walls and under floors – by those who did not live to retrieve them" (Michaels 1996, 9). Some stories are retained only by memory, never having been written down or spoken, while other memories, such as Jakob's in Anne Michaels's novel, were discovered by chance.

The novel refers to the childhood memories of Jakob Beer when he, a seven-year-old child, was saved by the geologist Athos Roussos near the archaeological remains at Biskupin while he was fleeing the German soldiers who had just killed his parents and taken away his fifteen-year-old sister. Jakob made it through a German patrol in a car driven by Athos and hidden under a blanket. Athos, meanwhile, tricked the Germans by feigning illness. The horrific experience of Jakob's family tragedy is always with him. The first-person narrator recalls the events this way:

My sister had long outgrown the hiding place. Bella was fifteen and even I admitted she was beautiful, with heavy brows and magnificent hair like black syrup, thick and luxurious, a muscle down her back. "A work of art," our mother said, brushing it for her while Bella sat in a chair. I was still small enough to vanish behind the wallpaper in the cupboard, cramming my head sideways between choking plaster and beams, eyelashes scraping.

Since those minutes inside the wall, I've imagined that the dead lose every sense except hearing.

The burst door. Wood ripped from hinges, cracking like ice under the shouts. Noises never heard before, torn from my father's mouth. Then silence. My mother had been sewing a button on my shirt. She kept her buttons in a chipped saucer. I heard the rim of the saucer in circles on the floor. I heard the spray of buttons, little white teeth.

Blackness filled me, spread from the back of my head into my eyes as if my brain had been punctured. Spread from stomach to legs. I gulped and gulped, swallowing it whole. The wall filled with smoke. I struggled out and stared while the air caught fire.

I wanted to go to my parents, to touch them. But I couldn't, unless I stepped on their blood.

The soul leaves the body instantly, as if it can hardly wait to be free: my mother's face was not her own. My father was twisted with falling. Two shapes in the flesh-heap, his hands.

I ran and fell, ran and fell. Then the river: so cold it felt sharp.

The river was the same blackness that was inside me; only the thin membrane of my skin kept me floating. (Michaels 1996, 9–10)

From this terrible experience forth, Jakob's memories are indelibly overwhelmed by thoughts of the dead:

The dead passed above me, weird haloes and arcs smothering the stars. The trees bent under their weight. I'd never been alone in the night forest, the wild bare branches were frozen snakes. The ground tilted and I didn't hold on. I strained to join them, to rise with them, to peel from the ground like paper ungluing at its edges. I know why we bury our dead and mark the place with stone, with the heaviest, most permanent thing we can think of: because the dead are everywhere but the ground. I stayed where I was. Clammy with cold, stuck to the ground. I begged: If I can't rise, then let me sink, sink into the forest floor like a seal into wax. (Michaels 1996, 10)

Jakob is most struck by the disappearance of his beloved sister Bella, and he dreamed about her during the day when he slept buried in earth, and at night, as he walked on through the woods. He remembers her reading her favourite novels by Romain Rolland and Jack London, and it was unbearable for him that he could no longer hear her: "Filled with her silence, I had no choice but to imagine her face" (Michaels 1996, 11).

One grey autumn day Jakob, at "the end of his strength" and hungry, stopped just a few metres away from where Athos had picked up the weeping boy and carried him under his heavy coat and driven away with him. Jakob recalls:

For miles through darkness in the back seat of the car, I had no idea where we were or where we were going. Another man drove and when we were signalled to stop, Athos pulled a blanket over us. In Greek-stained but competent German, Athos complained that he was ill. He didn't just complain. He whimpered, he moaned. He insisted on describing his symptoms and treatments in detail. Until, disgusted and annoyed, they waved us on. (Michaels 1996, 13)

During the drive the feverish Jakob thinks about his sister Bella and about his best friend Mones, though his thoughts are also ineludibly tied to Athos: "But Bella clung. We were Russian dolls. I inside Athos, Bella inside me" (Michaels 1996, 13).

Athos promises shelter to the young boy Jakob, who lies hungry and worn out in his car:

Athos said: "I will be your koumbaros,<sup>9</sup> your godfather, the marriage sponsor for you and your sons...."

Athos said: "We must carry each other. If we don't have this, what are we..." (Michaels 1996, 13)

As Jakob approaches the home of his rescuer Athos and the faraway island of Zakynthos, his memories conjure up again and again images of his mother, father and sister Bella. Jakob says:

I watched Athos reading at his desk in the evenings, and saw my mother sewing at the table, my father looking through the daily papers, Bella studying her music. Any given moment – no matter how casual, how ordinary – is poised, full of gaping life. I can no longer remember their faces, but I imagine expressions trying to use up a lifetime of love in the last second. No matter the age of the face, at the moment of death a lifetime of emotion still unused turns a face young again. (Michaels 1996, 14)

Eventually Jakob adapts to the new surroundings, but the whole time he recalls the traumatic event of the murder of his mother and father as well as the disappearance of his sister Bella; he does not know where she is, where and how or even if they murdered her or even whether she is still alive. Also on Zakynthos he lives in fear:

On Zakynthos we lived on solid rock, in a high and windy place full of light. I learned to tolerate images rising in me like bruises. But in my continuous expectation of the burst door, the taste of blood that filled my mouth suddenly,

---

9 This Greek word refers to an individual who exchanges crowns over the betrothed in the Greek Orthodox wedding ceremony (along with other roles).

many times a day, I couldn't conceive of any feeling stronger than fear. What is stronger than fear; Athos, who is stronger than fear?

On Zakynthos I tended a garden of lemon balm and basil in a square of light on the floor. I imagined the thoughts of the sea. I spent the day writing my letter to the dead and was answered at night in my sleep. (Michaels 1996, 15)

The rescuer of the orphan Jakob – named Athos or Athanasios Roussos – is an extremely warm man who cares for Jacob as if he were his own son and reveals to him, through his immense knowledge, wisdom and spiritual depth, new life horizons, new intellectual directions in reflecting on the relationship between life and death, to living and dead nature, to time and history, to the past and the future. Athos offers him the beginning of a new life: “Even as a child, even as my blood-past was drained from me, I understood that if I were strong enough to accept it, I was being offered a second history” (Michaels 1996, 20).

Jakob has the child's devotion to his caregiver:

To share a hiding place, physical or psychological, is as intimate as love. I followed Athos from one room to the other. I was afraid, as one who has only one person to trust must be afraid, an anxiety I could only solve by devotion. I sat near him while he wrote at his desk, contemplating forces that turn seas to stone, stone to liquid. He gave up trying to send me to bed. Often I lay at his feet like a cat, surrounded by books piled ever higher on the floor beside his chair. Late at night, while he worked – a solid concentration that put me to sleep – his arm dangled like a plumb line. I was soothed by the smells of bindings and pipe tobacco and the weight of his safe, heavy hand on my head. His left arm reaching down to earth, his right arm reaching up, palm to heaven. (Michaels 1996, 15)

This admiration gives rise to the utmost respect that Athos feels for the young boy Jakob. Athos did not want Jakob to forget his own language, so he had to repeat the Hebrew alphabet, but at the same time Athos also taught him Greek and English:

Athos didn't want me to forget. He made me review my Hebrew alphabet. He said the same thing every day: “It is your future you are remembering.” He taught me the ornate Greek script, like a twisting twin of Hebrew. Both Hebrew and Greek, Athos liked to say, contain the ancient loneliness of ruins, “like a lute heard distantly down a hillside of olives, or a voice calling to a boat from a shore.” (Michaels 1996, 17)

Jakob longed, “to cleanse [his] mouth of memory” (Michaels 1996, 17) and feel the new memories as truly his own even when speaking in what was for him a foreign language. Recalling Athos, Jakob says,

By early morning Athos was often close to tears of admiration for his brave lineage, or for the future: “I will be your koumbaros, your godfather, the marriage sponsor for you and your sons.... We must carry each other. If we don’t have this, what are we? The

spirit in the body is like wine in a glass; when it spills, it seeps into air and earth and light ... It’s a mistake to think it’s the small things we control and not the large, it’s the

other way around! We can’t stop the small accident, the tiny detail that conspires into fate: the extra moment you run back for something forgotten, a moment that saves you from an accident – or causes one. But we can assert the largest order, the large human values daily, the only order large enough to see. (Michaels 1996, 17)

Jakob felt that Athos, in the four years of living in his room, “gave me another realm to inhabit, big as the globe and expansive as time” (Michaels 1996, 30). But he still felt Bella by his side:

Athos didn’t understand, as I hesitated in the doorway, that I was letting Bella enter ahead of me, making sure she was not left behind. I paused when I ate, singing a silent incantation: A bite for me, a bite for you, an extra bite for Bella. “Jakob, you’re such a slow eater; you have the manners of an aristocrat.” Awake at night, I’d hear her breathing or singing next to me in the dark, half comforted, half terrified that my ear was pressed against the thin wall between the living and the dead, that the vibrating membrane between them was so fragile. I felt her presence everywhere, in daylight, in rooms I knew weren’t empty. I felt her touch on my back, my shoulders, my hair. I turned around to see if she was there, to see if she was looking, to see if she was standing guard, though if anything were to happen to me, she wouldn’t be able to prevent it. Watching with curiosity and sympathy from her side of the gossamer wall. (Michaels 1996, 23–24)

At the same time, Athos believed that Jakob and he had saved each other. In 1937 Athos had joined a group of archaeologists with the task of preserving waterlogged structures in Biskupin. But soon after deciding to take Jakob home with him, soldiers in Biskupin devastated the former fortifications and houses, also killing five of Athos’s colleagues in the nearby forest, and sending the rest to Dachau.

Athos allows for an orphaned Jewish boy to find a substitute home, first in Greece, then in Canada, in the large city of Toronto. The compensation for the loss of his home in Poland in the essential circumstance that allows the orphan to hope for a new beginning. Dalia Kandiyoti, in *Contemporary Literature* (2004), reads the novel *Fugitive Pieces* in this light and concludes:



In *Fugitive Pieces*, the production of place has everything to do with the destruction of place: through consciousness of the destroyed, whose traces are in invisible corners, cracks, and depths, the displaced many produce a new sense of place for themselves. Invisible places are not only vertical metaphors or devices in the novel to signal deeper truths and meanings than what exist at the surface: digging into place by valorizing its invisible traces reaffirms both the varied lives that were once on the surface and the profundity of the devastation. In this way, *Fugitive Pieces* can wrest place-based narratives from those who liquidated places and people and attempted to leave no traces. (Kandiyoti 2004, 327)

Also in Toronto Jakob suffers from nightmares. One night, Athos hugs him and says, “Jakob, I long to steal your memories from you while you’re sleeping, to syphon off your dreams” (Michaels 1996, 54).

Jakob asks himself whether it is possible to read from someone’s face whether they are good or bad, or whether the truth lies on the face:

A child doesn’t know much about a man’s face but feels what most of us believe all our lives, that he can tell a good face from a bad. The soldiers who performed their duty, handing back to mothers the severed heads of daughters – with braids and hairclips still in place – did not have evil in their faces. There was no perversion of features while they did their deeds. Where was their hatred, their disgust, if not even in their eyes, rolling invisibly back in their sockets, focused on the unanswerable fact of having gone too far? There’s the possibility that if one can’t see it in the face, then there’s no conscience left to arouse. But that explanation is obviously false, for some laughed as they poked out eyes with sticks, as they smashed infants’ skulls against the good brick of good houses. For a long time I believed one learns nothing from a man’s face. When Athos held me by the shoulders, when he said, “Look at me, look at me” to convince me of his goodness, he couldn’t know how he terrified me, how meaningless the words. If truth is not in the face, then where is it? In the hands. In the hands.

I tried to bury images, to cover them over with Greek and English words, with Athos’s stories, with all the geologic eras. With the walks Athos and I took every Sunday into the ravines. Years later I would try a different avalanche of facts: train schedules, camp records, statistics, methods of execution. But at night, my mother, my father, Bella, Mones, simply rose, shook the earth from their clothes, and waited. (Michaels 1996, 55)

Jakob is still haunted by memories of the past, and he dreams of Bella’s hair, about the day the Nazis stormed into his parents’ house:

Sitting at the table, my parents and Bella pretended calm, they who claimed so often to have no courage at all. They remained in their seats as they’d planned they would, if it came to that. The soldiers pushed my father over in his chair.

And when they saw Bella's beauty, her terrified stillness – what did they make of her hair, did they lift its mass from her shoulders, assess its value; did they touch her perfect eyebrows and skin? What did they make of Bella's hair as they cut it – did they feel humiliated as they fingered its magnificence, as they hung it on the line to dry? (Michaels 1996, 62)

Jakob eventually studied at the University of Toronto, busying himself with literature, history and geography. Later he earned money by translating. He was greatly affected by Athos's death, recalling the following:

On his last night, Athos had come home from giving a lecture on the conservation of Egyptian wood. It was about half past ten. He usually reported some observation of the evening, or even recounted the main details of his talk, but since I'd typed it for him earlier that day the latter was unnecessary, and he was tired. I heated some wine for him then went to bed.

In the morning I found him at his desk. He looked as he often did, asleep in the middle of work. I embraced him with all my strength, again and again, but he would not come back. It is impossible to reach the emptiness in each cell. His death was quiet; rain on the sea. (Michaels 1996, 67)

For many nights after Athos' death, Jakob slept on the floor of his study. He felt that Athos's work on Nazi archaeology was so disturbing that it sucked the life force out of him. Immediately after the war, when they began to get information, he, heavily affected, began collecting documents and asking himself endless questions which he hoped he would be able to answer with the help of everyone else. Jakob felt it was his duty to compile and edit Athos's records of the SS-Ahnenerbe.

In chapter VII, the final chapter of part one, which is titled "The Gradual Instant," we learn that many years after Athos's death and after his divorce from his first wife Alex, Jakob is torn between Canada and Greece. He researches, writes, and publishes works from Athos's legacy. When he meets his second wife Michaela he moves to the Greek island of Idhra, to the home of Athos's parents, and writes down his memories there.

Also with Michaela he still feels the presence of Bella:

Listening to Michaela read, I remember how Bella read poetry; how the yearning in her voice reached me as a child, though I didn't understand the feeling. I realize, half a century after her death, that though my sister never felt herself moving in a man's hands, she must have already loved so deeply, so secretly, that she knew something about the other half of her soul. (Michaels 1996, 171)

However, memories also of another loved one return:

Each morning I write these words for you all. For Bella and Athos, for Alex, for Maurice and Irena, for Michaela. Here on Idhra, in this summer of 1992, I try to set down the past in the cramped space of a prayer. (Michaels 1996, 113)

To gaze into the future, trust, empathy and love are needed. In the novel *Fugitive Pieces*, Anne Michaels investigates the possibilities of love and faith after the Holocaust. Jakob Beer, who, as a seven-year-old child, was saved from the Nazi slaughter by becoming a fugitive in the Polish forests, where he was saved by the Greek geologist Athos, feels it is his life task to compose a memory of the past and of those he loved.

He understands the power of love precisely because he lost it and then found it again. In the power of love, he wants to live a normal life, like everyone else, after the trauma of the Holocaust. The greatness of the novel lies in its message that we do not need constant evidence of the reality of violence and horror, that a single example suffices. However, we need evidence of the truth of love and its fruit again and again. Contrary to Holocaust literature that focuses on the irreparable breakdown of the psyche, *Fugitive Pieces* sets as its main motivational aim the contemplating of complete and dubious experiences of healing.

For the writer Anne Michaels it was clearly empathy towards the victims of the Holocaust that dictated the decision to opt for such an extreme traumatic subject. Empathy helps her to discover the possibility of surpassing the usual scheme of irreversible mental breakdown.

Mei-Yu Tsai's "A Poetics of Testimony and Trauma Healing in Anne Michaels's *Fugitive Pieces*" uses the correct approach – "This essay draws on critical theories of post-Holocaust testimony and postmemory in conjunction with the emerging sociological concept of 'empathetic identification' to investigate the implications of trauma healing in Anne Michaels's *Fugitive Pieces*" (Tsai 2014, 50).

In her essay the author therefore wishes to investigate how empathetic testimony can help sustain life after a trauma:

As a theoretical starting point in my reading of *Fugitive Pieces*, I turn to the psychoanalytical theory of testimony and postmemory – especially the works of Dori Laub and Marianne Hirsch – to examine how testimony in association with empathetic identification can help sustain life after massive trauma. (Tsai 2014, 50)

The truth about the reality of atrocity thus opens up the paradoxical possibility of the opposite pole of truth, which empathy and love make possible: the transformational possibility of a Holocaust memorial that will serve future generations.

Only the discovery of the truth about the incompatibility of the evil of the Holocaust can help in the search to heal a sick society. Here we must never ignore

the other side of the truth, one which Anne Frank so explicitly points out in her diary entry of January 28, 1944:

Going underground or into hiding has become as routine as the proverbial pipe and slippers that used to await the man of the house after a long day at work. There are many resistance groups, such as Free Netherlands, that forge identity cards, provide financial support to those in hiding, organize hiding places and find work for young Christians who go underground. It's amazing how much these generous and unselfish people do, risking their own lives to help and save others.

The best example of this is our own helpers, who have managed to pull us through so far and will hopefully bring us safely to shore, because otherwise they'll find themselves sharing the fate of those they're trying to protect. Never have they uttered a single word about the burden we must be, never have they complained that we're too much trouble. They come upstairs every day and talk to the men about business and politics, to the women about food and wartime difficulties and to the children about books and newspapers. They put on their most cheerful expressions, bring flowers and gifts for birthdays and holidays and are always ready to do what they can. That's something we should never forget; while others display their heroism in battle or against the Germans, our helpers prove theirs every day by their good spirits and affection. (Frank 1995, 132–133)

## **REAL-LIFE RESCUERS OF JEWS DURING THE HOLOCAUST, AND THEIR MORAL IDENTITY**

Mordecai Paldiel dedicates a paper to the non-Jewish and Jewish “righteous” ones who risked their lives to save endangered Jews. People who decided to save Jews in occupied countries were threatened not only by Germans but also by collaborators in those occupied countries. That is why Paldiel, at the outset of his article, highlights the surprise that any of these Jews and rescuers managed to survive:

Upon reflecting on the immensity of the Holocaust, one sometimes wonders how anyone managed to survive. There are, of course, those who made it by sheer luck; they somehow withstood the terrible inhumanities inflicted on them in the ghettos and concentration camps and miraculously came out alive. At the same time, there is at least an equal number, if not more, of survivors who owe their survival to the good fate of having been extended a helping hand. Some were aided by Jewish networks and individual Jewish rescuers. But in the final account, for the undertaking to have been successful, one also needed the help of non-Jewish rescuers, for they enjoyed more flexibility. Unlike

Jews, they had not been condemned to death at the outset simply for having been born. (Paldiel 2012, 134)

The collective violence carried out by the Nazi authorities with the cooperation of collaborators of other nationalities also awakened a sense of justice and solidarity in some non-Jewish circles. The unexpected situation of distress awakened strong feelings of compassion and solidarity in good people, especially when this situation demanded immediate action. Among those who helped Jews in need, we find men and women, workers, simple farmers, intellectuals, diplomats, members of left-wing parties from the period before the war, active members of national organizations and some mindful members of Christian churches.

The more painful the testimonies of Jewish survivors of ghettos and concentration camps, the more gratifying the fact that in all countries there were others who strove, to the best of their abilities, and altruistically, to aid Jews. It is significant that there are many more anonymous ones who lost their lives in their attempts to save Jews than there are individuals who, in spite of the great risk, succeeded and survived.<sup>10</sup> The rescuers aided threatened Jews because they felt an inner need to do so; they helped out of a basic sense of humanity:

Rescuers apparently made little or no conscious decision when they rescued Jews. Conscious decision making entered only at a strategic level, focusing on how best to go about effecting the rescue, rather than on whether to attempt the rescue itself. The conscious element of rescue behavior thus appears to be limited to arranging the specific daily logistics of rescue activity. The initial actions in sheltering Jews were usually described as spontaneous. All our rescuers insisted that they simply saw no other option available to them. Their awareness of life around them made it abundantly clear that there *was* the option of turning away Jews or of simply doing nothing. They knew that most people did exactly that. But they also knew they could not accept such an option for themselves. The rescuers thus suggest that certain behaviors arise spontaneously, resulting from deep-seated dispositions which form one's central identity. This conclusion, if accurate, suggests that certain behaviors – and these may well entail the most significant personal and political choices we make – are not the result of conscious choice at all. (Monroe / Barton / Klingemann 1990, 113–114)

10 Since the 1980s, four seminal books about rescuers of Jews have appeared: Samuel P. Oliner in Pearl M. Oliner, *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe* (1988); Pearl M. Oliner, Samuel P. Oliner, Lawrence Baron, Lawrence Blum (eds.), *Embracing the Other: Philosophical, Psychological, and Historical Perspectives of Altruism* (1992); Eva Fogelman, *Conscience and Courage: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust* (1994); Kirsten Renwick Monroe, *The Heart of Altruism: Perceptions of a Common Humanity* (1998).

Also Eva Fogelman, in *Conscience and Courage: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust* (1994), seeks an explanation for the question of motivation for the altruistic behaviour of those who rescued Jews. She had discussions with more than three hundred rescuers, including such well-known figures as Miep Gies (known from the diary of Anne Frank), Oskar Schindler and Raoul Wallenberg, as well as lesser-known individuals, such as the Polish minor Stefania Podgorska Burzminska, who hid and saved thirteen Jews in her home when she was not yet eighteen. A valuable general conclusion is that rescuers of Jews did not view their actions as exceptional and heroic but as something self-understood, as something that one must do out of a sense of conscience (Fogelman 1994, 60). When experiencing the extreme circumstances of suffering people, there awoke such a strong empathy in them that they could not remain indifferent. They worked spontaneously, out of compassion, that is, out of an inner sense of moral commitment.

Recently, there has been an increasing number of studies highlighting the role of women as rescuers of their families. In his book *Empathy in the Context of Philosophy* (2010), Lou Agosta highlights the ethical extent of empathy. In connection with empathy in the circumstances of the Holocaust, meanwhile, Marion A. Kaplan, in her book *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (1998), speaks of the reaction of Jews who lives in the extraordinary conditions of Nazi Germany. The author devotes much attention to the extremely important role of Jewish women who, with compassion, dedication and great effort, saved members of their family. Much valuable information about these matters are provided by memoirs, interviews, and letters and diaries of Jewish women who experienced the anxieties of this time. In them, Jewish women highlight the difficulties of helping the family survive, of great emotional engagement, and of resourcefulness in seeking solutions in hopeless situations.<sup>11</sup>

During the period of the rise and consolidation of Hitler's power (1933–1938), Jewish woman often played a more significant role in saving their families than men did. Women took care of their homes in both a physical and an emotional sense; they calmed terrified children and supported their husbands, who more frequently than they succumbed to frustration and despair. Their encouragement of others was usually linked to the denial of their own worries. There are many known examples of women proving to be rescuers of the family, of having saved their family members from the brutality of authorities, working

---

11 In her study "Empathic Identification in Anne Michaels's *Fugitive Pieces*: Masculinity and Poetry after Auschwitz" (2002) Susan Gubar sums up the role of men and women survivors in Anne Michael's novel thus: "*Fugitive Pieces* can be said to sustain a conventional approach to the catastrophe: Jewish survivors are presented as male protagonists, while female characters play supporting roles as sacrificial muses or nurturing helpmates" (Gubar 2002, 250).

on the conviction that the authorities would be less harsh on them, since they were women.<sup>12</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Although not all historians have agreed with Philippe Ariès that childhood, as we understand it today, did not exist at all until the Middle Ages, his research remains very important. It opened the possibility of exploring childhood, including the modern romantic idea of childhood innocence, as a social construct that changes over the course of history.

Images of childhood in literature, as well as in the fine arts, arise in particular cultural contexts and in response to specific historical moments. In the history of art, especially visual images of children were often marginalized, since they were rejected as being too sentimental and simple. However, in modern times, the image of the child has become one of the most emotionally powerful and contradictory images in Western consumer culture. Despite changing political, sexual and commercial forms, the image of the child and childhood has retained the message of innocence.

In the figure of the child in the works of Charles Dickens we find the paradoxical phenomenon that the “worshipping” of the romantic cult of childish innocence utterly coincides with the unprecedented industrial exploitation of children. This fact is clearly illustrated in the novel *Oliver Twist* to be a key cultural icon of Victorian childhood, as well as in the writer’s other considered works. Marilyn R. Brown assesses the contradictory attitude towards childhood during Dickens’s time thus:

Romanticism’s exploration of the subjective self through the idealized state of the child sought a repository of sensitivities and sentiments thought to be lost or blunted in adulthood. While legal reforms (however ineffective they may have been initially) helped attract public opinion to the plight of factory children, capitalism discovered in middle-class children and their parents a ready-made consumer class.

---

12 Among female rescuers or rescuers of Jews are: Klara Baić (Serbia), Jeanne Daman (Belgium), Johanna Eck (Germany), Antonina Gordey (Belarus), Suzanne Spaak (France), Karolina Juszczykowska (Poland), Bronislava Krištopavičienė (Lithuania), Sofia Kritikou (Greece), Maria Agnese Tribbioli (Italy), Caecilia Loots (The Netherlands), Irena Sendler (Poland), Sofka Skipwith (Russia, United Kingdom), Anna Igumnova (Slovakia, Russia), Elisabeta Strul (Romania), Ludviga Pukas (Ukraine), Lois Gunden (United States). On females who have been declared “Righteous among the Nations,” see <http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/righteous-women/index.asp> (7.6.2017).

A burgeoning industry in children's toys, books, magazines, songs, clothes, and advice manuals for parents helped market the child as a symbol of progress and of the future. As state protection and the surveillance provided by its various institutions, including educational, medical, and legal, increasingly diminished the patriarchal power of fathers over their children, the bourgeois ideal of the family and of the protected place of the child within it was magnified. By the end of the century, primary school education was compulsory and free and child protection legislation was enacted.

An ideal of sheltered childhood had become accepted by the middle classes and was finally extended, as a right, to poorer classes as well. Shifting attitudes towards working-class children could be seen in the writings of, among others, Charles Baudelaire, Victor Hugo, and Charles Dickens.

The constructed ideal of childhood innocence was, in many respects, a Victorian defense against advancing awareness of the sexual life of children and adolescents during the period when Freud himself was growing up. (Brown 2004, 454)

The lives of orphans as depicted by Charles Dickens in the Victorian era are difficult, but orphans in the circumstances of the Second World War are even more difficult – they are filled with worse anxiety, distress and suffering, as the proximity to death for those children becomes even more tangible. Many children lost their young lives in the circumstances of the war, but some were fortunate enough to survive. Particularly tragic were the fates of Jewish children who, like the Jewish community as a whole, were exposed to the Holocaust during the Second World War. Most of these children lost their lives. At the beginning of the Second World War in September 1939, the Nazis killed at least six thousand children aged up to sixteen in their program of euthanasia, with some of them being exposed to painful experiments. Because the Nazis wanted to “exterminate” the Jews, they were utterly merciless. In the so-called “final solution” the Nazis killed 1.2 to 1.5 million Jewish children. In the many narratives, memoirs and diaries about the Holocaust, however, we can discover the surprising phenomenon that some Jewish children, despite being unprotected and in a state of weakness and, despite the brutality of evil that threatened them, maintained a strong hope or faith in the final victory of the good (see the diaries of Anne Frank and Helen Berr, among others).

While most Jewish children lost their lives during the Second World War, many of them were orphaned due to the Holocaust. In her novel *Fugitive Pieces*, Canadian writer Anne Michaels lays out one such shocking story. In it, she gives a voice to the Jewish boy Jakob, whose parents and sister were killed in Poland and who, frightened and fleeing, happens to be noticed in the woods by the Greek geologist Athos. Without hesitating, Athos decides to help the poor child and to save him from mortal danger, even if it means risking his own life.



The writer Anne Michaels in her novel *Fugitive Pieces* asks where memory can help overcome the traumas that have marked the orphaned Jakob throughout his life. What sort of relationship must the afflicted person have towards the brutal past, to death, to those who perpetrated the evil? Is it possible to forgive the perpetrators if their victims are already dead and must therefore remain silent? Is it possible to heal the deep and wounded memory through love and thus give rise to a new life? Is it possible to take leave of the dead in order to remain with the living in a different, less painful way? Can trauma at least slightly be alleviated through the memory of the happy childhood that Jakob Beer spent in the circle of his Jewish family somewhere in Poland? How can the loving, moral and emotional support from generous people help victims overcome trauma and return to a “normal” life?

In her novel *Fugitive Pieces*, Anne Michaels describes the contrast between the brutality of the Holocaust and the sacrificial benevolence of the rescuer of the surviving boy in the figure of the foreign intellectual. She puts the story into the broader framework of “typical” stories about saving an orphan. In their article “Holocaust Literature and Historiography in Anne Michaels’ *Fugitive Pieces*” (2013), Victoria Nesfield and Philip Smith argue:

Michaels’ *Fugitive Pieces* makes no claim to be a truthful representation of the author’s life and experience. It does, however, follow many of the conventions of the Shoah genre despite it not being a Shoah testimony in the style of most others. Michaels seems at times to be constructing a “typical” survivor’s tale through reference to other genuine testimony. Michaels’ literature shares with the work of Wilkomirski and Defonseca the use of the Jewish orphaned child victim of the Shoah as a channel for the narrative. This motif can most obviously be traced back to Elie Wiesel’s trajectory (even though Wiesel did not lose his father until the end of his experience and survived in the camps ostensibly as an adult despite being only 15). (Nesfield and Smith 2013, 17–18)

On a Greek island, Jakob Beer reveals to his rescuer Athos that he cannot longer remember the faces of his mother, his father and his sister Bella. However, he can clearly remember their expressions: “I can no longer remember their faces, but I imagine expressions trying to use up a lifetime of love in the last second. No matter the age of the face, at the moment of death a lifetime of emotion still unused turns a face young again” (Michaels 1996, 18).

Jakob knows how central a place love had in the lives of his intimates who died and what a stark contrast this was to the unthinkable horror of the evil that befell them. The traumatic event of his mother’s and his father’s murder means that fear accompanies him for a long time on the Greek island of Zakynthos. The only person he completely trusts is Athos, and he believes he “was being

offered a second history” (Michaels 1996, 20), if only he is strong enough to accept it. He has a very strong relationship to and devotion for Athos, who helps him overcome his fear and to awaken the faith that there is “an invisible world, just as real as what’s evident” (Michaels 1996, 49).

In this world, even his loved ones that the war took away are alive. Jakob does not believe that they are buried in the earth, for he can feel them by his side:

The dead passed above me, weird haloes and arcs smothering the stars. The trees bent under their weight. I’d never been alone in the night forest, the wild bare branches were frozen snakes. The ground tilted and I didn’t hold on. I strained to join them, to rise with them, to peel from the ground like paper ungluing at its edges. I know why we bury our dead and mark the place with stone, with the heaviest, most permanent thing we can think of: because the dead are everywhere but the ground. (Michaels 1996, 12)

Nevertheless, it is not until many years later that Jakob senses he must somehow leave the dead behind in order to be able to write down the past, think about it, and devote himself to it: “Each morning I write these words for you all. For Bella and Athos, for Alex, for Maurice and Irena, for Michaela. Here on Idhra, in this summer of 1992, I try to set down the past in the cramped space of a prayer” (Michaels 1996, 171).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY AND WORKS CITED

- Agosta, Lou. 2010. *Empathy in the Context of Philosophy*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Anderson, Roland F. Structure, Myth, and Rite in “Oliver Twist”. *Studies in the Novel* (1986): 18/3: 238–257.
- Anderson, Mark M. 2007. The Child Victim as Witness to the Holocaust: An American Story? *Jewish Social Studies* (2007): New Series 14/1: 1–22.
- Ariès, Philippe. 1960. *L’Enfant et la vie familiale sous l’Ancien Régime*. Paris: Seuil.
- Ariès, Philippe. 1962. *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*. Trans. Robert Baldick. New York: Vintage Books.
- Attebery, Louie W. The American West and the Archetypal Orphan. *Western American Literature* (1970): 5/3: 205–207.
- Banerjee, Jacqueline. 1996. *Through the Northern Gate: Childhood and Growing Up in British Fiction 1719–1901*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Baron, Lawrence. The Holocaust and Human Decency: A Review of Research on the Rescue of Jews in Nazi Occupied Europe. *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations* (1985/86): 13/1–2: 237–251.

- Berger, Alan L. and Gloria L. Cronin (eds.). 2004. *Jewish American and Holocaust Literature: Representation in the Postmodern World*. New York, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Berger, Alan L. 2004. Hidden Children: The Literature of Hiding. In: Alan L. Berger and Gloria L. Cronin (eds.), *Jewish American and Holocaust Literature: Representation in the Postmodern World*. New York, NY: State University of New York Press. 13–30.
- Brown, Marilyn R. 2004. Images of Childhood. In: Paula S. Faas (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood: In History and Society*, I-III (Volume I). New York, NY: Macmillan Reference USA. 449–462.
- Brunet, Guy. 2004. Orphans. In: Paula S. Faas (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood: In History and Society*, I-III. New York, NY: Macmillan Reference USA. 640–643.
- Cavanagh, Michael E. Rediscovering Compassion. *Journal of Religion and Health* (1995): 34/4: 317–327.
- Chlebek Diana. 2011. DICKENS, CHARLES *David Copperfield* (1849–1850). In: Jennifer McClinton-Temple (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Themes in Literature*. New York, NY: Fact On File. 334–337.
- Chlebek Diana. 2011. DICKENS, CHARLES *Oliver Twist* (1837–1839). In: Jennifer McClinton-Temple (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Themes in Literature*. New York, NY: Fact On File. 341–344.
- Cornell, Elizabeth. 2011. FAULKNER, WILLIAM Light in August (1932). In: Jennifer McClinton-Temple (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Themes in Literature*. New York, NY: Fact On File. 425–429.
- Coveney, Peter. 1967. *The Image of Childhood: The Individual and Society: A Study of the Theme in English Literature*. London: Penguin Books.
- Cretzmeyer, Stacy. 1999. *Your Name is Renée: Ruth Kapp Hartz's Story as a Hidden Child in Nazi-Occupied France*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cunningham, Hugh. 1995. *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500*. London: Longman.
- DeRouen, Anita and Gulshan Taneja. 2011. BYRON, GEORGE GORDON BYRON, LORD *Don Juan* (1817–1824). In: Jennifer McClinton-Temple (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Themes in Literature*. New York, NY: Fact On File. 243–246.
- Dickens, Charles. 2008. *Oliver Twist*. Edited by Kathleen Tillotson, Introduction and Notes by Stephen Gill. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Oxford World's Classics).
- Ellison, David. 2004. *Ethics and Aesthetics in European Modernist Literature: From the Sublime to the Uncanny*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Estrin, Barbara L. Ending in the Middle: Revisioning Adoption in Binjamin Wilkomirski's "Fragments" and Anne Michaels's "Fugitive Pieces". *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* (2002): 21/2: 275–300.
- Faas, Paula S. (ed.), 2004. *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood: In History and Society*, I-III. New York, NY: Macmillan Reference USA.
- Fensham, F. Charles. Widow, Orphan, and the Poor in Ancient Near Eastern Legal and Wisdom Literature. *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (1962): 21/2: 129–139.
- Fogelman, Eva. 1994. *Conscience and Courage. Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*. New York: Doubleday Anchor.
- Frank, Anne. 1993. *A Diary of a Young Girl*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Friedländer, Saul. 1979. *When Memory Comes*. Trans. Helen R. Lane. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux.
- Geest, Sjaak van der. Orphans in Highlife: An Anthropological Interpretation. *History in Africa* (2004): 31: 425–440.
- Georgieva, Margarita. 2011. Childhood. In: Jennifer McClinton-Temple (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Themes in Literature*. New York, NY: Fact On File. 10–12.
- Gille, Elisabeth. 1998. *Shadows of a Childhood*. Trans. Linda Coverdale. New York: The New Press.
- Gordon, John. 2011. *Sensation and Sublimation in Charles Dickens*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gribble, Jennifer. Why the Good Samaritan Was a Bad Economist: Dickens' Parable for Hard Times. *Literature and Theology* (2004): 18/4: 427–441.
- Gubar, Susan. Empathic Identification in Anne Michaels's *Fugitive Pieces*: Masculinity and Poetry after Auschwitz. *Signs* (2002): 28/1: 249–276.
- Immel, Andrea and Michael Witmore (ed.). 2006. *Childhood and Children's Books in Early Modern Europe, 1550–1800*. New York / London: Routledge.
- Jaeger, C. Stephen. 2012. *Enchantment: On Charisma and the Sublime in the Arts of the West*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- James, Scott M. Good Samaritans, Good Humanitarians. *Journal of Applied Philosophy* (2007): 24/3: 238–254.
- Kaplan, Marion A. 1998. *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Studies in Jewish History).
- Katz, Steven T., Shlomo Biderman and Gershon Greenberg (ed.). 2007. *Wrestling with God: Jewish Theological Responses during and after the Holocaust*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- König, Eva. 2014. *The Orphan in Eighteenth-Century Fiction: The Vicissitudes of the Eighteenth-Century Subject*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Manning, Erin. Beyond Accommodation: National Space and Recalcitrant Bodies. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* (2000): 25/1: 51–74

- Marten, James (ed.). 2002. *Children and War: A Historical Anthology*. Foreword by Robert Coles. New York / London: New York University Press.
- McClinton-Temple, Jennifer (ed.). 2011. *Encyclopedia of Themes in Literature*. New York, NY: Fact On File.
- McClinton-Temple, Jennifer (ed.), 2011. DICKENS, CHARLES *Great Expectations* (1860–1861). In: Jennifer McClinton-Temple (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Themes in Literature*. New York, NY: Fact On File. 337–341.
- Michaels, Anne. 1996. *Fugitive Pieces. A Novel*. 1st ed. New York: Vintage Books. A Division of Random House, Inc.
- Michaels, Anne. 2017. *Ubežni delci*. Translated by Teja Bivic. Ljubljana: Modrijan.
- Monroe, Kristen Renwick, Michael C. Barton and Ute Klingemann. Altruism and the Theory of Rational Action: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe. *Ethics* (1990): 101: 103–122.
- Monroe, Kristen Renwick. 1998. *The Heart of Altruism: Perceptions of Common Humanity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Nelson, Cassandra. 2011. TWAIN, MARK *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884; 1885 [U.S.]. V: Jennifer McClinton-Temple (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Themes in Literature*. New York, NY: Fact On File. 1082–1085.
- Nesfield, Victoria and Philip Smith. Holocaust Literature and Historiography in Anne Michaels' *Fugitive Pieces*. *Journal of European Studies* (2013): 43/1: 14–26.
- Oliner Samuel P. and Pearl M. Oliner. 1988. *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe*. New York: Free Press.
- Paldiel, Mordecai. Righteous Gentiles and Courageous Jews: Acknowledging and Honoring Rescuers of Jews. *French Politics, Culture and Society* (2012): 30/2: 134–149.
- Partee, Morriss Henry. 2006. *Childhood in Shakespeare's Plays*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Pollock, Linda A. 1983. *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Radhwi, Mariam. 2011. BLAKE, WILLIAM, Songs of Innocence and Experience (1789, 1794). In: Jennifer McClinton-Temple (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Themes in Literature*. New York, NY: Fact On File. 216.
- Radhwi, Mariam. 2011. INNOCENCE AND EXPERIENCE in Songs of Innocence and Experience. In: Jennifer McClinton-Temple (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Themes in Literature*. New York, NY: Fact On File. 216.
- Rose, Lionel. 1991. *The Erosion of Childhood: Child Oppression in Britain 1860–1918*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Roukema, Riemer. The Good Samaritan in Ancient Christianity. *Vigiliae Christianae* (2004): 58/1: 56–74.

- Sorop, Aloisia. 2011. TWAIN, MARK, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876). In: Jennifer McClinton-Temple (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Themes in Literature*. New York, NY: Fact On File. 1085.
- Stearns, Peter N. *Childhood in World History*. New York / London: Routledge.
- Tsai, Mei-Yu. 2014. A Poetics of Testimony and Trauma Healing in Anne Michaels's *Fugitive Pieces*. *Shofar* (2006): 32/3: 50–71.
- Welch, John W. The Good Samaritan: A Type and Shadow of the Plan of Salvation. *Brigham Young University Studies* (1999): 38/2: 50–115.
- Wilkomirski, Benjamin. 1997. *Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Wiman, Christian. *Fugitive Pieces*. *Poetry* (2001): 179/2: 90–102.
- Wolf, Diane L. 2007. *Beyond Anne Frank: Hidden Children and Postwar Families in Holland*. Berkeley / Los Angeles / London: University of California Press.
- Zalar, Jeffrey T. 2004. Holocaust. In: Paula S. Faas (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood: In History and Society*, volume II. New York, NY: Macmillan Reference USA. 431–334.
- Zmora, Nurit. 2004. Orphanages. In: Paula S. Faas (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood: In History and Society*, I–III. New York, NY: Macmillan Reference USA. 638–640.

*Translated from Slovenian*

*Irena Avsenik Nabergoj,*

University of Ljubljana, ZRC SAZU, Univerza v Novi Gorici  
irena.avsenik-nabergoj@guest.arnes.si



## Otroci brez otroštva: čustvovanje osirotelih otrok in liki njihovih rešiteljev v izbranih delih angleške in kanadske književnosti

Prispevek obravnava literarne opise družbenih, političnih, kulturnih in verskih okoliščin, v katerih so se znašli otroci, ki so že ob rojstvu ali pozneje v otroštvu izgubili enega ali oba starša. Kot najšibkejši člani družbe so bili izpostavljeni grožnjam, izkoriščanju in nasilju, a so imeli srečo, da jih je rešil kak sorodnik ali kakšna druga sočutna in dobrohotna oseba. Ob ugotovitvi, da opise odnosa med otrokom – siroto, ki je v smrtni nevarnosti –, in rešiteljem, ki se večinoma pojavi nepričakovano, zasledimo v pripovedih vseh časov in da zato lahko govorimo o

arhetipu razmerja med otrokom-sirotom in rešiteljem, se članek osredotoča predvsem na tri romane angleškega pisatelja Charlesa Dickensa *Oliver Twist* (1837–1839), *David Copperfield* (1849–1850) in *Great Expectations* (1860–1861) ter roman sodobne kanadske pisateljice Anne Michaels *Fugitive Pieces* (1996). Charles Dickens je dosegel sloves pisatelja klasika z izvirnimi literarnimi prikazi otroka – sirote – v okoliščinah grobega kapitalizma viktorijanske dobe 19. stoletja. Izvirnost odlikuje tudi Anne Michaels, ki v romanu *Fugitive Pieces* slika skrajno travmatične okoliščine, kakršnim je izpostavljen judovski deček, potem ko Nemci sredi morije holokavsta ubijejo njegove starše. Vse osrednje otroške like iz skrajnih položajev rešijo plemeniti ljudje, s tem pa je poudarjena osrednja ideja obeh izbranih avtorjev: da zlo ne more premagati dobrega. Rešitelji svojo nesebično odločenost, da rešijo nemočne in nezaščitene otroške žrtve nasilja iz življenjsko nevarnih okoliščin, doživljajo kot samoumevni moralni imperativ. Charles Dickens in Anne Michaels sta s svojimi poglobljenimi in močno občutenimi opisi spominov na travme, ki so jih njihovi osrednji literarni liki uspešno premagovali ob pomoči sočutja in solidarnosti, prihodnjim generacijam zapustila testament upanja proti upanju.

**Ključne besede:** Charles Dickens, čustva, spomini, Anne Michaels, holokavst, osiroteli otroci, rešitelji, travma, posvojitve, zmaga dobrega.





# Names in Literary Translation: A Case Study of English Versions of the Slovenian Tale *Martin Krpan*

*Darja Mazi – Leskovar*

## Abstract

This article presents three English translations of the Slovenian tale *Martin Krpan z Vrha* (1858) by Fran Levstik and focuses on the translation of personal and geographical names with the aim of examining the application of domestication and foreignization translation strategies. The comparative analysis of the English names aims to find out if the cultural gap between the source and the target cultures has been diminishing over the years. The study also highlights the role of the chronotope that gives the work, one of the most frequently translated Slovenian texts, a distinctive cultural character.

**Key words:** English translations of *Martin Krpan*, comparative analysis of translated names, domestication and foreignization strategies, chronotope.

## INTRODUCTION

The Slovenian tale *Martin Krpan z Vrba* was written by Fran Levstik (183-1887), a Slovenian writer, poet and playwright who was also a literary critic and a linguist. The text was first published in Celovec<sup>1</sup> – Klagenfurt in a fortnightly journal *Slovenski glasnik/Slovenian Herald* in 1858 and then in a book format. One of the author's aims<sup>2</sup> was to offer contemporary Slovenian writers and readers a model of an original tale based on folklore and national tradition (Boris Paternu, 1981; Miran Hladnik, 2002). This tale, written for adult readers, exploits »traditional tales of fights between simple but brave giants from among the ordinary people, and violent figures of foreign and noble origin« (Niko Grafenauer, 2004)<sup>3</sup>. The book already appeared interesting for translators in the 19th century, when the first translations were published. In 1917, it was illustrated, and since then it has been present in the market as a picturebook. Illustrated by various renowned artists, it has been considered primarily as a children's book, however, its protagonist, the eponymous Martin Krpan, became a folk hero and, towards the end of the 20th century, even a national icon. Today the book is generally referred to as *Martin Krpan* and this shorter form of the title will be used also in the current context.

This study focuses on the personal and geographical names in the three English translations. By uncovering the application of domestication and foreignization translation strategies that gave rise to the forms of the names, this paper aims at highlighting the bridging of the cultural gap between the source Slovenian culture and the English speaking target cultures. It may be indicative that the translators of *Martin Krpan* originate from four different English cultures.<sup>4</sup>

The comparative analysis of translated names will additionally reveal if in the period from the mid 20th century, when the first English translation was published, to the start of the third millenium, when the second and the third

- 
- 1 Names of places are given in the Slovenian traditional form. When other forms are used officially, both names are quoted. As the town of Klagenfurt (situated in Austria) has a traditional Slovenian name Celovec, the name is given also in the Slovenian form. English names presented in this text are the ones to be found in the translation of Maja Visenjak-Limon and David Limon, if not otherwise stated.
  - 2 In accordance with the purpose of this paper, the other goals, related to the national awareness and the political position of Slovenians in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, will not be taken into consideration here. Consequently, also the view that the 'English salt' that Krpan illegally transports, may have a metonymic significance and may well represent the import and proliferation of ideas of the non-German origin, will not be discussed in the current context.
  - 3 Neither the pages in the Slovenian picturebook nor in translations are numbered. The editor, Niko Grafenauer, wrote a one-page introductory presentation to the English translation of Maja Visenjak Limon and David Limon.
  - 4 F.S. Copeland, of Irish-Scottish origin, Erica Johnson Debeljak, of American origin, Maja Visenjak Limon, of Slovenian descent, and David Limon, of English origin.

translations were offered to the market, the openness of the English speaking audiences to the Slovenian culture has increased. These aims are based on the supposition that since throughout this period, sections of Slovenian culture have been losing their totally foreign connotations for an important section of the international literary audience; English<sup>5</sup> readers may have also become more open to Slovenian literature.

This paper also stresses the crucial role of the chronotope, the fusion between the setting and the temporal framework of the story, that gives to this literary masterpiece its distinctive cultural character.

## TRANSLATION OF PROPER NAMES: DOMESTICATION OR FOREIGNIZATION

Proper names, whether names of persons or geographical names, have an important role in *Martin Krpan*. Geographical names may be considered as essential markers as they directly indicate where the story is located. Personal names which may »implicitly indicate to which culture the character belongs« (Nord, 2003 : 184) do not always perform the identifying function in this tale. This is true for the original and the translations. However, the English versions of the story, inevitably, indicate the applied translation strategies.

Domestication and foreignization rank among frequently applied translation strategies. When the culture of the original, referred to as the source culture, and the target culture i.e. the culture of the translation, share a sufficient field of common semiotic signs,<sup>6</sup> so that no extensive adaptation of the text is required to be acceptable in the new reading context, foreignization tends to be the chosen strategy. Domestication, on the contrary, tends to be applied when the shared semiotic space is so narrow that it requires considerable adaptation of specific cultural features of the original. Any application of translation strategies mirrors the expected openness of the target audience to the culture of the original as it is expected to create the preconditions for the understandability of a text in the new literary environment.

The application of translation strategies depends also on the position the target and the source language have in a world context. If there is a considerable gap between the two with regards to their influence and impact, the first translations,

5 The term English readers refers to English speaking audiences all over the world.

6 Semiotic terminology seems to be particularly convenient for the discussion of cultural encounters between the source and target cultures, as Maria Nikolajeva proves it in her book *Children's Literature Comes of Age. Towards a New Aesthetic*.

especially those from peripheral or non-central languages,<sup>7</sup> tend to be considerably domesticated. This is particularly true when the target language is English, the world central language number one. When further rapprochement between cultures and literatures takes place, the subsequent translations tend to reflect the combination of domestication and foreignization strategies and perhaps even the predominance of the foreignization translation method.

Slovenian ranks among non-central languages and therefore the first translation of *Martin Krpan* is expected to be noticeably domesticated. The comparative analysis of names will uncover to what degree the translation strategies changed in the retranlations.

## **MARTIN KRPAN – A PLOT PERSPECTIVE**

*Martin Krpan* is a tale of a Slovenian countryman who comes from Hilltop in Inner Carniola. The eponymous hero is of extraordinary strength and exceptional wit and he makes his living by smuggling English salt. As this is strictly prohibited, he becomes an object of suspicion to the authorities. On one occasion he accidentally meets the imperial carriage and with his strength impresses the Emperor so much that when a murderous warrior threatens the Court, Krpan is summoned to Vienna, in the hope that he can behead the killer. Krpan accepts the challenge but at the court he has to equip himself with his own weapons, a club of soft wood, and a butcher's axe. He also has to send home for his mare, as no Viennese horse is strong enough to carry him to the battlefield. Applying an unexpected fighting strategy, he is successful: Vienna is saved and the whole court with it. The saviour is hailed by the citizens and the Emperor but his heroic deed is not given due tribute by the Empress and the minister »who kept the keys to the Emperor's treasury« (translated by Maja Visenjak-Limon and David Limon). They both try to diminish the importance of Krpan's act of heroism. Krpan therefore addresses the Emperor, saying:

I've heard in church that every labourer is worthy of his hire. If you so will it, then give me a letter that will be valid before every church and land authority, and set your seal upon it, saying that I'm free to peddle English salt (translated by Maja Visenjak-Limon and David Limon).

This is the translation of the following Slovenian lines:

---

7 Division of languages according to the taxonomy of Johan Heilbron ('Towards a Sociology of Translation: Book Translations as a Cultural World System') and Pascale Casanova ('Translation as Unequal Exchange'), is explained in Mona Baker's (ed.) *Critical Readings in Translation Studies* (2010).

Ampak vendar je vsak delavec vreden svojega plačila, to sem v cerkvi slišal. Če je vaša draga volja, dajte mi tedaj pismo, ko bo veljavno pred vsako duhovsko in deželsko gosposko; pa tudi svoj pečat morate udariti, da bom brez skrbi nosil angleško sol po svetu.

Krpan thus obtains the official permit to peddle salt without restrictions or limitations. He is additionally freed from a cumbersome gift offered by the Empress just to embarrass him and rewarded with a purse filled with gold coins by the Emperor. Thus he is able to return home. Before leaving, however, he says to the Emperor that «if any such Brdaus should appear again, you know where Hilltop by Holy Trinity is» (translated by Maja Visenjak-Limon and David Limon). This reads in the original, »Ko bi se spet oglasil kak Brdavs ali kdo drug, saj veste, kje se pravi na Vrhu pri Sveti Trojici.«

The plot of this narrative reveals a harmonious interplay between facts and fiction, between mythical and realistic elements (Paternu, 1981). From the international perspective it is worth stressing that among mythical elements echoes of the Habsburg myth can also be found.<sup>8</sup> Thus *Martin Krpan* transcends its national and temporal context, something which is confirmed also by translations published in various languages, twelve in all. The most recent renderings of the text into foreign languages are *Martin Krpan från Vrh* (2004), in Swedish, and *Marutein Kurupan*, (2006) in Japanese.

## THE CHRONOTOPE AND THE INTERPLAY OF FACTS AND FICTION

The chronotope, the configurations of place and time of the narrative, plays a pronounced role in this tale. It does not only frame the story but it also gives its *raison d'être*. This tale grows from the fictional setting that evokes the actually existing European territory situated between Trst/Trieste<sup>9</sup>, Vrhnika<sup>10</sup> and Dunaj/Vienna and it also evokes a period that had severely marked the Slovenian sense of identity.

The region, presented as the fictional location, has been important for trading from time immemorial. This is the area known for commercial routes connecting Central Europe with the Adriatic sea. In the book it is named Notranje, today it is

8 See: Baskar Bojan, "Martin Krpan ali habsburški mit kot sodobni slovenski mit" (Martin Krpan or a Habsburg Myth as a Modern Slovenian Myth).

9 Commercially important in Roman Times and in the following periods, especially under the Habsburg rule.

10 A commercial port already in the Antiquity (<https://sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/vrhnika>)

called Notranjska. The area is characterized by Karstic phenomena and one of its salient features is the lowest passage<sup>11</sup> between the Southern and Central Europe. It was therefore favourable for traditional transporting and peddling. It is a hilly region with villages also on the slopes or even the hilltops. Thus the name Vrh, the only one that derives from the topographical features of the region. The names Vrh and Sveta Trojica have been fairly common in Slovenian territory. The name Vrh od Svete Trojice<sup>12</sup>, refers to a village and is generally known in Notranjska.

The temporal framework of the picturebook is determined by the mid – 19th century, the time in which Fran Levstik was an important literary figure, and by the historic circumstances which gave rise to the oral literary tradition which the author relied on in this narrative. The historic circumstances echoed in this tale derive from the historic fact that from 1382 most of the territory inhabited by Slovenians was ruled by the Habsburg dynasty. In the time of the invasions from the Ottoman Empire, this territory presented a kind of shield for the more central regions of the Habsburg Empire. Another fact derived from this historic reality was that the regions of Karst and Notranjska were among those Slovenian areas that were particularly afflicted by the raids of the Turks (Simoniti 1990: 88). History reveals as well that this territory played a role in the traffic of sea salt. Both historic experiences had therefore strongly marked the collective memory of the local population.

The time framework of this narrative is indicated by the author himself at the very start of the text<sup>13</sup>:

An old man of my acquaintance would sometimes spin me yarns about times gone by, how people used to live and things that went on between them (Maja Visenjak Limon and David Limon).

A man by the name of Močilar used to tell me stories about the olden days, about how people lived and what kind of things they kept by them (Erica Johnson Debeljak).

Sometimes Mochilar would tell me of bygone days, how people used to live and how they got on with each other (F.S. Copeland).

This reads in Slovenian:

Močilar mi je časi kaj razkladal o nekdanjih časih, kako so ljudje živeli in kako so imeli to in to reč med sabo.

---

11 Postojnska vrata/Postojna Gate called also Adriatic Gate is a major mountain pass that allows for the lowest crossing (609–612 m) between Central Europe and the Mediterranean.

12 The modern version is Vrh pri Sveti Trojici.

13 The introductory paragraph is given as rendered by the three English translators since it mirrors the variants not only in the presentation of the time frame, but also in the translation of a personal name, Močilar.

In the same introductory paragraph the indications of time and place become more precise.

One Sunday afternoon, sitting on the bench in the shade of the linden tree, he told me the following tale: ... (Maja Visenjak Limon and David Limon).

One Sunday afternoon, as we sat on a bench in the shade of a great linden tree, he related the following tale to me: ... (Erica Johnson Debeljak).

One Sunday afternoon, as we sat on the bench under the lime tree, he told me the following tale (F.S.Copeland).

This reads in the original:

Nekoč v nedeljo popoldne mi je v lipovi senci na klopi pravil naslednjo povest ...

The chronotope is further explained in the following paragraph by the fictional narrator.

There is a village in Inner Carniola known as Hilltop. There once lived a certain Krpan (Maja Visenjak Limon and David Limon).

In the region of Notranjska there once stood a village called Vrh. A very long time ago, a strong and powerful man named Krpan lived in the village (Erica Johnson Debeljak).

There is a village in Inner Carniola, called The Peak. In that small village there lived in olden times Krpan, a powerful man and strong (F.S. Copeland).

This reads in the original:

V Notranjem stoji vas, Vrh po imenu. V tej vasi je živel v starih časih Krpan...

When trying to establish facts related to the temporal framework of this tale, it should be highlighted that from the Middle Ages onwards, Austria and the Republic of Venice were fighting for primacy in this part of Europe (Granda, 142). Austria prohibited its citizens from trading with salt which was a monopoly of the Crown. Trafficking was one of the responses to the prohibition.

The time frame of the story is determined also by the visual narrative. Since the first illustration, created by Hinko Smrekar<sup>14</sup> (1883-1942), the brutal warrior has been viewed as a Turk. The gap existing due to the missing textual clue about the origin of the foreign knight, the seemingly invincible killer, was thus filled by the illustration.<sup>15</sup> Among other illustrators who presented the cruel knight as a Turk, it is

14 A renowned Slovenian caricaturist who worked also as a graphic artist and illustrator.

15 The presentation of Brdavs contributes essential information to the understanding of the book as a whole. This picturebook therefore ranks among those where the word and the image complement each other. This is one of the possibilities of the relationship between the text and the illustration as Maria Nikolajeva and Carol Scott explain in their book *How picturebooks work*.

in the present context particularly worth mentioning Tone Kralj (1900-1975) whose illustrations accompany several translations of this book. Kralj's monumental realism corresponds so much to the story and to the characters of the hero and of the cruel intruder that his illustration acquired the status of the 'standard' one.<sup>16</sup> Such a vision must have been the result of the Slovenian collective memory, strongly marked by the raids of the Turks which were a real scourge in the 15th and 16th centuries. It was the time when the forces of the Ottoman Empire systematically raided and plundered the bordering regions of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. The first raid on the Slovenian territory took place in 1408, as reported by Janez Valvasor.<sup>17</sup> Turks endangered the territory for more than 200 years. They were remembered for plunder, arson, killing and hostage taking. When not massacred, Slovenians were sold as slaves in the Ottoman Empire, or destined to be re-educated as janizaries. Thus, due to the Turkish invasions, an important section of the Slovenian rural population was lost.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the Slovenian chivalry suffered a severe blow and was considerably reduced during the wars that were waged against the Ottoman Empire. The raids on the Slovenian territory ceased only in 1593.<sup>19</sup>

It is therefore no surprise that Slovenian culture, particularly literature and the arts, echoes this period full of tribulations for Slovenians and other nations of Southeastern and Central Europe. The experience that they had to endure represented a challenge for the rest of Christian Europe, aware as it was that its cultural roots were endangered. It can be presumed that this common experience is one of the main reasons why *Martin Krpan* has been frequently translated and retranslated into the languages of the neighbouring nations.

## TRANSLATIONS: FOCUS ON TRANSLATIONS INTO ENGLISH

*Martin Krpan* ranks among those Slovenian literary works which have been translated comparatively often. The first translations, into Russian (1888 and 1891) and into German (1893), were followed by translations into a further ten languages. However,

- 
- 16 Probably because Tone Kralj was not only a painter, illustrator and a graphic artist but also a sculptor and architect. *Martin Krpan* represented a challenge for several other illustrators, and they all attributed Brdavs with the features that are associated with the Turks.
  - 17 Johann Weikhard von Valvasor (1641 – 1693), whose work has been considered one of the main sources for the older Slovenian history, was a polyhistor from Carniola, the present-day Slovenia, and a fellow of The Royal Society in London. His research and writings have been considered one of the main sources for the study of older Slovenian history.
  - 18 From Vasko Simoniti's *Turki so v deželi že* (*The Turks are already in the country*) and Ignacij Voje's, *Slovinci pod pritiskom turškega nasilja* (*Slovenians under the pressure of Turkish terror*).
  - 19 However, the Habsburg Empire was liberated from the constant threat of the Ottoman Empire only in 1683, after the Battle of Vienna.



the real number of translations is much higher as, in the case of various languages, the text has been retranslated several times. Retranslations in the neighbouring languages may have been the result of the special interest in the fictional representation of an aspect of historic experience that this geographical area had been directly confronted with. In the case of retranslations into other languages, it can be presumed that the targeted public appreciated not only the factual and fictional aspects of this narrative, which are related to the experience of a wider part of South Eastern and Central Europe, but also its transnational and transcultural aspects.

The three English translations were published in 1960 and in 2004. The 1960 translation, entitled *Martin Krpan*, was the work of F.S. Copeland.<sup>20</sup> It was followed by two translations, both with the same title as the original. They were published in the same year, 2004, but at different publishing houses: Erica Johnson Debeljak published her translation by Prešernova družba, and Maja Visenjak Limon and David Limon published theirs by Mladinska knjiga. The comparative analysis of the three translations will focus on the translation of personal and geographical (topographical) names. The aim of this comparative analysis is double: to find out if the gap between the source and the target literary contexts has diminished from the mid 20th century to the start of the third millennium; and to establish if in this period the openness of the English speaking audiences to the Slovenian culture has risen.

The first English translation (1960) of *Martin Krpan* may be expected to be largely adapted to the target readers' cultural context, i.e., to that of the English speaking readers, and to be largely domesticated. The study of translation of names will show if later translations moved from domestication translation strategy<sup>21</sup> to foreignization as this change of translation method is expected to be present also in the translation of personal and geographical names. However, no clear dichotomy between the two approaches is envisaged as domestication and foreignization are not mutually exclusive (Baker 2010: 115). Especially in the case of retranslations, the application of translation strategies will be viewed as a mirror, reflecting the bridging of the gaps between the source Slovenian culture and the target English cultures. In this context, the comparative analysis of personal and geographical names will be considered as a testimony to the changes in the application of these two translation methods.

## TRANSLATION OF PERSONAL NAMES

Names are traditionally culture-bound and as such they deserve the special attention of translators and readers. This is particularly true in books that have

20 Fanny Susan Copeland (1872–1970).

21 In this context, the term 'translation strategy' will be used as an equivalent to 'translation method'.

multicultural contexts. *Martin Krpan* is a good example of such a literary work as the chronotope represents a geographical region where Slovenian, German and Italian cultures meet. The analysis of names as »culture markers« (Nord, 184) will reveal if also in this picturebook names »implicitly indicate to which culture the character belongs« (ibid.) The names in the original and in translations will be therefore analysed also as to their culture of origin, to their source tradition.

Translators approach the task of translating proper names in various ways. When the target and the source language share the same script, as it is the case for English and Slovenian, names in the target text generally tend to be either reproductions of source names, i.e. without any change, or they are changed due to morphological, phonological or cultural adaptation to the target language (Bassnett and Lefevère; Nord). Accordingly, even though domestication and foreignization seem to be rather obvious in the translation of a particular literary work, translation of names may not be so straightforward. Therefore translations may contain names which are clear equivalents as 'John' in the case of Slovenian 'Janez'. On the other hand, equivalents may not be the choice of translators, as particular forms depend on several factors and not on translation strategies alone. Accordingly, the comparative analyses of selected forms may also uncover other solutions, for example those originating from the translator's creativity and this is likely also to reveal the skill and artistry of a particular translator. However, in this context, in accordance with the aim of this study, the latter aspect is not taken into consideration.

The challenge posed by the translation of names in *Martin Krpan* was indicated above when the concept of the chronotope was discussed. Proper names are an essential source of the construction of the cultural setting in which the story is embedded. The appearance of the name Močilar which was dealt with in various ways by the three translators is therefore also relevant in connection with the discussion of names.

ORIGINAL	1960 F.S. Copeland	2004 Maja Visenjak Limon, David Limon	2004 Johnson Debeljak
Martin Krpan	Martin Krpan	Martin Krpan	Martin Krpan
Brdavs	Brrdows	Brdaus	Brdaus
Cesar Janez	The Emperor John	The Emperor Johann	The Emperor Johan
Minister Gregor	Minister Gregory	Minister Gregor	Minister Gregor
Jerica	Yeritsa	Yerica	Yerica
Močilar	Mochilar	Substitution	Močilar
Marjeta	Maggie, Mag	Marieta	Marietta
Klinčar	Klinchar	Klinchar	Substitution

ORIGINAL	1960 F.S. Copeland	2004 Maja Visenjak Limon, David Limon	2004 Johnson Debeljak
Jernej	Bartholomew	Yerney	Jernej
Štempihar	Shtenpihar	Shtempihar	Štempihar
Pegam	Pegam	Pegam	Pegam

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PERSONAL NAMES

The personal names used in the original are all of Slovenian origin or, without referring to the etymological origin of each of them, in their Slovenian form. Original names thus do not reflect the presumed nationality of literary characters which are of Slovenian and German origin. The name of the giant, Brdavs, is presented as Brrdows in the first translation (1960). The double 'r' in spelling may indicate the translator's aim to insist on a pronunciation that would evoke the original one. The tendency to keep the pronunciation of individual's proper names similar to that of the original becomes even more obvious in the cases of the names Štempihar, Močilar and Klinčar. As all three contain letters absent from the English alphabet, they are written with combinations of letters that are likely to make English readers imitate the original pronunciation. Thus there is 'sh' for the Slovenian 'š' (sibilant [ʃ]) so that Štempihar turns into Shtempihar, and 'ch' for the Slovenian 'č' (affricate [tʃ]), thus Močilar turns into Mochilar. The cited names, appearing in the first English translation, are thus, contrary to expectations, partly foreignized: the spelling is anglicized with the intention of offering readers an impression of the original sound of Slovenian names.

Thus even in the first translation names are transformed in different ways. They are entirely domesticated, when they are already familiar within an English cultural context. The name Gregor thus becomes Gregory and Jernej changes into Bartholomew. Conversely, in both 2004 translations, the quoted Slovenian names are kept and English readers are faced with foreignization. When names contain sibilants and affricates, Maja Visenjak Limon and David Limon, apply the same type of adaptation procedure as adopted by F.S. Copeland. Erica Johnson Debeljak, on the contrary, uses the Slovenian forms Močilar and Štempihar, and keeps also the name Jernej. The translator thus introduces complete foreignization.

The 2004 translators used the same name for the giant: Brdaus. but different names for the Emperor. In the original, the Emperor himself is referred to either with his title or by title and first name. In translations, the title is followed by the name, either in the English form, as Emperor John (F.S. Copeland), or with Emperor Johann (Maja Visenjak Limon, David Limon) and Johan (Erica

Johnson Debeljak). The retranslations introduce foreignization based on the German origin of the Monarch. Conversely, the name of the Emperor's daughter, Jerica, becomes Yeritsa in the 1960 translation and Yericica in both translations from 2004. Thus Yeritsa is domesticated, while Yericica has undergone only a partial domestication.

It seems logical that the name of the eponymous character is not adapted. However, the same is true for the name Pegam<sup>22</sup> which appears only in order to foreshadow Krpan's victory.

## TRANSLATION OF PLACE AND OTHER GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

SLOVENIAN ORIGINAL	COPELAND	VISENJAK LIMON, LIMON	JOHNSON DEBELJAK
Vrh pri Sveti Trojici	The Peak by Holy Trinity	Hilltop by Holy Trinity	Vrh near Holy Trinity
Notranje	Inner Carniola	Inner Carniola	Notranjska
Dunaj	Vienna	Vienna	Vienna
Trst	Trieste	Trieste	Trieste
Rim	Rome	Rome	Rome
Razdrto	Broken Hill	Razdrto	Razdrto
Golo	Bare Hill	Golo	Goli
Koper	Koper	Koper	Koper
Vrhnika	Vrhnika	Vrhnika	Vrhnika
Ljubljana	Ljubljana	Ljubljana	Ljubljana
Reka	Reka	Rijeka	Reka

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

The comparative analysis of geographical names reveals that in these three translations, most places are translated in the same manner. These include English forms of internationally known places such as Vienna, Trieste and Rome. The names of the Slovenian towns Koper, Ljubljana and Vrhnika are retained, a factor which

22 Slovenian folklore speaks about a giant Pegam who challenged Vienna and all the great knights and lords in the empire to fight him. »The giant slew whoever he could subdue« (translated by Johnson Debeljak) till he was defeated by a Slovenian, Lambergar. The tradition tells that Lambergar managed to be a winner in an unequal fight, like the one between David and Goliath, because his mother supported him with prayer.

contributes to the foreignizing effect of the translations. Conversely, Krpan's place of origin, his home village, is translated in three different ways. Only the second part of the name is translated identically by all of them. In the 1960 translation the domestication strategy is particularly underlined with a short commentary that accompanies the translations of the name Razdrto, translated as Broken Hill, and Golo, rendered as Bare Hill. Each of these translations is accompanied with a footnote on the same page informing the reader that the translation is an »approximate rendering«.

The only name referring to a geographical region is Notranje which is translated in two ways: with the name established in historiography, Inner Carniola, by F.S. Copeland and Maja Visenjak Limon and David Limon, and with the modern name, Notranjska, by Erica Johnson Debeljak. If the latter is an obvious foreignization, I dare say that the name used by historiography would also hardly sound less foreign to the majority of Non-Slovenian readers. This also proves that in the translation of any literary text, domestication and foreignization can be assigned their role and effect only within a larger linguistic, literary and cultural context.

## CONCLUSION

This comparative analyses of the translations of names in the narrative *Martin Krpan* has turned out to be particularly interesting not only because the time span between the first translation and the retranslations was almost half a century, but also because the two retranslations, published in the same year, reveal a few aspects of the complexity of literary translation.

The comparative studies of personal names, place names and other geographical names reveal that the expectations built on theoretical premises regarding retranslations and the application of domestication and foreignization translation strategies were basically justifiable. The analyses reveal that within the three translations domestication and foreignization tend to complement each other and that foreignization is particularly pronounced in the area of geographical names. Most names of Slovenian places retain their original form. In the field of names of individuals only a few can be considered as »culture markers« (Nord, 184). The Emperor's name, Johann, which in itself clearly indicates its linguistic origin within the Habsburg Monarchy, ranks among them.

The analysis of personal names also reveals frequent adaptations of spelling which is anglicized with the intention of enabling targeted readers to derive an impression of the original sound of Slovenian names. Neither of the retranslations is based primarily on a single translation strategy. As expected, the degree of application of each of the highlighted translation strategies differs. Visenjak and

Limon apply both domestication and foreignization strategies and it is likely that their translation may help the English reader to gain an impression of the sound of the Slovenian language.

The translation of names reveals that the cultural gap between the Slovenian and English speaking cultures has diminished and that since the start of the 21st century translators have expected English readers to be much better prepared for the encounters with Slovenian literature than their counterparts in the reading audiences in the second half of the 20th century.

## WORKS CITED

- Baker, Mona (ed). *Critical Readings in Translation Studies*. London and New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Baskar, Bojan. "Martin Krpan ali habsburški mit kot sodobni slovenski mit" (Martin Krpan or a Habsburg Myth as a Modern Slovenian Myth). *Etnolog* 69. 75-90. Ljubljana: Slovenski etnografski muzej, 2008.
- Levstik, Fran. *Martin Krpan z Vrha*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1954.
- Bassnett, Susan and André Lefevère, eds., *Translation, History and Culture*. London: Pinter, 1998.
- Casanova, Pascal. »Consecration and Accumulation of Literary Capital: Translation as Unequal Exchange«, in *Critical Readings in Translation Studies*, ed. Mona Baker. London and New York: Routledge, 2010: 285-303.
- Grafenauer, Niko. A Brief Introduction to *Martin Krpan* in Levstik, Fran. *Martin Krpan* translated by Maja Visenjak Limon and David Limon. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2004.
- Granda, Stane. *Mala zgodovina Slovenije (A Brief History of Slovenia)*. Celje: Mohorjeva družba, 2008.
- Heilbron, Johan. »Towards a Sociology in Translation: Book Translations as a Cultural World System«, in *Critical Reading in Translation Studies*, Mona Baker (ed.). London and New York: Routledge, 2010: 304-316.
- Hladnik, Miran. *Pa začnimo pri Krpanu (Let's Start with Krpan)*. <http://slovlit.ff.uni-lj.si/slovjez/mh/6reci.html>.
- Levstik, Fran. *Martin Krpan z Vrha*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1954.
- Levstik, Fran. *Martin Krpan*. Translated by F.S. Copeland. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1960.
- Levstik, Fran. *Martin Krpan*. Translated by Maja Visenjak Limon and David Limon. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2004.
- Levstik, Fran. *Martin Krpan*. Translated by Erica Johnson Debeljak. Ljubljana: Prešernova družba, 2004.

- Nikolajeva, Maria. *Children's Literature Comes of Age: Toward a New Aesthetic*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996.
- Nikolajeva, Maria and Carol Scott. *How Picturebooks Work*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 2001.
- Nord, Christiane »Proper Names in Translations for Children: *Alice in Wonderland* as a Case in Point.« In *Meta, Translator's Journal, Journal des traducteurs. Traduction pour les enfants, Translation for Children*. Ed. Riitta Oittinen. *Meta*, Vol. 48, 1-2, mai 2003.
- Paternu, Boris. *Martin Kerpan z Verha*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1981.
- Sedej, Ivan. *Martin Kerpan z Verha*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1981.
- Simoniti, Vasko. *Turki so v deželi že (The Turks are already in the country)*. Celje: Mohorjeva družba, 1990.
- Voje, Ignacij. *Slovenci pod pritiskom turškega nasilja (Slovenians under the pressure of Turkish terror)*. Ljubljana: Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete, 1996.

Darja Mazi – Leskovar  
University of Maribor  
darja.leskovar@guest.um.si



## Lastna imena v angleških prevodih slovenske povesti *Martin Krpan*

Članek se tematsko umešča med razprave o prevodih slovenskih literarnih besedil, točneje o prenosu lastnih imen v tuje jezike. Obravnava prevode Martina Krpana, ki so izšli v angleščini od leta 1960 do 2016 ter se osredotoča na osebna in geografska imena v treh ciljnih besedilih. Lastna imena so deležna posebne pozornosti prevajalske stroke, saj dokaj natančno pokažejo, v koliki meri so se prevajalci pri prenosu literarnega besedila odločali za podomačitveno oziroma potujitveno prevajalsko strategijo. Zato študija v uvodnem delu predstavi oba osrednja prevajalska principa ter opozori, da je njun izbor v veliki meri odraz bližine oziroma oddaljenosti med izvorno in ciljno kulturo. Ker se izbrana povest uvršča med dela, v katerih književni prostor in čas igrata bistveno vlogo, sta uvodoma predstavljena tudi kraj in čas dogajanja, prepletanje zgodovinskih dejstev, geografske danosti in umetniškosti, ki hoče biti tipično slovenska. Primerjalna analiza lastnih imen pokaže, da so vsi prevajalci ohranili ime glavnega junaka, pri ostalih pa beleži

nekaj odstopanj, ki so kulturno pogojena. Predvsem zaradi večje rabe potujitvene strategije pri zapisu geografskih imenih lahko zaključimo, da se je, po oceni prevajalcev, v zadnjih petdesetih letih zmanjšala oddaljenosti med slovensko, angleško in ameriško kulturo.

**Ključne besede:** prevodi Martina Krpana v angleški jezik, primerjalna analiza prevodov lastnih imen, potujitveni in podomačitveni prevajalski princip, prostor in čas dogajanja



# Übersetzung oder Adaption: Fallbeispiel Jakob Alešovec (1842–1901)

*Tanja Žigon*

## Abstract

Der vorliegende Beitrag setzt sich mit den essayistischen Skizzen *Laybacher Typen* (*Ljubljanske slike*) aus der Feder des Publizisten, Dramatikers und Satirikers Jakob Alešovec (1842–1901) auseinander, wobei hier der Frage nachgegangen wird, ob es sich bei der Übersetzung der behandelten Texte aus dem Deutschen ins Slowenische um eine (Selbst)übersetzung handelt oder man in diesem Zusammenhang doch lieber von einer Adaption sprechen sollte. Anhand der Lebens- und Schaffensgeschichte des Autors wie auch im Hinblick auf die im 19. Jahrhundert geltenden Normen in der slowenischen Übersetzungskultur wird gezeigt, dass es sich bei dem deutschen Ausgangstext überwiegend um eine Textvorlage für die slowenische Version handelt, welche als eine Zwischenstation zur originalen Produktion im Slowenischen zu verstehen ist.

**Schlüsselwörter:** Selbstübersetzung, Adaption, Ausgangs- und Zieltext (Deutsch/Slowenisch), Normen, Übersetzungskultur im 19. Jahrhundert

## EINLEITUNG UND EINIGE WORTE ZUM AUTOR DER UNTERSUCHTEN TEXTE

Das wissenschaftliche Interesse im vorliegenden Beitrag widmet sich den Texten von Jakob Alešovec (1842–1901)<sup>1</sup>, dem slowenischen Erzähler, Dramatiker, Satiriker und Publizisten, über den sich sein Zeitgenosse Josip Vošnjak (1834–1911), der slowenische Politiker, Arzt und Erzähler, in seinen *Memoiren* kritisch, aber teilweise auch ungerecht, wertend<sup>2</sup> und damit sehr subjektiv äußerte:

Alešovec war einer derjenigen in den Fluten des Lebens versenkten talentierten Menschen, die zu schlecht gelaunt waren, um ihre, ich würde sagen, animalischen Triebe zu zähmen. [...] Er hatte eine gute humoristische und satirische Ader, aber es fehlte ihm an der richtigen Bildung und an den eigenen Einfällen und Ideen (Vošnjak 1982: 627).<sup>3</sup>

Jakob Alešovec wurde vor 175 Jahren, im Juli 1842 in Skaručna, einem kleinen Dorf nicht weit von Laibach (Ljubljana) entfernt, geboren. Er wuchs in ärmsten Verhältnissen auf; während die Mutter den Haushalt führte, konnte der Vater mit seiner Arbeit als Handwerker kaum mehr als das Nötigste zum Überleben der Familie verdienen (Alešovec 1973: 5–9). Die Intelligenz des kleinen Jungen fiel dem Dorfpfarrer auf; dieser begann, Alešovec zu unterrichten und sorgte später dafür, dass er mit Hilfe der finanziellen Förderung der Franziskaner die Volksschule im nahegelegenen Ort Stein (Kamnik) besuchen konnte. Von 1856 bis 1863 setzte Alešovec seine Ausbildung am Laibacher Gymnasium fort, jedoch schloss er diese nie ab. Bereits als Gymnasiast gab er das deutschsprachige Schulblatt *Die Schwalbe* heraus (Alešovec 1973: 303). Zu dieser Zeit beherrschte er eher ein gebrochenes Slowenisch, denn nur in der Familie wurde untereinander Slowenisch gesprochen, während man sich ansonsten auf Deutsch unterhielt (Vošnjak 1982: 15–16). Nachdem er die Schulbank verlassen hatte, verbrachte Alešovec zwei Monate in der Lehrerbildungsanstalt in Laibach und entschied sich danach, die Stelle des Hauslehrers bei Miroslav Vilhar (1818–1871), dem slowenischen Dramatiker, Erzähler und Politiker, anzunehmen, um seinen Lebensunterhalt bestreiten zu können. Er griff auch immer öfter selbst zur Feder und veröffentlichte seine ersten Erlebnisberichte in den *Blättern aus Krain*, einer literarischen Beilage der *Laibacher Zeitung*. Bis in die 1860er-Jahre verfasste er seine Texte ausschließlich

1 Sein Familienname kommt auch in anderen Varianten vor, und zwar *Aleschouz*, *Alešovz*, *Alešovc*.

2 Zum Thema Emotionen in der Literatur vgl. Javor Briški (2012: 87–96).

3 Der slowenische Text lautet: »Alešovec je bil eden tistih v valovih življenja pogrezlih talentiranih ljudi, ki so bili preslabe volje, da bi znali brzdati svoje, rekel bi, animalske nagone. [...] imel je dobro humoristično in satirično žilo, nedostajalo pa mu je prave omike ter lastnih misli in idej« [diese und weitere Übersetzungen v. T. Ž.].

auf Deutsch, erst Miroslav Vilhar begeisterte ihn dafür, Slowenisch zu schreiben. So erschien im Jahr 1867 seine historische Skizze *Kustoca in Vis* [*Custozza und die Insel Lissa*], eine Beschreibung des Krieges an italienischen Kriegsschauplätzen im Jahr 1866. Ferner versuchte sich Alešovec auch als Schauspieler, Dramatiker und Übersetzer (Gostiša et al. 1967: 19–22) und übersetzte 1870 das Lustspiel von Georg Horn *Glückliche Flitterwochen* und Nestroys Zauberposse mit Gesang in drei Akten *Der böse Geist Lumpazivagabundus oder Das liederliche Kleeblatt*. Mitte der 1880er-Jahre wurde das Sehvermögen von Alešovec immer schwächer, so dass er schließlich erblindete. Seine Blindheit und sein Alkoholkonsum trugen zu seinem traurigen Ende in einer Laibacher Armenanstalt bei. Er starb vereinsamt und von allen verlassen am 17. Oktober 1901.

Es hat den Anschein, dass nicht nur seine Zeitgenossen, sondern auch die slowenische Literaturgeschichte Jakob Alešovec als einen widersprüchlichen Autor wahrgenommen hat, wohl auch deswegen, weil Alešovec in einer Zeit der nationalen Differenzierung bzw. Neupositionierung<sup>4</sup> sowohl auf Deutsch als auch auf Slowenisch schrieb, aber auch wegen seiner bissigen Satire, mit welcher seine Texte durchdrungen sind und die niemanden schonte. Wegen sehr subjektiver Urteile und oft auch ungerechter und unbegründeter Angriffe auf jede und jeden wurde auch der künstlerische Wert der Texte von Alešovec oft hinterfragt. Durch negative Kritiken und Rezensionen seiner Werke,<sup>5</sup> wurde er bereits zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts zu einem *damnatio memoriae* verdammt. Doch trotz dieser Haltung der Literaturgeschichte ihm gegenüber muss festgehalten werden, dass Alešovec nicht ganz in Vergessenheit geraten ist, denn seine *subjektiven* Darstellungen geben oft schonungslos das Bild der sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse in der Landeshauptstadt Krain im 19. Jahrhundert wieder und beleuchten die kulturellen Zustände<sup>6</sup> der damaligen Zeit von einer anderen Perspektive. Somit werden seine Texte des Öfteren als historische Quelle herangezogen, vor allem die im Weiteren analysierten *Laibacher Typen*.

Alešovec verfasste seine ironischen und satirischen kulturhistorischen Skizzen in den 1860er- bzw. 1870er-Jahren. Zunächst wurden sie 1869 im Feuilleton der Zeitschrift für vaterländische Interessen *Triglav* (vgl. dazu Žigon 2004; Žigon 2007), welche Alešovec selbst redigierte, unter dem Titel *Laibacher Typen* veröffentlicht, zehn Jahre danach (1879) folgte die slowenische Fassung, die Alešovec zunächst im Feuilleton der konservativen Zeitung *Slovenec* [*Der Slowene*] und

4 Zum Einfluss der gesellschaftlichen, historischen und politischen Zustände auf den Einzelnen vgl. Maver 2015: 177–178.

5 Besonders kritisch und negativ waren die Rezensionen der *Ausgewählten Werke* von Alešovec, die nach seinem Tode herausgegeben wurden (L[enart] 1910: 41; Jurkovič 1912: 219).

6 Vgl. zum Thema Kulturdiplomatie z. B. Udovič und Podgornik 2016.

im gleichen Jahr auch im Selbstverlag unter dem Titel *Ljubljanske slike. Podoba ljubljanskega sveta pod drobnogledom* [Bilder aus Laibach. Das Bild der Laibacher Welt unter der Lupe] herausgab. Der Autor selbst fungiert hier auch als Übersetzer des deutschen Textes. Doch soll hervorgehoben werden, dass in der slowenischen Fassung an keiner Stelle der deutsche Ausgangstext erwähnt wird und auch das von Alešovec aufs Neue verfasste Vorwort in der slowenischen Buchausgabe wird lediglich mit »Verfasser« (slow. »pisatelj«) unterschrieben und es wird völlig außer Acht gelassen, dass es sich um einen bereits in deutscher Sprache existierenden Text handelt; dies deutet auf einen relativ niedrigen Status der Übersetzungen in der slowenischen Übersetzungskultur (mehr zum Begriff Prunč 2008b) im 19. Jahrhundert hin.

## FRAGESTELLUNG UND THEORETISCHE VORÜBERLEGUNGEN

Anhand des Vergleiches des deutschen Ausgangs- und des slowenischen Zieltextes (*Laybacher Typen* vs. *Ljubljanske slike*) wird im Weiteren überprüft, ob es sich bei der slowenischen Übersetzung um eine Selbstübersetzung handelt oder eher von einer dem „Zielpublikum emotionell ansprechende[n] kulturspezifische[n] Adaption“ (Prunč 2007a: 170; vgl. auch Prunč 2008a: 117–119) gesprochen werden kann. Die Adaption ist in diesem Sinne als freieste Form der Übertragung eines Textes in eine andere Sprache (Prunč 2007b: 77) zu verstehen, denn der Text wird in der Zielsprache bzw. Zielkultur, wie Newmark schreibt, neu geschrieben, also *rewritten* (Newmark 1995: 45). In so einem Falle wird dem Übersetzer die Freiheit zugestanden, gravierende Eingriffe in den Ausgangstext vorzunehmen, den Text sehr frei zu lokalisieren, zu erweitern, bestimmte Textstellen auszulassen usw. Bereits die von Alešovec im Jahr 1874 veröffentlichte Kriminalgeschichte *Iz sodnijskega življenja* [Aus dem Gerichtsleben] – zum Schreiben dieses Krimis wurde Alešovec von Miroslav Vilhar ermutigt – kann als eine Art Adaption bzw. *Rewriting* eingestuft werden. Obwohl der slowenische Literaturhistoriker Matjaž Kmecl (1975: 113) diesen Text für den ersten slowenischen Kriminalroman hält und betont, dass Alešovec damit in die slowenische Literatur zum ersten Mal die Figur eines richtigen Detektivs, eines schlaunen, ehrlichen und konsequenten Ermittlers eingeführt habe, den es vorher in der slowenischen Literatur nicht gegeben habe, kann nicht übersehen werden, dass sich Alešovec von bereits existierenden ähnlichen fremdsprachlichen Texten inspirieren ließ und sich eine Reihe von deutschen, französischen und anderen historischen Sammlungen der Strafrechtsfälle zum Vorbild nahm, die man in seiner Zeit unter dem Namen *Pitaval* (Hladnik 1985: 196) kannte.

Der Begriff *Rewriting* wurde im Zuge der kulturellen Wende in den späten 1980er- und frühen 1990er-Jahren von André Lefevere (1992) in die Translationswissenschaft eingeführt, der zunächst noch den Begriff der Refraktion benutzte, womit das Adaptieren von Texten für ein bestimmtes Zielpublikum, eine bestimmte Situation oder Ideologie gemeint ist (vgl. dazu auch Prunč 2007: 255–258). Es geht vor allem darum, wie fremde AutorInnen, diverse Texte und Konzepte in die eigene Kultur und Literatur eingehen, wie sie angeeignet und folglich rezipiert werden. In diesem Zusammenhang stellt Lefevere fest, dass jede Übersetzung eigentlich auch *Rewriting* sei und unter bestimmten Bedingungen zur Manipulation führen könne, was sowohl positive als auch negative Folgen habe:

Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society. Rewriting can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another (Lefevere 1992: VII).

Da die meisten Texte von Jakob Alešovec und damit auch seine *Laibacher Typen* bzw. *Ljubljanske slike* in einer Zeit der immer heftigeren slowenisch-deutschen Auseinandersetzungen im Land Krain (vgl. z. B. Matić 2002) entstanden sind, kann die slowenische Übersetzung der *Laibacher Typen* auch aus der Sicht der Prozesse der slowenischen Sprach-, Literatur- und Nationalentwicklung betrachtet werden (vgl. Almasý 2016; vgl. auch Maver 2010, Maver 2015). Das bedeutet, wenn man an das Normenkonzept von Gideon Toury anknüpft, der das Übersetzen als normengeleitete Aktivität definiert (Toury 1995: 55–60), dass die Vornormen in der slowenischen Übersetzungskultur im 19. Jahrhundert (vgl. Žigon, Almasý und Lovšin 2017: 52–77) durch „ein Bündel (national)ideologisch motivierter Aufgaben“ (Prunč 2012: 86) gesteuert wurden. Man verfolgte das Ziel, „den Einfluss des Deutschen auf die Sprache (und Denkungsart) zurückzudrängen“ (ebd.) und eine eigene slowenische Textproduktion aufzubauen, was „den Übersetzungen von vornherein einen sekundären Status zuwies“ (ebd.). Ferner bemühte man sich „ein eigenes Verlagswesen aufzubauen und neue Leserschichten zu gewinnen“ (Prunč 2012: 87), doch wegen der Diglossie des Bildungsbürgertums, das ausgenommen der dramatischen Werke, „bei denen das Theater als gesellschaftliches Ereignis seiner nationsbildenden Funktion nur durch slowenische Übersetzung gerecht werden konnte“ (ebd.), alle weiteren „literarische[n] Werke im deutschen Original oder in deutschen Übersetzungen“ (ebd.) lesen konnte, wurden zunächst „nur so genannte ‚niedrige‘ Genres (Gebetbücher und

Katechismen, Sachbücher, Trivial- und Jugendliteratur) ins Slowenische übersetzt“ (ebd.; vgl. auch Hladnik 1993: 809).<sup>7</sup>

Gerade wegen der diglossischen Situation in den mit der slowenischen Bevölkerung besiedelten Gebieten gab es im 19. Jahrhundert oft Fälle von Selbstübersetzungen der zweisprachigen AutorInnen, doch ist die Erfassung der Übersetzungen in Bibliographien und Bibliothekskatalogen mangelhaft bzw. können die übertragenen Texte gar nicht erfasst werden, denn der niedrige Status der Übersetzungen in der slowenischen Nationalkultur hatte zur Folge, dass viele Texte, auch *Ljubljanske slike* von Alešovec, nicht als Übersetzung kenntlich gemacht wurden (vgl. Prunč 2007a: 165–166).

Im Blick auf die übersetzerischen Vornormen griff man auf der Ebene der Ausgangsnormen vor allem auf die bereits erwähnte zielkulturelle Adaption zurück, was in keiner Korrelation zu der kulturellen oder sozialen Rezeptionsfähigkeit des Zielpublikums stand; so entschied man sich für eine Adaption meistens aus »handfeste[n] ideologische[n] Gründe[n]«, z. B., um das Identifikationsgefühl der LeserInnen im slowenischen Emanzipationsdiskurs zu stärken, wozu die Übersetzungen instrumentalisiert wurden (vgl. Prunč 2008a: 117). Dadurch wurde den ÜbersetzerInnen auf der Ebene der Operativnormen, die sich auf konkrete Entscheidungen beim Übersetzen beziehen, relativ große Freiheit gewährt.

Schließlich darf nicht vergessen werden, dass Alešovec die slowenischen Texte zehn Jahre *nach* der deutschen Erstveröffentlichung herausgegeben hat. Nicht nur die zeitliche Distanz, die zwischen dem Entstehen beider Sprachversionen liegt, sondern vor allem die Tatsache, dass der Autor selbst auch Übersetzer des eigenen Textes war, lässt vermuten, dass es sich dabei nicht nur um eine übersetzerische, sondern auch um eine literarische Tätigkeit handelt. Es kann die Hypothese aufgestellt werden, dass der deutsche Ausgangstext dem Autor lediglich als eine Vorlage für einen völlig neuen slowenischen feuilletonistischen Text diente. Jakob Alešovec bewegte sich nämlich zwischen zwei Sprachen in Krain und wuchs in einer Zeit und Umgebung auf, wo der Bilingualismus die Norm war, worauf bereits hingewiesen wurde. Die Sprache wechseln, das hieß für Alešovec in eine andere Welt wechseln (Kupsch-Losereit 1995: 1) – oder anders formuliert: Für Alešovec gilt, was Hokenson und Munson treffend formulierten, nämlich, dass „bilingual self-translators produce two texts, often publish them under the same title, and usually consider them to be comparable versions“ (Hokenson und Munson 2007: 3). Ferner war auch die soziolinguistische Realität für Alešovec von großer Bedeutung; sie determinierte

---

7 Aus diesem Grund, so Almasy, „bediente man sich des Genres der Lyrik oder griff auch zu historischen Romanen und Erzählungen, weil durch ersteres die kreative Schaffenskraft des Slowenischen bewiesen und durch zweiteres nationale Vorstellungen transportiert werden konnten“ (Almasy 2017: 127).

ihn damals genauso wie das bei den ÜbersetzerInnen von heute in einer ähnlichen Situation der Fall ist, denn sie arbeiten und leben

not in a hypothetical gap between languages, between source and target cultures, but in the midst of them; they combine several languages and cultural competencies at once, and constitute a mid-zone of overlaps and intersections, being actively engaged in several cultures simultaneously. Hence every translator is ‚a minimal interculture‘ (Pym 1998: 181).

Es ist hervorzuheben, dass es gerade bei SelbstübersetzerInnen zu sprachlichen und kulturellen Überlappungen *par excellence* kommt, und zwar sowohl innerpersönlich als auch in den Texten (Hokenson und Munson 2007: 4), was auch bei Alešovec deutlich zum Ausdruck kommt.

## DIE GESELLSCHAFTLICH-POLITISCHE UND KULTURELLE SITUATION IM LAND KRAIN

In der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts spaltete sich die Bevölkerung der slowenisch besiedelten Gebiete in zwei Parteien mit unterschiedlicher Auffassung der staatsrechtlichen Konzeption. Während die Altslowenen unter der Führung vom Tierarzt und dem Herausgeber der slowenischen Landwirtschaftszeitung *Kmetijske in rokodelske novice* (1843–1902), Johann Bleiweis (1808–1881), eine gemäßigte, kompromissbereitere Haltung gegenüber der deutschen „verfassungstreuen Partei“,<sup>8</sup> welche für die Vorrangstellung der deutschen Sprache und Kultur eintrat, befürworteten, forderten die „liberalen“ Jungslowenen die kulturelle, wirtschaftliche und politische „Wiedererweckung“ der Slowenen. Allerdings waren die heftigen slowenisch-deutschen Auseinandersetzungen u. a. auch auf dem Zeitungsmarkt zu spüren. In den 1860er-Jahren sind in der Krainer Hauptstadt neben der offiziellen und meist gelesenen *Laibacher Zeitung* noch zwei weitere deutschsprachige publizistische Organe erschienen, die miteinander konkurrierten: *Triglav*, eine Zeitschrift, die sich als „slowenisch“ deklarierte und auf Deutsch slowenische Interessen vertrat, und das Organ der Deutschen in Krain, das liberal ausgerichtete *Laibacher Tagblatt*. Davon, dass die beiden Presseorgane auf völlig verschiedenen Seiten standen und dass *Triglav* unter der Redaktion von

8 Zu dieser gehörten vornehmlich die Beamtenschaft, das in der Wirtschaft aktive Bürgertum und Repräsentanten freier Berufe in den Städten und Märkten, jedoch wurde sie auch von den slowenischen Liberalen wahrgenommen. Liberale forderten persönliche, politische und religiöse Freiheit, eine Demokratisierung des Lebens auf allen Ebenen, die Einschränkung der Macht der Kirche, sie plädierten für Fortschritt und Modernisierung der Wirtschaft und unterstützten die individuelle unternehmerische Initiative (Vodopivec 1987).

Alešovec sehr kritisch gegen die Überzeugung der Krainer Deutschen von der Vorrangstellung der deutschen Kultur gegenüber der slowenischen antrat, legt das nachfolgende Zitat aus *Triglav* ein illustratives Zeugnis ab:

Glückliches Alterthum, wo keine „liberalen“ Blätter erschienen! Beneidenswerthes Publikum, das darin nicht Lügen fand! Beneidenswerth die Gänse, die nicht das Bewußtsein hatten, daß ihre Federn in so elende Hände kommen, daß damit so schändliche Artikel geschrieben, so schamlose Lügen fabrizirt werden, als man im „Laibacher Tagblatt“, diesem ungezogensten der journalistischen Gassenbuben, dieser Mißgeburt aller Fratzen, die durch ein menschenähnliches Geschlecht voll der diabolischsten Eigenschaften gefüttert wird, begegnet (Anonym 1869: unpag.).

Im Jahr 1868 wurde Alešovec zunächst Mitarbeiter, später auch der verantwortliche Redakteur der deutschsprachigen Zeitschrift für vaterländische Interessen *Triglav*. Vornehmlich im Feuilleton der Zeitschrift nahm er sich die Freiheit und griff nicht nur die Deutschen in Krain an, sondern auch die mit diesen sympathisierenden liberalen Slowenen, die sog. Renegaten.<sup>9</sup> Er kritisierte und verspottete sie, machte sich dadurch bei seinem Publikum immer unbeliebter und wurde dadurch bald zu einem Außenseiter, zu einem „einsamen Reiter“ (Lah 1991: 41–46). Er brachte, was ein typisches Merkmal der Feuilletonisten im Allgemeinen ist, immer alles aufs Papier, was ihm auf der Seele lag und ähnelte darin einem der damals wohl berühmtesten Wiener Feuilletonisten Ferdinand Kürnberger (1821–1879).<sup>10</sup>

## DIE TYPEN AUS DER LAIBACHER GESELLSCHAFT: EINE SELBSTÜBERSETZUNG?

Im Februar 1869 begann Alešovec in der Zeitschrift *Triglav* in Fortsetzungen seine Texte zu den sog. *Laibacher Typen* zu veröffentlichen. Seine feuilletonistischen Betrachtungen waren scharfe gesellschaftliche Satiren, in welchen er sich als ein begnadeter Sprach-Flaneur erwies, welcher seinem Publikum das Spiel der

9 Die Slowenen, die mit den deutschen Liberalen sympathisierten, wurden oft auch als „nemškutarji“, das ist „Deutschtümpler“, bezeichnet (Grdina 1995: 263–285). Mehr zu den deutsch-slowenischen Beziehungen (Miladinović Zalaznik 2002).

10 Ferdinand Kürnberger war Feuilletonist, Kritiker und Erzähler. Wegen seiner Teilnahme an der Revolution 1848 musste er aus Wien fliehen und lebte als Korrespondent und Kritiker in Deutschland. 1856 kehrte er nach Österreich zurück. Kürnberger gilt als einer der bedeutendsten Vertreter des Wiener Feuilletons. Seine kunstvollen Texte, die sich kritisch mit politischen, kulturellen und sozialen Themen auseinandersetzten, prägten unter anderem Hermann Bahr und Karl Kraus (Wildhagen 1985).



Individualitäten in verschiedensten Nuancen darbot. Seine *Laibacher Typen* können als ein eigenartiger *Katalog* von Menschen aus dem Laibacher gesellschaftlichen und beruflichen Leben verstanden und gelesen werden.

Bereits auf Makroebene sind zwischen dem Ausgangs- und Zieltext Unterschiede zu verzeichnen. Erstens wurde der slowenischen Fassung eine dreiseitige Einleitung [Uvod] vorausgeschickt, die in der deutschen Fassung nicht vorhanden ist, das bedeutet, dass sich der Autor auf der Ebene der Operativnormen erlaubte, den Text um einiges zu erweitern. Ferner versuchte er aber auch – in Bezug auf die Ausgangsnormen – das slowenisch patriotische Identifikationsgefühl der LeserInnen zu etablieren, indem er alles verspottete, was er mit Deutschtum assoziierte. In der Einleitung erklärte Alešovec seinem Lesepublikum, wie die Laibacher Typen klassifiziert werden bzw. in welche Gruppen die Laibacher Bevölkerung eingeordnet werden kann, und zwar sind das: a) die Herrschaften, die nur Deutsch sprechen; b) die Renegaten, die als verlorene Seelen gelten und ein gebrochenes Deutsch sprechen, aber meistens auch die Landessprache (Slowenisch), verstehen und (jedoch ungerne) sprechen, und c) die Vorstadtmenschen, die unter Schicksalsschlägen zu leiden haben; diese kommunizieren untereinander auf Slowenisch und verdienen ihr tägliches Brot meist als Handwerker (Alešovec 1911: I–III).

Die Methode, die Alešovec anwendet, die Menschen zu beschreiben, beschränkt sich also nicht nur auf eine einzige Gesellschaftsschicht, sondern erfasst alle, von den Hausherrn, Beamten, Studenten über Dichter, Künstler, Redakteure bis zu den Damen, Hausfrauen, Müttern, reizenden Mädchen und Plaudertaschen, wie er die meisten Frauen bezeichnet. Wen auch immer Alešovec nicht mochte, der wurde gebrandmarkt und befand sich in seinen Augen auf einmal im „Klub der Renegaten“, die er besonders verachtete. Einen nach dem Anderen entwarf Alešovec vor den nicht wenig staunenden Augen seiner Leser die verschiedensten Laibacher Typen, die er jeweils mit selbst ausgedachten, oft ironischen „lateinischen“ bzw. „lateinisch klingenden“ Beinamen versah, die zugleich auch eine differenzierte Typisierung seiner Figuren bedeuteten, z. B.: der Pensionist (*Spiritus familiaris*), der Gastwirth [sic!] (*Vampyrus*), der Kaffeehausbesitzer (*Homo Giftmischer*), der Professor (*Dominus omnipotens*), der Student (*Genius universalis*), der Beamte (*Homo pauper*), der Doktor (*Spiritus intrigans*), die Welt- oder Salondame (*Domina Luxuriosa*) etc.

Die zweite Abweichung vom deutschen Ausgangstext auf der Makroebene stellt die Zahl der beschriebenen „Typen“ dar. Die in der deutschen Originalversion veröffentlichten Texte von Alešovec wurden in der Zeitschrift *Triglav* in 18 Nummern (von Februar bis Mai 1869) abgedruckt. Da in einigen *Triglav*-Ausgaben Texte zu nicht nur einem, sondern zu mehreren Typen erschienen sind, kann festgestellt werden, dass in der deutschen Fassung 24 Typen aus der Laibacher

Gesellschaft dargestellt wurden, während die spätere slowenische Version 29 Typenbeschreibungen enthält. Alešovec blieb somit dem Original nicht ganz treu; in der slowenischen Ausgabe wurden folgende Typen hinzugefügt: *jezični doktor* [Jurist], *duhovnik* [Pfarrer], *zasebnik* [Privatunternehmer], *privatni uradnik* [Privatbeamter], *predmeščan* [Vorstadtmensch] und *raznoterosti* [Diversitäten] (Alešovec 1911).

Bei einer Vergleichsanalyse des deutschen und des slowenischen Textes auf der Mikroebene wurde vor allem auf die Fragen eingegangen, inwieweit verschiedene Elemente des Originals beim Übersetzen modifiziert wurden, was ausgelassen, hinzugefügt, gekürzt, neutralisiert oder stereotypisiert wurde. In diesem Zusammenhang stellt man bereits beim ersten, einleitenden Bild bzw. beim ersten „Typen“ (*Der Hausherr = Hišni lastnik ali gospodar*) fest, dass der slowenische Text viel länger ist und nicht ganz dem Original folgt. Alešovec verändert nicht nur die *quasi* „lateinische“ Benennung des Hausherrn, er bemüht sich auch um eine zusätzliche Erklärung, nämlich, dass es sich um einen Hauseigentümer (slow. *hišni lastnik*) und nicht etwa um einen Mieter oder Ähnliches handelt und schickt dem slowenischen Text einen Absatz voraus, der in der deutschen Fassung nicht vorkommt.<sup>11</sup>

<i>Triglav</i> , Jg. IV, Nr. 12, 9. Februar 1869, unpag.	<i>Ljubljanske slike</i> . Ljubljana 1911, S. 1.
Der Hausherr ( <u>Herus domesticus</u> )	<u>Hišni lastnik ali gospodar</u> ( <u>Dominus domesticus</u> )
/Auslassung/ /Erweiterung in der slowenischen Fassung/	<u>Brez hiš ni mesta. Zato moram tudi jaz pričeti s hišami – ali pravzaprav z njihovimi lastniki. Ti so važni v trojem oziru: 1. plačujejo hišni davek – to je dobro za mestno blagajnico; 2. imajo pod svojo streho ljudi, ki nimajo svojih hiš, in od teh dobivajo najemščino – kar je za gospodarje dobro, ker bi jim brez tega hiše nič ne nesle; 3. So vsledtega volivci za mestni, deželni in državni zbor. Razen tega so gospodarji tudi jako nevarni ljudje; kajti če bi svoje hiše podrli – česar bi se jim ne moglo braniti – bi ne imel nihče nikjer strehe, in mesta Ljubljane ne bi bilo več. „Mesto je naše,“ lahko rekó ti ljudje ponosno – in kdo jim bo oporekal? Zato je spodobno, da tudi jaz postavim te ljudi v vrsti ljubljanskih slik na prvo mesto.</u>

11 Die Erweiterungen, Veränderungen, Auslassungen usw. sind in den Beispieltexen kenntlich gemacht (unterstrichen oder fett gedruckt).

Es wird in dem neugeschriebenen ersten Absatz in drei Punkten lexikongemäß, jedoch äußerst ironisch, erläutert, warum die Hausherrn so bedeutend sind und worin ihre Rolle im gesellschaftlichen Leben besteht: Erstens bezahlen sie die Immobiliensteuer, was die Stadtkasse kräftig unterstützt; zweitens beherbergen sie Mieter, die sich kein eigenes Haus leisten können, was wiederum dem Hausherrn zugute kommt, denn nur dadurch kann er sein Haus in Stand halten, und drittens bilden die Hausherrn den sog. Wahlkörper, dem die Macht der Entscheidungen zusteht.

Nach den einleitenden Worten geht Alešovec im slowenischen Zieltext zur Beschreibung des Hausherrn über und konstatiert:

<i>Triglav</i> , Jg. IV, Nr. 12, 9. Februar 1869, unpag.	<i>Ljubljanske slike</i> . Ljubljana 1911, S. 1.
Seiner Abstammung nach gehört jeder Hausherr, folglich auch der in Laibach, zu den Säugethieren, und zwar sowohl der allgemeinen Welt-, als auch der besonderen Hausordnung zufolge.	Po rodu je vsak hišni gospodar, torej tudi ljubljanski, sesavka, in sicer po splošnih postavah sveta in tudi po posebnih hišnih zakonih.
Das letztere <b>wissen und</b> empfinden namentlich die Parteien. Was seine <b>grammatikalischen Kenntnisse</b> anbelangt, so liegt seine Hauptstärke im <b>Steigern</b> ; <u>so zwar, daß er stets nur den Superlativ im Auge hat und auf der Zunge führt, und dennoch ist er dabei der Ansicht, daß sein Superlativ den Parteien als Postitiv zu gelten habe.</u>	To poslednjo lastnost <b>občutijo</b> najhujše najmeniki ali hišni gostači. Posebna lastnost hišnega lastnika je namreč ta, da hrepeni vedno više – z najmeščino, ki se mu ne zdi <b>nikdar previsoka</b> .
	/Auslassung/

Wie aus der zitierten Stelle ersichtlich, handelt es sich beim ersten Satz um eine fast wortwörtliche Übertragung des deutschen Textes, doch bereits im zweiten Satz wird das Verb „wissen“ (poznati) ausgelassen; genauso wird der ganze Vergleich mit dem grammatischen Superlativ und den viel zu hoch gerechneten Mieten nicht ins Slowenische übertragen. Es heißt nämlich im slowenischen Text nur, dass die Höhe der Miete dem Hausherrn nie zu hoch scheint. Alešovec kürzt und formuliert den Ausgangstext um. Der Grund dafür könnte darin liegen, dass er dem „einfachen“ slowenischen Leser diverse Kenntnisse der deutschen Grammatik nicht zutraut und versucht deswegen mit einer knappen, klaren Aussage das Verstehen zu erleichtern. Auch im weiteren Verlauf des Textes fungiert Alešovec weniger als Übersetzer als als Autor eines neu konzipierten Textes. Es ist ihm wichtig, dem slowenischen Leser zusätzliche Informationen vorzuschicken und darauf hinzuweisen, was er als Verfasser des Textes von den (meist deutschen) bürgerlichen Hausbesitzern hält.

Bei der zweiten Typenbeschreibung (*Der Handelsmann*) wie auch in allen weiteren sind etliche Abweichungen festzustellen und die Treue zum Original verliert sich allmählich, so dass sie letztendlich nicht mehr vorhanden ist. Alešovec benutzt die deutsche Fassung als literarische Vorlage und lässt seinen feuilletonistischen Betrachtungen freien Lauf. Es entsteht ein neues literarisches Produkt, bei dem man von einer Übersetzung gar nicht mehr sprechen kann. So wurde z. B. in der 23. Nummer der Zeitschrift *Triglav* der Dichter (*Genius incognitus*) dargestellt – jedoch unterscheidet sich die deutsche Fassung gravierend von der späteren slowenischen:

<i>Triglav</i> , Jg. IV, Nr. 23, 19. März 1869, unpag.	<i>Ljubljanske slike</i> . Ljubljana 1911, S. 108.
<p>Der eigentliche Dichter (Poëta natus) ist heutzutage fast ganz ausgerottet. In seinem Urzustande ist er unabhängig, seine Begabung entschieden ausgesprochen. Er lebt nur von edlen Stoffen, er schafft nicht gegen Zeitungshonorar, auch nicht für andere, sein Beruf ist ihm selbst die größte Befriedigung. Gezähmt heißt er Hofdichter, unterjocht – Theaterdichter; dann verliert er häufig seine Flügelweite, die gestutzten Flügel vermögen ihn nicht mehr über die irdische Athmosphäre zu erheben. Während er im Urzustande keine Schranken, keine Grenzen kannte, respektirt er gezähmt die Zensur, welche seine Werke der Oeffentlichkeit übergibt, ihn selbst aber in dunkler Zelle einsamen und erbaulichen Betrachtungen überläßt. Es gibt wenige, die sich nicht zähmen lassen, denn der Käfig, in dem sie dann wohnen, ist vom Gold, der Gesang des gefangenen Vogels tönt durch die ganze Welt und trägt ihm Bewunderung und Lorbeerkränze bei Lebenszeiten ein. Stirbt er im Urzustande, so wird er erst nach dem Tode entdeckt, man reißt sich um seine Fotografien und Manuskripte und leitet Sammlungen für sein Denkmal ein, welches dann nach langen Jahren erst zu Stande kommt [...]</p>	<p>Pesnik (Poëta natus)          Pesnik je živalca, ki živi najrajši v tihotnem gaju, pa se vendar tuinsem preseli med viharnost človeškega življenja. Pesnik prve vrste zbuja nežna čustva in povzdiga srcazeljske ruše držečega se človeštva – proti zvezdam, kamor se zaganja on s svojim letčim konjem „Pegazom“; druge vrste pesnik pa goni srca v boj človeških strasti; le redek je tak, ki poje zgolj zase, kakor ptica v gozdu, ne oziraje se okrog sebe, ga li kdo poslušá ali ne. O starih pesnikih se pripoveduje, da so jim bile rojenice Vile, in da so jim čebele nosile že otročičem méd v usta, da se jim je cedili z njih. Zdaj pa je nekoliko drugače. Le redki so še taki, ki jih zibljejo Vile; zlasti Ljubljana pa se ne more bahati z njimi [...] in to zato, ker je Ljubljana jako neugoden kraj za prave pesnike; preveč je še nemčurske megle nad njo. Tudi čebel ni več okrog ust novorojenega pesnika, marveč le še muhe, ki si ogledujejo njegov obraz. Pravega pesnika je zato še težje najti nego pravega narodnjaka. Tudi ne poje ljubljanski pesnik toliko iz pravega nagiba, ampak veliko več iz drugih vnanjih vzrokov, ki mu sprožijo pevsko žilo, in ta potem drdra toliko časa, za kolikor je bila prej navita. Čas je pač prematerialen, Slovenec preveč tlačén in zato se tudi pesnik ne more vzdigniti kvišku [...]</p>

Alle Motive, Behauptungen und Beschreibungen, die im deutschen Text vorhanden sind und neutral das dichterische Schicksal wiedergeben, verschwinden im Slowenischen. Alešovec schreibt seinen Text neu, er betrachtet die Situation im Land Krain gleichsam mit „slowenischen“ Augen und lässt sich von emotionalen Eindrücken leiten, indem er alle auf Deutsch schreibenden Dichter und Schriftsteller angreift und ihren künstlerischen Wert in Frage stellt. Vor allem ist er den Renegaten, d. i. den mit den deutschen liberalen Ideen sympathisierenden Krainern gegenüber, sehr bissig. Die deutschen Poeten in Laibach, so Alešovec, gäbe es nicht, „doch findet man ab und zu Einen, der irgendetwas aus verschiedenen Texten schmiedet und zusammendichtet, was jedoch keinen Wert hat [...] Das Renegatentum besitzt keine Gedichte; und auch wenn es welche besäße, so wären dies keine Gedichte, sondern Lieder heiserer Säufer“.<sup>12</sup>

Im zweiten Teil seiner *Laibacher Typen* widmet sich Alešovec der Damenwelt, die ihn einerseits fasziniert, ihm andererseits aber große Angst macht. Er schildert in der deutschen Version die junge Frau (*Papilio carus*), die Kaffeeschwester (*Spatzus domesticus aut Rosenbachus*), die Studentenfrau (*Baba vorax*) und auch die Kokette (*Miles femininus*), bei der er sich ironisch fragt, ob sie „dem Thier-, Pflanzen- oder Mineralreiche angehört“, und konstatiert, dass diese Frage auch „die Naturforscher bis jetzt noch unentschieden gelassen“ haben, denn „dem Thierreiche wäre sie insofern anzureichen, weil sie auf Raub und Eroberung ausgeht; dem Pflanzenreiche gehört sie in Folge ihrer Farbenpracht [...] an, während sie infolge ihres *steinernen* Herzens dem Mineralreiche zufällt“ (Triglav, Jg. 4, Nr. 29, unpag.). Interessanterweise kommt dieses Bild in der slowenischen Version gar nicht vor, was aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach damit zusammenhängt, dass Alešovec mit seiner Mutter eng verbunden war und sehr an ihr hing (Alešovec 1973), weshalb er unter den slowenischen „nicht bürgerlichen“ Frauen die Koketten nicht wahrnehmen konnte und wollte. Und während Alešovec im Schlusswort zu seinen Skizzen in der deutschen Fassung nochmals die Charakteristika aller Laibacher Typen zusammenfasst, sind seine slowenischen Abschlussgedanken eher eine Abrechnung mit den Lesern. Allem Anschein nach hatte sein Publikum etliche Schwierigkeiten, sich mit den *Laibacher Typen* identifizieren zu können. Alešovec schließt seine slowenische „Abhandlung“ mit dem bedeutsamen Satz: *Resnica oči kolje* (Alešovec 1911: 263) oder, wie man das auf Deutsch formulieren würde (was Alešovec in der deutschen Fassung jedoch nicht tat): *Die Wahrheit sticht ins Auge*.

12 Der slowenische Text lautet: „[...] pač se najde tupatam kdo, ki nekaj skuje in splete iz raznih besedil, kar pa ni podobno nikomur [...] Renegatstvo nima pesmi; in če jih ima, niso pesmi, ampak popevke hripavih pijancev“ (Alešovec 1911: 109).

## FAZIT

Jakob Alešovec greift im *Triglav*-Feuilleton immer wieder die gleiche Problematik auf: Die deutsch-slowenischen Beziehungen, sein slowenisches Nationalbewusstsein, seine Überzeugung, dass die slowenische Sprache der deutschen ebenbürtig sei, und seinen Dissens mit der berühmten Äußerung Seumes, dass das Land Krain „das letzte Zipfelchen unsers deutschen Vaterlandes“ (Seume 1985: 150) sei. Bei Alešovec kann man von einem Grenzbereich sprechen: Er bewegt sich zwischen der Selbstübersetzung und Bearbeitung bzw. einer Fortschreibung seiner Texte, was mit seinen Erfahrungen und seiner Position auf dem kulturellen und politischen Feld in Krain zusammenhängt. Er nutzt den deutschen Text (eine erste – fremdsprachliche – Fassung) als Vorlage, um ihn auf Slowenisch fortzuschreiben (vgl. Lamping 1992: 221). Die Fortschreibung geht weit über das Original hinaus, sie entfernt sich sogar von ihm. Die von Alešovec angefertigte Übertragung der eigenen Texte ist somit weder eine Annäherung an das Original noch eine Verdoppelung oder ein Ersatz derselben. Es ist vielmehr eine Fortsetzung seines deutschen Werkes, eine gleichsam *erneuerte* Texterstellung. Alešovec erweitert den slowenischen Text, erläutert die Situation und nutzt vor allem die Möglichkeit, die leitende Rolle des Deutschtums im Land Krain immer wieder zu hinterfragen, ironisch darzustellen und die Zustände in Laibach, wo das deutschsprachige Bürgertum eine wichtige Rolle im gesellschaftlichen Leben spielte, auseinanderzunehmen. In diesem Kontext sind seine slowenischen Texte gegenüber den Deutschen in Krain des Öfteren ungerecht und beleidigend. Eine solche Haltung hätte er sich in der deutschen Fassung gar nicht leisten können. Seine Kritik des Deutschtums hält sich in der deutschsprachigen Version noch sehr in Grenzen, denn als verantwortlicher Redakteur und sogar Eigentümer der deutschsprachigen Zeitschrift *Triglav* hielt er sich an die Norm und hatte sein Zielpublikum vor Augen, also nicht nur die Slowenen, sondern auch die Deutschen, die sich über slowenische politische Ansichten informieren wollten. Zu viele bissige, emotionale, Deutsche in Krain angreifende und kritisierende Texte, hätten für ein noch früheres Eingehen der Zeitschrift gesorgt.

Es steht fest, dass Alešovec selbst über die Wortwahl sowohl im Ausgangs- als auch im Zieltext entscheiden konnte, fungierte er doch gleichzeitig als Autor und als Übersetzer des Originals – er war in dieser Hinsicht also sein eigener Herr. Die Übersetzung verliert bei Alešovec ihren Status, auch weil das Original der Übertragung nur noch von fern ähnelt und eher eine im weitesten Sinne verstandene dem slowenischen Zielpublikum emotionell angepasste kulturspezifische Adaption (Prunč 2007a: 170; Prunč 2008a: 117–119) bzw. *Rewriting* darstellt. Diese ist allerdings als ein „Durchgangsstadium zu originaler Produktion“ zu verstehen, in dem „das zu übersetzende Original in des Wortes wahrster Bedeutung zum Prätext“

(Lamping 1992: 221) wird. Alešovec fühlt sich im Umgang mit dem *eigenen* Ausgangstext viel freier – und auch produktiver, was einerseits auf Kosten der Treue zum Original geht, andererseits aber einen neuen selbständigen Text entstehen lässt.

## LITERATURVERZEICHNIS

### Primärliteratur

- Alešovec, Jakob: Laibacher Typen. In: *Triglav. Zeitschrift für vaterländische Interessen*, Jg. 4, aufeinander folgende Nummern von Februar bis Mai 1869.
- Alešovec, Jakob: *Ljubljanske slike. Podoba ljubljanskega sveta pod drobnogledom* [Bilder aus Laibach. Das Bild der Laibacher Welt unter der Lupe]. Ljubljana: Selbstverlag 1879 (zweite Ausgabe Ljubljana: Katoliška bukvarna 1911; dritte Ausgabe Ljubljana: Rokus 2003).
- Alešovec, Jakob: *Kako sem se jaz likal* [Meine Entwicklungsgeschichte]. Ljubljana: Prešernova družba 1973 (erste Ausgabe Ljubljana: Selbstverlag 1884).
- Anonym: „Unser Programm“. *Triglav. Zeitschrift für vaterländische Interessen*, Jg. 1, Nr. 1 (3. Januar 1865), S. 1.
- Anonym: „Journalistische Mefisto's“. *Triglav. Zeitschrift für vaterländische Interessen*, Jg. 4, Nr. 41 (21. Mai 1869), unpag.
- Jurkovič, Joso 1912: „Jakoba Alešovca izbrani spisi“ [Ausgewählte Schriften von Jakob Alešovec]. *Ljubljanski zvon* [Laibacher Glocke], Jg. 32, Nr. 4 (1912), S. 219.
- L[enart], L[eopold]: „Jakoba Alešovca izbrani spisi. 1. zvezek“ [Ausgewählte Schriften von Jakob Alešovec. Heft 1]. *Dom in svet* [Die Heimat und die Welt], Jg. 23, Nr. 1 (1910), S. 41.
- Vošnjak, Josip: *Spomini* [Memoiren]. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica 1982.

### Sekundärliteratur

- Almasy, Karin: „... za Boga in véro, za cesarja in domovino!« Kultura prevajanja in ideološko usmerjanje v slovenskih šolskih berilih (1848 – 1918)“. *Zgodovinski časopis* [Historische Zeitung], Jg. 70, Nr. 3–4 (2016), S. 490–590.
- Almasy, Karin: „... za Boga in véro, za cesarja in domovino!“ *Translationskultur und ideologische Steuerung in slowenischen Schullesebüchern (1848–1918)*. Dissertation zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades der Philosophie an der Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz 2017.
- Globočnik, Damir: „Alešovčev *Brencelj* – pri slovenski satirični list“ [Jakob Alešovec und sein *Brencelj* – das erste slowenische satirische Blatt]. *Zgodovinski časopis* [Historische Zeitung], Jg. 58, Nr. 1–2 (2004), S. 7–45.

- Gostiša, Nevenka et al. (Hg.): *Repertoar slovenskih gledališč 1867–1967 [Repertoire der slowenischen Bühnen 1867–1967]*, Ljubljana: Slovenski gledališki muzej 1967.
- Grdina, Igor: „Die Rezeption der Deutschen und der deutschen Kultur bei slowenischen Intellektuellen von der Aufklärung bis zur Moderne“. In: Bister, Feliks J. und Peter Vodopivec (Hg.): *Kulturelle Wechselseitigkeit in Mitteleuropa*, Ljubljana: Oddelek za zgodovino Filozofske fakultete 1995, S. 263–285.
- Hladnik, Miran: „Svobodno po nemškem poslovenjeno. Popularni prevedeni žanri 19. stoletja“. In: Drago Bajt et al. (ur.): *Prešeren v prevodih*. Zbornik društva slovenskih književnih prevajalcev 8/9, Ljubljana, DSKP 1985, S. 191–199.
- Hladnik, Miran: „Der Einfluss des Bilinguismus auf die Auswahl der zu übersetzenden narrativen Gattungen am Beispiel slowenischer Literatur“. In: Frank, Armin Paul, Horst Turk und Kurt-Jürgen Maaß (Hrsg.): *Übersetzen, verstehen, Brücken bauen: geisteswissenschaftliches und literarisches Übersetzen im internationalen Kulturaustausch*. Berlin: E. Schmidt 1993, S. 801–810.
- Hokenson, Jan Walsh und Marcella Munson: *The Bilingual Text. History and Theory of Literary Self-Translation*. Manchester (UK)/Kinderhook (NY): St. Jerome Publishing 2007.
- Javor Briški, Marija: „Angst – Trauer – Zorn: ‚Emotionen‘ im Nibelungenlied“. *Acta neophilologica*, Jg. 45 (2012), Nr. 1/2, S. 87–96.
- Kmecl, Matjaž: *Od pridige do kriminalke [Von der Predigt bis zur Kriminalgeschichte]*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga 1975.
- Kupsch-Losereit, Sigrid: „Übersetzen als transkultureller Verstehens- und Kommunikationsvorgang: andere Kulturen, andere Äußerungen“. In: Salnikow, Nikolai (Hg.): *Sprachtransfer – Kulturtransfer, Text, Kontext und Translation*. Frankfurt am Main etc.: Peter Lang 1995, S. 1–16.
- Lah, Andrijan: „Pripovednik in humorist Jakob Alešovec“ [Der Erzähler und Humorist Jakob Alešovec]. In: Mahnič, Joža (Hg.): *Kopitarjevi študijski dnevi I. Predavanja iz 1989 in 1990 [Kopitars Studentage I. Vorträge aus den Jahren 1989 und 1990]*. Ljubljana: Zveza kulturnih organizacij Ljubljana Šiška 1991, S. 41–46.
- Lamping, Dieter: „Die literarische Übersetzung als de-zentrale Struktur. Das Paradigma der Selbstübersetzung“. In: Kittel, Harald (Hg.): *Geschichte, System, Literarische Übersetzung. Histories, Systems, Literary Translations*. Berlin: Erich Schmidt 1992, S. 212–227.
- Lefevere, André: *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary fame*. London, New York: Routledge 1992.
- Matić, Dragan: *Nemci v Ljubljani. 1861–1918 [Die Deutschen in Laibach 1861–1918]*. Ljubljana: Oddelek za zgodovino Filozofske fakultete 2002.



- Maver, Igor: „Die Bedeutung von Lord Byrons slowenischen Übertragungen am Fallbeispiel von France Prešeren: die nationale Wiedergeburt und das politische Bewusstsein der Slowenen im 19. Jahrhundert“. In: Heppner, Harald und Mira Miladinović Zalaznik (Hg.): *Provinz als Denk- und Lebensform: der Donau-Karpatenraum im langen 19. Jahrhundert*. Frankfurt am Main etc.: P. Lang 2015, S. 111–126.
- Maver, Igor: „War and race in C. K. Stead’s Talking about O’Dwyer“. *Journal of Language, Literature and Culture*, Jg. 62 (2015), Nr. 3, S. 176–181.
- Maver, Igor: „Byronism on the Slovene territory in the 19th century“. *La questione romantica*, Jg. 2 (2010), Nr. 1, S. 99–108.
- Miladinović Zalaznik, Mira: *Deutsch-slowenische Wechselbeziehungen*, Ljubljana: Oddelek z germanistiko z nederlandistiko in skandinavistiko Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani 2002.
- Newmark, Peter: *A Textbook of Translation*. New York etc.: Phoenix ELT 1995.
- Prunč, Erich: Deutsch-slowenische/kroatische Übersetzung 1848–1918. Ein Werkstättenbericht. In: *Wiener Slavistisches Jahrbuch*, Bd. 53, 2007a, S. 163–175.
- Prunč, Erich: Entwicklungslinien der Translationswissenschaft. Von den Asymmetrien der Sprachen zu den Asymmetrien der Macht. Berlin: Frank & Timme 2007b.
- Prunč, Erich: Die Funktion der Übersetzung im Prozess der Nationswerdung. In: Görner, Franz (Hg.): *Stabilität in Südosteuropa: eine Herausforderung für die Informationsvermittlung*. Berlin: Osteuropa-Abteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin 2008a, S. 114–124.
- Prunč, Erich: Zur Konstruktion von Translationskulturen. Schippel, Larissa (ur.): *Translationskultur – ein innovatives und produktives Konzept*. Berlin: Frank & Timme 2008b. 19–42.
- Prunč, Erich: Zur ideologischen Steuerung von Übersetzungsprozessen. Mednarodni simpozij ob 20. obletnici Avstrijske čitalnice Maribor (25.–27. 11. 2010). Breitenfellner, Helene in Mateja Škofljanec (ur.): *Avstrija\_Slovenija: kulturni stiki. Österreich\_Slowenien: kulturelle Begegnungen*. Maribor: Univerzitetna knjižnica Maribor 2012. 85–107.
- Pym, Anthony: *Method in Translation History*, Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing 1998.
- Seume, Johann. Gottfried: *Spaziergang nach Syrakus im Jahre 1802*. München: DTV 1985.
- Toury, Gideon: *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins 1995.
- Udovič, Boštjan und Ana Podgornik: „Cultural diplomacy of slavic European Union member states: a cross-country analysis“. *Baltic journal of European studies*, Jg. 6 (2016), Nr. 2, S. 117–136.

- Vodopivec, Peter: „O socialnih in gospodarskih nazorih nemškega meščanstva na Kranjskem od konca 60. do začetka 80. let 19. stoletja“ [Die sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Anschauungen des deutschen Bürgertums in Krain Ende des 60er bis Anfang der 80er Jahre des 19. Jahrhunderts]. *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* [Beiträge zur Zeitgeschichte], Jg. 27, Nr. 1–2 (1987), S. 7–32
- Wildhagen, Andreas: *Das politische Feuilleton Ferdinand Kürnbergers. Themen und Technik einer literarischen Kleinform im Zeitalter des deutschen Liberalismus in Österreich*, Frankfurt am Main etc.: P. Lang 1985.
- Žigon, Tanja: *Nemški časnik za slovenske interese – Triglav (1865–1870)* [Deutsche Zeitschrift für slowenische Interessen Triglav (1865–1870)], Ljubljana: ZZDS 2004.
- Žigon, Tanja: „Eine slowenische Stimme in deutscher Sprache: Triglav, Zeitschrift für vaterländische Interessen (1865–1870)“. In: Miladinović Zalaznik, Mira et al. (Hg.): *Benachrichtigen und vermitteln: deutschsprachige Presse und Literatur in Ost-Mittel- und Südosteuropa im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*. München: IKGS-Verlag 2007, S. 97–110.
- Žigon, Tanja, Karin Almasy und Andrej Lovšin: *Vloga in pomen prevajanja učbenikov v 19. stoletju: Kulturnozgodovinski in jezikovni vidiki* [Die Rolle und Bedeutung der Schulbuchübersetzung im 19. Jahrhundert. Kulturhistorische und sprachliche Aspekte]. Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba FF 2017.

Tanja Žigon  
 Universität Ljubljana  
 tanja.zigon@ff.uni-j.si



## Prevod ali adaptacija: Primer Jakoba Alešovca (1842–1901)

Prispevek obravnava esejistične skice z naslovom *Ljubljanske slike* izpod peresa publicista, dramatika in satirika Jakoba Alešovca (1842–1901), pri čemer je v ospredju vprašanje, ali gre za (samo)prevod prvotnega nemškega besedila v slovenščino ali pa smemo govoriti o adaptaciji. Upoštevajoč avtorjevo življenjsko zgodbo in ustvarjalno pot kakor tudi norme, ki so veljale v slovenski prevajalski kulturi 19. stoletja, analiza pripelje do zaključka, da je nemško izhodiščno besedilo avtorju/prevajalcu večinoma predstavljalo zgolj predlogo za nastanek slovenskega

ciljnega besedila, ki jo smemo razumeti kot vmesno postajo na poti k izvorni literarni produkciji.

**Ključne besede:** samoprevod, adaptacija, izhodiščno in ciljno besedilo (nemščina/slovenščina), norme, kultura prevajanja v 19. stoletju

### **Translation or Adaptation: A Case Study of Jakob Alešovec (1842–1901)**

The present paper addresses the essay sketches entitled *Ljubljanske slike* by the publicist, playwright and satirist Jakob Alešovec (1842–1901). It deals with the issue whether the texts in question are (self)translations from German into Slovenian or whether they should rather be considered adaptations. Taking the biography and opus of the author into consideration along with the dominant norms of the Slovenian translation culture in the 19th century, the paper shows that the German source text can be seen more as a textual outline of the Slovenian text and can thus be regarded as an intermediary stage of original production.

**Key words:** self-translation, adaptation, source and target text (German/Slovenian), norms, translation culture in the 19th century

*Der Beitrag ist im Rahmen des Forschungsprogramms Interkulturelle literaturwissenschaftliche Studien (P6-0265) entstanden; die Autorin erkennt die finanzielle Unterstützung seitens der Slowenischen Forschungsagentur.*



# Die Darstellbarkeit des Bösen: Zu George Taboris Holocaust-Literatur

*Špela Virant*

## Abstract

Das künstlerische Schaffen George Taboris lässt sich nicht nur einer Kunstgattung oder einer Nationalliteratur zuordnen, doch gerade seine Interdisziplinarität und sein Kosmopolitismus leisteten im ausgehenden 20. Jahrhundert einen wichtigen Beitrag zur europäischen Kultur. Im Beitrag wird sein Stück *Mein Kampf* aus einer interkulturellen Perspektive im Kontext der jüdisch-deutschen Beziehungen in Österreich der Nachkriegszeit betrachtet. Die Uraufführung des Stücks, das gegen die Mythisierung Hitlers und die Viktimisierung der Juden anspricht, fand in einer Zeit statt, in der der Opfer-Status des österreichischen Staates ins Wanken geriet und das Judentum in Wien neues Selbstbewusstsein erlangte.

**Schlüsselwörter:** George Tabori, Dramatik, Holocaust-Literatur, Juden in Wien, Ironie

Als sich im Jahr 2014 George Taboris Geburtstag zum hundertsten Mal jährte, gab es keine große Feier anlässlich des Jubiläums. Es mag sein, dass der 2007 verstorbene Künstler noch nicht lange genug tot war, um sich an ihn zu erinnern. Der Grund für das Schweigen könnte jedoch auch an der Unklarheit bezüglich der Zuständigkeiten liegen, denn Tabori, eigentlich György Tábori, lässt sich schwer einordnen. Als Theaterregisseur berühmt geworden, wurde seine Arbeit zunächst von der Theaterwissenschaft aufgearbeitet, erst spät fand sein schriftstellerisches Werk Beachtung in der Literaturwissenschaft. Noch schwieriger als die Zuständigkeit der Disziplinen zu bestimmen, ist seine Zuordnung zu einer nationalen Literatur. Tabori, 1914 in Budapest in einer jüdischen Familie geboren, machte eine Ausbildung im Hotelgewerbe in Berlin, emigrierte nach London, arbeitete als Auslandskorrespondent in Bulgarien und dem Nahen Osten, erhielt die britische Staatsbürgerschaft und arbeitete während des Zweiten Weltkriegs für den britischen Nachrichtendienst, zog nach dem Krieg in die USA, zunächst nach Hollywood, dann nach New York, kehrte 1971 zurück nach Europa, arbeitete in Deutschland und Österreich, schließlich starb er 2007 in Berlin. Seine ersten literarischen Texte verfasste und veröffentlichte er in englischer Sprache. Die in Europa entstandenen Stücke sind jedoch nur in deutscher Übersetzung erschienen und in deutscher Sprache uraufgeführt worden, so dass sie praktisch als Originale gelten können. Die meisten davon übersetzte Ursula Grützmaker-Tabori, die dritte seiner vier Ehefrauen.<sup>1</sup> Taboris literarisches Werk lässt sich deshalb nur schwer einer Nationalliteratur oder einem Sprachraum zuordnen.

Obwohl im 21. Jahrhundert multikulturelle Ansätze, postkoloniale Studien und Migrationsliteraturforschung in die Literaturwissenschaft Einzug fanden, orientiert sich die Literaturgeschichtsschreibung immer noch an Nationalliteraturen. Die Migrationsliteratur ist zum Gegenstand germanistischer Literaturwissenschaft geworden, insoweit Migranten in deutscher Sprache schreiben und sich ihre Texte der deutschsprachigen Literatur zuordnen lassen. Zwischen den Konzepten von Nationalliteratur und Weltliteratur hat sich in der Literaturgeschichtsschreibung nie ein multikultureller und multilingualer Raum aufgetan. Taboris Werk lässt sich aus zwei Gründen nicht der sogenannten Migrationsliteratur zuordnen: Erstens weil diese Bezeichnung die Thematisierung der Migration voraussetzt, die nicht sein Thema war, zweitens wegen der Sprache, in der seine Texte verfasst worden sind. Auch seine Biographie suggeriert für ihn eher den altmodischen Begriff des Kosmopoliten. Doch gerade weil sich seine Arbeit einer Einordnung entzieht, leistete sie einen wichtigen Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte im mitteleuropäischen Raum. Im Folgenden soll dieser Beitrag am Beispiel seines 1987 im Akademietheater in Wien uraufgeführten Stücks *Mein*

---

1 Zu den biographischen Angaben über George Tabori vgl. Feinberg 2003 .

*Kampf* dargestellt werden. Das Stück wird im Rahmen seines Gesamtwerks und der sozial-politischen Umstände in Österreich zur Zeit seiner Uraufführung verortet, wobei besondere Aufmerksamkeit nicht einer klar definierbaren nationalen Literatur und Kultur, sondern den interkulturellen jüdisch-österreichischen Beziehungen gewidmet wird.

Taboris erste, in englischer Sprache geschriebene Stücke *Flight into Egypt* (1953) und *The Emperor's Clothes* (1953) waren nicht erfolgreich, doch er widmete sich danach trotz des Misserfolgs intensiv dem Theater und wurde Mitglied des von Lee Strasberg geleiteten *Actor's Studio*, was auch später seine Arbeit prägte. Den ersten großen Erfolg brachte die deutsche Erstaufführung des Stücks *Die Kannibalen* in Berlin 1969, während die englischsprachige Uraufführung ein Jahr zuvor in New York relativ unbeachtet blieb. Das Stück, in dem er die Erinnerung an seinen in Auschwitz getöteten Vater Cornelius verarbeitet, ist der Beginn seiner Auseinandersetzung mit dem Holocaust, der in seinen späteren Prosatexten und Theaterstücken immer wieder thematisiert wird, so auch im Stück *Mein Kampf* (1987). Seine Werke können durchaus zur Holocaust-Literatur gezählt werden, doch gehört er nicht zu den Zeitzeugen im engeren Sinne, denn er berichtet nicht über eigene Erfahrungen aus den Konzentrationslagern, er selbst war nie interniert. Er berichtet über seine Erfahrungen als Familienangehöriger der Opfer, über die Schwierigkeit, mit dem Leid geliebter Menschen und der Trauer umzugehen, ohne dieses Leid selbst erfahren zu haben. „Tabori, dessen Vater in Auschwitz starb, übernimmt weder in Schriften noch in (Selbst)Inszenierungen die Perspektive der Opfer, aber er vergegenwärtigt ihr Leiden.“ (Huth 2008: 120) In seinen Werken spricht er über das Sprechen über den Holocaust, um so auch über den Holocaust sprechen zu können. Dies ist ein Weg, Tabus zu brechen:

Bis zur Aufführung von Taboris *Kannibalen* und wieder lange Zeit danach herrschte auf Deutschlands Bühnen und in den Bühnenmanuskripten entweder eine Fixierung auf die Täterfiguren oder aber ein Darstellungs-Tabu, das es verbot, differenziert gestaltete jüdische Figuren an den Schauplätzen ihres Leidens agieren zu sehen. (Stümpel 2000: 49–50)

Das Stück *Die Kannibalen* zeichnet sich durch eine komplexe dramaturgische Struktur aus, die für die Schauspieler eine Herausforderung darstellt. Sie übernehmen die Rollen von Söhnen, die die Figuren ihrer im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz getöteten Väter spielen, um sie so besser zu verstehen und das Trauma der Überlebenden zu überwinden. Die Geschichte der Väter, die im Lager spielt, ist makaber. Der Lagerinsasse Puffi isst heimlich ein Stück Brot, die Mitgefangenen ertappen ihn dabei und töten ihn unabsichtlich. Da sie sehr unter dem Hunger leiden, wollen sie ihn kochen und aufessen, aber einer der Gefangenen, der als

Onkel bezeichnet wird, lehnt es ab. Er plädiert dafür, trotz der Not die Würde zu bewahren und er zeigt ihnen den Weg, durch das Erzählen und das Rollenspiel ihre Menschlichkeit aufrecht zu erhalten und sich nicht zu Menschenfressern machen zu lassen. Doch auch er stirbt bei einem Tumult. Ein Aufseher zwingt die Lagerinsassen das von ihnen gekochte Menschenfleisch zu essen. Einige, die vom Onkel umgestimmt wurden, weigern sich nun und werden in der Gaskammer getötet. Nur zwei gehorchen und überleben.

Tabori stellt dadurch die Zuschreibung und Verfestigung der Rollen von Opfer und Täter in Frage. Er zeigt, dass Opfer auch Täter sein können und dass sich Menschen nicht auf eine Rolle reduzieren lassen. „Taboris Juden sind brutal, grotesk und bisweilen auch geschmacklos. Dadurch gibt er ihnen ihre Menschlichkeit wieder, die ihnen durch Sentimentalisierung und Sakralisierung ihrer Leiden entzogen wurde.“ (Roth 2003: 141) Mit der Opfer-Problematik beschäftigt sich Tabori auch in anderen Stücken, die vor dem Hintergrund des Rassismus in den USA spielen oder die Problematik des Vietnam-Krieg thematisieren. Am deutlichsten wird dieses Thema jedoch in dem Stück *Weisman und Rotgesicht* (1991) ausgearbeitet, in dem es sich herausstellt, dass der Indianer Rotgesicht eigentlich der Halbjude Goldberg ist, der schließlich die Rolle eines Cowboys übernimmt. Tabori relativiert dadurch nicht das Leid der Opfer, sondern versucht eine erneute Viktimisierung durch Rollenzuschreibung zu verhindern. Dabei wird jedoch nicht davon ausgegangen, dass sich die Rollen abschütteln lassen, um den 'wahren' Menschen zum Vorschein zu bringen, sondern vielmehr von der Wandelbarkeit und Widersprüchlichkeit des Menschen, der nacheinander oder gleichzeitig mehrere Rollen spielen kann. Eben das müssen auch die Schauspieler in dem Stück *Die Kannibalen* tun. Der Wechsel zwischen verschiedenen Spielebenen, der durch Kommentare und Autoreflexionen begleitet wird, verweist auf die seit dem Holocaust ausgiebig diskutierte Frage nach der Darstellbarkeit der Grausamkeiten, die sich im 20. Jahrhundert in Lagern, Kriegen und Genoziden ereigneten. Auf der autoreflexiven Ebene wird in Taboris Texten dem Erzählen und dem schauspielerischen Nacherleben eine heilende Wirkung zugesprochen, die, auch wenn das Dargestellte nie authentisch vermittelt werden kann, sowohl dem Einzelnen wie auch der Gesellschaft ein Weiterleben ermöglicht.

Das Gegenstück zu *Den Kannibalen* stellt das Stück *Mutters Courage* (1981, Uraufführung 1979) dar, und zwar als Versuch, die Geschichte von Taboris Mutter nachzuerzählen, die sich der Internierung in ein Lager entziehen konnte und den Krieg überlebte. In dem Stück, dem ein Prosatext vorausging, erzählt der Sohn die Geschichte der Mutter, die es wagte, einem deutschen Offizier in die Augen zu sehen und zu behaupten, dass sie eigentlich einen Schutzpass habe und nicht ins Lager gehöre, wodurch sie gerettet wird. Die Mutter hört der Erzählung zu, ergänzt sie und korrigiert nach Bedarf ihren Sohn. Diese Einwürfe führen auch



hier eine autoreflexive Ebene in die Erzählung ein, die die Möglichkeiten des Erinnerns und die Funktionen des Erzählens auslotet. Die erzählte Geschichte selbst zeigt, wie sich ein System, das auf Entmenschlichung basiert, durch Mut zur Menschlichkeit unterlaufen lässt.

Tabori beschäftigte sich immer wieder einerseits mit dem Holocaust und der jüdischen Identität, andererseits mit deren Darstellbarkeit in der Kunst wie auch mit den Funktionen der Erzählkunst und des Theaters im Allgemeinen. Beide Themenschwerpunkte werden im Stück *Goldberg-Variationen* (1994, Uraufführung 1991) meisterhaft verflochten. Das Stück spielt im Theater, es zeigt die Entstehung einer Inszenierung und endet, als sich der Vorhang für die Premiere dieser fiktiven Inszenierung hebt. Mr. Jay, der fiktive Regisseur, der mit Jahwe assoziiert wird, will mit Hilfe seines Regieassistenten Goldberg, der den Holocaust überlebte, die Bibel auf der Bühne dramatisch darstellen. Diese Konstellation ermöglicht es Tabori all seine Kunstfertigkeit bei der Dialoggestaltung auszuspielen und mit leichter Hand, die vor Witz, Ironie, Zotte und Kalauer nicht zurückschreckt, komplexe Themen zu vermitteln.

In Taboris Gesamtwerk, in dem, wie aus der kurzen Darstellung ersichtlich, die Auseinandersetzungen mit dem Holocaust und der jüdischen Identität immer wieder einen Schwerpunkt bilden, nimmt sein Stück *Mein Kampf* (1987), das zu seinem meistgespielten Text wurde, eine besondere Stellung ein, und zwar nicht nur wegen der Thematik und der Ausgestaltung des Textes, sondern auch wegen des zeitgeschichtlichen Kontexts, in dem die Premiere stattfand. Im Untertitel wird *Mein Kampf* als Farce bezeichnet.<sup>2</sup> Der Aufbau ist, verglichen mit anderen Texten Taboris, relativ konventionell. Die Gliederung in fünf Akte erinnert an die traditionelle Dramenstruktur. Diese formelle Anlehnung an die Dramatradition hebt das Provokative des Stücks noch stärker hervor. Provokativ ist schon der Titel, der auf Adolf Hitlers Buch verweist, das, mit Ausnahme der 2016 erschienenen kritischen Ausgabe, in Deutschland und Österreich nicht nachgedruckt und verkauft werden darf. Provokativ ist auch der humorvolle und ironische Ton, in dem das Stück über die traumatische Vergangenheit spricht.<sup>3</sup> Zwar wurde Hitler bereits 1940 von Charlie Chaplin in dem Film *Der große Diktator* parodiert, doch im deutschsprachigen Raum war im Kontext der Vergangenheitsbewältigung die Verbindung von Holocaust mit Humor bis zur Premiere von Taboris Stück praktisch unmöglich, da sie als despektierlich gegenüber den Opfern galt und den Verdacht einer Nähe zu Holocaustleugnern und Neonazisten weckte. Dieser

2 In der Forschungsliteratur werden auch Begriffe wie theologischer Schwank (Pott 1997: 248–269), Volksstück (Thuncke 1993: 246–272) und Tragödie (Liessmann 1997: 81) als mögliche Gattungsbezeichnungen in Erwägung gezogen.

3 Zur Komplexität des Humors in diesem Stück vgl. Höyng 1998.

Verdacht kam hier wegen seiner Biographie und seiner vorherigen literarischen Texte nicht auf. Die Gräueltaten werden in seinem Stück auch nicht verharmlost, sondern durch die Kontraste und Wendungen noch suggestiver vermittelt.

Das Stück zeigt die Genese des großen Diktators. Doch der fiktive Hitler wird in der Personenkonstellation zu einer Nebenfigur degradiert. Die Hauptfigur ist Schlomo Herzl, ein jüdischer Bibelverkäufer, dem zur Seite steht der jüdische Koch Lobkowitz, der an einem Gott-Komplex leidet und vielleicht auch tatsächlich ein Gott ist.<sup>4</sup> Die Geschichte spielt am Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts in Wien, im Männerasyl in der Blutgasse, wo alle drei, von Misserfolgen geplagt, Zuflucht finden.<sup>5</sup> Der dramatische Konflikt erwächst aus den Verwicklungen um Schlomos vermeintliche Autobiographie, die er als „Mein Kampf“ betiteln will, aber nie wirklich schreibt. Am Beginn des Stücks, das auch als Inversion des Passah-Festes interpretiert werden kann, indem statt der symbolischen Neugeburt des jüdischen Volkes der Holocaust angekündigt wird (vgl. Haas 2000: 161–198), kümmert sich Schlomo um den jungen Hitler, der nach seinem Scheitern an der Kunstakademie sehr unbeholfen ist. Der Jude Schlomo macht Hitler zu dem, den die Zuschauer aus der Geschichte kennen: Er gestaltet seine Frisur und seinen Bart und er zeigt ihm den Weg in die Politik. Er beschützt ihn vor Frau Tod, die nach ihm sucht, doch es stellt sich heraus, dass seine Sorge unbegründet ist, da sie ihn nur als Zuarbeiter braucht. Im letzten Akt wird die Stimmung düster. Hitler, der inzwischen bereits Erfolge feiert, sendet seine Gehilfen aus, um nach Schlomos Buch zu suchen, da er fürchtet, es könnte zu viel über ihn verraten. Die Suche bleibt erfolglos, aber die Gehilfen streichen die Wände braun und hinterlassen eine Vorahnung kommender Ereignisse, über die Schlomo zwar nicht Bescheid weiß, wohl aber Lobkowitz und die Zuschauer. Auf Lobkowitzs Anraten hin, der den Hunger der Konzentrationslager vorausahnt, verspeist Schlomo das geliebte Huhn, das von Hitlers Gehilfen geschlachtet wurde.

Neben der Literarisierung von Hitler verwendet Tabori in diesem Stück auch Anspielungen an historische Persönlichkeiten – Schlomo Herzl erinnert an Theodor Herzl, Hitlers Gehilfe Himmlischst an Heinrich Himmler. Die Personifizierung des Todes wird durch die Differenz zwischen dem grammatikalischen

4 „Lobkowitz ist nicht Gott, aber das Spiel mit Lobkowitz ermöglicht es Herzl, mit Gott, dem echten, zu sprechen.“ (Scholz 2002: 112). Zur ausführlichen Diskussion des Verhältnisses zwischen Lobkowitz und Gott vgl. Scholz (2002: 111–116).

5 Ivar Oxaal kommentiert Hitlers Aufzeichnungen, in denen er erzählt, er habe die Juden in Wien anfangs gar nicht bemerkt: „This was a tricky way of attempting to make amends to the reader for his earlier lack of racial awareness, because he knew, having himself lived in a men's hostel north of the canal on Meldemannstrasse from December 1909, that the Brigittenau district contained the major concentration of the highly visible, impoverished, Jews from Galicia.“ (Oxaal 1987: 28) Die Naivität von Taboris junger Hitlerfigur steht nicht völlig im Widerspruch mit diesem historischen Bild.

Geschlecht und dem Geschlecht der Figur verfremdet. Schlomos junge Geliebte Gretchen erinnert an die literarische Figur aus Goethes *Faust*, aber auch an Margarete aus Paul Celans *Todesfuge*.<sup>6</sup> Dadurch werden auf der Ebene der Namensgebung historische Fakten mit Fiktion vermischt, was auch auf der Ebene der dargestellten Geschichte passiert, in der hinlänglich bekannte Daten aus Hitlers Biographie mit Fiktion verwoben werden. Dadurch entstehen zahlreiche komische Effekte, vor allem aber eine durchaus ernsthafte Hinterfragung der Geschichtsschreibung, die zwar objektive historische Wahrheiten vermitteln will, durch die Herstellung von Zusammenhängen und ihre Versprachlichung jedoch auch Interpretationsprozesse verwendet, wie sie in der Literaturproduktion und -rezeption zur Herstellung von Fiktion gebräuchlich sind. Taboris autoreflexive Texte, besonders beide Stücke, in denen er sich den Lebensgeschichten seiner Eltern anzunähern versucht – also *Die Kannibalen* und *Mutters Courage* –, vermitteln das Ausloten der Möglichkeit, wie Fiktion sich der historischen Wahrheit nähern kann, und zwar nicht durch verlässliche Vermittlung von Daten, die nur rational verarbeitet werden, sondern durch das Angebot, empathisch die Geschichte nachzuerleben. Der Holocaust ist ein Teil der Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts, der nur durch Zahlen und Daten in seiner Bedeutung und seinen Folgen nicht erfassbar ist. Erst ein empathischer, narrativer Vorgang macht die traumatischen, der Heilung bedürftigen Nachwirkungen sowie die Warnungen vor möglichen Wiederholungen nachvollziehbar. Tabori vermittelt in seinen Texten nicht nur negative Gefühle, sondern stellt ihnen immer auch Liebe und Sympathie gegenüber, sowie den Mut, sie im Alltag zu leben, auch auf die Gefahr hin, dass dadurch Figuren wie Schlomo naiv oder beschränkt wirken. Schlomos freundschaftliche Zuneigung zu Hitler wird missbraucht und er sitzt am Ende des Stücks eindeutig als Verlierer vor dem geschlachteten Huhn, dem Symbol seiner liebenden Hingabe. Das Stück endet trotzdem versöhnlich kokett, wenn auch nicht ohne Ironie: Gretchen küsst Schlomos Nase, den Körperteil, der von den Nationalsozialisten als besonderes Rassenmerkmal der Juden oft karikiert wurde (vgl. Tabori 1994: 203).

Taboris Theater und Literatur wurden im Kontext der Diskussion über die Darstellbarkeit des Holocaust bereits eingehend untersucht. Diese Diskussion wurde 1951 von Theodor W. Adornos Aufsatz *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft* mit dem Diktum „nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben, ist barbarisch“ angestoßen (Adorno 1977: 30). Als Reaktion darauf haben sich drei Grundpositionen gebildet: Die erste vertritt eine Art Darstellungsverbot; die zweite, in Anschluss

6 Eine ausführliche Studie zur Intertextualität bei Tabori bietet Alice Huth, die sich besonders auf Bezüge zu Shakespeare, Lessing und Kafka auf der Basis von Renate Lachmanns Theorie der Intertextualität konzentriert, und zwar „als Formen ästhetischer Auseinandersetzung mit Auschwitz“ (Huth 2008: 120).

an Adornos spätere Antwort auf Enzensbergers Widerspruch, vertritt die Position, dass ein literarisches Engagement trotz der grundsätzlichen Undarstellbarkeit notwendig sei, um nicht in Zynismus zu verfallen; die dritte hingegen verweist auf eine Literatur, die keine Repräsentation des Leids ist, sondern sich hermetisch gegen eine realistische Wiedergabe von Wirklichkeit sperrt und nicht als Abbild, sondern als Ausdruck des Leids wahrnehmbar ist (vgl. Adorno 1973: 355). Dies kann nur durch eine Desautomatisierung der Wahrnehmung erreicht werden: „Künstlerisch zu erreichen sind die Menschen überhaupt nur noch durch den Schock“ (Adorno 1970: 476). Auf eine vierte Position verwies Ruth Klüger, die nicht von dem Kunstrezipienten ausgeht, sondern von dem Autor, der die Literatur braucht, „um sich seelisch über Wasser zu halten“ (Klüger 1992: 126). Tabori integrierte all diese Bedenken in seine Texte, ging nicht auf die bereits etablierte Hermetisierung ein, noch griff er zurück auf pure Abbildung, sondern fand neue Möglichkeiten, das Theaterpublikum zu schockieren.<sup>7</sup> Durch Humor und Ironie, durchflochten mit Autoreflexion, schafft er eine lockere Atmosphäre, die plötzlich in Düsternis umkippen kann. Schon dieses Umkippen schockiert. Der zweite Schock kommt, wenn sich das Publikum seiner eigenen Rezeptionsvorgänge bewusst wird. Was von der Tabori-Forschung bisher jedoch weniger beachtet wurde, ist die Interpretationsmöglichkeit, dass Taboris Kombination von Humor und Autoreflexion die Debatte über die Darstellbarkeit des Holocaust selbst ironisiert und sie in die Tradition dessen einreihet, was Adorno in dem bereits erwähnten Aufsatz *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft* als die absolute „Verdinglichung, die den Fortschritt des Geistes als eines ihrer Elemente voraussetzte“ (Adorno 1977: 30), bezeichnete. Tabori gelang es, die Problematik des Holocaust und seiner Darstellbarkeit aus den in sich verschlossenen akademischen Debatten wieder in die Öffentlichkeit zu bringen. „In Taboris Theaterarbeit können die Witze zwar die Katastrophe überrumpeln, aber sie bringen das Trauma der Erinnerung nicht zum Schweigen.“ (Dahlke 1997: 154) Taboris literarische Aufarbeitung der deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte, die die Traumata nicht leugnet oder verdrängt, aber auch nicht auf Schuldzuweisungen und unversöhnlichen Vorwürfen insistiert, stieß in Wien in den späten 1980er Jahren auf offene Ohren, was in Bezug auf die Geschichte keineswegs selbstverständlich war. Die Inszenierung des Stücks im Akademietheater des Burgtheaters, also in der zentralen kulturellen Institution der spätbürgerlichen Selbstinszenierung, markiert einen Wendepunkt in der Nachkriegsgeschichte der deutsch-jüdischen Beziehungen, die in Österreich noch problematischer war als in Deutschland.

7 Berghahn sieht in Taboris „Heiterkeit der Verzweiflung“ eine Nähe zu Adornos ästhetischer Theorie, zweifelt jedoch, ob „Adorno der polemischen Komik Taboris in allen Stücken zugestimmt hätte“ (12).

Schon ein flüchtiger Blick auf die Statistik des Wiener Judentums zeigt die wichtigste Ursache für diese problematische Beziehung. Im Jahr 1848 lebten in Wien 4.000 Juden, im Jahr 1860 waren es 6.200, was etwa 2,2 % der Gesamtbevölkerung betrug, im Jahr 1923 schon 201.000, d. h. 10,8 % der Gesamtbevölkerung (vgl. Schubert 2008: 79). Das Bildungsniveau war recht hoch: „Im Studienjahr 1889/90 waren an der Universität Wien 22 % der Studierenden an der juristischen Fakultät Juden, an der medizinischen Fakultät 48 % und an der philosophischen Fakultät 15 %.“ (Ebd.: 80) Doch „Ende 1945 zählte die Israelitische Kultusgemeinde keine 5.000 Mitglieder“ (Embacher 1995: 21).

Am Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts stammten etwa 40 Prozent der Wiener Bevölkerung aus nicht-deutschen Gebieten der Habsburger Monarchie (vgl. Rozenblit 1992: 13). Etwa 25 Prozent der jüdischen Bevölkerung stammte aus Galizien, die meisten jedoch waren assimiliert, gebildet und sozial und finanziell besser gestellt (vgl. ebd.: 12). Marsha L. Rozenblit sieht darin den Grund, dass in Wien radikaler deutscher Nationalismus nie populär wurde (vgl. ebd.: 13). In ihrer umfangreichen Studie zu den Juden Wiens in der Zeit zwischen 1867 bis 1914 stellt sie fest, dass sie in dieser Zeit bestrebt waren, „sowohl eine jüdische als auch eine europäische Identität herauszubilden, und sie waren ehrlich davon überzeugt, daß ihnen dies schließlich auch gelingen würde“ (Rozenblit 1989: 195). Steven Beller, der die Epoche bis 1938 untersuchte, vertritt die These, dass sich nicht nur die Juden der österreichischen Kultur anpassten, sondern auch die österreichische Kultur stark von ihnen geprägt wurde (vgl. Beller 1989: 70). Er macht jedoch darauf aufmerksam, dass man nicht vereinfachend von einem einheitlichen Einfluss ausgehen kann, sondern von einer Vielfalt von unterschiedlichen Arten, wie die jüdische Herkunft Einzelne in ihrer Ideenwelt beeinflusst hat (vgl. ebd.: 82–83). Er stellt fest, dass um 1900 die jüdische intellektuelle Elite die Modernität der Wiener Kultur entscheidend bestimmte: “it was indeed its Jews which made Vienna what it was in the realm of modern culture” (ebd.: 244). Hervorzuheben ist auch die Bedeutung der Juden für das österreichische Theater der Zwischenkriegszeit, vor allem die Bedeutung Max Reinhardts und des Yiddischen Theaters in Wien (vgl. Silverman 2012: 172, 142).

Nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg fehlte nicht nur im Theater, sondern in ganz Österreich jene Schicht, die am Beginn des Jahrhunderts Wien zu einer modernen, weltoffenen Stadt machte, zum europäischen Zentrum von Kunst und Kultur. Der Germanist Harry Zohn besuchte 1956 Wien nach langer Zeit und notierte:

Heute befinden sich die Wiener Juden nicht mehr im Hauptstrom des Stadtlebens, sie können nicht länger den so wichtigen ‘Sauerteig’ beistellen; im praktischen Sinn also ist das Nachkriegs-Wien eine ‘Stadt ohne Juden’. Ich meinerseits hege keinen Zweifel, daß der Provinzialismus, welcher im täglichen

Leben wuchert, die Verrohung des Geschmacks, die Verminderung des Kosmopolitismus der Stadt, in gewissem Maße der Dezimierung der jüdischen Bevölkerung zuzuschreiben ist. (Zohn 1956: 14).

Dieses von Zohn beobachtete Absinken in die Provinzialität war für die Stadt sicherlich eine Katastrophe, doch die wenigen in Wien verbliebenen oder zurückgekehrten Juden hatten größere Probleme als die Verrohung des Geschmacks,<sup>8</sup> dazu gehörten: der „ ab 1948 immer offener auftretende Antisemitismus“ (Embacher 1995: 87); die Spannungen zwischen den alt-österreichischen assimilierten Juden und den neu zugereisten Ost-Juden sowie zwischen Anhängern unterschiedlicher politischer Parteien und Ideologien; die Auswirkungen des problematischen Status Österreichs als erstes Opfer von Nazi-Deutschland, der es dem Staat ermöglichte, keine Wiedergutmachung zu zahlen.<sup>9</sup> Erst Anfang der 1990er Jahre begann sich die Situation in dem Land, in dem nie eine gründliche Entnazifizierung stattgefunden hatte (vgl. Wistrich 1992: 241), zu ändern: „Im Juli 1991 gab Bundeskanzler Franz Vranitzky im Rahmen einer Erklärung zu Jugoslawien eine vor allem im Ausland vielbeachtete Stellungnahme über Österreichs Mitverantwortung im ‚Dritten Reich‘ ab.“ (Embacher 1995: 260)

Die Demütigungen und Beleidigungen, die die Juden in Österreich durch den Antisemitismus (vgl. ebd.: 95) und die Freisprüche für Nazi-Verbrecher erfahren mussten (vgl. ebd.: 252), schwächten ihr Selbstbewusstsein. Erst in den 1980er Jahren kommt es zu einem Generationswechsel: „Die überalterten und in die Minderheit geratenen ‚Wiener Juden‘ sahen sich allmählich von einer kritischen und selbstsicheren, jüngeren Generation abgelöst.“ (Ebd.: 256) Eine Reihe von Veranstaltungen der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde in der ersten Hälfte der 1980er Jahre stärkte das neue jüdische Selbstbewusstsein,<sup>10</sup> das sich von der Waldheim Affäre 1986, die als Katalysator für eine in breiteren Gesellschaftsschichten stattfindende Vergangenheitsbewältigung gesehen werden

8 Vgl. auch die literarischen Darstellungen dazu: „Diese Kombination von jüdischer Vergangenheit und judenloser Gegenwart – und dazwischen die Geschichte des Holocaust – verursacht ein Spannungsverhältnis, das zugleich eines der Hauptthemen in den Romanen jüngerer jüdischer Autoren ist: der Dualismus zwischen Juden und Nichtjuden, der zum übergroßen Teil in Kommunikationsunfähigkeit gipfelt.“ (Kunne 2000: 274)

9 Vgl. dazu auch Robert Knight, der auf das Spannungsverhältnis zwischen der Selbstdarstellung des Staats als Opfer und dem Antisemitismus in der österreichischen Nachkriegsgesellschaft verweist (Knight 1992: 221).

10 „Den Schritt aus der Anonymität ins Rampenlicht der Öffentlichkeit drückte die Israelitische Kultusgemeinde durch die gemeinsam mit der Stadt Wien und dem ‚Jewish Welcome Service‘ organisierte Ausstellung ‚Versunkene Welt‘ (1984), dem Besuch des New Yorker Bürgermeisters Edward Koch (1984), der Eröffnung des Chajes Gymnasiums (1984) oder mit der 1985 in Wien stattgefundenen Tagung des ‚World Jewish Congress‘ aus.“ (Embacher 1995: 257)

kann (vgl. Mitten 1992: 268),<sup>11</sup> nicht auf Dauer erschüttern ließ (vgl. Embacher 1995: 260).

Ende der achtziger Jahre konnte die Israelitische Kultusgemeinde die bisher vergeblich beanspruchte Rolle einer moralischen Instanz gewinnen, was nicht nur auf den – sowohl auf jüdischer als auch auf nichtjüdischer Seite stattgefundenen – Generationswechsel, sondern hauptsächlich auf das in den achtziger Jahren angeschlagene Opferimage Österreichs zurückzuführen ist. (Ebd.: 261)

Auch Evelyn Adunka hebt die Veränderung innerhalb der jüdischen Gemeinde Wiens wie auch in ihren Beziehungen zum nicht-jüdischen Wien hervor, die Ende der 1980er Jahre vollzogen war. Sie berichtet über zahlreiche Veranstaltungen, die diese neue Selbstsicherheit ausdrückten.

1990 fand erstmals ein jüdisches Straßenfest mit Musik, Ausstellungen und Ständen aus Anlaß des Jom Jeruschalajim statt, das seither in der Umgebung des Stadttempels und später im Palais Lichtenstein alljährlich wiederholt wird. Eine selbstbewußte jüdische Gemeinde öffnete sich damit und zeigte sich ihrer Mitwelt in einer Form, wie es noch bis in die siebziger und achtziger Jahre völlig undenkbar gewesen wäre. (Adunka 2000: 527)

Dieses Selbstbewusstsein, das Auftreten in der Öffentlichkeit und der Zueignung an öffentlicher Bedeutung, die wahrscheinlich sowohl auf den in Zweifel gezogenen Opfer-Status Österreichs als auch auf den Generationswechsel zurückzuführen sind, darf jedoch nicht über die Tatsache hinwegtäuschen, dass Antisemitismus nach wie vor weiter Existierte. Umfragen zufolge bejahten im Jahr 1973 21 Prozent die Frage, ob es besser sei, keine Juden im Land zu haben, im Jahr 1991 hingegen 15 Prozent der Befragten. Doch „1986 erklärten 35 Prozent der Befragten, sie stünden den Juden freundlich gegenüber, 1991 halbierte sich dieser Wert auf 18 Prozent, wohingegen sich die Ablehnung von sieben auf vierzehn Prozent verdoppelte.“ (Wassermann 2000: 312–313.)

Wenn die Uraufführung von Taboris *Mein Kampf* im Kontext dieses erstarrenden Selbstbewusstseins der jüdischen Gemeinde in Wien betrachtet wird, dann erscheint die Aufmerksamkeit, die ihr zuteilwurde, im neuen Licht. Die parodistische Darstellung Hitlers im ersten Teil des Stücks deutet auf eine selbstbewusste Position des Beobachters hin, der sich über den einst gefeierten und gefürchteten Diktator lustig machen kann. Es bedeutet nicht nur die

11 Ähnlich urteilt auch Matthias Konzett: „With Waldheim, finally, Austria’s silenced past became an open public theme and allowed writers to articulate their concerns with more national and international attention than ever before... Jewish themes and concerns now received more resonance in Austria.“ (Konzett 2000: 323)

Entmythisierung Hitlers, sondern auch eine Aufwertung seiner Opfer. Noch wichtiger ist jedoch die Ablehnung der Festschreibung von Opferrollen, die Tabori bereits durch seine früheren Stücke veranschaulichte, die aber erst jetzt bei einem breiteren Publikum Gehör fand, das selbst die gesellschaftliche Last der Rollenzuschreibungen sowohl der Opfer als auch der Täter einsah und sich davon zu befreien suchte. Tabori leistete eine wichtige Vorarbeit mit seinen Stücken, die zum Teil bereits in den USA entstanden sind. Die geographische Distanz und die Erfahrung mit dem Rassismus und den Emanzipationsbewegungen in den USA verhalfen ihm schon viel früher zu den Einsichten, die in Wien erst Jahrzehnte später verstanden wurden. Doch obwohl der Augenblick, in dem die Uraufführung von *Taboris* nach langjährigem Schaffen ausgereiften Kunstwerk mit den gesellschaftlichen Prozessen in Mitteleuropa glücklich zusammenfiel, längst vergangen ist, so werden Rollen immer wieder von neuem zu- und -festgeschrieben, bestimmte Bevölkerungsgruppen kriminalisiert, andere viktimisiert. Zehn Jahre nach *Taboris* Tod und drei Jahrzehnte nach der Uraufführung von *Mein Kampf* ließe sich dieses Werk wieder aktualisieren. Darüber hinaus sind seine Werke ein bleibender Beitrag zur literarischen Aufarbeitung von individuellen und kollektiven traumatischen Ereignissen.

## LITERATURVERZEICHNIS

- Adorno, Theodor W.: *Ästhetische Theorie. Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd. 7. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970.
- Adorno, Theodor W.: *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft. Gesammelte Schriften*. B. 10. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977.
- Adorno, Theodor W.: *Negative Dialektik. Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd. 6. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973.
- Adunka, Evelyn: *Die vierte Gemeinde. Die Geschichte der Wiener Juden von 1945 bis heute*. Berlin, Wien: Philo, 2000.
- Beller, Steven: *Vienna and the Jews 1867 – 1938. A cultural history*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989.
- Berghahn, Klaus L.: „Hitler und sein Jude‘: Anmerkungen zu George Taboris *Mein Kampf*“. *Modern Austrian Literature*, Vol. 36, No. 1/2, 2003.
- Dahlke, Karin: „Überrumpelte Katastrophen‘. Taboris ‘Witz‘ im Schatten der Shoah“. Bayerdörfer, Hans-Peter; Schönert, Jörg (Hg.). *Theater gegen das Vergessen*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1997. S. 123–154.
- Embacher, Helga: *Neubeginn ohne Illusionen. Juden in Österreich nach 1945*. Wien: Picus, 1995.
- Feinberg, Anat: *George Tabori*. München: DTV, 2003.



- Haas, Birgit: *Das Theater des George Tabori: vom Verfremdungseffekt zur Postmoderne*. Frankfurt am Main, Wien: Lang, 2000.
- Höyng, Peter: „Immer spielt ihr und scherzt?“ Zur Dialektik des Lachens in George Taboris *Mein Kampf. Farce*.“ Peter Höyng (Hg.). *Verkörpernte Geschichtsentwürfe*. Tübingen: Francke, 1998.
- Huth, Alice: »*In meiner Geisterstunde*«. *Intertextualität und Gedächtnis in Werken von George Tabori*. Marburg: Tectum, 2008.
- Klüger, Ruth: *Weiter leben: eine Jugend*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 1992.
- Knight, Robert: „‘Neutrality’ Not Sympathy: Jews in Post-War Austria“. Robert S. Wistrich (Hg.). *Austrians and Jews in the Twentieth Century. From Franz Joseph to Waldheim*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992. S. 220–233.
- Konzett, Matthias: „Transcultural Profiles in Contemporary Austrian Jewish Literature“. Willy Riemer (Hg.): *After Postmodernism. Austrian Literature and Film in Transition*. Riverside, California: Ariadne Press, 2000. S. 315–339.
- Kunne, Andrea: „Jüdische Identität in der österreichischen Nachkriegsliteratur. Peter Henisch, Robert Schinder, Robert Menasse und Doron Rabinovici.“ Klaus Hödl (Hg.): *Jüdische Identitäten*. Innsbruck, Wien, München: Studien V., 2000. S. 271–306.
- Liessmann, Konrad Paul: „Die Tragödie als Farce: Anmerkungen zu George Taboris ‘Mein Kampf’“. *Text+Kritik*, Heft 133, Januar 1997. S. 81–89.
- Mitten, Richard: „New Faces of Anti-Semitic Prejudice in Austria: Reflections on the ‘Waldheim Affair’“. Robert S. Wistrich (Hg.). *Austrians and Jews in the Twentieth Century. From Franz Joseph to Waldheim*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992. S. 252–273.
- Oxaal, Ivar: „The Jews of Young Hitler’s Vienna: Historical and Sociological Aspects“. Ivar Oxaal, Michael Pollak, Gerhard Botz (Hg.): *Jews, Antisemitism and Culture in Vienna*. London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987. S. 11–38.
- Pott, Sandra: „‘Ecce Schlomo’: Mein Kampf – Farce oder theologischer Schwank?“. Bayerdörfer, Hans-Peter; Schönert, Jörg (Hg.). *Theater gegen das Vergessen*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1997. S. 248–269.
- Roth, Markus: *Theater nach Auschwitz: George Taboris Die Kannibalen im Kontext der Holocaust-Debatten*. Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2003.
- Rozenblit, Marsha L.: „The Jews of Germany and Austria: A Comparative Perspective“. Robert S. Wistrich (Hg.). *Austrians and Jews in the Twentieth Century. From Franz Joseph to Waldheim*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992. S. 1–18.
- Rozenblit, Marsha L.: *Die Juden Wiens 1867 – 1914. Assimilation und Identität*. Wien, Köln, Graz: Böhlau, 1989.
- Scholz, Stefan: *Von der humanisierenden Kraft des Scheiterns*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002.

- Schubert, Kurt: *Die Geschichte des österreichischen Judentums*. Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau, 2008.
- Silverman, Lisa: *Becoming Austrians. Jews and Culture between the World Wars*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012.
- Strümpel, Jan: *Vorstellungen vom Holocaust: George Taboris Erinnerungs-Spiele*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2000.
- Tabori, George: *Theaterstücke II*. München, Wien: Hanser, 1994.
- Thuncke, Jörg: "Farce oder Volksstück? Eine Untersuchung der Theaterversion von George Taboris *Mein Kampf*". *Modern Austrian Literature*, Vol. 26, No. 3/4, 1993. S. 247–272.
- Wassermann, Heinz P.: „Eine Wohn-, aber keine Lebensgemeinschaft? Notizen zum Verhältnis zwischen nichtjüdischen und jüdischen Österreichern nach 1945“. Klaus Hödl (Hg.). *Jüdische Identitäten*. Innsbruck, Wien, München: Studien V., 2000. S. 307–334.
- Wistrich, Robert S.: "The Kreisky Phenomenon: A Reassessment." Robert S. Wistrich (Hg.). *Austrians and Jews in the Twentieth Century. From Franz Joseph to Waldheim*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992. S. 234–251.
- Zohn, Harry: „Wien erfüllt die Prophezeiung: Die Stadt ohne Juden“. *Jüdisches Echo*, 5. Jänner 1956.

Špela Virant  
Universität Ljubljana  
spela.virant@guest.arnes.si



## Upodobljivost zla: literatura holokavsta Georgea Taborija

Prispevek z medkulturnega vidika obravnava dramsko delo Georgea Taborija, zlasti igro *Mein Kampf*, ki se z ironizacijo upira mitiziranju Hitlerja in viktimizaciji Judov, v kontekstu judovsko-nemških odnosov v Avstriji po drugi svetovni vojni. Igra je bila prvič uprizorjena leta 1987 na Dunaju, v času, ko je status Avstrije kot žrtve nacizma postajal vprašljiv, Judje na Dunaju pa so prvič po vojni spet začeli pridobivati samozavest.

**Ključne besede:** George Tabori, dramatika, holokavst, Judje na Dunaju, ironija

## **The Representability of Evil: George Tabori's Holocaust-Literature**

The article tries to read the plays by George Tabori from an intercultural point of view. The focus is on his play *Mein Kampf*, in which he uses irony to oppose the threatening mythologization of Hitler. It was first staged in 1987 in Vienna, when the status of Austria as a victim of Nazi-Germany became questionable and the Jews in Vienna regained their self-awareness for the first time after World War II.

**Key words:** George Tabori, Drama, Holocaust-Literature, Jews in Vienna, irony

*Der Beitrag ist im Rahmen des Forschungsprogramms Interkulturelle literaturwissenschaftliche Studien (P6-0265) entstanden; die Autorin erkennt die finanzielle Unterstützung seitens der Slowenischen Forschungsagentur an.*



# Beatrix, un roman courtois au sein du cycle de la croisade

*Tadeja Dermastja*

## Synopsis

Dans cet article on essaie d'exposer certains éléments du fabuleux dans la branche médiévale de Beatrix qui a été intégrée au cycle épique français de la croisade et la comparer au poème médiéval anglais portant le même titre. La question qui se pose dans ce sens est pourquoi le thème de cette chanson pouvait-il être intéressant dans les deux milieux littéraires et quelles sont les circonstances historiques et littéraires qui l'ont fait connu dans les différents cadres culturels européens. Il faudra aussi rechercher tous contextes de cette matière qui est entrée dans le genre épique, mais qui pourrait représenter un autre genre poétique médiéval ; que ce soit la poésie courtoise soit la poésie chevaleresque, la branche de Beatrix a été jointe aux chansons des croisades, celles-ci étant majoritairement les chansons de geste. La branche de Beatrix raconte l'histoire de la naissance du Chevalier au cygne, dont la légende était très répandue dans le continent européen, surtout sous la forme de la légende de Lohengrin. On démontrera que la matière de Beatrix était connue en Angleterre pour des raisons purement historiques et qu'en effet cette matière y a pré-existé et elle lui a été rendue après s'être proliférée dans le continent.

**Mots-clefs:** Chanson de geste, Godefroi de Bouillon, Cycle de la croisade, branche de *Beatrix*, croisades, poésie médiévale, fabuleux

La chanson de geste s'appuie autant sur les chroniques que sur les légendes, elle s'éloigne pourtant des épopées homériques, demeurant à l'écart des mythologies où il y a les mélanges du monde des dieux et des hommes et s'approchant des sagas qui racontent les histoires des familles où le monde des dieux disparaît. La matière épique française est fortement basée sur l'époque carolingienne, les hagiographies, les traditions orales, les chroniques latines et sur l'idéologie féodale, ce qui crée une mythologie particulière, car elle implique l'imaginaire chrétien et, très rarement, le monde ontologique provenant des légendes antérieures à la christianisation de l'Ouest. La pléiade des chansons de geste réunies aux cycles, fait partie de la matière épique du Charlemagne, ce qui représente la partie majeure des chansons de geste en France.

En dehors de la matière carolingienne qui est souvent reprise en trois cycles (Labarthe, 2006 : 83) se trouvent les épopées des croisades qui n'ont été étudiées de près que récemment et les chercheurs contemporains en distinguent amplement deux cycles (Labarthe, 2006 : 99 ; cf. Bender, 35-83) : le premier cycle comprendrait la *Chanson d'Antioche* en tant que chanson principale du cycle et le deuxième, les chansons ayant pour noyau la chute de Jérusalem. Pourtant, ces classifications sont faites du point de vue historique et non-contextuel, parce que presque toutes les chansons de ce cycle relatent les épisodes de la vie du héros Godefroi de Bouillon, c'est pourquoi les classifications récentes redoublent la présence de certaines chansons dans les deux cycles (*p.ex.* les branches relatant l'enfance du héros sont dans les deux cycles) et Judith Labarthe constate que : « *Les deux cycles forment un sous-genre épique non homogène. Ils sont constitués d'une série de formes limites, se combinant chaque fois avec des genres apparentés comme l'historiographie, le roman chevaleresque, le conte ; la latitude dont jouit le genre épique s'y manifeste pleinement* » (Labarthe, 2006 : 99 – 100).

Godefroi de Bouillon, chef militaire de la première croisade, représente l'actant principal de plusieurs branches de nature biographique auxquelles sont rajoutées les branches intitulés *Beatrix* et *Elioxe* (les deux représentent *La Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne*)<sup>1</sup>. Aussi celles qui puisent des éléments biographiques ne peuvent pas représenter la chanson de geste au sens propre, elles sont un mélange des genres, allant du conte au roman chevaleresque, transfigurant la chanson de geste en fabuleux des légendes du monde ontologique. Ce qui

1 Dans l'édition intégrale de tous les manuscrits du *Cycle de la croisade*, plusieurs auteurs américains ont donné les noms suivants aux manuscrits contenant les poèmes versifiés, publiés en huit volumes dans la publication de l'Université d'Alabama : *La Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne* (avec les versions d'*Elioxe* et de *Beatrix*), *Le Chevalier au Cygne*, *La fin d'Elias*, *Les enfances Godefroi*, *La Chanson d'Antioche*, *Les Chétifs*, *La Chanson de Jérusalem* ; s'ensuivent les « continuations » de *Jérusalem : La Chrétienté Corbaran*, *La Prise d'Acre*, *La Mort Godefroi* et *La Chanson des Rois Baudouin*. (Mickel et Nelson, 1977 : xi).

serait intéressant d'analyser de plus près est ce fabuleux qui est entré dans les littératures française, anglaise, espagnole et allemande, cette dernière inaugurant l'histoire du chevalier au cygne dans la saga de *Lohengrin*, interprété aussi en musique wagnérienne. Bien que la légende de Lohengrin soit bien analysée dans le milieu allemand, il y a toujours quelques lacunes dans les études médiévales anglaises et françaises à propos de cette matière. La question qui se pose est pourquoi a-t-on fait si peu de recherches du fabuleux des épopées des croisades, même si celui-ci était très répandu à l'époque et assez populaire pour s'étaler en Europe occidentale et en Angleterre ?

L'herméneutique littéraire et les études de l'érudition du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle laissent de côté, dans une certaine mesure, les analyses plus approfondies de cette matière à cause des désagréments politiques trop nationalistes. Pourtant, Judith Labarthe reprend la constatation de David Jacoby que même au Moyen-Âge « *les croisés, [...] apprécient d'ailleurs davantage les chansons d'outre-mer* » (Labarthe, 2006 : 98) ce qui d'ailleurs confirme la popularité du cycle carolingien, mais qui prouve qu'à l'époque, l'armée croisée autant que la population qui l'accompagnait connaissait une pléiade de genres épiques. Dans les analyses des épopées, les recherches doivent nécessairement porter dans la même mesure aux faits historiques et à la science littéraire et c'est dans ces deux directions qu'il faut analyser le fabuleux du *Chevalier au Cygne* et surtout les faits qui répandaient sa popularité en France et en Angleterre et qui présentent une lacune d'analyses dans les sciences littéraires d'aujourd'hui. Ce fabuleux qui sera le sujet du présent article, n'est pas en majorité la légende du chevalier mystérieux qui se transfère dans un petit bateau mené par son frère en forme de cygne, mais le conte de sa mère, qui prend soit une forme divine soit une forme humaine et dont la branche fait partie initiale du *Cycle de la Croisade* qui commence par l'histoire biographique de Godefroi de Bouillon.

La matière pour ce conte qui comprend tous les éléments d'un conte de fée selon la *Morphologie du conte* de Vladimir Propp<sup>2</sup> n'existe pas en version allemande du *Lohengrin* où le chevalier au cygne est le fils de Parzival allemand, pourtant on trouve le même conte ayant les noms différents en Angleterre, en Espagne et surtout en France (Lecouteux, 1998 : 105). Le sujet de l'analyse dans cet article porte sur une étude comparative de ce conte et de ses sources dans les littératures anglaise et française et sur l'actualisation de ces légendes fabuleuses médiévales.

Pour dévoiler le phénomène de leur présence sur le continent européen et en Angleterre, il faut présenter quelques points historiques et sommairement toucher au contenu du conte. Le manuscrit portant le titre latin *Dolophatos, sive de Rege et Septem Sapientibus* datant du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle a été écrit par le moine lorrain Jean de

2 Surtout ses recherches des transformations des contes merveilleux. Voir Propp, *La Morphologie du conte*. Paris : Seuil, 1970, p. 172-249.

Haute-Seille où on trouve sept contes indoeuropéens, le conte en question étant présenté le dernier, le septième (Nelson et Mickel 1977 : lxxxix). Tout à la fin de son livre, l'auteur mentionne qu'il a utilisé le matériel de la tradition orale, ce qui peut, selon Huet, prouver que l'auteur a entendu ce conte d'un jongleur qui a déjà chanté des exploits de Godefroi de Bouillon incluant, parmi les chansons de la croisade, ce conte fabuleux de sa naissance (Ibid., cxiv).

Le récit du conte qui fait partie des chansons des croisades se résume ainsi : Beatrix et le roi Oriant sont un couple sans enfants et de leur donjon ils observent une femme avec les enfants jumeaux. Beatrix médite de cette femme en disant que les enfants jumeaux doivent certainement être produits de l'adultère. Cette nuit même elle devient enceinte et par la suite elle accouche de sept enfants qui sont nés avec les chaînes en argent autour du cou. La mère du roi, Matabrune, est une femme d'une méchanceté extraordinaire et elle ordonne à son serviteur Macron de porter les enfants dans la forêt et les tuer. Celui-ci ne les tue pas, il les expose dans la forêt où il y a l'ermite qui sauve les enfants. Matabrune explique à son fils que pendant son absence, Beatrix a accouché de sept chiens et qu'elle doit être tuée. Le roi Oriant jette Beatrix à la prison. Après des années, un autre serviteur de Matabrune, Malquarés, trouve les enfants dans la forêt et immédiatement il reçoit l'ordre de la vieille reine d'apporter les chaînes. Il réussit, mais le garçon favori de l'ermite était dans la forêt avec lui. Les six enfants changent aux cygnes et s'envolent au marais de leur père. Matabrune donne les chaînes à l'orfèvre pour en faire les coupes, mais celui-ci trouve que les chaînes sont magiques et produit deux coupes d'une seule chaîne. Il garde les autres chaînes. Après quinze ans, Matabrune convainc son fils de brûler Beatrix. Elle pourrait être sauvée au cas où elle trouve un champion pour la défendre. En ce moment un ange apparaît au garçon et à l'ermite qui leur explique la situation et envoie le garçon défendre sa mère. Celui-ci était élevé comme Perceval et il ne connaît rien des combats chevaleresques, mais il est instruit que Dieu le protégerait. Dès son arrivée dans la ville, il est baptisé au nom d'Elias et il gagne le combat, libère sa mère et garantit la transformation des enfants-cygnes qui reprennent la forme humaine. Seul un frère reste dans sa forme animale. Matabrune s'enfuit dans son château et Elias vient l'assiéger, il gagne de nouveau et Matabrune est brûlée au bûcher préparé pour Beatrix. En respectant la volonté d'un ange, Elias et son frère-cygne s'en vont par la mer et après encore une bataille victorieuse, ils arrivent à Nimègue.<sup>3</sup>

La version du conte de *Beatrix* diffère de celle de *Dolopathos* et d'*Elixo* dans plusieurs éléments et elle semble être adaptée pour pouvoir fonctionner dans l'épopée de la croisade et surtout dans les chansons qui touchent à la poésie de

3 Le texte est résumé d'après la lecture des manuscrits publiés en édition de « *The Old French Crusade Cycle* » (Nelson et Mickel, 1977 : 131 – 201).



Godefroi de Bouillon. Les manuscrits en français pour la version de *Beatrix* se trouvent dans la Bibliothèque nationale<sup>4</sup>, dans la Bibliothèque d’Arsenal à Paris<sup>5</sup> et à British Museum à Londres<sup>6</sup>. Pourtant, il existe la branche de Beatrix en anglais, intitulé *Chevalere Assigne* et se trouve aussi à British Museum dans un seul manuscrit<sup>7</sup> dans une version très abrégée, n’ayant que 370 lignes et menant l’histoire jusqu’à la reprise de la forme humaine des enfants-cygnés. Le manuscrit porte la date de la deuxième moitié du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle et il est écrit dans l’accent de l’anglais moyen<sup>8</sup> dans les vers allitérés. L’édition intégrale et annoté a été publiée en 1868 par Henry Gibbs. Le copiste du manuscrit anglais dit précisément qu’il puise la matière d’un autre livre :

« The kyngge hette oryens - as Þe book tellethe » (v. 7)

« They kallede hym Enyas to name - as Þe book tellethe » (v. 270) (Gibbs, 1868 : 1, 14)<sup>9</sup>

Il est possible que le copiste ait utilisé des sources littéraires pour remanier la matière qui était très répandue en Europe, mais qui n’existait pas en langue anglaise. Cependant, c’est justement cette matière fabuleuse qui est venue d’Angleterre et elle lui a été rendue, après être imprégnée dans les chansons de geste. Les raisons pour lesquelles elle est retournée en Angleterre résident dans le fait que les ancêtres et les descendants de Godefroi de Bouillon étaient liés à l’histoire d’Angleterre.

Avant la prise de la ville de Jérusalem en 1099 par les croisés et son titre du « *roi de Jérusalem* », Godefroi était le comte de Boulogne. Le père Eustache II, était parmi les soldats de Guillaume le Conquérant et à cause de ses engagements guerriers, il a reçu les propriétés en Angleterre, que sa mère Ide, béatifiée après sa mort,

4 Les manuscrits des *fonds français* aux indices 786, 795, 1621, 12569 (Nelson et Mickel, 1977 : xxiv – lxxv)

5 Portant l’indice de 3139 (Nelson et Mickel, 1977 : xlv).

6 Portant les indices 3661 et 15 E VI.

7 Portant l’indice Cotton Caligula A. II (Barron, 1967 : 25).

8 L’accent dans le poème est soumis aux analyses. J.R.Hulbert qui cite R. Morris constate que « *the Dialect [of Chevalere Assigne] in its present form is East Midland. But as we do not find [other] East Midland writers adopting alliterative measures in the 14th century, I am inclined to think that the original English text was written in the N. or N.W. of England.* » (Hulbert, 1921 : 5). Pourtant, C. Moorman qui recherche le renouveau de la poésie allitérative du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle en Angleterre constate que « *twelve alliterative poems written between 1350 and 1400 in the Western and Northern Midlands [...]* » et parmi ces douze poèmes en allitération il cite aussi la chanson de *Chevalere Assigne* (parmi Winner and Waster, Morte Artur, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight etc.)

9 Le livre concerné peut être le manuscrit français 15 E VI à Londres, mais ce n’est pas évident (Barron, 1967 : 32).

gérait bien après être devenue veuve.<sup>10</sup> Ide de Boulogne a vendu quelques-unes de ses propriétés en Angleterre pour financer l'exploit de la croisade de ses trois fils, mais après celles-ci son fils aîné a eu la fille Mathilde qui est devenue la reine d'Angleterre après son mariage à Étienne de Blois<sup>11</sup>. La présence de la famille de Boulogne sur le territoire anglais est évidente aussi dans l'une des branches du *Cycle de la croisade*, celle de la chanson des *Enfances Godefroi* où on trouve le frère de Godefroi, Eustache à Londres pour son éducation chevaleresque.

« *Que Witasses l'aisnés ot .xii. ans acomplis,  
Moult estoit prox et sages, cortois et bien pris ;  
N'avoit si bel vaslet el regne Loéis.  
Par le los que li quens ot de ses bons amis,  
L'a al roi d'Engleterre por adober tramis.* » (v. 761-765)<sup>12</sup>

Le roi cité dans la chanson est un des rois capétiens, mais celui-ci n'est pas historiquement contemporain à Godefroi de Bouillon (Mickel 1999 : 119). La grandeur historique de Godefroi réside dans le fait qu'il était le roi de Jérusalem. Son règne était très court et après sa mort son frère Baudouin a accédé au trône. Un des chroniqueurs, Guillaume de Tyr, constate avec indignation dans la seconde moitié du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle : « *J'omets avec intention la fable du cygne, rapportée cependant dans un grand nombre de récits, et qui a fait dire vulgairement que les fils du comte Eustache avaient eu une naissance merveilleuse : mais une telle assertion paraît trop contraire à toute vérité* » (Guizot, 1824 : 11).<sup>13</sup>

De cela s'ensuit que les jongleurs ont, déjà à cette époque, relié l'histoire biographique aux récits légendaires.<sup>14</sup> Du point de vue historique, la vie de Godefroi de Bouillon dévoile que c'était un homme très militaire, mais à la fois humble ; Guillaume de Tyr note qu'il a résigné à porter la couronne de la ville sainte en disant

10 Le comte Eustache II. de Boulogne a reçu douze fiefs dans le Hertford, l'Essex, le Norfolk, le Bedford et le Kent. Sur ce point, après les exploits militaires avec Guillaume le Conquérant, le comté de Boulogne a sa plus grande étendue (Dickès 2004 : 61).

11 Ibid., 216.

12 Les vers sont tirés de l'édition du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, faite par Célestin Hippeau qui était le seul à publier quelques manuscrits du fonds français, notamment celui portant l'indice 1621 qui fait partie du fonds français, mais sa publication porte le titre *La Chanson du Chevalier au Cygne et de Godefroi de Bouillon* (Hippeau, 1969 : 28).

13 Le texte en latin en original : «Praeterimus denique studiosa, licet id verum fuisse plurimorum astruat narratio, Cygni fabulam, unde vulgo dicitur sementiam eis fuisse originem; eo quod a vero videatur deficere alis assertio.» [Http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/williamtyre/9.html](http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/williamtyre/9.html), consulté le 26 juin 2017.

14 Il y a une lettre de Guy de Bazoches vers 1175 constatant l'ascendance féerique de la famille de Bouillon, mais Guillaume de Tyr la rejette comme fabuleuse. (Gauillier – Bougassas, 2005 : 116)

que « son extrême humilité le porta à ne point vouloir être distingué dans la Cité sainte par une couronne d'or semblable à celle que portent les rois » (Guizot, 1824 : 17). Même si Godefroi est mort après avoir régné une seule année, c'est son frère Baudouin qui a continué la régence à la ville sainte. Ce qu'il faut rechercher davantage c'est aussi la corrélation de la famille de Boulogne – Bouillon à l'établissement de l'ordre templier. L'ordre s'est développé au fur et à mesure de la « garde du Saint-Sépulcre » qui protégeait la communauté des chanoines du Saint-Sépulcre établie par Godefroi de Bouillon (Demurger, 2008 : 25). Plus tard, la reine Mathilde établissait des églises templières en Angleterre et supportait l'ordre des templiers.<sup>15</sup>

En tant que héros littéraire, Godefroi occupe le rôle central dans presque toutes les chansons de la croisade, sauf dans les deux chansons fabuleuses de sa naissance qui ont été probablement jointes à *posteriori* dans le récit biographique de son enfance et dans *La Chanson d'Antioche* qui met en valeur d'autres héros importants pour leurs exploits militaires. Cette chanson est d'ailleurs la branche centrale du *Cycle de la croisade* et elle s'est probablement développée pendant la croisade elle-même. C'est la gloire de Godefroi de Bouillon qui a rendu populaires d'autres chansons, entre autres les récits légendaires de *Beatrix* et d'*Elixo*.

Le rôle de Godefroi en tant que héros littéraire semble être celui de Charlemagne, mais dans une mesure beaucoup plus restreinte. On y trouve aussi des éléments d'autres œuvres littéraires médiévales, notamment de *La Chanson de Roland*. Les trouvères et les jongleurs y ont inséré le détail avec Perceval, ce qui montre qu'ils connaissaient le roman courtois. Ide de Boulogne joue aussi un rôle majeur dans le *Les Enfances Godefroi*, car étant la mère de Godefroi qui portait la couronne de Jérusalem elle pourrait prendre un semi – rôle de la sainte Marie, c'est pourquoi elle vit dans la littérature les moments qui ressemblent à ceux de *Beatrix*. Dans le *Cycle de la croisade*, elle est la petite-fille de *Beatrix* et la fille du *Chevalier au cygne* et avant la naissance de ses trois fils, elle est confrontée aux visions pareilles à celles de sa grand-mère, mais à ce point, le fabuleux qui semblait provenir d'un monde païen, prend l'aspect chrétien.

Dans le genre épique, les héros font souvent partie de l'au-delà (*p.ex.* Achille, fils d'un mortel et d'une nymphe) ou sont au moins à la recherche de l'immortalité (*p.ex.* Gilgamesh). Contrairement aux héros grecs antiques qui sont d'après Daniel Madelénat « des dieux déchus, ou des hommes promus » (Madelénat, 1986 : 54), le héros médiéval et celui des chansons de geste françaises restent dans le cadre du réel, parce qu'il est souvent un roi, un chevalier, un noble, mais pareillement aux grands épopées antiques, ce héros provient parfois du monde ontologique, en possédant, comme le résume Charles Baudouin un signe de reconnaissance, qui se

15 À comparer : Chibnall, Marjorie, « *Empress Matilda : Queen Consort, Queen Mother and Lady of the English* » London : Blackwell Publishers, 1993.

manifeste soit par l'origine royale du héros soit par son enfance mystérieuse et ses actes extraordinaires (Baudoin, 1952).

Pour le héros médiéval, il est nécessaire de garder un certain mystère chrétien, impénétrable pour le public et qui crée une certaine distance car le Dieu chrétien ne peut pas coexister avec des hommes, mais dans les hommes. Daniel Madelénat en citant Hegel constate que le merveilleux doit « *préserver l'indépendance [...] des actions humaines et des actions divines, afin que les dieux n'apparaissent pas comme des abstractions sans vie et que les individus humains ne soient pas dégradés au niveau de simples serviteurs.* » (Madelénat, 1986 : 63). De cela s'ensuit que le seul héros qui puisse être capable à représenter un idéal chevaleresque dans le cas des chansons de geste, serait celui qui joindrait l'image de l'homme et l'hypostase du Dieu et Godefroi en est l'exemple par excellence. Même dans les drames modernes il y a toujours cette présence du surnaturel, c'est notamment Paul Claudel qui dit à propos de son drame aux dimensions épiques, *Soulier de satin*, que ses personnages surnaturels entrent dans sa composition, parce que leur présence lui a paru artistiquement nécessaire, « *de même que dans l'Iliade l'absence des personnages de l'Olympe représenterait quelque chose d'absolument inconcevable* » (Claudel, 1954 : 276). Le héros épique est souvent l'hypostase d'une nation, et souvent il est « *dépourvu d'hiatus entre un moi et une persona, [...] il porte à leur plus haut degré les qualités requises par l'action [...]* » (Madelénat, 1986 : 55) et c'est pour cette raison que Roland peut être à la fois courageux comme il sauve l'armée de Charlemagne, mais il a peur de sonner le cor, pour qu'on ne fasse pas de lui une « *male chanson* ». <sup>16</sup> C'est pareil pour le chevalier au cygne, qui subit à l'interdiction mystérieuse : il quitte son pays avec son frère cygne après la question interdite de « *la dame du Bouillon* ».

L'histoire fabuleuse prend fin avec le départ d'Élias et sur ce point commencent les exploits guerriers, le thème central des épopées et des chansons de geste. L'épopée est aussi le mythe de la guerre, son herméneutique, et l'historiographie, pareille à celle des chroniques. Le conflit qui est l'immanence humaine y est mis au piédestal comme la vérité singulière de l'homme et la guerre qui, d'après la philosophie allemande de Marx et Hegel, repose « *au cœur de la pensée et de la société, et en la justifiant comme voie vers la fin de l'histoire* » (Ibid., 68). L'épopée trouve un point de lumière dans la sombre atmosphère de la guerre et c'est l'amour pour la gloire du héros, un amour sacré pour la reconnaissance parmi les siens.

Le but des chansons de geste était souvent le divertissement de la population noble à la cour, surtout lors des adouvements, les tournois, les banquets où il y avait les présentations des armes, des chevaux (Labarthe, 2006 : 78). C'étaient des occasions où tout le monde de la cour était présent et pour cela il est tout à fait vraisemblable que pendant les événements de société il y avait aussi les dames de

16 V. 1014, *La Chanson de Roland*.

la cour. Même si l'enchaînement des branches du *Cycle de la croisade* était faite à posteriori et il y a toujours quelques ambiguïtés dans leur disposition dans le cycle<sup>17</sup>, on peut définitivement constater que les deux récits de *La Naissance du Chevalier au cygne* étaient intégrés à l'histoire du héros parce qu'il nous reste deux manuscrits en prose, l'un datant du XIV<sup>e</sup>, l'autre du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, ce dernier étant d'un grand intérêt pour Marie de Clèves qui se croyait la descendante de la famille Boulogne-Bouillon et qui intègre encore une petite partie des *Enfances de Godefroi* (Emplaincourt, 1989 : xiii - xxx).<sup>18</sup>

La version anglaise ne possède que ce fabuleux qui pourrait présenter dans le cas de deux versions françaises, soit *Elixo*, soit *Beatrix* le roman courtois indépendant. Où peut-on trouver la source de la légende qui ouvre l'histoire biographique de Godefroi et des croisades ? On vient de prouver que le récit légendaire de la famille Boulogne – Bouillon pourrait intéresser le monde des lettres anglaises, mais il n'est quand même pas évident, si la légende pourrait intéresser un public plus large. Cathérine Gaullier – Bougassas en citant Georges Duby souligne qu'il y avait pratique au XII<sup>e</sup> et au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles dans les familles aristocratiques de se trouver des ancêtres ayants une source généalogique féerique (Gaullier – Bougassas, 2005 : 116) et elle cite encore les romans lignagers en anglo-normand qui, de cette façon célèbrent une famille aristocratique. S'il y a, dans ce territoire, la tradition de ce genre, il n'est pourtant pas extraordinaire de trouver la légende des enfants-cygnés dans le territoire anglais.

La légende des enfants-cygnés elle-même est d'origine anglo-saxonne car au moins les premières recherches de Jacob Grimm notent une courte légende du X<sup>e</sup> siècle relatant de la barque sans avirons qui porte un enfant (Lecouteux, 1998 : 125). Les recherches de la source de la légende mènent à travers les légendes saxonnes où on trouve le héros Scaef qui étymologiquement rappelle le nom de Scandinavie et la région de Schleswig (Ibid., 126) et qui serait le fils des descendants du dieu nordique suprême, Odin. Ce héros est largement connu dans les sagas du nord et il semble être d'une très grande antiquité. Les deux récits, *Isomberte* espagnole et *Beatrix* française semblent être les remaniements d'*Elixo* qui a l'air d'être la plus proche à l'histoire de *Dolopathos*. Ce qui diffère *Elixo* d'autres

17 Voir *supra*.

18 Il y a encore une autre référence à la généalogie mystérieuse de Godefroi de Bouillon. Celle dans *La Chanson d'Antioche* où il y a les vers (pendant le siège d'Antioche) : « – Sire ne parlés mais, qu'a mal nel tiegne on, / Molt est de grant parage, par Deu qui fist ne mon. / Vos avés bien oï qui il est ne qui non. / Son avie a duis un cisnes a Nimaie el sablon, / Enmi le plain gravier, el plus maistre donjon, / Tot seul en un batel, ainc n'i ot compaignon, / Bien cauciet et vestu d'un paille d'auqueton, / Plus reluisoit ses ciés que pene de paon, / Ainc Dex ne fist un home de si bele façon. / Le cors ot molt plenier, bien resambla baron. / L'emperere el retint par el gueredon / K'il dona moillier en ceste region, / Un soie parent d'un sien cosin Begon, / Tere bone et fegonde et l'onor de Buillon. », vv. 7450 – 64. (Duparc-Quioç, 1976 : 372).

versions, c'est le manque presque total de l'élément chrétien, *p.ex.* le fait qu'*Elioxe* est une fée et d'autres éléments qui semblent provenir d'un monde païen et qui n'existent pas dans les versions ultérieures de *Beatrix* et d'*Isomberte*. Pourtant, les deux versions de *Beatrix*, anglaise et française, sont imprégnés avec de l'imaginaire chrétien qui essaie vaguement de remplacer le mystérieux païen. Dans les deux versions on trouve par exemple la biche qui miraculeusement aide l'ermite à sauver les enfants et qui est envoyée par le Christ ou par Dieu. La situation dans la version anglaise quand l'ermite remarque les enfants : « *And cryde ofte vpon cryste for somme sokour hym to sende, / Il any lyfe were hem lente in Dis worlde lengur. / Thenne an hynde kome fro De woode rennyng fulle swyfte, / And felle be-for hem adowne Dey drow3e to De pappes;* » (vv. 111-14)<sup>19</sup>, tandis que dans la française le trouvère décrit le même moment (après la prière d'ermite au Dieu) : « *Et quant li sains hermites ot sa proiere faite, / Este vous une cirge ki les enfans alaite / Que Dey i envoia [...]* » (vv. 368 – 70)<sup>20</sup>.

Claude Lecouteux qui a fait une recherche historique-littéraire sur le mythe de la fée Melusine, a trouvé des faits importants dans la légende du *Chevalier au Cygne* où il exclut complètement les sources allemandes, car elles sont trop tardives et elles ne présentent pas, selon la théorie d'épopée de Labarthe, l'épique primaire où la tradition orale est très transparente, mais secondaire, car les récits allemands sont clairement l'œuvre des auteurs et ne font pas partie de la tradition orale (Lecouteux 1998, 108)<sup>21</sup>. Lecouteux sort du fait que l'élément d'interdiction qui est présent dans la légende de la fée Melusine provient du monde celte et que l'interdiction dans le *Chevalier au cygne* provient du même modèle. L'interdiction a, selon lui, une marque de finité, du tabou, « *une sorte de malédiction, un geis* »<sup>22</sup>, qui est présent déjà dans le récit de *Beatrix* parce que le frère ne va jamais reprendre sa forme humaine et cette « punition » cache en elle un mystère païen qui a sa propre loi fabuleuse. La douleur du cygne qui restera dans sa forme animale est terrible : « *But on was alwaye a swanne for fosse of his cheyne. / Hit was doole fot to se De sorow Pat he made ; / He bote hym self with his bylle Pat alle his breste blede,* » (vv. 358 – 60)<sup>23</sup> et dans la version française « *Li .I. [une chaîne] i a fali et cil seus est en paine ; / Par .III. fois est pasmés, puis brait a grant alaine, / A son bec se demaine, toute la cars li saine.* » (vv. 1852 – 53)<sup>24</sup>. Le monde d'au-delà dans lequel se font ces restrictions restera fermé pour les hommes du réel, il se fait une substitution pour l'inconscient et essaie de se débarrasser de ce qu'on pourrait nommer providentialisme chrétien,

19 H. Gibbs : *Chevalere Assigne*, 1868, 6.

20 Nelson J. A., Mickel E.J., 1977, 139.

21 À comparer : Labarthe, 2005 : 16.

22 Le terme de « geis » désignant un tabou. (Lecouteux, 1998 : 121).

23 Gibbs, 1868 : 18.

24 Nelson et Mickel, 1977 : 171.

soit il restera, comme le note Georges Dumézil pour le terme d'épopée « *en communication constante, dans les deux sens, avec les contes* » (Dumézil, 2007 : 19). Dans *Beatrix* française autant qu'en anglaise on remarque le nom du chevalier *Elias* qui va mystérieusement perdre son prénom en entrant dans l'histoire française du *Chevalier au cygne*, mais il le regagne quand les continuateurs français (dans ce cas les jongleurs et les trouvères) inventent la chanson intitulée *La Fin d'Elias* où le protagoniste rentre dans le monde d'au-delà. Le héros porte le nom d'Enyas dans la version anglaise de *Beatrix* : « *Go brynge hym to his fader courte & loke Þat may be cristened ; / And kalle hym Enyas to name for arw3te Þat may be-falle* » (vv. 204-4).<sup>25</sup> La différence de la lettre n'est pas expliquée, ni pourtant la disparition du nom dans la version française. Cependant, les récits de *Beatrix*, version française et anglaise se ressemblent beaucoup et ils excluent la parenté de Perceval, ce qui est l'élément clé dans les versions allemandes.

Cette mère qui a perdu sa caractéristique féerique dans les versions *Beatrix*, représente l'élément clé pour découvrir l'inspiration du conte des enfants-cygnés. Il faut souligner aussi que contrairement à la nature très militaire du *Cycle de la croisade*, cette branche semble très féminine, ayant le protagoniste féminin et on connaît des métamorphoses femmes-cygnés en France médiévale, autant qu'en Irlande.<sup>26</sup> De même, cet élément d'interdiction provient du monde celtique ce qui a prouvé Lecouteux dans l'explication du mythe de la fée Melusine. Mais l'une des sources les plus évidentes qui proviennent du monde celtique, sont des chaînes d'or ou d'argent qui sont innés aux enfants (surtout dans le récit d'*Elixo*, et dans le *Cycle de la Táin*, où il y a les oiseux reliés par les chaînes dorées).

L'autre élément qui révèle des mythologies irlandaises est celui d'un petit navire sans avirons et Ferdinand Lot a découvert un récit irlandais datant du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle qui raconte l'histoire du roi Lir où on trouve les métamorphoses des enfants-cygnés, la marâtre démoniaque, les enchantements druidiques, les premiers saints chrétiens et à la fin de l'histoire les cygnés changent aux vieillards qui meurent (Lecouteux 1998 :120). À la base d'une recherche étymologique on découvre que la langue gaélique d'Écosse donne pour le mot du cygne « *eala* » et en langue irlandaise « *ela* » (Matthews, 2002) ce qui pourrait présenter l'étymologie inexplicée dans le contexte de la matière, pour *Elixo* et *Elias*. Le conte irlandais ressemble – dans une certaine mesure – à un conte japonais, *Urashima Taro*, ce qui prouve que le matériel fabuleux provient d'inconscient et c'est surtout l'élément d'eau qui le rappelle et qui, dans le monde littéraire, fait penser à l'au-delà. Cette matière a pu entrer en continent en IX<sup>e</sup> siècle lors de l'installation des moines irlandais sur les bords du Rhin. Le poème de *Beatrix* qu'on trouve en Angleterre

25 Gibbs, 1868 : 10.

26 *Pex*. Dans les lais de Graelent, de Guingamor et de Garin (Lecoutoux, 1998 : 118).

contient ainsi les éléments celtes et anglo-saxons qui se sont répandus sur le continent, pris une nouvelle forme et rentrés à l'île.

Ce transfert des sources n'a évidemment rien de particulier pour l'époque ; c'est l'importance du mythe et du récit qui prend un tel poids pour être toujours intéressant. Les épopées médiévales peuvent de nos jours être un point repère pour les chercheurs littéraires du genre épique car il y a toujours certains contextes qui doivent être transférés. Si l'on prend en considération le fait que les épopées médiévales étaient orales, les légendes comme celles-ci d'*Elixo* et de *Beatrix* pourraient être transmises par le septième art qui représente aujourd'hui, pareillement aux épopées, « la voix » du peuple.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIE

- Barron, William R. J. : Chevalere Assigne and The Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne. *Medium Ævum*, vol. 36, No. 1, 1967, pp. 25–37.
- Bender, Karl – Heinz : « De Godefroy à Saladin ». *Les épopées romanes*, volume III, tome 1/2, fascicule 5. Heidelberg, 1986 : 35 – 83.
- Boudoin, Charles : *Le triomphe du héros : étude psychanalytique sur le mythe héros et les grandes épopées*. Paris, Plon : 1952.
- Chibnall, Marjorie, « *Empress Matilda : Queen Consort, Queen Mother and Lady of the English* » London : Blackwell Publishers, 1993.
- Claudiel, Paul : *Mémoires improvisés*. Paris : Gallimard, 1954.
- Demurger, Alain : *Les Templiers, une chevalerie chrétienne au Moyen Âge*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2008.
- Dickès, Jean-Pierre : *Sainte Ide de Boulogne, mère de Godefroy de Bouillon*. Paris : Éditions de Paris, 2004.
- Dumézil, Georges : *Mythe et Épopée I. L'idéologie des trois fonctions dans les épopées des peuples indo-européens*. Paris : Quatro Gallimard, 2007.
- Duparc-Quioc, Suzanne : *La Chanson d'Antioche*. Paris : Librairie orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1976.
- Emplaincourt Edmond A. : *The Old French Crusade Cycle. Vol. 9: La Geste du Chevalier au Cygne*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989.
- Gaullier-Bougassas Catherine : *Le chevalier au Cygne à la fin du Moyen Âge. La tradition épique, du Moyen Âge au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Éd. Suard François. Paris: Honoré Champion éditeur, 2005, pp. 115–146.
- Gibbs, Henry H. : *The Romance of the Chevalere Assigne*. London : Early english text society, 1868.
- Guizot, François : *Histoire des croisades par Guillaume de Tyr*. Vol. 2. Paris: Brière librairie, 1824.



- Hippeau, Céléstin : *La Chanson du Chevalier au Cygne et de Godefroid de Bouillon*. Vol. 1–2. Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1969.
- Hulbert, James R. : The « West Midland » of the romances. *Modern Philology*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1921, pp. 1-16.
- Zink, Michel, éd. : *La chanson de Roland*. Paris: Le livre de poche, 1990.
- Labarthe, Judith : *L'épopée*. Paris : Armand Colin, 2006.
- Lecouteux, Claude : *Mélusine et le Chevalier au cygne*. Paris : Imago, 1998.
- Madelénat, Daniel : *L'épopée*. Paris : Presses universitaires de la France, 1986.
- Matthews, John : *Celtic totem animals*. Boston: Red Wheel Press, 2002.
- Mickel, Emanuel J. Jr. et Nelson Jan A. : *The Old French Crusade Cycle, Vol. 1, La Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne*. Alabama : The University of Alabama Press, 1977.
- Mickel, Emmanuel J. Jr. : *The Old French Crusade Cycle. Vol.3: Les Enfances Godefroi and Le Retour de Cournumarant*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999.
- Moorman, Charles : The English Alliterative Revival and the Literature of Defeat. *The Chaucer Review*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1981, pp. 85-100.
- Propp, Vladimir : *La Morphologie du conte*. Paris : Seuil, 1970.

Tadeja Dermastja

Ljubljana

tadeja.dermastja@gmail.com



## **Beatrix, viteški roman v srčiki cikla o križarskih vojnah**

V članku so obravnavani nekateri elementi fantastičnega v srednjeveški veji pisanja o Beatrix, ki je bila integrirana v francoski epski cikel o križarskih vojnah in avtorica jo primerja z angleško srednjeveško pesmijo z enakim naslovom. Postavlja si vprašanje zakaj je bila tema te junaške epske pesnitve zanimiva v obeh literarnih okoljih in katere so zgodovinske in književne okoliščine, ki so vplivale na njeno prepoznavnost v različnih evropskih sredinah.

**Ključne besede:** chanson de geste, Godefroi de Bouillon, cikel o križarskih vojnah, srednjeveška književnost, *Beatrix*





# ACTA NEOPHILOLOGICA

**Acta Neophilologica** is published once yearly (as a double number). The review is primarily oriented in promoting scholarly articles on English and American literature, on other literatures written in English as well as on German and Romance literatures.

All articles are refereed before being accepted or rejected. Manuscripts will not be returned unless they are commissioned. Computed-printed copies must be doublespaced and new paragraphs should be printed with an indentation. Articles must have an accompanying abstract and key-words. Literature used should be prepared in the alphabetical order of authors. The views expressed in articles should in no way be construed as reflecting the views of the publisher. Articles submitted for consideration should be sent in two computed-printed copies (double spaced) with a short abstract (in English) and together with a diskette. Articles should be of no more than 5,000 words, and book reviews of 1,000 words. For format and style authors should follow the MLA Handbook.

Authors who wish to have their articles published in the next issue of **Acta Neophilologica** should send their manuscripts to the editor no later than 1 May each year: Professor Igor Maver, Department of English, Filozofska fakulteta/Faculty of Arts, Aškerčeva 2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia.