

ACTA NEOPHILOLOGICA

34. 1-2 (2001)

Ljubljana

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EN *CRÓNICA DE UNA MUERTE ANUNCIADA* DE GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ

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**PROFESSOR DUŠAN LUDVIK (1914-2001)
IN MEMORIAM**

Anton Janko

Abstract

Der Artikel ist dem Gedenken an den Professor, Übersetzer und Dichter Dr. Dušan Ludvik gewidmet, der in den Jahren 1954-1983 am Institut für Germanistik (Abteilung für germanische Sprachen und Literaturen) tätig war. Das Hauptgebiet seiner wissenschaftlichen Tätigkeit war die alte deutsche Sprache und Literatur. Darüber hinaus hatte er großes Interesse für die Geschichte und Entwicklung des deutschsprachigen Theaters in Ljubljana sowie die Besuche von ausländischen Theaterwundertruppen im slowenischen Raum. Er hat zwei wichtige Abhandlungen zur deutschen Verslehre (Stabreim, Nibelungestrophe u.a.) veröffentlicht. Als selbständiger Dichter hat er vier Gedichtsammlungen herausgegeben. Dušan Ludvik hat sich auch als Übersetzer der Gedichte von Goethe und der ritterlichen Liebeslyrik einen Namen gemacht. Er hat zur Ausbildung vieler Germanistengenerationen Sloweniens maßgebend beigetragen.

Germanistik als wissenschaftliche Disziplin ist in Slowenien genauso alt wie die älteste und lange Zeit die einzige Universität des Landes, gegründet 1919 in Ljubljana. Bereits ein Jahr danach wurde der erste Lehrer für germanische Philologie, Jakob Kelemina, ernannt. Er legte den Grundstein zum Institut für Germanistik. Dieses wurde anfangs unter dem Namen *Germaniski seminar* ("germanisches Seminar") geführt, nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg wurde es in *Oddelek za germanske jezike in književnosti* ("Abteilung für germanische Sprachen und Literatur(en)") umbenannt. Die Abteilung umfasste nicht nur die Forschungsgebiete, die international unter dem Begriff Germanistik verstanden werden, sondern auch Anglistik, Amerikanistik und verwandte Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften. Im Herbst 1998 kam es zu einer Trennung der beiden Hauptdisziplinen der Abteilung, und es gibt nun eine selbständige Abteilung (Institut) für Germanistik (*Oddelek za germanistiko z nederlandistiko in skandinavistiko*).

Im Bereich *Germanistik* waren in der unmittelbaren Nachkriegszeit die Universitätslehrer Janez Stanonik und Dušan Ludvik maßgebend. Professor Dušan Ludvik ist im siebenundachtzigsten Lebensjahr nach langer Krankheit am 12. Juni 2001 verstorben. In den folgenden Ausführungen wollen wir seinen Lebensweg und seine wissenschaftliche Laufbahn in einer kurzen Darstellung würdigen.

Geboren wurde Ludvik am 13. 12. 1914 in Braslovče (in der damaligen Untersteiermark, jetzt Region Štajerska in Slowenien) als unehelicher Sohn der Mutter Katarina. Nach dem Besuch der Volksschule in Braslovče, besuchte er in Wien das tschechische Gymnasium *Komenského* und legte hier 1935 die Matura ab. Gleich danach finden wir ihn an der Universität Prag, wo er Germanistik, Bohemistik und Bibliothekswesen/-wissenschaft studiert. Der Kriegsergebnisse wegen (nach fast zweijährigen Inhaftierung — Februar 1942 bis September 1943 — in Čiginj bei Tolmin, Gonars und Monigo) musste er seine Studien in Ljubljana fortsetzen, wo er 1944 in den Fächern Slowenistik, Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft und Germanistik (Deutsche Sprache und Literatur im Hauptfach) diplomierte.

Seit Februar 1945 war er als Hilfsbibliothekar, seit 1946 als Bibliothekar in der Universitätsbibliothek in Ljubljana eingesetzt, wo er bis 1954 blieb. Im Jahre 1952 begann er an der Philosophischen Fakultät Ljubljana, Abteilung für germanische Sprachen und Literatur, Vorlesungen über das Alt- und Mittelhochdeutsche zu halten. Im Herbst 1954 wurde er an der erwähnten Abteilung zum Assistenten ernannt. Ein Jahr danach erlangte er mit der Dissertation *Nemško gledališče v Ljubljani do leta 1790 (Deutsches Theater in Ljubljana bis 1790)*, veröffentlicht 1957, den Dokortitel und habilitierte sich mit den *Untersuchungen zur spätmittelalterlichen deutschen Fachprosa (Pferdebücher, 1959)*. Im Jahre 1962 wurde er zum Dozenten, 1966 zum außerordentlichen und 1973 zum ordentlichen Professor für Deutsche Sprache und Literatur ernannt. Lange Jahre war er Vorstand des Lehrstuhls für Deutsche Sprache und Literatur (bis 1978). 1983 trat er in wohlverdienten Ruhestand. Als Hochschullehrer befasste er sich in seinen Vorlesungen vor allem mit der historischen Grammatik, der deutschen Sprachgeschichte und der alt- und mittelhochdeutschen Literatur. Seine Vorliebe galt der Prosodie, insbesondere auf den Gebieten *Stabreimvers* und *Nibelungenstrophe*.

Neben den schon erwähnten grundlegenden Untersuchungen auf dem Gebiet des deutschsprachigen Theaters in Ljubljana und der Prosa in Pferdebüchern, galt Professor Ludviks Interesse vor allem der alten deutschen Sprache und der älteren deutschen Literatur. Eine Ausnahme darin bilden seine Abhandlungen über Franz Kafka und Vorlesungen zu Goethes *Faust*.

Im großen Ganzen kann man in Ludviks gesamter wissenschaftlicher Tätigkeit vier verschiedene Bereiche entdecken, aus welchen sich die folgende Einordnung ableiten lässt:

- (1) Zunächst gibt es hier seine Schriften, die sich mit der älteren deutschen Literatur und der deutschen Theatergeschichte befassen. Neben schon oben erwähnten Dissertation, sind die folgenden Arbeiten herauszustreichen: *Die Eggenbergischen Hofkomödianten*, worin eine genaue Darstellung eines Zeitabschnittes dieser Theaterwandertruppe (1675-1700) vorgenommen wird, die Abhandlung *Zur Chronologie und Topographie der Innsbrucker Komödianten (1652-1676)*, worin besonders die Besuche dieses wandernden Theaters in Ljubljana in den Jahren 1662, 1666, 1669, 1672, 1673, 1675, 1676 eine gebührende Würdigung erfahren, und die Untersuchung *Zur Chronologie und Topographie der „alten“ und „späten“ Englischen Komödianten in Deutschland*, die ebenso den Besuch einer englischen Truppe in Ljubljana schildert.

- (2) Bemerkenswert sind Prof. Ludviks Beiträge zur deutschen Sprachgeschichte; hierin finden wir Verknüpfungen mit der Entwicklung der slowenischen Sprache, in welchen Ludvik Grundlegendes zur Lösung einiger Probleme etymologischer und zeitgeschichtlicher Natur beisteuert (z.B. zu der Benennung *edling* bzw. *kosez*, weiters zum Begriff mhd. *schifband* usw.) sowie auch zur Erklärung etlicher slowenischer Hydronyme und Pflanzennamen beiträgt.
- (3) Professor Ludvik ist auch Verfasser von Abhandlungen über deutsche Prosodie (vor allem die mittelalterliche). Hervorzuheben sind zwei Bände in der Schriftenreihe *Literarni leksikon*, die die Slowenische Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Künste herausgibt. Im ersten Buch (Nr. 4 der Schriftenreihe) mit dem Titel *Srednjeveške in staronemške verzne oblike* behandelt er vorzüglich die Nibelungen- und Hildebrandstrophe; ein selbständiges Kapitel widmet er auch der Vagantendichtung, ihrer Genese und den Erscheinungsformen in der slowenischen Literatur. Das zweite Buch (Nr. 17 der Schriftenreihe), *Aliteracija in aliteracijski verz*, untersucht die alliterierenden Versformen im allgemeinen, im Deutschen und im Slowenischen.
- (4) Nicht zuletzt wollen wir noch seine ethnographischen bzw. ethnologischen Abhandlungen erwähnen; in diesem Komplex sind seine Erläuterungen zur slowenischen Tierfabel und ihre Einbettung in der europäischen und auch deutschsprachigen Tradition hervorzuheben.

Dušan Ludvik hat sich auch als ein hervorragender Übersetzer von Gedichten der prominentesten deutschen Lyriker ins Slowenische profiliert. Hier sind Übertragungen mittelhochdeutscher Minnegedichte herauszustreichen (u. a. Der von Kürenberg und Walther von der Vogelweide), vor allem aber sind seine beinahe kongeniale Übersetzungen eines bedeutenden Teils der Gedichte von Goethe hoch einzuschätzen.

Es darf am Ende nicht unerwähnt bleiben, dass sich Ludvik auch als eigenständiger Dichter einen ehrenvollen Namen in der slowenischer Literatur gemacht hat. Obwohl seine lyrische Produktion nicht sehr umfangreich ist, ist sie dank ausgefeilter poetischer Diktion und auserwählter Dichtersprache zu einem bedeutenden Bestandteil der modernen slowenischen Literatur geworden.

In seinen Werken, besonders jedoch in der Erinnerung mehrerer dankbarer Germanistengenerationen wird Professor Ludvik auch weiterhin als ein wirkendes Glied der slowenischen Kulturgemeinde gegenwärtig sein.

Universität Ljubljana

ON PHILIP LARKIN'S POETRY

Jason Blake

Abstract

Using his seemingly crass and apparently pessimistic "This Be the Verse" as a point of departure, this paper examines Philip Larkin's poetry with regard to the poet's own attitude towards the reader. His highly accessible poems, penned in common language, resulted in a reputation as both a 'poet of the people' and a 'philistine'. But for all its crudeness, Larkin's mode of writing always showed a keen awareness of the distancing aspects of modernism. In other words, he was not ignorant of the current political trends of his time, rather he was consciously writing against what he deemed elitist art. In conclusion, the paper returns to "This Be the Verse" and considers the moral import of Larkin's ironically acerbic "Get out early as you can, and don't have any kids yourself".

*"They fuck you up, your mum and dad.
They may not mean to, but they do."*

In terms of beginnings, Philip Larkin's "This Be The Verse" may offend some readers, but it will not bore. The more prudish among us might throw the verse down in disgust, while *Angst*-ridden teenagers might embrace the poem as a form of literary protest against mum and pop. This leaves that smaller segment of the population, professional and lay literary critics, to wonder if the poem is not protesting a bit too much in its very directness and crudeness against the previous generation. Before considering the shockingly pessimistic and crass nature of "This Be The Verse," in this paper I will offer a few examples of the flavour of Larkin's poetry and consider him as a poet far removed from any ivory tower. Furthermore, I will reflect on the possible motivating factors for Larkin's highly accessible mode of writing, primarily with regard to his aversion to modernism, such as that of T.S. Eliot, and his own views towards the poet's responsibility to the reader.

As cited above, the lines introducing "This Be The Verse" sound not only profane but also prosaic - hardly the sort of language we expect from poetry. Yet even the rhyming companions which complete the first verse are hardly virtuosic:

*"They fill you with the faults they had,
And add some extras, just for you." (Larkin, 190)*

It is because of lines such as these that Larkin's reputation as a poet is not that of a virtuoso. Since this reputation is well-documented, perhaps even exaggerated in academic considerations of his works, the following assessment is not untypical: "With Larkin and his English readers, the silliness which helped to make him popular was his genuine, uncultivated, sincere philistinism." (Hall, 10) Silliness? Uncultivated philistinism? These are not words we traditionally hear about first-rate poets. However, as we know from the circulation statistics of tabloid newspapers, these terms might be linked directly to Larkin's popularity. Silliness, being uncultivated, and even philistine, can add to one's popularity by increasing accessibility and thereby ensure a larger potential reading audience. But this, of course, is only half the story, for it ignores Larkin's quality as a poet. True, it might be easy to work with Larkin's poetry even in classes where English is a second language, but accessibility does not mean mediocrity. The quality of Larkin's poetry as a whole rests less on its lack of difficulty than on its formal excellence and earthy sincerity of content, a sincerity that arises from the personal tone Larkin employs. In other words, Larkin's oeuvre adheres to the traditional definition of poetry as the genre that expresses personal experiences and feelings in a most musical manner. Poetry is the stepsister of music that presents the emotions of the poet in conjunction with a particular experience or affinity.

Most of Larkin's poetry consists of portraying a concrete personal situation as a source of reflection. For example, the opening line of "Talking in Bed" portrays the intimacy of lying beside a loved one, but simultaneously corrupts that intimacy by expressing the realization that things are not as they should be: "Talking in bed ought to be easiest [...]" (Larkin, 129) It *ought* to be easiest, but for the voice of the poem, it is not. The concrete image of imperfect domesticity becomes an emblem of isolation. "Sad Steps," meanwhile, starts with a strange mingling of drunken solitude and an unromantic encounter with nature:

"Groping back to bed after a piss
I part thick curtains, and am startled by
The rapid clouds, the moon's cleanliness." (Larkin, 169)

The figurative isolation of "Talking in Bed" becomes literal, for both urinating and an encounter with the sublime are more personal than post-coital chats. Neither experience is likely to be shared with a loved one.

"This Be The Verse" goes well beyond the often painfully personal air of Larkin's other poems. Here the apparent malaise of a general condition, combined with profanity, makes this poem's opening sound more like graffiti than a rendering of a personal experience. The indicative surety of "They fuck you up [...]" even though "[t]hey may not mean to [...]" allows for no exceptions. Parents fail, and that is just the way it is. Even if we assume that this poem springs from a personal experience, say from a horrible childhood, this individual aspect is pushed into the background in favour of universalizing the experience, of stating it as an axiom. Even if we take the message symbolically, as a pessimistic expression of entropy marching across the generations, this is hardly sound argumentation. The blatant generalization about every previous generation rings chauvinistically anti-intellectual. Furthermore, if we combine this unphilosophical thinking with the crudeness of diction, and if we assume that crudeness

of diction is a measure of philistinism, then this poem does little to refute Larkin's reputation as an anti-intellectual, philistine poet. As we shall see, Larkin would probably not be bothered by this judgement, for unlike the modernists whom he disliked, Larkin was not one wear his intellect on his sleeve.

Larkin's distrust of modernism, such as that represented by T.S. Eliot, is hardly a secret. It shows forth his selection of poems for the *Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*, in personal remarks, as well as in his own poetry. Take any given Larkin poem and compare it to one from Eliot, and the contrast will speak loudly. In terms of form, the simplicity of Larkin's folksy rhythms will contrast sharply with the complicated metres of a "Prufrock." In terms of content, Larkin's lines will often seem naively pedestrian, though not always untrue, against the erudite intellectuality of the modernist Eliot. In Larkin's view, modernism was an "aberration" that "blighted all the arts" and was partly responsible for stealing poetry from the "general reader." He decried both the transcendental tendencies in Eliot and, more vehemently, "the culture-mongering activities of the Americans Eliot and Pound." (Quoted in Motion, 354) Though Larkin's poems are permeated by a fearful obsession with death, he had little ink to spill on transcendental themes, and therefore an aversion to at least some of Eliot's poetic musings is understandable. A single comparison will illustrate the contrast between the two. Whereas Eliot writes confidently in "The Hollow Men" of "Those who have crossed / [...] to death's other Kingdom[.]" Larkin essentially pleads ignorance in matters of the afterlife:

"At death, you break up: the bits that were you
Start speeding away from each other for ever
With no one to see [...]" ("The Old Fools"; Larkin, 196)

Also, in an epistolary ad hominem attack, Larkin remarked to a friend that the scribbler of "The Hollow Men" was himself "an old tin can." (Motion, 173)

It seems that the difference between the two lay in their manner of reaching their audience, for Larkin revolted against and was revolted by Eliot's claim that a modern poet was likely to be "difficult." (Day, 30) Where Eliot's poetry breathes the rarefied air of academia, Larkin's remains refreshingly monosyllabic. Where Eliot quotes from a range of languages and literatures, Larkin quotes contemporary vulgarity as often as he quotes other (but only English!) poets. "This Be The Verse" offers a prime example of such quoting, as its title refers to "Requiem," a Robert Louis Stevenson poem, while the first line evokes the prosaic speech of everyday life. If this sounds like an extreme variation on William Wordsworth's call for a poetry using "a selection of language really used by men," such as outlined in the famous preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, it also entails writing about what really happens to men in their daily lives.

Larkin's role as a highlighter of the humdrum, quoter of the *quotidien* accompanies him throughout his career. "Vers de Soci t ," which originally appeared in the same volume as "This Be The Verse," begins with a mocking quote of a de-ephemized invitation:

"My wife and I have asked a crowd of craps
To come and waste their time and ours: [...]"
(Larkin's Italics; Larkin, 181)

If its tone is mocking, it is at least forthright in its disdain for others, for no one can accuse a misanthrope of insincerity. Though this is poetry, the voice of the poet is never far behind the lyrical voice of the poem - that is, one does not have the sense that this speaker is merely a postulated experimental voice. It is the voice of a real man who "deal[s] with farmers, things like dips and feed" ("Livings" 186), with the shortcomings of a real man: "I work all day, and get half-drunk at night." ("Aubade", 206); as well as the concerns of a real man:

"I have started to say
'A quarter of a century'
Or 'thirty years back'
About my own life." ("I have started to say" 185)

Such an approach to poetry accounts for Larkin's preference for the plainly pessimistic diction and the simpler rhythms of, as we shall see later, a Thomas Hardy as opposed to the modernists: "When I came to Hardy it was with the sense of relief that I didn't have to try and jack myself up to a concept of poetry that lay outside my life [...]. One could simply relapse back into one's own life and write from it." (Quoted from Booth, 66) And elsewhere on the same poet: "He's not a transcendental writer, he's not a Yeats, he's not an Eliot; his subjects are men, the life of men, time and the passing of time, love and the fading of love." (Quoted from Motion, 141) In Larkin's view Eliot, the author of "The Social Function of Poetry", had moved himself and his poetry away from themes and subjects that would appeal to the 'general reader.' Furthermore, the artist's retreat behind the work is carried out in an idiom that further distances the writer from the reader. Larkin is personal as can be, but not solipsistic, and his poetry is not hermetic. Even when chronicling personal misery, he never loses sight of the reader.

Larkin's viewpoint on the relationship between the writer and the reader is perhaps best represented in the poem "Fiction and the Reading Public." The poem begins with an imperative:

"Give me a thrill, says the reader,
Give me a kick;
I don't care how you succeed, or
What subject you pick." (Larkin, 34)

It would be easy to read this poem as a lament for the decline of artistic quality as a consequence of an uninterested public demanding that the writer speak down to its level. The tone is highly ironic, as an apparently apathetic reader nevertheless places demands - like a child throwing a tantrum for no apparent reason - for *something* even without knowing specifically what that something is. The diction of the poem makes it clear that the reader is not after eternal bliss, not after some lofty aesthetic perfection, but merely the fleeting pleasure implied by "thrill" and "kick." Merely? As the poem marches along towards its laconic conclusion, which contradicts any romantic cult of genius surrounding the artist, we see what themes propel the poem. On the one hand there is our desire for the poet to brighten our lives, on the other, the wish that he do so in an intellectually accessible manner. When Larkin, later in the poem, rhymes "make

me feel good” with “[I]et it be understood[,]” the suggestion is that the two are linked, as though the trickiness of intellectual themes impedes pleasure. In order to reach contemporary readers, it seems that the poet has to talk down to them.

In the final stanza of “Fiction and the Reading Public,” it becomes apparent that the question of whether or not it is a shame that poets have to speak down to their readers is essentially moot. The imperative of the opening lines is now a threat, as we learn the reason why the reader is in a position to utter commands:

“For I call the tune in this racket:
I pay your screw,
Write reviews and the bull on the jacket -
[...]
Just please me for two generations -
You’ll be ‘truly great.’”

In an admirably condensed manner, Larkin shows that worrying about the autonomy and position of the writer or the work of art is economically irrelevant. It is irrelevant for the simple reason that - and here the politically conservative Larkin becomes blatantly materialist - without readers prompted by critics to buy the works we can forget about poetry reaching any sizeable audience. In true Larkin fashion, this clearly stated point is further underlined by the kaleidoscope of puns whirling around “tune” and “racket.” By calling the shots, readers also literally determine the form of the poem, that is, its music, its “tune.” The most transparent meaning of “racket” in this context is obviously ‘business,’ but this meaning cannot be heard independently of others, including ‘fraudulent scheme,’ and ‘social whirl or excitement,’ each of which casts a dubious shadow on both the sublimity of art and the circumstances of its production. This whirling of meanings leaves the reader wondering whether the difference between a pleasant “tune” and yet another meaning of “racket,” in the sense of a ‘confused din,’ depends solely on the artist’s ability to be ‘in tune’ with his readers. The reader is not only a critic, but a bully.

It would be exaggerated to claim that the ideal interpretation of “Fiction and the Reading Public” is one which embraces the increased role of the reader in both the figurative and literal production of art - as though the poem were some sort of precursor to Reader Response criticism. Nevertheless, the roles of the writer and the reader are playfully reversed, for the latter even *writes* ‘reviews.’ But this elemental step is immediately undercut by a simultaneous realization on the part of this reader-become-writer that the words adorning a book’s jacket are “bull.” Readers realize that they wield power, but they also realize that the basis of this power is rather shaky. One wonders if the later Larkin would have added a syllable of profanity to this assessment, or if he would have left the echoes of the authoritative ‘Papal bull’ to resound ahead of bovine excrement. If Larkin showed restraint, this pun on “bull” leaves us with the implication that idiots pull the strings of power when it comes to the production of art. The suggested irony is that readers and literary critics, though papal in their power, are rather plain in matters of taste.

And so the poem is clearly ironical. But understanding ironical statements, as I will show again later with regard to “The Be The Verse,” need not be a mere matter of

turning a statement on its head. At its best, irony can be an oscillation between the literal and figurative, the stated and the implied. Its full understanding or appreciation requires an imaginative shifting of perspectives on the part of the reader. When, in tragedy, the hero announces to his loved one, just before his obviously imminent death, 'I will not see you for some time....,' our appreciation of the irony depends on both the privileged position of knowing more than the hero himself, and an attempt to identify with him. Thus, even as we observe him as a spectator, we also see the world through his eyes. In other words, irony means hearing or seeing two things at once.

The ironic strain running throughout Larkin's poetry is a musical one - the darkest cynicism is always formally mitigated by his sovereign command of rhythms; shining through this heart of darkness is an omnipresent lightness of verse which delights. In the case of "Fiction and the Reading Public," concentrating on the seemingly dark message means overlooking the fact that these words, placed in the mouth of the 'reader' who functions as the voice of the poem, are not only formally fine but also refreshingly true in their naiveté. If we (naturally excluding ourselves!) accept the tragedy that the general reader is a fop, we should not forget that Shakespeare's Polonius, one of the greatest fops in literature, was also capable of producing tidbits of wisdom. Foppery and useful bits of truth are not mutually exclusive. The analogy is not forced, for like Polonius' "Neither a borrower, nor a lender be," saying to the writer, "Just please me for two generations" is darn good advice. In light of Shakespeare's staying power, 'two generations' is akin to a nine days' wonder and therefore slightly humorous; but at the same time, Larkin's poem is a reminder that there is no need to pack books when we exit this world's stage. Dead men do not read books.

The advice doled out in "Fiction and the Reading Public" cannot be rejected altogether, even if it lacks erudition. On the contrary, for Larkin a lack of erudition, as well as a reticence towards the avant-garde so praised by modernism is a good thing:

"This is my essential criticism of modernism, whether perpetrated by [Charlie] Parker [the jazz musician who, in Larkin's opinion, gave in to the "constant pressure to be different and difficult" at the expense of pleasure], Pound or Picasso: it helps us neither to enjoy nor endure. It will divert us as long as we are prepared to be mystified or outraged, but maintains its hold only by being more mystifying and more outrageous: it has no lasting power." (Quoted in Motion, 398)

The sense here is that art's job is not to educate or edify, but merely to make life more bearable, to help us "endure." This evokes Nietzsche's oft-quoted aphorism that without music life would be a mistake, that music and by extension poetry help to soothe us. In addition, the conclusion we can draw from the above Larkin quote is that the ability to be "different and difficult" is not an intrinsic value; in other words, this quote redeems the simplicity of the "[l]et it be understood" that we see in "Fiction and the Reading Public." Larkin's work in general, and this poem in particular, calls for a philistine leap of faith by reminding us that there is no shame in asking of art, "That we may lie quiet in our beds / And not be 'depressed.'" In the words of Philip Booth, Larkin "is a highly 'visible' poet, who seems to have no inhibition about addressing

the reader in his own candid, natural tone.” (Booth, 6) If Eliot and the other modernists are cerebral twelve-tone composition, Larkin is the Jazz he loved so much.

“Fiction and the Reading Public” can be read as a counterpoint to T.S. Eliot’s canonical essay “The Social Function of Poetry,” in which he articulates the poet’s duties:

“[H]is first duty *qua* poet is to the language of his country. First, he has the duty to *preserve* that language: his use of it must not weaken, coarsen, or degrade it. Second, he has the duty to *develop* that language, to bring it up to date, to investigate its unexplored possibilities. So far as he expresses, in his poetry, what other people feel, he is also affecting that feeling by making it more conscious: in giving people words for their feelings, he is teaching them something about themselves.” (Quoted in Kernan, 160f)

Eliot’s optimistic conception of the poet contains an inherent confidence in the poet’s ability to shape language, to influence the general idiom. But what is the nature of this language to which Eliot refers? What does ‘weakening’, ‘coarsening’ or ‘degrading’ a language mean? If we accept the common currency of these words, this definition of the poet can only come at the expense of Larkin; accepting this definition at face value means denying Larkin the status of a poet as his language is often coarse, his lines more concerned with clarity of subject matter than with the lofty task of developing the language as a whole. It is unlikely that a poem like “This Be The Verse” will teach us anything new about ourselves. In short, Larkin takes his language and ideas from what is already there, as though Larkin were anticipating Terry Eagleton’s objection to formal definitions of poetry when he stated that “there is more metaphor in Manchester than there is in Marvell.” (Eagleton, 5)

Returning to the lines quoted at the outset of this paper, the profanity may sound more like Manchester or Manhattan than Marvell. Larkin’s use of the word puts a novel spin on the common expletive ‘they fuck you up.’ As one critic put it, the poem begins with a “fine pun,” for parents-to-be must get their corrupting hands on each other before they can turn to corrupting the fruits of their labour. (Day, 70) In other words, the profanity in the first line reminds us that the creation of the child necessarily precedes any psychological wounding of the same. Thus, in the biological sense, Larkin’s blatant generalization *is* a truthful rendering of a general condition, if not a truism. But focusing on the weakness of Larkin’s generalizations and the fanciness of his pun draws attention away from what strikes us first about the poem. In “This Be The Verse” we do not hear a particularly poetical voice in the first line, and even before unravelling the ‘fucking’ pun’s double strands, we are more likely to be shocked by the vulgarity of the language itself. Pun or not, it is unlikely that any reader will view this first line as any linguistic development, any investigation of ‘unexplored possibilities.’ Larkin, of course, was as aware of this as his detractors, and he commented more than once on his use of four-letter words, both in practical and pragmatic terms. The first because, “these words are part of the palette”, they simply exist and it is not the poet’s job to deny this existence, to bowdlerize the language; the second because, as every rebellious teenager knows, “[y]ou use them when you want to shock.” (Quoted from Swarbrick, 135)

Just as the specific pun asks us to engage in a sort of doublethink akin to appreciating irony, so did Larkin remain aware of the different functions of coarse language, as the following passage from a letter indicates: "I think it can take different forms, It can be meant to be shocking; it can be the only accurate word (the others being gentilisms, etc.); or it can be funny, in that silly traditional way such things are funny." (Quoted in Burt) However - and this is where the artist distances himself from others working in a four-letter vernacular - Larkin maintained in the same letter: "I don't think I've ever shocked for the sake of shocking." In other words, there is method to his meanness of diction. In yet another remark on the use of four-letter words, Larkin commented: "we live in an odd era, when shocking language can be used, yet still shocks - it won't last." (Quoted in Burt) It may be an easy way of garnering attention, but therein lies its problem, namely in the fact that shock-value is inclined to decline very quickly. To draw a parallel: the shocking quality of the avant-garde is that it is ahead of its time; when times catch up with it and entrench within the cultural canon, it is no longer shocking.

The same holds true for shock-value within an individual work - that is, it fades quickly. Works that begin with a bang, can easily end with a comparative whimper. Not so in "This Be The Verse." The shocking fatalism intimated in the generality of the first lines moves brashly, yet beautifully along towards its dour conclusion. Life is miserable, Larkin says, and it is not getting any better:

"Man hands on misery to man.
It deepens likes a coastal shelf."

The brashness comes out in more indicative surety about our common heritage, the beauty comes out in the perfection of the simile. The "faults" (yet another pun) alluded to in the first stanza grow into a coastal shelf that deepens towards inevitable catastrophe. In a world where parents' best intentions are swallowed whole by the weight of "They may not mean to, but they do," there seems only one solution:

"Get out early as you can,
And don't have any kids yourself."

The final lines of the poem are more vague but also more shocking than the first. Is it a thinly disguised call to suicide? A wish in the style of *The Who's* 'I hope I die before I get old...'? Or is it yet another literary lamentation in the tradition of Job or Oedipus?

Rather than repeating the story, let it suffice to say that while Job's salad years were relatively fruitful, he had a tough going of it later in life, and was driven to utter the following: "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived." (Job ch. 3, v. 3) In plain English, he laments his birth, much like that other famous literary figure who laments his birth, namely, Oedipus Rex: "Not to be born is, past all prizing, best." These quotes are linked not only by intent, but also by the tragic context of their utterance. For both Job and Oedipus Rex are tragic characters in the classical sense of the word, that is, as victims of Fate. Job's position in the Bible is the essence of fatalism, for he is nothing more than the unfortunate object of a wager between God and Satan. His Greek counterpart is nothing more

than the unfortunate object of that cryptic public relations manager of the Gods, the oracle at Delphi. Such utterances are an extension of a wish for death as a means of ending one's suffering and pain. However in each case, the heroes' wish for death is as hyperbolic as their own tragic fates, and they are just as helpless, passive: suicide is a grim but active option, preventing our own birth is beyond our power.

As a parody of the more canonical examples just cited, Thomas Hardy, a writer very dear to Larkin, offers the following quatrain:

"I'm Smith of Stoke, aged sixty-odd,
I've lived without a dame
From youth-time on; and would to God
My dad had done the same." ("Epitaph on a Pessimist" Hardy, 764)

The poem possesses a bounce similar to that of Larkin's own "This Be The Verse" and the diction is slightly humorous, folksy, and anonymous. "Smith of Stoke" is about as unique as 'Novak of Novo Mesto,' and therefore evokes a generic character that detracts from the idea of individual tragedy. In addition, Hardy's vague reference to his source - "From the French and the Greek" - suggests a further generic aspect of Smith's situation, thus undermining a tragic situation by robbing it of uniqueness. If he is unhappy, he is surely not alone in his suffering. The value we allot unusual circumstances is undermined by the vulgarity and banality of Stoke's situation, for the source of this lamentation pales in the light of Oedipus and Job. The bluntness of "I've lived without a dame" implies that sexual frustration is to blame for this wish not to have been born which, Freudian interpretations aside, pales against the problems of Job and Oedipus.

Both Larkin and Hardy often play the time-honoured trick of mismatching form and content. Just as we rarely hear an ode to banality, or a sonnet composed to a goldfish, neither do we expect sheer pessimism to be presented with the levity of a nursery rhyme. (Swarbrick, 138) With the Hardy poem, the humour arising from such incongruity is clearly a means of dealing with the pain of loneliness. The wish never to have been born functions therefore as a sort of sexual gallows humour. In Larkin's "This Be The Verse" things are more complicated because an individual wish is spun into an imperative that tells us, if not to seek actively the grave then at least to avoid propagating the species. Can Larkin really mean this? As Anthony Swarbrick puts it: "The poem teases us by not quite telling us how seriously to take it. In that way, it gets away with being viciously cynical and uncompassionate." (Swarbrick, 138) Larkin's own comments on the poem do little to clear up the issue: "It's perfectly serious as well." (Quoted in Swarbrick, 138) Without the qualifying 'as well,' we could write the poem off as an ode to bitterness. On the other hand, by claiming so strongly that the poem is meant in earnest, Larkin shows a keen awareness that the reader is tempted to dismiss the poem's message as solely comic in its darkness. Larkin's comment on the poem does nothing to slacken the grotesque tension between the comical and the tragic, a tension that cannot be divided. If I accused Larkin of weak thinking at the outset of "This Be The Verse," the impossible imperative in the final stanza is an intellectual gem that shows how irony can allow us to spring the boundaries of logical thinking.

According to Anthony Swarbrick, a similar sort of tension exists in Larkin's works as a whole: "His whole career can be read as the often unresolved conflict between a romantic, aspiring Larkin and the empirical, ironic Larkin, between the aesthete and the philistine." (Swarbrick, 19) The strength of the imperative "Get out early as you can, and don't have any kids yourself" is essentially moral, though far from moralistic. Things are getting worse, we cannot do anything about that, says the ironical Larkin, so the best solution is to do something about it, says the aspiring Larkin. A wonderful contradiction in which he, for all his crudeness and apparent philistinism, both laments and pokes fun at our role in the modern world. In a similarly structured imperative, Larkin writes, elsewhere, "Get stewed: / Books are a load of crap." This was early in his career, yet he continued to write. And read.

University of Ljubljana

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SLOVENE IMMIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA IN RICHARD FLANAGAN'S NOVEL *THE SOUND OF ONE HAND CLAPPING*

Mirko Jurak

Abstract

The core of this article presents a structural and thematic analysis of a novel *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1979) written by a contemporary Australian novelist Richard Flanagan (1961-). The novel deals mainly with the life of a Slovene family, which immigrated to Australia in 1954. The story centres on the life of the heroine, Sonja Buloh, who finds herself at the end of the 1980ies in a severe mental crisis. Besides, the author of this article uses information about immigrants' life in Australia obtained from reports and sketches of a Slovene psychiatrist who treated immigrants in Melbourne. The author of this paper also calls the reader's attention to various literary allusions, which appear in the novel (e.g. Eugene O'Neill, John Keats, W. B. Yeats). It also appears that Flanagan was under a strong spiritual influence of the Indian philosopher Osho (= Bhagwan Shree Rajneshi) and his meditations upon life as published in Osho's book bearing the same title as Flanagan's novel and which first appeared in 1981. The novel is particularly interesting for Slovene readers, because it uncovers the emotional and spiritual life of Slovene immigrants in Australia.

I.

The news that in 1997 the Australian author Richard Flanagan (b. 1961) had published a novel *The Sound of one Hand Clapping* in which the main story develops around three characters who came to Australia in 1954 as refugees from Slovenia, did not only come as a surprise to the reading public in Slovenia but also to critics and literary historians who follow the development of literature in Australia. His first novel, *Death of a River Guide*, did not receive much attention in Europe, in spite of the fact that it won the Australian Fiction Award. The feature film, which was based on *The Sound of One Hand Clapping*, undoubtedly also contributed to the popularity of the novel, which has since been translated into several languages. The novel would remain only another prose work dealing with immigrants and their problems, if it did not have an outstanding aesthetic value, which places it among the best achievements in Australian fiction in the last few decades.

The novel is divided into 86 chapters, each of them bearing as its title the year in which the central episode of the chapter takes place. The exceptions are the last two

chapters (85 and 86), which are untitled and leave the time period open or may simply be the present. The theme of the first chapter, Maria Buloh's singing a Slovene lullaby to her three year old daughter Sonja, and her departure from home into a snowy, blizzard night, is referred to in the novel a number of times in different variations and the same lullaby concludes the novel when Sonja's daughter is born thirty-six years later. The analysis of the time scope dealt within this novel show us that the majority of scenes take place during the years 1989 and 1990 (16 and 25 chapters, respectively), which form together with the last two, undated scenes, exactly half of the novel. However, the middle of this concluding part, consisting of 43 chapters, is broken several times, and in the final 21 chapters the break occurs after the ninth chapter, taking the reader (in six chapters) back to the beginning of the story in 1954. In the first half of the novel the jumps in time occur even more regularly, although the majority of events take place between 1954 and 1966. However, even within these scenes defined by time, the narrator includes many glimpses both of the past and of the future, so that the story of the novel is really completely intertwined; the past, the present and the future mix into an amalgamation of incidents, dreams, memories and hopes of the main characters. The theme of the novel is not only counterbalanced, but it has counterpoints skilfully and tightly interspersed throughout the whole novel.

The novel has a short motto which was written by the Serbian author Ivo Andrić in Sarajevo in 1946. In it, Andrić describes and comments briefly upon the effect of the Second World War on people in Bosnia. In his view the war turned the young ones into old people, "these youthful grey heads, from which the nonchalance of youth has been stolen". This message about the evil of wars obviously did not reach the new generations living in Bosnia and in other parts of former Yugoslavia, for at the time when Richard Flanagan wrote this novel another war was going on in Bosnia. It is ironical enough that among the intellectuals in Bosnia now, when I am writing this article (in summer 1999) a dispute is going on about Ivo Andrić's moral responsibility for these antagonisms, accusing him of his support of the Serbs against the Muslims and the Croats living in Bosnia. The Second World War and its aftermath are also closely connected with the fate of the Buloh family, with "the stolen youth" experienced by Bojan and Maria as well as of their daughter Sonja, who was only sixteen months old when her parents brought her to Australia, where they hoped to find peace, happiness and prosperity. But their dreams did not come true although by the end of the novel the author suggests that after many years of suffering Sonja and her baby may eventually lead a different kind of life.

II.

The narrator opens the novel with a short presentation of the time and the place of the novel: "All this you will come to understand but can never know, and all of it took place long, long ago in a world that has since perished into pit, in a forgotten winter on an island of which few have ever heard" (1). First of all, it may seem strange that the narrator tells the reader that he will never really "know" what happened in Tasmania in 1954; however, as we continue reading the novel we see that the narrator

includes various perspectives about particular events, meditations, feelings of his characters, and that unlike the traditional, omniscient story-teller he does not take it for granted that he can tell us “the whole truth”. As we discover throughout the novel, the truth may appear to be different to different people although in reality it is composed of hundreds of facts, each one of them contributing to a more complete picture of reality. The narrator occasionally admits that he does not know what was going on in the mind of a particular person at a certain moment and therefore his tale is in a way incomplete. So, for example, he uses the syntagma “Some people say ..” (1), or “Some people even say...” (2) to leave the issue open. Characters who appear in the novel are aware that they cannot tell wholly about some event. When Sonja asks her (and her mother’s) friend Helvi, what happened to Maria, Helvi thinks that the story “was not hers to tell. She was no chronicler who might foolishly pretend it was possible to assemble all the details to begin at the beginning and end at the end, but only an old woman ..(who) understood only the unspeakable nature of it” (177). Or, the first three paragraphs of chapter 85, which is set in the year 1954, begin with a sentence expressing such uncertainty, “If this tale could be told properly it would be filled with everything..” (376), and “If this tale could be told fully, you would be able to swim through the strangeness of the weather..” (376), or “All this and more. All of this and more and more and the sea would still not be full or the story told, but of a night child Sonja lay in her bed ..” (377). The author also skilfully – like an author of a detective novel – conceals the facts connected with Maria’s departure and fate until the end of the novel. Flanagan’s narrative technique greatly contributes to the complex vision of the world which he presents in this novel.

III.

The Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy begins his novel *Anna Karenina* with a famous sentence, “All happy families resemble each other, each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way”. This statement is true for the Buloh family, although many of its features were also shared by other immigrant families which came to Australia from Europe after the Second World War. These immigrants brought with them the impact of the hardships and cruelties which happened to them and their relatives during and after the War. Although Maria Buloh only appears in the first chapter of the novel, her fate dominates that of her husband, Bojan, and their daughter, Sonja, almost until the very end of the novel. In the first chapter we see how Maria takes leave from her daughter Sonja on a cold, winter night, trying to soothe her crying baby by singing her a Slovene lullaby about a little black man, almost like Humpty Dumpty, who walks around at night and sends children to sleep. But the child has noticed that something unusual is going on and she will not be pacified. It is obvious that Maria is taking a decisive step, “she knows that she had already gone too far and that she could no longer return” (1). The narrator tells us that at that moment Maria’s awareness of the situation is such that she can notice everything around herself and including herself, as if she were an outside observer and not an active participant in life. We only learn later what kind of reasons made her take this decision which fell so hard on her husband and on her daughter.

Maria's departure increases Bojan's loneliness in this foreign country in which he does not know how to express his thoughts and feelings. He has to work hard in the new environment and he spends the evenings together with immigrants from other European countries whose knowledge of English is also very limited, so that they bridge the gaps in conversation by using vulgar words. When Bojan gets drunk – and this is not rare – he gets quickly enraged and if Sonja mentions his drinking, Bojan calls her vulgar names, often referring at the same time to “a whore of her mother” (16). He drinks so heavily to forget the past and the present, and “Days and weeks fled by with the speed of a few seconds, and a few seconds stretched into an eternity of suffering” (65). He is aware that his inability to communicate does not only prevent him from getting a better job but that he also does not know how to tell Sonja and other people what he thinks and how he feels. He swears in Italian, like the Slovenes at home, not “to profane his native tongue” (93). Through his beating of Sonja he in a way tries to establish a kind of contact with her, but this does not work. She only becomes a more introverted person, losing all emotional contact with her father.

During the war Bojan saw how people were tortured and killed and these experiences made him believe that people are essentially evil. The loss of his wife, the estrangement between him and his daughter and his disappointment with the new life in Australia are the cause of his complete disappointment with ideals he had when young, such as Nation, the Working Class, Socialism, the Future, and so on. His rule in life became not to tell people the truth or what he meant and not to trust anybody (187). He works hard, as if he wished to fight with nature when he cuts stone. When an Australian film team comes to Butlers Gorge, where Bojan is one of many immigrant workers building a dam for a hydro-electric power station, the camera-man sees Bojan as a “wild wog” (66) and the whole scene as “fucking heroic” (67), whereas in reality Bojan's life is full of misery and tragedy.

Bojan does not have a positive attitude towards the Church, because he believes that many priests in Slovenia collaborated with the Fascists during the War. His only retreat into spiritual peace is when he finds the material, the time and the energy to work with wood, to make tables, chairs, cupboards and the like, at which he is really good and he enjoys doing most. Therefore in her imagination Sonja links her father with wood, which is on the one hand symbolically connected with the fact that her father is a difficult person to deal with, a hard-headed, stubborn man, and on the other, by his ability to create something beautiful out of wood by his hard work and imagination. A strange and awkward expression of his love of Sonja is seen in the fact that he buys her the twenty-four volume set of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and tells her to read it so that she would not have to have a future like his.

During one summer Bojan has a connection with a lady friend, Jean, who gets on well with Sonja too. But one morning, when Bojan and Jean send Sonja from their bedroom, Sonja starts to believe that her father's relationship with Jean could mean her exclusion, her separation from him. “She watched with unease as Bojan gently parted Jean's hair with his hands, then with equal tenderness cupped and ever so slowly rolled one of Jean's breasts” (222). This scene fills Sonja with fear that she might lose her father and that night she has a terrible dream in which she cries for help but Bojan turns away from her and embraces Jean. On the following day Sonja tells her father

that she does not wish to share him with Jean. Bojan accepts her decision, but from that moment on his personal life is even more bitter than before. When he visits a brothel in the outskirts of Hobart he meets a prostitute who knows him, but he is unable “to enter through her gates into her body” (286). The prostitute realizes that Bojan has not come there for sex, but to cry over his fate (287), and – as the narrator tells us – to achieve the unachievable, to establish a contact with his wife Maria.

Although Maria troubled Bojan’s memory for years, he only eventually realized that he did not really know her and that he does not know his daughter Sonja either (332). He came to Australia to be free, but his own life and that of his family turned out to be a disaster. The past is symbolically repeated again and again by the clockwork mechanism which plays ‘Lara’s Theme’ from the film *Dr Zhivago*. Bojan is tired of it and in anger he one day breaks the coffee cup – such an impulsive action is also characteristic of Sonja – and the music stops. “He no longer saw chaos. The storm has ended, the song finally over” (328).

The process of Bojan’s transformation which includes the rejection of the idea that darkness always prevails in life and that life is a triumph of evil (407) lasts for decades until he becomes reconciled with his daughter after twenty-two years of separation. He then accepts Sonja as her own person and he is happy that he is going to become a grand-father. But on the whole the reader can see that Bojan’s life has definitely been ruined, he still drinks, though less frequently than before. He becomes estranged even from his drinking pals. He likes to revive old memories, remembering how he and Maria fled from Yugoslavia across the Alps. In such moments he does not care about drinking, and “Even to other wogs he had become a real wog: forever different, alien even to other aliens” (308). Nevertheless he occasionally “seemed genuinely happy” (420), looking at old photographs and sitting in front of his house, with his small garden where he grew strawberries for his grand-daughter and musing with a certain wonder over memories of his past life.

In many ways, Sonja, the heroine of the novel, is the one who suffers most. After her mother’s departure her father turns into “an unrecognizable monster” (13) and therefore the abyss between her and him is deeper from one day to another. She learns not to cry when he beats her, to stifle her sobbing within herself. Sonja has very few pleasant memories from her childhood and her youth, the only exception are the Heaney children, who are considered rather wild by the neighbourhood, but whose mother takes Sonja in as one of her own. Although Sonja does not have such problems with communication as her father does, she is intimidated by him as well as by the two families where she spends her youth. She “never tried to explain herself, nor did she believe there was much virtue in talking things out”, and although she found words “interesting”, “even powerful”, they were never “reliable” (97), particularly when she wished to express her emotions. Her attitude to life changes during the years of her absence from Tasmania, when the past begins to lose a grip on her and when she begins to experience time as a positive, independent quality of life. The narrator conveys her perception of time in a Yeatsian manner: “In a growing gyre, she felt time circling her, at first slowly, as if waiting. And though it seemed dreams were being born within dreams, it was not so. It was only Tasmania in spring.” (20) Unlike the story in the Biblical parable Sonja returns to Tasmania to find there her “long lost parent” (28).

She knows now that Tasmania shaped them and that they shaped it too. This scene occurs in 1989, when changes happen not only at Sonja's personal level but when the history of many European nations changes too, when "the destructive power of evil" – like the Berlin wall – is conquered and "the redeeming power of love" (25) begins to prevail. Only then does Sonja start to capture the present, to turn it into her "dreams of tomorrow" (23) and to leave behind her past. Her change makes it possible for her father to accept her as his equal, as his partner.

Sonja has a very hard life in childhood and in adolescence. The engineer's wife, Mrs Michnik, after the disappearance of Sonja's mother takes Sonja to stay with her, but she does this on the pretence of false Christian ethics. Sonja's life there is miserable and she can hardly wait for her father to take her away. But he does not bring her home, he takes her to live with the Picotti family. Sonja is then in her early teens. Umberto Picotti, who is so jealous about his wife, has no moral inhibitions regarding his sexual desires towards Sonja. So, one day he orders Sonja to come with him for a drive "to find his unfaithful wife and her phantom lover" (128). Although Sonja has noticed that Umberto likes to watch her, to stare at her, like "an animal with semaphoring eyes sizing his prey" (126), she does not expect him to do anything bad to her. But when in the car he starts to tell her how corrupt her mother was and then "He reached over and placed his hand on the inside of Sonja's leg and began to draw it up her thigh." She gets terrified and asks him what he is doing, but Picotti just smiles and "His hand was nearing the top of her thigh .."(130). Fortunately she can escape from his car, although this incident, and Sonja's trying to make Picotti's child accept the hardships of life without crying, terminate her stay with the Picottis.

The narrator does not tell us much about Sonja's life in Sydney between 1967 and 1989. We know she made a professional career from typist to secretary, to an administrative position in an insurance company and finally to a productive assistant in a television company. This means that she is no longer condemned to a life in the diaspora (76). We also learn very little about her personal life, which is summarized in a few sentences. "She had known off and on the sweet warmth and heavy odours of a shared bed and a common life, had slept with many men, and, when younger, a few women, sometimes out of desire and more often simply for comfort. But then she found she could no longer satisfy desire nor find comfort" (59). By her late thirties she had had enough of men who cheated her, who "used her for sex or for company or for money or for any combination of the three" (61), and when she learns that she is pregnant she definitely does not wish to continue her love affair. She lays the main blame for this on her past and she makes an appointment at a Sydney clinic to have an abortion after her return from Tasmania. But her friends Helvi and Jiri try to persuade her that she should stay in Tasmania and she decides not to return to Sydney just before she should embark the plane.

Sonja realizes that life could have been different when she visits the place where Jean once lived. Jean's home has been turned into a barn, the trees have no blossoms and Jean's window no lace. Sonja feels guilty about this, as if she had betrayed her father and Jean, making the life of each one of them so lonely and miserable. There was nobody with whom she, or Bojan, or Jean could share the happiness and the sadness of life. This is "the sound of one hand clapping" (236), the emotional emptiness

and the alienation of each one who once used to share the feelings with others. The reconciliation with her father and her love and responsibility towards the baby she carries in her womb are the main reasons for her new, positive attitude towards life. After she gives birth to her daughter and becomes reconciled with her father, her emotions begin to function naturally, she can laugh and she can cry, her feelings are no longer repressed.

Sonja's decision to start leading a completely different kind of life is the only solution against despair, which forced her mother into committing suicide. Sonja hears the story about the death of "an immigrant woman" in Tasmania when she sees on the TV an interview with an old man, Preston, who used to be the AWU organizer. He was coming on a motor-bike to Butlers Gorge on the very same night when her mother left the settlement in the blizzard. He remembers that the woman wore "a scarlet coat and beneath it a dress edged in lace" (245). When Sonja wishes to extract the fact about her mother's destiny from Helvi, she avoids answering her directly and tells her only that Maria was a good woman and a good mother, who loved Sonja (178). She finally learns the truth from her father, who tells her that her mother was raped by SS soldiers during the War, when she was only twelve years old, and that the same happened to Maria's mother and her sister. Maria could never fully recover from this event, and her family's miserable life in Australia must have been another cause for her mental problems, which Bojan did not even notice. Maria wished and – at the same time – did not wish to remember her native village, set in the midst of the Julian Alps, buried in snow in winter and surrounded by green pastures and flowers in summer. The pressure of the new environment was too much for her, she could endure it no longer. Her complete lack of belief in life forced her to commit suicide.

A Slovene psychiatrist, Jurij Zalokar, who spent the years 1986–1989 as a doctor at a hospital in Melbourne, mainly responsible for patients who came to Australia from Slovenia and the rest of Yugoslavia, enumerates in his autobiographical account *Mavrična kača* (The Rainbow Snake, 1990) the main symptoms typical of migrants with mental problems. They are: alienation from society, introversion, the loss of perception of reality, unbearable nostalgia about their native country, uncertainty about moral values, hallucination, spiritual regressiveness. These symptoms are often caused, says Zalokar, by the immigrant's inability to communicate with the native population and it is particularly hard for them not to be able to communicate even with their own children. They learn English fairly quickly and because they do not wish to be different from other children, not to be ridiculed by them, many of them avoid using their mother tongue even at home (Zalokar 19–24, 81). He noticed that among the first generation of Greek, Italian and some of the Yugoslav migrants, 70 or even up to 90% of them still did not speak English although they had lived in Australia for many years. Zalokar mentions as a special cause of migrants' health problems their inability to express their thoughts and feelings, which may even induce them to commit suicide (94). These psychological observations as causes of mental distress may also – at least partly – be applied to members of the Buloh family, and Flanagan presents such symptoms in a very personal, individual manner.

On the day following Maria's disappearance from the village, the men building the dam, including Bojan, are taken by a truck to their building site. All of a sudden a

Czech fellow notices something in the wood that he saw before in the Bohemian forests, and a dozen other men see the body of Maria Buloh, “a stiffening corpse suspended upon a rope from a tall tree” (397). At first Bojan Buloh cannot even cry and then he begins to sob uncontrollably. The noise around him means nothing to him and his thoughts – not unlike the meditations of Shakespeare’s heroes – revolve in his mind about the simple facts of life. “There was birth and there was love and there was death, and there was death and there was noise, this endless noise that confused people, making them forget that there was only birth and love and that each and everything died” (399). If Sonja is troubled in her dreams with the image of her departing mother, Bojan tries to forget the sight of his dead wife in work and in intoxication. Although his tragic story is unique it resembles in some ways other stories briefly mentioned in the novel, as e.g. of his Polish fellow-worker Pavel, whose wife and children disappeared during the war, or of some other immigrants, whose lives were also ruined in one way or another.

This brings us to “the wogs”, or “the reffos”, as the Australians call immigrants from Europe who are of non-British descent. The immigrants left post-Second World War Europe and migrated to Australia hoping to find there a new, happy life, although for many immigrants of the first generation the golden promise of a better future does not come true. But most of them did not feel good in their native country either, like Jiri, who was born in Moravia, half Sudeten German and half Czech, but considered by both peoples as an outsider. Most of “the wogs” do not speak proper English and so they can only share their lives with other immigrants. They are only “prospective Australians”. Some of them, like the Greek shopkeeper whose name was changed into “John Kerr” (157), have even lost their personal identity, not to speak of losing their national identity when they become Australian citizens. They are lonely men who know that they are going to die lonely and this is why they fear the night and stay up late in the pub and get drunk to forget. At the back of their minds creeps the thought that death will do them a favour and relieve them of the burden of life.

A very different view about the life of migrants than the one presented in Flanagan’s novel is shown in the personal account of a Slovene immigrant Ivan Kobal, who came to Australia in 1950 and spent the years 1954–1958 helping to build the Snowy Mountains hydro-electric scheme. His presentation of the hard life, human suffering and deaths which occurred during these years is much more warm-hearted and optimistic than the story of Flanagan’s novel. Kobal sees the above-mentioned project as “A challenge and a reward, a battle and a victory in time of peace ... (as) a model case of human endeavour, a test of faith in a better future” (4). For him this enterprise is a statement how men of different nationalities build the mosaic of multicultural Australia.

Flanagan does not depict “the old settlers” in Australia in a very pleasant light either. Those who represent the administration, the power, are often conceited, self-satisfied and they wish to make Australia a copy of Europe. They believe that the new immigrants will receive from them the greatness of British civilization, its language, belief in justice and fair play and in return they expect from them hope and determination (44). They do not wish to remember that the land was not empty when their ancestors got there and that they took it away from the “blackfellas”. They deny the history of

Australia and the author makes a parallel between them and the Chinese Emperor Shih Huang Ti, who ordered the construction of the Great wall of China and the destruction of all books preceding his reign. They build enormous electric water-power stations to make Tasmania one day "Australia's Ruhr Valley" (21), but in reality these monstrous projects are the sign of their vanity. Even within the time scope of the novel the dam begins to decay and it seems to Sonja "an historical oddity as curious and as inexplicable as a Mayan temple in a Mexican jungle", as "a relic from another age" (26). One of the reasons why Sonja wishes to visit Tasmania again is that in spite of some ecological disasters Tasmania has on the whole still preserved its natural heritage. Sonja wishes to see again "the peculiar Tasmanian light and what it touched upon, what it was that stood between the sun and the earth, that strange light of negative images, whereby the sky could be dark as pitch and the earth could glow ruby gold, and only shadows holding the two together" (17). But such an attitude reflects also the change in Sonja's view upon life, the change for which she has searched for a long time.

IV.

The novel is extremely rich in imagery and in many literary, historical, political and religious associations, which make Richard Flanagan's work *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* a literary masterpiece. The author creates a gloomy atmosphere by his presentation of a wild blizzard in which Maria is seen like an angel, or like a spectre, which will be sucked up in a gale. Her scarlet dress is contrasted with the white snow and black clouds, which "shroud the star and moonlit heavens", indicating Maria's tragic end and they are accompanied by "the whispering land" (1) of the settlers in Butlers Gorge. Maria wears "burgundy-coloured shoes" (1) which are also suggestive of blood and of her premature death.

When Sonja returns to Tasmania and stops at the dam, the narrator uses the transferred epitheton to present her feelings as "the coldness of the stalactite tears falling down the dam face" (33). She begins to dig the bush covered peat in the rainforest and she finds pieces of porcelain, which bring her the memories of childhood, but which are also connected with her father's rage. When Sonja returns to Tasmania she is physically beautiful, she sees in the mirror her ripe body, like the wings of the swan growing from her padded shoulders, almost like that of an angel or like a dove in Henry James's novel *The Wings of the Dove*. Sonja no longer needs to complain about false friends (like King David in *Psalms* 55:6) to give her "wings like a dove" so that she could fly away "and be at rest", because she has found her inner peace and is no longer under the wings of "the terrors of death". She has found peace under the wings of God who is Love (*Psalms* 17:8, 57:1) as well as in her "trust in Life" (*Psalms* 36:7, 61:4, 91:4). Flanagan's use of Biblical symbolism suggests a variety of allusions and an optimistic ending.

Bojan's renunciation of Yugoslav citizenship and his acceptance of naturalization is compared to a storm in the Adriatic sea and "the young girl-Queen and Ming Menzies circled around him like wolves" (42). When Bojan has a nightmare he sees in his dream "a fucken Tassie tiger" (58), which is supposed to be extinct, and when the tiger

opens its jaw Bojan sees in it terrible things which had happened in Slovenia and elsewhere in Europe during the War (58). After the disappearance of his wife Bojan's mind seems to exist in "a huge dark tunnel" (65) – almost like the tunnel often described by people who were on the verge of death –down which he is travelling towards some distant and almost unreachable ray of light. The novel is full of imagery of light and darkness and it is paradoxical that the evil of life, which is so often present, is terrifying but also in a way beautiful like Blake's tiger, and the symbol of light is like starry nights in Australia, which are also beautiful, although the stars cannot be reached.

Maria and Bojan are symbolically defined by two powerful images, that of lace and of wood. Sonja's mother walks out into the night in a dress embroidered with lace and lace often appears in Sonja's dream related to her mother (19). In some regions of Slovenia lace is still a typical product connected with folk art. It is characterized by its fragility, its endurance and its beauty, and these qualities may also denote the character of the person who made it. In Slovenia making lace ornaments has a long tradition and lace is thus connected with the past (also in Sonja's life). Even Preston, who only very briefly saw Maria on the night of the blizzard, remembers her by the embroidery of her dress (245). Bojan's friend Jean has a window curtain embroidered with lace and Sonja is afraid that her father might – like her mother's lace – one day dissolve into air or in the wind (260, 387, 400).

The colour which is closely associated with Maria is red, the scarlet and the burgundy shades of it. The red colour sometimes has a positive connotation in colour symbolism, but in this case it is linked with blood, with death. The scarlet coat, which Maria wears, may represent a deconstruction of the symbolic red letter "A", denoting adultery for Hester Prynne, the heroine in Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter*. But Maria was, unlike Hester, raped and lost her innocence forcefully; nevertheless this incident left a lasting imprint of shame and guilt on her soul and it was known to her surroundings. In many ways she reminds the reader of another destruction of a character, that of Mary Tyrone in Eugene O'Neill's play *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. Mary's husband James, like Bojan in Flanagan's novel, expects her to be on the one hand like the Virgin Mary, a faithful wife and a good mother, and on the other, to be his sensual mistress. Sonja even places the picture of her mother on an elevated place, together with the picture of the Virgin Mary. Sonja, unlike her mother, does not wish to give way to the destructive, nihilistic forces which also exist in her, and she knows that she is not faultless. But she realizes that life is not perfect and that her dreams to be like a toy ballerina "forever frozen in a single beautiful dance, circling within a circle forever" (325) cannot come true. Flanagan joins here various images from John Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and W. B. Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium", and he counterpoints them with Sonja's awareness that she is not a fair and happy maiden proclaiming "beauty is truth", nor can she be a golden bird living forever. In Flanagan's modern world the old myths connected with man's hope for eternity are destroyed, they are acceptable only within the limitations of human imperfection.

Flanagan's diction and style are extremely rich and varied, ranging from vulgar language to everyday and elevated, poetic language. The rhythmical structure of his sentences is sometimes even closely linked with the Biblical style (repetitions, oppositions, terseness and conciseness), as for example in the description of Bojan's

lament over his uneasy relationship with his daughter Sonja (e.g. 51–59, 263). The author also includes a Slovene song, a lullaby, which is the *leitmotif* through the whole novel. A number of other Slovene words, which are included in the novel appear in a context which provides their easy understanding. They are mostly written phonetically so that their Slovene pronunciation can be guessed by English readers.

V.

Richard Flanagan's novel *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* presents a new perspective upon the lives of Slovene and other migrants in Australia in the period after World War Two. Igor Maver expresses the following opinion about the book: "Is it perhaps an exaggeration to say that with Flanagan the Slovene migrant experience entered Australian 'mainstream' literature and Australian consciousness, that it broke loose from within the borders of the Slovene ethnic group living in Australia? Definitely so ...It is also a subtle artistic depiction, a document of a certain historical period in Tasmanian past and of its people, a region not too frequently represented in the landscape of Australian literature. And finally, the book is a domestic novel, testifying to a domestic migrant family tragedy and survival, which can be achieved through love and understanding" (Maver 81–2). Flanagan shows how the treatment of immigrants coming from non-English speaking countries by the rest of the population and by the government administration put these people – at least the first generation – in an inferior position to the rest of the population. However, the second generation of immigrants to which the heroine of the novel, Sonja Buloh, also belongs, becomes equal to the rest of the Australians. Her journey is painful not only because of the social and racial prejudices with which she was faced in her youth, but also as a result of the unhappy personal and family circumstances in which she grew up. Richard Flanagan gave an interview to a Slovene TV reporter Aleksander Čolnik (Flanagan 1999). In this interview Flanagan says that his wife Majda, who is of Slovene origin told him about her family struggle to survive in Australia, where her parents came after the Second World War: "They left their homes and they never really found a new home, they forsook one language and they never really gained a new language" (*Ib.*), they had to go through terrible experiences, but most of them saw their experiences in a tragic-comic way. Flanagan chose to write about a Slovene migrant family because he believes that Australia is a country of migrants, and because that was the world he knew best. These people had experienced great tragedies, they had traversed certain depths of the human soul and therefore their view upon life is more profound.

This brings us back to the meaning of the title Richard Flanagan used for his novel. Although he says in the above-mentioned interview that the title appealed to him because of its openness to interpretation, because it is enigmatic, it is possible to surmise that Flanagan knew at the time of his writing this novel of a book of meditations, written by an Indian philosopher Osho (= B. Rajneesh, 1931–1990). These were published in 1981 under the very same title as Flanagan's novel (Osho, *The Sound of One Hand Clapping*: 1981). Some of the main views expressed by Osho about his "new religious consciousness" may very well be linked with the state of mind as

reflected in Sonja at the end of the novel. Osho's meditations lead the reader to accept the necessity of greater self-awareness, and this is also the point Sonja reaches at the end of her spiritual journey. Osho mentions many times in his meditations that one should surpass alienation from society and from oneself by finding one's true being, by making one's life genuine, sincere, in union with the universe, with its totality and wholeness, in order to achieve a state of blessedness, God's kingdom, which exists in every human being. In order to achieve this goal one should first of all get to know oneself and one's nature (17), to reject the limitations imposed on one by society (24), to realize that time is only the past and the future, whereas the present time is our real being, our real existence (32). According to Osho, life is energy which can create love or serfdom, and the latter leads us to material and sensuous experiences of life that are only the surface of our being, and are not the authentic, spontaneous life (32, 35, 37, 42, 253). The truth of life cannot be found in one's ambition to conquer the world, but in self-awareness, in meditation in blessedness, in the innermost circle of one's being, in one's self-identity and integrity (63, 147, 282). Life should be transformed into "growing in love", into friendship, into the experience of innocence and truthfulness (206, 212, 225). Only when one can hear the music of the sound of one hand clapping within himself, the song of the heart, can one reach the state of self-less love, of blessedness, sacredness, of celestial music linking the human being with the universe (57, 92, 113, 115, 124), and only then one can transcend time and death (92). Blessedness is experienced in man's deepest loneliness, in the existential experience of finding the meaning of one's life which brings him into unison with God (146, 163, 243 etc.), when man finds absolute happiness and beauty of existence within his inner self, when he can listen to the music of one hand clapping (344). Regardless of the fact whether Richard Flanagan knew these thoughts when he was writing the novel we can see that the spiritual parallels between Osho's meditations and Flanagan's solution of the novel are very close, if not almost identical.

The author deconstructs in the novel several myths which are closely connected with aesthetic, social, political, historical, religious and other Western traditions and norms. Flanagan's rich use of imagery and his accomplished style make the novel a modern work of art in which the story of the Buloh family transcends personal and historical limitations. Time in the novel is seen as a construct very much depending on the point of view from which it is perceived, but when the life of European immigrants to Australia is interpreted references to broader social and historical dimensions should also be taken into consideration. Although Flanagan's characters are ordinary people they do not capture through the artist's vision only personal relevance, or relevance connected with Slovene and other European immigrants to Australia, but they also embody the spirit of modern man. Thus Richard Flanagan's novel becomes open for many interpretations to readers throughout the world, not least to the above-mentioned meditation by the Indian philosopher Osho.

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»NOTHING WILL COME OF NOTHING«: AN INTERVIEW WITH SIR RICHARD EYRE

Igor Maver

Abstract

The article features an interview with Sir Richard Eyre, a long-time Director of the Royal National Theatre in London and the director of the production of William Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear* in the very same theatre in 1997, which also saw a successful film version. Sir Richard openly spoke about his dilemmas as a director in the process of staging the play, finding the right cast, about rehearsals and the first night performance, as well as about some key scenes interpreted by him somewhat differently, although he essentially firmly relied on the text and the more traditional staging of this famous Shakespeare's tragedy.

This interview with Sir Richard Eyre was made on Sunday 27 February 2000 at the Castle of Leopoldskron in Salzburg during the Salzburg Seminar on Shakespeare around the Globe. Sir Richard Eyre, C.B.E., formerly for many years Director of the Royal National Theatre in London, a famous theatre and also film director, graciously consented to answer the questions about his staging of William Shakespeare's play *King Lear* at the Royal National theatre in 1997, the stage production which was later also made into a film version that was shown on the Slovene TV in the year 2001.

Question: When did you decide to embark on this particular 1997 production of *King Lear* in London and how does a stage director feel on such an occasion – confronting Shakespeare?

Answer: I'd committed myself in the summer of 1995 to directing *King Lear* almost two years later. When you approach a new play as a director or an actor, you carry no baggage, you are free of opinion. With a Shakespeare play you arrive with pantechinons: you cross continents of critical prose. When I thought about the play I felt as if I was balancing the summit of an inverted mountain on my skull. I started by taking a frail defensive position: »It's only a play«, I said. But as my confidence grew I began to realise that far from being a life-preserving reductive position, it was the only proper position to take – and not just because I'm a theatre director. I became aware of the comparative rarity of commentators – all convinced of the greatness of the work on the page – to concede, or perhaps even to understand, the singularity of Shakespeare's genius. Shakespeare was writing plays not for publication or reflective analysis, but for a medium that only exists in the present tense, a medium which depends

for its success – at the moment of performance – on the skill of the actors and the imagination of a willing audience.

Question: Do you consider Shakespeare a ‘bad’ poet in his being a ‘good’ playwright, as it has been suggested, and did this at all influence your staging of this particular production of *King Lear*?

Answer: Well, ... Shakespeare is often referred to as a poet, and a poet of variable abilities – as if to describe him as a playwright and to judge him as such is to risk some sort of intellectual infection. Even such a keen theatregoer as Dr Johnson could only view him through the prism of poetry: »Shakespeare«, he said, »never had 6 lines together without a fault«. Johnson’s successors are all around us, one of them boasted in a newspaper column that she didn’t need to see any production of *Lear* in the theatre – and in particular *my* production; her friend had been to see it and had e-mailed her response: »No sequins. They all took their clothes off, shouted and died«. Poetry is applied to plays, not as Dr Johnson seemed to think, like a sort of decorative paint, but as an expressive tool that gives a greater pulse, momentum, and distillation of thought and feeling than prose. However, it’s no less a medium for delineating individual characters – and for that reason it makes no sense to criticize Shakespeare’s characters for speaking »bad verse«, any more than to criticize Harold Pinter’s for speaking »bad prose«. If Shakespeare had wanted to write his plays in prose he would have been more than capable of it – as a glance at the ‘Willow’ scene in *Othello* will confirm. To appreciate Shakespeare thoroughly is to believe in him as a writer who wrote for the theatre in verse as a matter of choice, which is why the wonder of *King Lear* lies not only in its profundity but in its accessibility. To believe in the theatre is like believing in religion: you have to experience its effect rather than discuss it – which is part of what makes it so much more difficult for me to describe the making of a production than to do the thing itself ... (laughter).

Question: So, why did you, in fact, choose *King Lear* for the 1997 production?

Answer: You see, I have been a director for over 30 years and by the time I decided to do *King Lear* I had directed at least two thirds of Shakespeare’s plays, but I had always fought shy of *Lear*. About 15 years ago – just before I started to run the National Theatre – I was asked by Joe Papp to direct it in New York with George C. Scott. »Are you ready for *King Lear*«, he asked combatively. I obeyed my instinct. »No«, I said, »I don’t think I am«. But until recently I didn’t know why. The first production of *Lear* that I saw was Peter Brook’s production with Paul Scofield in the early sixties. Since this was almost the first Shakespeare production I’d seen I had no sense at the time of its iconoclasm or its historical importance. I barely knew the play, and I was knocked sideways by its savagery, its bleakness, and its extraordinary prescience. I’ve come to know Peter Brook well in the last ten years, and not the least of the challenges when I came to direct *Lear* was the certainty that I would have to confront his criticism of my production. I can’t say exactly what made me decide to approach Ian Holm, but the fact that he was approaching 65, and was an actor for whom I had boundless admiration and considerable affection had something to do with it. He was intrigued. He didn’t say yes, and he didn’t say no. »How does one play an 80 year old man«, he said.

Question: How did you decide for a minimalist staging of the play in the first place, and how is it that you as a stage director rather unusually insisted on creating a series of separate scenes in mostly domestic interiors?

Answer: Good question, indeed. It's a commonplace to observe that Shakespeare has a 'filmic' style; but, only by providing a staging that allows a seamless cut from the end of one scene to the beginning of another can we begin to experience it – for instance, the 'cut', in the cinematic sense, from Edmund's »The younger rises when the old doth fall« inside the house, to Lear. Kent and the Fool on the heath in the storm; or from Kent's soliloquy in the stocks to Edgar escaping from his pursuers. These scenes are simply robbed of their power unless the pulse of the verse – and the action – is allowed to beat unbroken. And, as in so many other Shakespeare plays – *Hamlet* and *Richard III* to name but two – the vertiginous speed and the breathless plausibility with which events develop are a crucial element of the descent into disaster. We have to keep rediscovering ways of doing Shakespeare's plays. They don't have absolute meanings. There is no fixed, frozen, way of doing them. Nobody can mine a Shakespeare play and discover a 'solution'. To pretend that there are fixed canons of style, fashion, and taste, is to ignore history. When there is talk of 'classical acting', what is often meant is an acting style that instead of revealing the truth of a text for the present day, reveals the bombast of yesterday.

Question: But how do we, then, present plays in a way that is true to their own terms, and at the same time bring them alive for a contemporary audience?

Answer: It's much easier to achieve this in a small space, and it's no coincidence that the most successful Shakespeare productions of recent years have been done in theatres seating a couple of hundred people at most, where the potency of the language isn't dissipated by the exigencies of voice projection, and the problems of presentation – finding a physical world for the play – become negligible. We have to avoid latching on such a visual conceit that tidies up the landscape of a Shakespeare play, and avoid trying to impose unity through a rigorously regimented verse-speaking. Verse-speaking should be like jazz: never on the beat, but before, after, or across it. An Elizabethan audience would have responded to the pulse, the rhythms, the shapes, sounds, and above all meanings, within the consistent ten-syllable, five-stress, lines of blank verse. They were an audience who listened.

Question: How do you personally tackle this actor-audience relationship in your productions?

Answer: We have to aim at re-establishing the relationship between actor and audience that had existed in Shakespeare's theatre and I don't personally believe we can do this by looking for a synthetic Elizabethanism - a sort of aesthetic anaesthesia, involving the audience in an insincere conspiracy to pretend that they were willing collaborators in a vain effort to turn the clock back. We have to use scenery not to decorate and be literal, but to be expressive and poetic. It must also be specific; it must be real; it must be minimal and it must be iconographic: and this is what I have done in the production of *King Lear*.

Question: When did you actually start thinking seriously about the play?

Answer: In August of 1995, by reading it aloud to my wife who had just had an operation, I started to develop a sense of what the play meant to me: a play about

family, about fathers and their children, about children and their fathers. There are two fathers in the play – one with three daughters, the other with two sons. Both receive a brutal education in parental love, both in a sense being made to see through blindness. I began to realise why I had shied away from the play until now: I didn't know enough about the subject-matter, but with the death of my parents I was no longer a child: I was an orphan, a grown up, and a parent myself – and I was ready to understand *King Lear*. I realised my sympathies had shifted with time. When I was young I saw two terrible daughters abusing a man more sinned against than sinning. Now I was no longer prepared to judge: all were to blame, all could be forgiven.

Question: When did you decide for introducing the 'naked' storm scene, which some saw as shocking and too advertising?

Answer: Ha, ha, ha ... (laughs heartily). In the fall of 1995 both Ian Holm and myself were working in New York. We would meet once a week in a favourite restaurant and talk about *Lear*, of fathers, children, and of kings. Of parental tyranny, different only in scale from the political variety. We talked of old age, and we talked of madness. »If we get the beginning right«, we said, »it will all fall into place«. We must think of the habit of power: a man who never has to ask for anything, a man who only says 'thank you' – possibly for the first time in his life – on the edge of death«. »And I have two thoughts«, said Ian, »about the storm«. »Oh, so do I«, said I. »You speak«, he said. »Real rain is the first«, I said. Ian nodded. »And the second«, I said. »He must be naked«, Ian said. And I nodded; anything less than an 'unaccommodated man' would be dishonest. I know of no other actor who would have suggested this, agreed to do it – but more importantly have made it seem so inevitable, so unself-advertising, and so deeply shocking.

Question: Could you tell us more about the significance of the rather bare, minimalist stage in the production?

Answer: I had a clear view of how I wanted to stage the first scene: a long table around which the family sat with Lear at the head of the table. An image of order, of hierarchy, of family, one that would resonate for everyone in the audience – a family meal, a family meeting, the king's cabinet. I started to understand that the play depended on a world of the 'versuses' of life: the home and the heath, comfort and privation, soft clothes and nakedness, riches and poverty, interior and exterior. I understood the stark horror of being locked out of your own home by your children, and this led me to believe that I need walls and doors, a sense of being inside, protected from the elements, and a sense of being outside, exposed to wind and rain and mud and nature. I wanted to create a world on stage that was consistent within its own terms, specific but ahistorical, that didn't lean on specious notions about the look of pre-Christian Britain, eschewing woad and iron age jewellery. In short, the design of the set and the costumes had to serve Shakespeare's imaginative universe: all expression and no decoration.

Question: To what an extent did you decide to edit the text of the play?

Answer: Any director of a Shakespeare play has to make a number of choices about cutting the text prompted perhaps by anxiety about the performance length, perhaps by anxiety about comprehensibility, or even to suit a directorial conceit. I cut a little for length largely in the Fourth and Fifth Acts, and perhaps 100 lines on the grounds of comprehensibility – largely the Fool's obscurer jokes and the wholly

untranslatable parts of Edgar's 'Poor Tom' speeches. I decided to put the interval after the 'joint stool' scene, at the tail end of the storm. This meant starting the second act with the short, sharp shock of the blinding of Gloucester, which had the effect of ending the first half with Edgar's speech:

When we our betters see bearing our woes,
We scarcely think our miseries our foes...

That became a pre-echo of his speech at the end of the play:

The weight of this sad time we must obey;
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.

I had decided to place Edgar on stage at the beginning of the play, watching the eclipse of the sun, establishing him in the mind of the audience perhaps as a thinker, a rationalist, a student scientist. Apart from inserting Edgar at the start of the play, I made no changes to the content or position of his speeches.

Question: The play was staged in 1997; when did you start casting and rehearsing your cast?

Answer: I started to cast the production in the autumn of 1996, and rehearsals were to start in January of the following year. If politics is the art of the possible, casting is the art of the available. Casting is a lottery: it's an almost invariable rule of casting that the actor and actress you want has just signed for a film, or is planning to have a baby or is about to retire. The luck in a production is in obtaining the right actors at the right time. When you cast you start with certain given facts derived from your understanding of the play – the demands of the characterisation and the play's dynamics. With *King Lear* you under-cast at your peril: there are 11 parts which need to be strongly played, anything less will dilute the power of the play. I am convinced that part of the play's meaning lay in the sense of the young needing to be liberated from the oppression of the old – the universal feeling of the child towards the parent, or as Edmund says: »The younger rises as the old doth fall«. This led me to the conviction that there were four old men in the play: Lear, Gloucester, Kent and the Fool. It may be pointed out that Kent says in answer to Lear's enquiry that he is 48. This, I was convinced, was intended as a joke, and I was reassured that it was consistently received as such by the audience.

Question: And rehearsing, then, started soon afterwards?

Answer: Not until the third week of January 1997. Rehearsals have to begin somewhere and this began with a meeting of the cast, and a reading of the play. I talked a little and my words drifted like incense over a group of actors who, regardless of their mutual familiarity, were at that stage united only in their nervous anticipation and social unease. I stood like a heron, rigid with anxiety, and offered the cast a few simple precepts, which can be used in the production of any play, as much to remind myself of the guidelines as to inform the cast:

1. You may be daunted by a play that appears to be about everything. At this moment it may appear to be a mountain that is inaccessible and unscaleable. But trust your own knowledge of the world: this is a play about two fathers – one with three daughters, the other with two sons. Everyone is an expert on the subject of families.

2. Believe that the writer is a playwright who understands what he is doing. However great Shakespeare's genius, it doesn't help to treat him as a sort of holy fool, or as a messianic seer. He was a playwright, and an actor, and a theatre manager. He was utterly pragmatic; his plays would not and could not have worked if they had been shrouded in obscurity and abstract conceits.
3. Treat the verse as an ally not as an enemy. Look at the scansion, the line endings, the line breaks, the changes of rhythm: they are all aids to understanding the meaning and how to convey it.
4. Don't make judgments on the characters. Let us – and the audience – discover what the moral scheme of the play is. Don't describe anyone as good or evil; let us decide on the basis of their actions.
5. Rely on the evidence of the text, not on speculation, or psychological theory, or conceptualising, or spurious historical research.
6. Try to be simple; trust that Shakespeare is trying to do the same, however profound, eloquent, and complex is his intention. Be specific: all good art is derived from specific observations, all bad art from generalisations.
7. Our job is to discover and animate the meanings of the play: its vocabulary, its syntax, and its philosophy. We have to ask what each scene is revealing about the characters and their actions: what story is each scene telling us? We have to exhume, examine and explain: line by line, scene by scene. We have to understand the mystery of the play - in the light of that understanding.

Question: When did you actually start working with the text?

Answer: Then we read the play, not apologetically as often happens at a first reading, but following Ian's example, with daring and ferocity. Right after that we sat around and talked for a few days. Partly as a means of trying to gain purchase on the mountainside, partly as a way of putting off the moment when the actors stand up and you start to draw on the blank sheet of paper, and partly as a way of finding out about each other. We talked about religion, about money, about monarchy, about hierarchy, about living conditions, about crime and punishment, about the climate, about the geography, about the food, the clothes. All assertions had to be supported by the evidence of the text; everyone had an equal voice in the discussions. For the first week or so of the rehearsals I felt overwhelmed by the size of the task; I had never done anything so difficult or so physically draining. I didn't feel physically prepared for it.

Question: How did you feel when D-day approached, when *King Lear*, your grappling with this myth of a play, written by William Shakespeare, a playwright something of a myth himself, was to go onstage?

Answer: What do *you* think? Excited and worried. For me the most exciting part of the production is always the first time an audience sees it even though it's often disappointing, and sometimes catastrophic. But this was one of those nights that Lorca fit dog gnawing at the bone. It took nearly three weeks to work through the play from beginning to end, blocking out each scene, chipping away like a sculptor with raw stone. At that stage I decided to have a run through, so we could all feel the power of the play in the light of what we'd learned about it. We sat round in a circle; some actors read their parts, others performed them. Some stood up for their scenes in the middle of the circle, some remained seated. We did the play without a break: 2 hours

45 minutes. It was thrilling: fast, clear, intensely moving. The process of rehearsal defies conventional description. Only a Proustian narrative could do justice to the countless steps forward and back, the nudges of excitement, the nuances of insecurity, that mark the growth of the organism of a production. It is all in the detail: the physical minutiae of speech and gesture and movement – whether it be the blinding of Gloucester, the seduction of Goneril, the fight between Edgar and Edmund, or the death of Lear himself. Some scenes took weeks to evolve: the arrival of the Knights in Goneril's house, for instance, where we were trying to create the mixture of licensed anarchy and sycophancy that characterised the court of the King of rock and roll, Elvis Presley.

Question: Did Ian Holm himself come up with the idea for a special variant of the famous 'Howl' speech delivered by Lear?

Answer: We talked just before the performance. »I think I know how to do the 'Howl' speech«, he said. »Ah«, I said. »See what you think«, he said. And he did know how to do the 'Howl' speech. He carried Cordelia's body on – always an anxiety for every Lear – and instead of putting her down before he spoke, he stood with the body in his arms and howled at Kent, Albany and Edgar. The four 'howls' emerged as an order, a command, the indictment of a father: Don't be indifferent to my suffering. We weren't, and not for the first time in the evening I found myself brushing tears from my cheeks with the palm of my hand, professional objectivity long since cast aside. I don't know what makes one production soar like a bird of paradise, and others embarked on with just as much optimism and care, fall like dead sparrows from the nest. I know that I was part of an enterprise that did manage to be more than the sum of its parts, and I know that that is at the heart of every successful theatrical enterprise.

Question: Sir Richard, many thanks for this interview, which shall hopefully find many interested readers in Slovenia, where Shakespeare and his plays are well known, frequently performed, and, what's most important, very much liked.

University of Ljubljana

KATHERINE MANSFIELD IN SLOVENE TRANSLATIONS

Andrej Podbrežnik

Abstract

During her short life Katherine Mansfield wrote numerous short stories, which place her among the best authors of this genre in world literature. The author of this paper tries to establish the reception of Mansfield's work and the critics' response in Slovenia. First translations of her stories were published in various Slovene magazines and reviews after the Second World War. However, the most complete and artistically successful presentation of her work was prepared in 1963 when Jože Udovič published twenty-eight short stories written by this author under the title *Katherine Mansfield: The Garden Party*. Udovič also contributed the introduction about the author and her work. The book was very well received in Slovenia not only by the reading public, but also by critics, who praised Mansfield and Udovič's translation as well. After that more than twenty years passed, before Katarina Mahnič translated Katherine Mansfield's short story "The Singing Lesson" in 1988. We can conclude that hopefully some new translations of Katherine Mansfield's stories will appear soon.

During the last fifty years there have been numerous translations in Slovenia of literatures written in English. However, the number of works translated from New Zealand literature is relatively small compared with British and American fiction, which is understandable due to the lack of connections between New Zealand and Slovenia and the smaller number of authors writing there.

The works of some ten New Zealand authors have been translated; among these the works of Katherine Mansfield have appeared most frequently. The purpose of my paper is to present a brief account of those of her works translated into Slovene and their reception by Slovene critics and an evaluation of the artistic quality of the translations.

The first people in New Zealand were the Maori, who inhabited the North Island before 800 (*World Book Encyclopaedia*, 164). Several Maori tribes arrived there from the East Polynesian Islands and, settling on the warm shores of the North Island, they called the country Aotearoa.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, British whalers and missionaries, often despite fierce opposition from the Maoris, established settlements and trading posts in New Zealand.

It is not surprising that the notable 19th century writing by white settlers is not found in poetry or fiction but rather in letters, journals and factual accounts, such as Samuel Butler's *A First Year in Canterbury Settlement* (1863).

Among the best 19th century New Zealand poets are Alfred Domett (1811–1887), whose *Ranolf and Amohia* (1872) was an attempt to discover epic material in the new land, and William Pember Reeves, born in New Zealand, who rose to be a government minister and then retired to England, where he wrote nostalgic poems with a colonial voice. But none of the poets stands out until the twentieth century, the first being Blanche Edith Baughan (1870–1958) (*Reuben and Other Poems*, etc.)

New Zealand literature was making slow and seemly progress; but suddenly this was interrupted by one brief life – that of Katherine Mansfield. She died at the age of 34, but not before she had laid the foundations for a reputation that has gone on to grow and influence the development of New Zealand literature ever since.

Katherine Mansfield (1888–1923) was born Kathleen Mansfield Beauchamp in Wellington, New Zealand. She spent the first fourteen years of her life surrounded by her large family. From 1903 to 1906 she and her two sisters completed their education in London. That she was forced to return home also reveals her opposition to her family's conventions and values, her condemnation of vulgar materialism, her desire to return to London, her struggle against restraints, and her passionate determination to be an artist despite her parents' opposition. But despite her protests against New Zealand, she made significant intellectual progress during her reluctant exile from England, which was actually a profitable and relatively happy period of her life. In July 1908, she was finally allowed to leave, so she exchanged the security and comfort of her Wellington middle class home and family for a difficult life in London.

She struggled for two very hard years, but in 1911 her first collection of short stories *In a German Pension* was published. This represented a significant breakthrough and sealed her literary career in England. She followed up with several further short stories, inspired by her life in Europe as well as in New Zealand. She often used herself and members of her family as models for the main characters. In 1920 her second collection of short stories, *Bliss and Other Stories*, was published, and in 1927 *The Garden Party and Other Stories*. But from 1911 she was already suffering from tuberculosis and spent much of her life, especially the last five years, in hospitals and sanatoriums. She died on 9 January 1923 in Fontainebleau, France. After her death another two collections were published, *The Dove's Nest* in 1923 and *Something Childish and Other Stories* in 1924. Posthumously published stories, poems, literary criticism, letters and journals followed. She became for a time a major figure, before her reputation faded for two decades only to be rediscovered in the 1970s by feminists and scholars. It seemed that Katherine Mansfield remained a New Zealand writer, as her best work was that in which she had recreated the country and family she grew up in. She had made the short story a worthy genre; she had established it as a form sufficient in itself for a writer's reputation to rest on, and had made it a staple of New Zealand writing. Her exquisite short stories deal with everyday human experiences and inner feelings. They are internationally acclaimed for their broad perception of the human character and sensitive treatment of human behaviour, and they show Katherine Mansfield's power for subtlety and understatement at its most delicate.

The collection *Družba v vrtu* (*The Garden Party*), published in Slovene in 1963, is the most extensive and most sophisticated collection of stories by Katherine Mansfield in Slovene. The stories for this edition were taken from some of her best collections. They were translated and edited by Jože Udovič (1912–1989), a poet and one of the best known Slovene translators, editors and critics. However, some of Katherine Mansfield's stories published in this edition appeared earlier and some of them have appeared subsequently in some of the Slovene newspapers and periodicals.

In making a short review of the Slovene translations of Katherine Mansfield's stories we soon find out that the translators who have thus far translated her stories have always taken the stories to translate from all of her collections save one, *In a German Pension*. None of the stories in this collection has ever been translated into Slovene, whereas the stories that have been translated can be found in all of her other collections. Here one has to consider that Katherine Mansfield's characterisation of Germans in these stories is rather stereotypical and full of the prejudices that were prevalent in English minds shortly before World War I. Even the author herself, though achieving her first success with them, did not allow these stories to be published again later.

I shall now briefly discuss the individual collections of Katherine Mansfield's stories and focus on those stories in the collections that have been translated into Slovene. It is worth mentioning here that each of her collections (*In a German Pension* being an exception) contains stories of which translations are available in Slovene in various libraries in our country.

Among the *New Zealand Stories* by Katherine Mansfield only the following three have been translated into Slovene: "The Woman at the Store", "Ole Underwood" and "Six Years Later".

Since "The Woman at the Store" is still considered to be by far her most successful accomplishment in the group of her *New Zealand Stories* it may well be interesting to cast a brief glance at how this story has been dealt with by Slovene translators. The story itself is about three travellers (one female and two male) who stop overnight at an isolated shop run by a solitary woman who has got a small daughter. To the female narrator the woman appears unhinged, an impression which is vindicated when the child reveals, by way of a sketch, that the woman has shot and buried her husband, the child's father. Descriptions of the environment draw on Katherine Mansfield's 1907 camping trip through the North Island.

The first translation of "The Woman at the Store" into Slovene appeared in *Obzornik* (3, 1959), a popular magazine dealing with culture and current social issues, as "Žena v prodajalni" by an anonymous translator. In 1963 Jože Udovič included his own translation of this story, which he titled as "Ženska v trgovini", in his collection *Družba v vrtu*. Finally the third translation, or rather a shortened version of the translation of the original text of the story, appeared in *Obzornik* (2, 1978) translated by Stana Vinšek as "Žena v prodajalni". In comparing the three translations and the original text of the story there are to be found some discrepancies in the meanings of certain words and syntagmas between the original and the three translations.

In Jože Udovič's translation from his collection *Družba v vrtu*, at the beginning of the story, in the very first paragraph, the English version reads as follows:

The pack horse was sick – with a big, open sore rubbed under the belly. Now and again she stopped short, threw back her head, looked at us as though she were going to cry, and whinnied. (Katherine Mansfield: *New Zealand Stories*, 39)

Udovič translated these lines in the following way:

Tovorni konj je bil bolan – pod trebuhom je imel veliko rano, kjer ga je odrgnil jermen. Tu in tam se je nenadoma ustavil, vrgel glavo nazaj in nas pogledal, kakor da bo pričel jokati, in zarezgetal. (*Družba v vrtu*, 329)

Both texts inform us that the packhorse is sick with a big open sore, but the translator tells us explicitly what has caused it, while the original does not. In the English version the author refers to a mare, whereas in Slovene the animal is not a mare but a stallion.

The translation of the song sung by Jo, one of the three travellers, is also quite interesting. In the original text it reads as follows:

I don't care, for don't you see,
My wife's mother was in front of me! (*New Zealand Stories*, 39)

The Slovene translation renders this as:

Kaj mi to mar, preljubi moj,
ne vidiš tašče pred menoj. (*Družba v vrtu*, 330)

The second line would be better translated thus: "Ali ne vidiš, moja tašča je bila pred menoj." which indicates that his wife's mother may still be standing in front of him. Moreover, Udovič adds the expression *preljubi moj*, meaning *my dearest*, which is not in the original. He probably introduces *preljubi moj* because it rhymes with *menoj*. In any event, though written in the present tense simple, the words "ne vidiš tašče pred menoj" (can't you see/don't you see my wife's mother in front of me) can refer to some past event – it can also imply an encounter between Jo and his wife's mother which may have happened sometime in the past.

Another point is that a great deal of the conversation that takes place among the characters is written in the vernacular style; the characters speak in the New Zealand dialect all the time, except when the female first person relates to us what is going on in the story, which she does in literary language.

Let us compare the following paragraph:

"Hallo," screamed the woman. "I thought you was three 'awks. My kid comes in ter me. "Mumma," says she, "there's three brown things comin' over the 'ill." says she. An' I comes out smart. I can tell yer. "They'll be 'awks." I says to her." (*New Zealand Stories*, 41)

In Udovič's translation:

"Hej!" je zavreščala ženska. "Mislila sem, da ste trije jastrebi. Moj otrok je priteknel noter in zakričal: "Mama," tako je rekel, "tri rjave lise prihajajo

čez grič.” Je rekel. In skočila sem hitro ven, lahko mi verjamete. “Najbrž bodo jastrebi.” Sem rekla otroku. (*Družba v vrtu*, 332)

We can see that the translator in this and similar paragraphs did not use any dialect or slang but the Slovene literary language. Although it is clearly stated, in both the original and the translation, that the woman has a daughter, in this part of the translation the child is referred to in the masculine. By this, I think, the translator wished to show how the woman was not very kind to her daughter; she did not care whether the “kid” was a girl or a boy. There are also some other minor differences between the original and the translation.

While very few of the *New Zealand Stories* have been translated into Slovene, this however is not the case with the stories in the collection *Bliss and Other Stories*, more than half of which have been translated into Slovene. From this collection the following stories are available in Slovene: “Je ne Parle pas Francais”, “Bliss”, “Mr. Reginald Peacock’s Day”, “Sun and Moon”, “Fueille D’Album”, “A Dill Pickle”, “Revelations”, “The Escape” and “The Apple Tree”.

“Bliss” presents the perceptions of the affluent Bertha Young preparing for and then hosting a dinner party of “modern thrilling friends”, at which she discovers that her husband, whom she sexually desires for almost the first time, has betrayed her with a female guest, Pearl Fulton. The story is notable for the extent to which people and objects act as symbols of Bertha’s sexual self-discovery, as when she shows Pearl Fulton a flowering pear tree. Bertha’s ecstasy leads to a moment of inner transformation and finally she is crushed when she discovers her husband’s infidelity. The story is packed with symbolic meanings and allusions.

It is interesting to ask whether the translator has managed to preserve the meanings of the symbols and allusive statements, especially those that in their structure as well as in their literal meaning may differ from their Slovene equivalents. “Bliss” has been translated into Slovene twice. The first translation of the story was published in *Večer*, an influential and widely read Slovene newspaper, on 5 December 1959, as “Veselje”. The translator is anonymous. Jože Udovič did the second translation of the story and published it along with other translations in his book *Družba v vrtu* as “Blaženost” in 1963. Here again we can perceive certain differences, not only between the Slovene and English texts, but also between the two translations themselves. “Veselje” is actually not a proper full-length translation, since the anonymous translator omitted parts of sentences, various individual words and expressions and even larger parts of the text. So the translated story is much shorter than “Blaženost”, which is a complete translation.

In order to see how the two translators handled the text, let us have a look at the first paragraph of the story, which in the original reads as follows:

Although Bertha was thirty, she still had moments like this when she wanted to run instead of walk, to take dancing steps on and off the pavement, to bowl a hoop, to throw something up in the air and catch it again, or to stand still and laugh at nothing – at nothing simply. (*Selected Stories*, 111)

Jože Udovič translated this paragraph in the following way:

Čprav je Berta Young imela že trideset let, je še zmeraj doživljala trenutke, kakršen je bil ta, ko jo je nekaj sililo, da bi tekla namesto hodila, da bi plesala in vrteč se stopala s pločnika na cesto in spet nazaj, da bi po otroško poganjala obroč, da bi nekaj vrgla v zrak in potem spet ujela, ali da bi stala in se smejala – ničemur – preprosto ničemur. (*Družba v vrtu*, 7)

The translation shows us that Udovič did not omit anything; he translated every constituent part of the text in a literal manner, thus creating an extremely accurate translation, which might in a way also be regarded as word-by-word translation. He included every single emotional state of Bertha Young's mentioned in the original text, as well as every single action she wanted to perform.

But in "Veselje" the translation of the same paragraph is as follows:

Čprav je Bertha imela že trideset let, so bile ure, ko si je želela teči, zaplesati po pločniku, da bi nekaj vrgla v zrak, da bi se smejala brez pravega vzroka. (*Večer*, 5 December 1959)

which might be back-translated into English like this:

Although Bertha was thirty, there were still hours when she wanted to run, to dance on the pavement, to throw something up in the air, to laugh without any proper reason.

It is quite clear that the first paragraph in "Veselje" is translated in factual, realistic language without any sophistication or poetic touch, without any deep sense of the beauty and understanding of a human inner life. An omission of this kind can be seen in the translation of the following paragraph – the description of the scene where Bertha enters the nursery and the nurse feeding her baby:

"Now, my lovely, eat it up like a good girl," said the Nurse, setting her lips in a way that Bertha knew, and that meant she had come into the nursery at another wrong moment.

"Has she been good, Nanny?"

"She's been a little sweet all the afternoon," whispered Nanny. "We went to the park and I sat down on a chair and took her out of the pram and a big dog came along and put his head on my knee and she clutched its ear, tugged it. Oh, you should have seen her."

Bertha wanted to ask if it wasn't rather dangerous to let her clutch at a strange dog's ear. But she did not dare to. She stood watching them, her hands by her side, like the poor little girl in front of the rich little girl with the doll.

The baby looked up at her again, stared, and then smiled so charming that Bertha couldn't help crying. (*Selected Stories*, 112–113)

In "Blaženost" this paragraph is translated completely, but in "Veselje" it is again shortened, almost becoming a new text, quite unlike Katherine Mansfield's original.

“Srček, pojej to in bodi pridna deklica,” jo je opominjala dojjila, stiskajoč usta na način, ki ga je Bertha dobro poznala in ki je pomenil, da je v otroško sobo zopet prišla v nepravem času. Otrok jo je ponovno pogledal in se tako ljubko nasmejaj, da se Bertha ni mogla vzdržati in mu je zaklicala. (*Večer*, 5 December 1959)

“The Escape”, another story from the collection *Bliss and Other Stories*, presents the reactions of an English couple having missed a train. The first part of the narrative, channelled through the consciousness of the wife, establishes a tone of disgust and frustration that gives way in the second part of the narrative, channelled through the consciousness of the husband, to acceptance. While the characters attempt physical, emotional and psychological escape, they also try to accept the status quo.

The first translation of “The Escape” into Slovene was published on 10 January 1963 in the magazine *Vprašanja naših dni* under the title “Pobeg”, and then again in Jože Udovič’s collection *Družba v vrtu* in the same year and with the same title. The first translation, published in the magazine, is accompanied by the following remark: “Novela je iz zbirke Katherine Mansfield *Družba v vrtu*, ki izide v kratkem pri Cankarjevi založbi.” (*Vprašanja naših dni*, 1963, 392) (The story is taken from the collection of Katherine Mansfield’s short stories *Družba v vrtu*, which will soon be published by Cankarjeva založba.) Undoubtedly we are dealing here with one and the same text since the translation published in the magazine is actually that of Udovič and was published with the purpose of calling the attention of readers to his book. In comparing Katherine Mansfield’s original story with Udovič’s translation, only some minor but not relevant differences can be found.

Shortly before the end of the story, there is a part of a conversation which is partly written in French, as follows:

“Do not disturb yourself, Monsieur. He will come in and sit down when he wants to. He likes – he likes – it is his habit.”

“Oui Madame, je suis un peu souffrante... Mes nerfs.” (*Bliss and Other Stories*, 280)

Udovič did not translate the French expressions and sentences into Slovene, but left them in their original form. (*Družba v vrtu*, 134) There is an exception to this rule, though, as in the very first paragraph of the story, where the French word *voiture* was translated with the Slovene word *voz* (meaning a carriage or a coach). However, generally speaking, the translator did a very good job.

Another story which may be very interesting in terms of the translations of Katherine Mansfield’s stories is “Sun and Moon”. The story is about a brother and a sister (Sun and Moon) with Sun’s perception of a dinner party exposing adults as predatory, destructive and objectifying of children. The only known translation into Slovene of this story was published in Udovič’s *Družba v vrtu*, 1963 as “Sonček in Luna”. As has always been the case with translations, “Sonček in Luna”, too, contains some places where the translator took a liberty and slightly altered the original meaning of some of the sentences, although this was of no detriment to the story itself (as, for example in *Selected Stories*, 146) and in the Slovene translation (*Družba v vrtu*, 95).

A little bit further in the original story there is the following sentence:

Moon thought they were hats. (*Selected Stories*, 164)

The literal Slovene translation of it would be:

Luna je mislila, da so klobuki.

But Udovič translated the sentence in the following way:

Luna je res mislila, da so klobuki. (*Družba v vrtu*, 95)

In adding the word *res*, which means *really* but which is not in the original text, the translator emphasises the naivety of the small girl's imagination, her ingeniousness and intelligence.

The translation of the following paragraph is also quite interesting in its use of words:

That was for the concert. When Sun looked in a white-faced man sat at the piano – not playing, but banging at it and then looking inside. He had a bag of tools on the piano and he had stuck his hat on a statue against the wall. Sometimes he just started to play and then he jumped up again and looked inside. Sun hoped he wasn't the concert. (*Selected Stories*, 164–165)

To je bilo za koncert. Ko je Sonček pokukal noter, je sedel pri klavirju mož z belim obrazom – vendar ni igral, ampak tolkel po njem in potem spet pogledal vanj. Na klavirju je imel torbo z orodjem, klobuk pa je poveznil kar na kip, ki je stal ob steni. Včasih je komaj začel igrati, pa je že spet skočil na noge in pokukal noter. Sonček je upal, da ta mož še ni pravi koncert. (*Družba v vrtu*, 96)

It is the translation of the word *concert* which is interesting here. It appears twice in Katherine Mansfield's text, as it does in the translation, where it is translated in both cases as *koncert*. But the second time it is supposed to denote a person. Udovič tries to convey to the readers the same idea as Katherine Mansfield. Sun must have heard his parents talk about a *concert* and in the imagination of a small child he must have conceived the idea of a concert being someone who would play for them. The same goes for the Slovene word *pokukal* (peeped in), which also indicates both the child's curiosity and his manner of speaking.

The expression *my lamb* is literally *moje jagnje*, or more fondly *moj jagenjček*, but Udovič translated this epithet as *golobček moj*, which is a more usual expression in Slovene. (*Selected Stories*, 166; *Družba v vrtu*, 97) It is clear that Udovič was mindful of the phraseology and idiomatic use of Slovene.

Another story worth mentioning from *Bliss and Other Stories* is "Je ne Parle pas Francais". The story is that of Raul Duquette, a young Parisian writer and critic, who lives his submerged life on the margins of respectable society. His encounter with Dick Harmon (presented as his English counterpart) and in a particular Dick's abandonment of his lover "Mouse", whom Duquette also betrays by citing the only words that Mouse spoke in French, "Je ne parle pas Francais". The only known

translation of this story was published in *Družba v vrtu* in 1963. The translator left the title in the original language, since he was aware of its importance; it conveys the basic idea of the story.

In the original text of the story there are some other French words and expressions about which the translator logically concluded that they should not be translated because they characterise Raul Duquette, the narrator as a Frenchman, which is probably what Mansfield intended.

However, in the following part of the text

“Thanks, mon vieux. You haven’t got perhaps a set of ginger whiskers?”
“No, monsieur,” he answered sadly. (*Selected Stories*, 91)

which is translated

“Hvala, mon vieux. Ali mogoče nimate pri roki dveh rjavkasto rumenih zalizkov?”
“Ne, gospod,” odgovori žalostno. (*Družba v vrtu*, 49)

the translator kept the first French expression, *mon vieux*, but translated the second one *monsieur*, probably because he thought that the reader would thus not be “disturbed” any more.

The next story from *Bliss and Other Stories* translated into Slovene that might be of some interest is “The Wind Blows”. In it Katherine Mansfield narrates the response of a rebellious and disgruntled young woman, Matilda, to a music lesson on a windy day. Although unnamed, the location is identifiably Wellington. The strength of frustration in the first part of the story changes to one of arousal during the music lesson. It concludes with a wish or dream sequence in which Matilda and her brother look back on themselves from the deck of a boat sailing from the harbour. The wind is a symbol of an unsatisfied sexual arousal.

The story was translated into Slovene by Jože Udovič and published in the collection *Družba v vrtu*, 1963, as “Veter veje”. The translation sticks in its use of language and vocabulary more or less to the original, though there are some minor differences, for example in the description of the windy day, at the very beginning of the story

It is only the wind shaking the house, rattling the windows, banging a piece of iron on the roof and making her bed tremble. (*Bliss and Other Stories*, 137)

is rendered

Samo veter je, ki stresa hišo, ropota z okni, udarja s kosom železa ob streho in besni, da se trese njena postelja. (*Družba v vrtu*, 29)

In the original text there is no verb where Udovič has the Slovene verb *besni*. The translator had expanded the meaning a little by adding the verb *besneti*, which means *to rage*. A little bit further in the original text we come across the phrase *a perfect idiot*, which is how Matilda’s mother brands her daughter. Udovič translated this *trapa, da ji ni para*, which literally means *a silly woman without comparison*, which is milder than in the original.

Throughout the translation there are further similar discrepancies, but they do not have an influence on the readers' understanding of the story.

Another notable collection by Katherine Mansfield from which some stories were translated into Slovene is *The Garden Party and Other Stories*, published posthumously just two days after her death. The stories from the collection that have been translated into Slovene are: "At the Bay", "The Garden Party", "Mr And Mrs Dove", "Life of Ma Parker", "Marriage a la Mode", "The Voyage", "Mrs. Brill", "Her First Ball", "The Singing Lesson", "The Stranger", "Bank Holiday" and "The Lady's Made".

"The Garden Party" is undoubtedly the best-known story in the collection. It concerns a garden party held by the rich Sheridan family. The central consciousness is that of Laura, whose ecstatic excitement in the first part of the story gives a way to shock when news of the accidental death of a carter who lived nearby reaches her. In what Sheridan family members call an absurd and extravagant reaction, Laura pleads for the party to be cancelled. It goes ahead but afterwards her mother suggests she should take a basket of leftover food to the bereaved family. Laura's sighting of the corpse results in a transforming, epiphany experience, which completes the emergence of Laura's individual voice and consciousness from that of the Sheridan family. Apart from its treatment of the effect of death on the living, the story is a subtle commentary on class-consciousness.

"The Garden Party" changed the title of the collection (originally to be "At the Bay"), which indicates the story's reputation and popularity. So far, we only have one translation of "The Garden Party". Jože Udovič included it in his collection *Družba v vrtu*. His translation of the very title of the story as well as of the entire collection – *Družba v vrtu* – deserves some attention, since the translation of *The Garden Party* into *Družba v vrtu* seems to some extent inadequate if we take into consideration the fact that that the literal translation of "The Garden Party" into Slovene is *vrtna veselica* or *vrtna zabava* or even *zabava na vrtu*, i.e. a certain festivity which is going on in a garden, park or lawn, or gathering of persons by invitation for pleasure arranged in such a place. If we assume that Katherine Mansfield tried to depict in her story a party in this sense of the word, Udovič's translation may appear to be inaccurate. However the word *party* itself can also be used to denote a group of people united in their policy and opinions, in such part of a cause, or a single person as well (we can ask, for example, "Who is the party in blue?" meaning the person in blue). If indeed Mansfield had in mind a party in this sense of the word – a group of people making up a party – Udovič's translation turns out to be correct. Though it may seem open to question whether Katherine Mansfield had in mind one particular meaning of the word *party* (an event, festivity in the garden or a group of people gathered in the garden), there are some transparent places in the text of the story which indicate clearly that she meant an event rather than a group of people, for example:

She ran at Laurie and gave him a small, quick squeeze.

"O, I do love parties, don't you?" gasped Laura. (*Selected Stories*, 240)

In this context it is clear that the word *parties* implies a series of events, festivities (acts of eating, drinking, celebrating, listening to music and having fun) and that it

does not refer to a group of persons. Thus Laura's sentence could be translated "Oh, resnično imam rada zabave." with the Slovene word *zabava* meaning *festivities*. But Udovič translated this fragment as follows:

"Oh kako rada imam take dneve, ko imamo povabljene, ti ne?" je dahnila. (*Družba v vrtu*, 195)

As we can see, he translated the word *parties* with *dneve, ko imamo povabljene*, which means *those days when we have guests*. There is a similar case in the next sentence:

They could not have had a more perfect day for a garden-party if they had ordered it. (*Selected Stories*, 237)

which Jože Udovič translated:

Ne bi mogli imeti lepšega dne za to priložnost, ko bodo povabljenec sprejeli na vrtu, tudi ko bi ga bili naročili. (*Družba v vrtu*, 191)

In this case he translated the word *garden-party* using a whole clause, *ko bodo povabljenec sprejeli na vrtu*, which means *when they are going to receive their guests in the garden*.

Comparing the original text and the translation we come across some further discrepancies between them, where the translator altered a word or a phrase in order to adjust it to the Slovene vocabulary, phraseology and grammatical rules, for example:

"Tuk – tuk – tuk" clucked cook like an agitated hen. Sadie had her hand clapped to her cheek as though she had toothache. Hans's face was screwed up in the effort to understand. (*Selected Stories*, 244)

In Katherine Mansfield's text the cook utters inarticulate sounds, tuk – tuk – tuk, which has no meaning at all and which is not of the nature of human speech but is a simple sound similar to the noises made by a hen. However, in the translation these sounds are no longer inarticulate but take the form of the question *Kako, kako?* (*How? How?*) while the translator does still compare the cook to an agitated hen:

"Kako, kako" je kokodakala kuharica kakor prestrašena kokoš. (*Družba v vrtu*, 201)

Instead of translating the sounds similar to those produced by a hen into their Slovene counterparts, such as ko-ko-ko, the translator displayed his great sensibility in dealing with the language by translating these inarticulate sounds, which he knew must have been well articulated questions made unclear by the distance from which they were heard, into seemingly inarticulate sounds similar to those of a hen. In the same paragraph we can also note that the clauses in the original are written in the passive voice, while the Slovene translation uses the active voice.

As is the case in other stories, Jože Udovič paid no regard to the colloquialisms but made sentences grammatically correct using only words from the formal vocabulary.

Another very significant story from *The Garden Party and Other Stories* is "At the Bay". It focuses on relationships between women and between men and women,

who seem to inhabit different realities, the social expectations of gender roles, the world of children, criss-crossed by shadows from the adult world and the unknown, disillusionment and life's inevitable paradoxes. To tell the characters' individual stories Katherine Mansfield brings them together in the progress of a single summer's day from dawn to dark, each of the twelve sections centred on a moment of revelation: Stanley's sense of exclusion as he blusters off to work, the child Kezia's discovery of the universality of death, or Beryl's late-night encounter with the dangerous sexuality of Harry Kember.

The only known translation of "At the Bay" was by Jože Udovič and included in *Družba v vrtu*, 1963, titled "Ob zalivu". As a very skilful translator, showing an extremely high level of sensibility and respect for the spirit of both languages, Udovič also respected Katherine Mansfield's emotional orientation as well as her emotional worlds. His translation of the very beginning of the story presents just a tiny piece of his mastery skills as translator. (*Selected Stories*, 210; *Družba v vrtu*, 135)

Apart from the distinctive location, the use of New Zealand words such as "bush", "paddock" and "toi-toi" in this paragraph distinguish the story from its English contemporaries. There are no substantial differences between the original and the translation. What differences there are are of no great importance. For example, a sentence in the original reads "The grass was blue." which in the translation is "Trava je bila videti modra." which means *the grass looked blue*.

Further on in the original text there is a sentence describing the sea: "Ah – aah!" sounded the sleepy sea. "In the translation this is rendered as "Ah – a – ah," je vzdihovalo zaspano morje." The translator used the verb *vzdihovati*, which means *to sigh* and is in Slovene quite often used when we want to describe a rough sea or a certain rough movement of the sea.

The next story from *The Garden Party and Other Stories* which is interesting from the point of view of translation is "Miss Brill". The story presents an excursion to "les jardins publiques" by Miss Brill, a lonely, ageing English spinster living and working in France. In an indirect interior monologue, she habitually dramatises her own and others' fixations and eavesdrops on others' conversations. The denouement occurs at the point when she imagines herself to have a special empathy with those around her in the park and overhears a young couple describe her as a stupid old thing and liken her beloved fur to a fried whiting. The story handles the theme of the "femme seule", betrayed, rejected or unwanted.

So far there have been two translations of "Miss Brill". The first one was published on 3 October 1954 in *Primorski dnevnik* as "Gospodična Brill" and was by an anonymous translator. Jože Udovič did the second translation and it was published in *Družba v vrtu*, again with the title "Gospodična Brill". In it Udovič's main characteristics as a translator can be established, such as his careful choice of vocabulary. Whenever he tries to shape an English text into the narrative patterns typical of Slovene, he considers the meaning of every single word before he starts the translation. As soon as he comes across a word that is unclear or unsuitable or inadequate for the delineation of a certain phenomenon or situation or word, i.e. the literal meaning is insufficient, he provides such a word with an additional explanation or description, as can be seen in the following fragment of the story:

Although it was so brilliantly fine – the blue sky powdered with Gold and the great spots of light like white wine splashed over The Jardins Publiques – Miss Brill was glad that she had decided on her fur. (*Selected Stories*, 309)

Jože Udovič's translation reads as follows:

Čeprav je bilo vreme tako čudovito lepo – modro nebo, posuto z drobnim zlatom, in velike lise svetlobe kakor belo vino, razlito čez mestni park – je bila gospodična Brill vesela, da se je odločila za svoj krznen ovratnik, za svojo lisico. (*Družba v vrtu*, 273)

Everything except the word “fur” is translated literally. While in the original text it might indicate any sort of fur or any garment made of fur, Udovič's translation states very clearly that Miss Brill had decided on her toque, on her fox fur.

After Katherine Mansfield's death, her husband John Middleton Murry reverently managed and published her literary legacy. From her uncollected and unpublished stories he produced two collections: *The Dove's Nest and Other Stories* (1923) and *Something Childish and Other Stories* (1924). Some of the stories from both collections have also been translated into Slovene.

From *The Dove's Nest and Other Stories* the following four stories have been translated for Slovene readers: “The Doll's House”, “A Cup of Tea”, “The Fly” and “The Canary”.

The story of “The Doll's House” is set in New Zealand and it involves some of the Burnell family characters that also appear in “The Bay” and “Prelude”. It deals with various characters' reactions to a doll's house sent to the Burnell children as a gift. The central consciousness of the story, against which the characters' speech and thoughts are drawn, is that of Kezia. Her independence contrasts with her sibling, aunt Beryl and her friends, presented as spiteful gatekeepers of middle-class privilege. She responds with wonder to a miniature lamp in the house and ultimately defies family mores by allowing the impoverished socially outcast Kelvey children to look at the toy.

“The Doll's House” was included in the collection *Družba v vrtu* as “Hišica za lutke”. In drawing parallels between the original and the translation we can find some examples where the translator uses phrases and words which are more typical of Slovene than their English counterparts. Some differences can be found in the following section:

The Burnell's children could hardly walk to school fast enough the next morning. They burned to tell everybody, to describe, to – well to boast about their doll's house before the school bell rang. (*Selected Stories*, 338)

In Udovič's translation:

Burnellovi otroci so drugo jutro komaj dočakali, da so šli v šolo. Kar razganjalo jih je, tako so si želeli pripovedovati o tej hišici vsem, popisovati in – no – postavljati se z njo, preden bo zadonel šolski zvonec. (*Družba v vrtu*, 381)

The first part of the translation slightly differs from the original text and literally means that the Burnell's children can hardly wait for the moment they go to school and are bursting with the desire to do so. While in Katherine Mansfield's text the children are already on their way to school and they are trying to walk as fast as possible, in the Slovene version they are still at home waiting eagerly for the moment they can go to school.

From Katherine Mansfield's last collection of short stories *Something Childish and Other Stories* only three have been translated into Slovene. These are "Sixpence", "This Flower" and "Poison".

"Poison" is the only story from the collection which has been translated into Slovene more than once. It is narrated by a young man aged twenty-four who is having an affair with Beatrice, a young woman but already divorced twice. The man loves her; he has been staying with her for several months, though he is never sure whether she loves him or not. The fact is that she never seems to be satisfied or pleased with anything he does for her. Therefore his life with her is actually a pain, since he is constantly tormented with doubts about her love and devotion to him. Beatrice, on the other hand, plays mischievously with his love, devotion and servitude, without giving him anything in return.

One morning Beatrice is expecting a certain letter, which may also be from a past lover, and it is her impatience that makes the young man nervous and uneasy about her true feelings. In a sudden outburst of tenderness and kindness Beatrice reassures the man about her love for him: she declares her total devotion to him, which makes the young man extremely happy. Even though the postman doesn't bring them any letters, which – along with the feeling of being loved by Beatrice – pleases the young man immensely, while reading a newspaper, Beatrice runs across an article about a man tried in a court of law for having poisoned someone. Upon reading this she starts talking about poisoning. She states that it is the exception to find married people and lovers who don't poison each other. In her opinion the only reason why so many couples survive is that one partner is frightened of giving the other the fatal dose and that it is bound to come sooner or later. These thoughts disconcert the young man and make him feel that the drink she has given to him tastes strange – as if it had been poisoned.

There are two Slovene translations of "Poison". The first one was published in *Družba v vrtu* as "Strup" and the second translation with the same title was published on 27 January 1975 in *Dnevnik*. It is interesting to see how the most important paragraph of the story was translated into Slovene.

"Haven't you ever thought... of the amount of poisoning that goes on? It's the exception to find married people who don't poison each other – married people and lovers.

Oh... the number of cups of tea, glasses of wine, cups of coffee that are just tainted... The only reason why so many couples... survive is because the one is frightened of giving the other the fatal dose. That does take nerve! But it's bound to come sooner or later." (*Something Childish and Other Stories*, 381)

In Jože Udovič's translation this is rendered:

“Nisi nikoli pomislil... koliko je tega zastrupljevanja neprestano na tem svetu? Prava izjema je, če najdeš poročene ljudi, ki ne zastrupljajo drug drugega – poročene ljudi in zaljubljenca. Oh, kako veliko je število skodelic čaja, kozarcev vina in skodelic kave, ki so le za spoznanje pobarvane s strupom...Edini razlog, zakaj toliko dvojic...to preživi, je ta, da se eden od njiju boji dati drugemu usodno količino. Če hoče človek to storiti, mora biti trdnih živcev.” Vendar mora prej ali slej priti do tega. (*Družba v vrtu*, 375)

Udovič translated the text very carefully; he closely followed the author's words and thoughts and he even kept the exact punctuation, showing his expertise in language and stylistics and ability to understand the slightest hints in the story. On the whole his translations are as brilliant as the original stories.

In *Dnevnik* the anonymous translator put it this way:

“Skoraj ni človeka, ki ne zastruplja drugega ali s svojo naravo, boleznijo, in ne redko tudi s pravim strupom. Koliko kozarcev vina in skodelic kave je zastrupljenih. Edino pojasnilo, zakaj toliko parov “preživi”, je v tem, da se ON ali ONA boji natočiti usodno dozo, kar zahteva dobre živce in precej hrabrosti.” (*Dnevnik*, 1975, 13)

We can see that the second translation is a variation on Katherine Mansfield's text, since it is much shorter and it reads like a kind of resume. The translator omitted some words, phrases, and parts of sentences and even whole sentences. Sometimes his translation sounds as if he was telling the contents of the story, and Katherine Mansfield's brilliance of her style and language has almost vanished.

The appearance of Katherine Mansfield's works in Slovenia triggered several critical reviews by Slovene literary critics. Let me mention briefly some of the critical reviews on Katherine Mansfield's short stories that have appeared so far in various periodicals in Slovenia.

The very first article on Katherine Mansfield published in any of the Slovene periodicals had the title “Nežna ženska” (Tender Woman) and was published in the *Življenje in svet* magazine in 1939. The author of the article, referred to only by the initials N. K., gives a short account of Katherine Mansfield's life and informs us that she spent the last few years of her life in France, where she tried to restore her health, that she was fond of Southern France and Paris with its surroundings, and that she died in Fontainebleau. It is also said that she had left many letters and then the article continues with two remarks taken from her diary: the one that she wrote about a German bombardment of Paris, which she witnessed while staying there in 1915, the other about two French vessels making an unsuccessful attempt to enter the Mediterranean Sea. The article focuses on those moments of Katherine Mansfield's life that may confirm that she was a tender woman.

The 7 *DNI* magazine of 17 January 1958 features a translation of Katherine Mansfield's story “Feuille d' Album” titled “Hiša onstran ceste”, along with a very

short critical account with the heading “Nekaj o piscu...nekaj o delu” (something about the writer... something about the work) about the author’s life and work.

The greatest contribution to the Slovene reception of Katherine Mansfield’s work is undoubtedly that of Jože Udovič. In his book *Družba v vrtu* (The Garden Party) he published Slovene translations of twenty-eight of Mansfield’s short stories from all of her collections except *In a German Pension*. He also added an essay on Katherine Mansfield’s life and work. In the first part of it, he explains the most important events in her life that influenced her writing. Then he writes about the most evident literary trends and ideas, and ways of writing as well as about the best-known writers of her time. He also mentions the main characteristics of her writing, first of all her sense for the inner life of the characters she wrote about, the symbolism in her stories and her mastery of the form of the short story.

In publishing this book, Udovič not only did a good job as a translator, he also managed, at least for a short period, to direct the attention of Slovene readers towards Katherine Mansfield, who thus, for a certain period, became popular in the country.

On 7 March 1964, *Ljubljanski dnevnik* featured an article with the title “Katherine Mansfield: Družba v vrtu”. Only the initials S. Š. (probably Snežna Šlamberger) identify the author of the article, who compares Katherine Mansfield’s work to a finely woven, richly textured and well-patterned linen.

Just a day later, on 8 March 1964, the newspaper *Delo* featured the same titled article (“Katherine Mansfield: Družba v vrtu”) by Stanka Godnič, who describes the book as one of the most beautiful literary gifts ever presented from foreign literature in the last few years to Slovene readers. Further she enumerates the factors that influenced Katherine Mansfield’s work, and continues with a description of her narrative techniques. She also points out the importance of social critique and irony in her works. Then she calls Katherine Mansfield’s work a special sort of clipping and finally praises Jože Udovič’s translations.

Two days later, on 10 March 1964, an article by Marija Cvetko with the title “Družba v vrtu” was published in *Tedenska tribuna*. She praises Udovič’s translations and his foreword to the collection, as well as Katherine Mansfield’s work.

On 16 May 1964, the *Mladina* magazine published Katarina Bogataj’s article “Katherina Mansfield: Družba v vrtu”. Katarina Bogataj asserts that Katherine Mansfield’s mastery is at its greatest in her depiction of small things, details and nuances, and that in her stories one would search in vain for certain moments of suspense, since it is rather an atmosphere which gives the stories their flavour, and since the writer depicts in each of them a single apparently unimportant event or moment from everyday life, which on the other hand conveys a certain meaning – the point. Katarina Bogataj defines certain groups of people Katherine Mansfield deals with in her stories. She mentions that the writer also deals with her homeland, New Zealand, and makes a list of human vices Katherine Mansfield lampoons in her stories.

In the same year (1964) the *Sodobnost* magazine published Rapa Šuklje’s article “Novele Katherine Mansfield” (“Katherine Mansfield’s Short Stories”). In her article Rapa Šuklje also deals with the book *Družba v vrtu*. In her opinion two characteristics are typical of Katherine Mansfield’s short stories: her detailed psychologically based observations and her economy of narration. She grades Jože Udovič’s choice of stories

as a well-accomplished cross-section through Katherine Mansfield's creative development.

Also in 1964, the first issue of the *Naša žena* magazine featured Udovič's translation of "Mr Reginald Peacock's Day" as "Veliki dan gospoda Reginalda Peacocka". The translation is preceded by a short biography of the writer, entitled "Pisateljica Katherine Mansfield".

It is evident that Katherine Mansfield's popularity in Slovenia reached its climax in 1964, due to *Družba v vertu*, published the year before. But as time went on, her popularity faded and she fell into oblivion, with very few translations or critical reviews being published, till 1988, when "Ura petja", a translation by Katarina Mahnič of "The Singing Lesson", marked the hundredth anniversary of Katherine Mansfield's birth.

A large part of Katherine Mansfield's stories have still not been translated into Slovene, such as "An Indiscreet Journey" showing the author's despise at the idiocy and cruelty of war, or "Something Childish but Very Natural", a story of the romantic love of a very young couple, or Katherine Mansfield's longest novella, "Prelude", one of her most celebrated New Zealand stories, based on her family's move to Karori, near Wellington, in 1893. After the accidental death of her beloved brother Leslie in October 1915, Mansfield wanted to write a recollection of her own country and childhood. She also wanted to write a kind of a long elegy to her brother. The story is structured rather metaphorically with inner monologue moving from one character to another. Symbols and images are used to illuminate characters' perceptions, with meanings emerging from their own evolution of their inner lives. "Prelude" presents an excellent picture of Katherine Mansfield's internal world, since while telling the story, she actually makes a thorough analysis of her own feelings she had had in her youth living in the house of her parents. At the same time the psychological ideas she develops and the motions and feelings shown in the characters would represent a rich source of information for psychologists as well as for literary theorists for their further research.

Also interesting for Slovene readers would be "The Little Girl", a story based on the author's experience with her father who, though he loved her very much, always behaved sternly towards her and imposed his authority upon her in a rather harsh, bullying way. Yet another interesting story is "Pictures" dealing with an impoverished, elderly actress who keeps trying in vain to find employment at numerous film producing companies.

In her short life Katherine Mansfield created masterpieces of stories that have found their way to the readers throughout the world, including Slovenia. A few translations of her stories have appeared in Slovene periodicals, but it was Jože Udovič who with his great mastery of both languages (English and Slovene) and his substantial artistic abilities in his own right translated some of her most outstanding stories into Slovene. Thanks to him Slovene readers are thus acquainted with the work of Katherine Mansfield.

After Udovič for a period of some twenty-five years not a single translation of any of Mansfield's stories appeared in Slovene. Finally in 1988 Katarina Mahnič's

translation of "The Singing Lesson" reminded the Slovene readers of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Katherine Mansfield.

Maribor

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THE SOUTH PACIFIC IN THE WORKS OF ROBERT DEAN FRISBIE

Nataša Potočnik

Abstract

Robert Dean Frisbie (1896-1948) was one of the American writers who came to live in the South Pacific and wrote about his life among the natives. He published six books between 1929 and his death in 1948. Frisbie was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on 16 April 1896. He attended the Raja Yoga Academy at Point Loma in California. Later he enlisted in the U. S. army and was medically discharged from the army in 1918 with a monthly pension. After his work as a newspaper columnist and reporter for an army newspaper in Texas, and later for the Fresno *Morning Republican*, he left for Tahiti in 1920.

In Tahiti he had ambitious writing plans but after four years of living in Tahiti, he left his plantation and sailed to the Cook Islands. He spent the rest of his life in the Cook Islands and married a local girl Ngatokorua. His new happiness gave him the inspiration to write. 29 sketches appeared in the United States in 1929, collected by The Century Company under the title of *The Book of Puka-Puka*. His second book *My Tahiti*, a book of memories, was published in 1937. After the death of Ropati's beloved wife his goals were to bring up his children. But by this time Frisbie was seriously ill. The family left Puka-Puka and settled down on the uninhabited atoll of Suwarrow. Later on they lived on Rarotonga and Samoa where Frisbie was medically treated. Robert Dean Frisbie died of tetanus in Rarotonga on November 18, 1948.

Frisbie wrote in a vivid, graceful style. His characters and particularly the atoll of Puka-Puka are memorably depicted. Gifted with a feeling for language and a sense of humor, he was able to capture on paper the charm, beauty, and serenity of life of the small islands in the South Pacific without exaggerating the stereotypical idyllic context and as such Frisbie's contribution to South Pacific literature went far deeper than that of many writers who have passed through the Pacific and wrote about their experiences.

Frisbie's first book *The Book of Puka-Puka* was published in New York in 1929. It is the most endearing and the most original of his works. It was written during his lifetime on the atoll Puka-Puka in the Cook Islands. It is a collection of 29 short stories, episodic and expressively narrative in style. This is an account of life on Puka-Puka that criticizes European and American commercialism and aggressiveness, and presents the themes of the praise of isolation, the castigation of missionaries, and the commendation of Polynesian economic collectivism and sexual freedom. At the same time, the book presents a portrait of Frisbie himself, a journal of his day-to-day experiences and observations and a vivid description of the natives on the island. Frisbie's unique knowledge of the natives and their daily lives enabled him to create in *The Book of Puka-Puka* an impressive gallery of vivid, amusing, yet very real and plausible Polynesians.

The second book of Robert Dean Frisbie to appear in print was *My Tahiti* (1937), a book of memoirs, published in Boston. *My Tahiti* is a book of 30 short stories about the author and his living among Tahitians. Again, Robert Dean Frisbie is the main hero in the book and as such the book is autobiographical in a sense as well. This book is a personal record which has charm and distinction as it has sincerity, which is in the men, women and children of Tahiti, and which brings an effortless and unpretentious humor to depict a South Seas idyll and a quiet poise to withstand the insidious romance of the tropical islands, too.

One of the American writers who came to live in the South Pacific, among other foreigners who lived there or just visited the region, (Robert L. Stevenson, Frederick O'Brien, James Norman Hall, Charles Bernard Nordhoff, James Michener, Herman Melville, etc.) was also Robert Dean Frisbie (1896-1948), a former journalist from California who first arrived in Papeete to start a new life. He wanted to write a book like Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, and Robert Louis Stevenson (*An Inland Voyage*, *In the South Seas*) was also his idol. He published six books between 1929 and his death in 1948. He adored Polynesia and became a veritable legend among the Polynesians. His work has not been given sufficient critical attention despite its artistic merit and for this very reason it is important to introduce this author and his literary work to the wider public (cf. also my article "Robert Dean Frisbie – An American Writer in the South Pacific" in *Acta Neophilologica* 2000, pp. 93 – 105) .

Robert Dean Frisbie was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on 16 April 1896. He attended the Raja Yoga Academy at Point Loma in California. He read a great deal and wrote long poems which were mostly dedicated to his mother. He did not like his father, who had left the family and created a new one. After holding various jobs, Frisbie enlisted in the U. S. army toward the end of World War I. He was tall, thin, and susceptible to respiratory illness. At his last medical examination the doctor advised him to have a complete change of climate. He was medically discharged from the army in 1918 with a monthly pension. After his work as a newspaper columnist and reporter for an army newspaper in Texas, and later for the Fresno *Morning Republican*, he left for Tahiti in 1920.

In Tahiti, Frisbie bought a plantation and built himself a native-style bamboo house. He lived among simple Polynesian folk who liked Robert, calling him Ropati. He had ambitious writing plans, but he also began to drink a great deal and his friends were worried about him. After living four years for in Tahiti, he left his plantation in 1924 and sailed with the famous Pacific Captain Andy Thomson on the schooner the *Avarua* to Rarotonga, capital of the Cook Islands. He spent the rest of his life in the Cook Islands and took the offer of running a trading station on a small, lonely island, the atoll of Puka-Puka in the northern Cooks. Puka-Puka or "Danger Island" thus became his home for nearly twenty years. He married a local girl Ngatokorua and his new happiness gave him the ability to write. Nga followed him wherever he travelled and was to bear him five half-Polynesian children (cf. "Robert Dean Frisbie – An American Writer in the South Pacific" in *Acta Neophilologica* 2000, pp. 93 – 105).

Frisbie began writing and sending his sketches of life on Puka-Puka to New York. Most of them were accepted by the editors of *Atlantic Monthly*. 29 sketches

appeared in the United States in 1929, collected by The Century Company under the title of *The Book of Puka-Puka*. He had every reason to be happy because his first book was highly praised. But there, in the middle of this idyllic paradise, Frisbie contracted filarial fever in addition to tuberculosis and other health problems. He became an invalid, and took to drinking heavily to dull his pain and frustration.

His second book *My Tahiti*, a book of memories, was published in 1937, but other efforts did not fare very well nor was he very productive. Then personal tragedy struck him. Nga, his wife, became ill with tuberculosis, and Frisbie, shocked by her illness, wrote frantically in hope of earning enough money for her treatment in Western Samoa. He sold some more articles and another book, his first published novel, *Mr. Moonlight's Island* (1939). His young wife died and he became a widower, left to bring up his small children alone in the Pacific.

After the death of Ropati's beloved wife his goals were to bring up his children. He loved them dearly and hoped that he could build his 'little ship' and travel around the Pacific with his family as a South Seas trader, and write great literature. But by this time Frisbie was seriously ill with filariasis, addicted to alcohol and possibly a user of opium and morphine. The family left Puka-Puka and settled down on the uninhabited atoll of Suwarrow. Frisbie read a great deal from his library, had plenty of time left to teach his children and to relax. In February 1942 Suwarrow was virtually destroyed by one of the most terrible hurricanes ever to hit that part of the Pacific. Frisbie managed to save his children and himself by tying them all to the tops of the tamanu trees. The most authentic account of the great Suwarrow hurricane is to be found in Frisbie's book *The Island of Desire* (1944), the autobiographical story that describes Frisbie's life on Puka-Puka and Suwarrow.

Ropati found a new wife, Esetera, but the marriage soon failed. Frisbie at that time became very ill and began hemorrhaging. He had to be evacuated by navy plane to Samoa. Aboard the plane was Lt. James A. Michener (1907-1997), an American, who later became a well-known writer. Ropati recovered and took a schoolteaching job in a Samoan village. His four children joined him later. In 1947 Ropati and his children returned to Rarotonga on the Cook Islands.

While living in Samoa, Frisbie worked hard on his last books, this time fiction: the novels *Dawn Sails North* (1949) and *Amaru* (1945). The first one describes a voyage on a copra schooner, while the second one deals with the adventures of a young American in search of a fortune in pearls on a distant island. *Amaru* represents, according to book reviews, a decline in Frisbie's work. Frisbie also helped Johnny to write her first book, *Miss Ulysses from Puka-Puka* (1948).

Frisbie knew that he was dying and was frantic for the future of his children, because he had nothing to leave them. He died of tetanus in Rarotonga on November 18, 1948 and is buried in the churchyard of the Avarua Cook Islands Christian Church on Rarotonga. He has since become a near-legend himself in the lore of Pacific beachcombing, a position he would surely have enjoyed. He is, with his sad lifestory, considered by many a tragic hero of the Pacific.

Frisbie wrote in a vivid, graceful style. His characters and particularly the atoll of Puka-Puka are memorably depicted. Gifted with a feeling for language and a sense

of humor, he was able to capture on paper the charm, beauty, and serenity of life of the small islands in the South Pacific without exaggerating the stereotypical idyllic context. This little world became his world, as he remained there 28 years and acquired an intimate, almost unique knowledge of these islands.

Robert Dean Frisbie, with his classic work on the Pacific atoll life, some good articles, and an outstanding description of a hurricane, does not have a very impressive writing record, but it is unique in its own way. He was very popular during his lifetime, but he is almost forgotten today, because literary critics have not paid him enough attention. Frisbie never won the battle with the self, he aimed at goals too far out of his reach and so became frustrated. He, with his sad life, was a tragic hero who in his search for beauty, as Michener said, destroyed himself (Wolfram 18). Although he had a great desire to write, he placed the demands of his life before the needs of his art, and it should be added that Frisbie never avoided his family responsibilities.

Frisbie's contribution to South Pacific literature went far deeper than that of many writers who have passed through the Pacific and written about their experiences (Herman Melville, James Michener, Mark Twain, ...). He was one of that rare group of non-native authors who chose the islands as his home. He lived side-by-side with the indigenous people, became a "hybrid" himself, raised a family, learned the local language, was a keen observer and recorder of island life and culture, a serious student of island history, traditional canoe building, fishing and navigation by the stars.

Robert Dean Frisbie's books, especially *The Book of Puka-Puka* (1929) and *My Tahiti* (1937), deserve a place on every Pacific bookshelf. Frisbie's first book, published in New York by The Century Co., a South Seas classic entitled *The Book of Puka-Puka*, is the most endearing and the most original of his works. It was written during his lifetime on the atoll Puka-Puka in the Cook islands. This small tropical island became his second home and it inspired him to write his first great book that is, as his daughter Johnny Frisbie claims in her book *The Frisbies of the South Seas*, "considered to be the most accurate portrayal of life on an atoll ever written" (Frisbie 1961: 41). It is a collection of 29 short stories, episodic and narrative in style. This is an account of life on Puka-Puka that criticizes European and American commercialism and aggressiveness, and presents the themes of the praise of isolation, the castigation of missionaries, and the commendation of Polynesian economic collectivism and sexual freedom. At the same time, the book presents a great portrait of Frisbie himself, a journal of his day-to-day experiences and observations and a vivid description of the natives on the island.

This book was dedicated to the American writer James Norman Hall who was known to be Frisbie's good friend and was, as Johnny told me in one of her interviews, among all of his published books, the only one that was later reprinted (Potočnik 1999: A personal interview with Johnny Frisbie). The publication of this volume gave Frisbie the courage to persist as a writer hoping for greater achievements and made the island of Puka-Puka or Danger Island and its inhabitants famous to the world. This is the account of life which the author enjoys among one of the most highly segregated of the South Pacific island groups, The Cook Islands.

Robert Dean Frisbie in *The Book of Puka-Puka* has succeeded in giving a much-written subject an entertaining twist. While the book adds little to the scientific data about those remote islanders of the Pacific, it makes light reading. Puka-Puka is the native name for Danger island, far removed from tourist routes. Even the traders' ships make it their port of call only a few times a year. It is a small atoll with no passage into the lagoon. The people of Danger Island are brown, handsome, courteous, indolent Polynesians, and little touched by the world so far away even today. Here Frisbie, or Ropati, as the natives called him, came with his books to escape civilization. He took to the native life with joyous abandon, loving the native woman, hunting and fishing with the men and that is what he wrote about in *The Book of Puka-Puka*.

The Puka-Pukans are a singing race. Some of their chants are ancient, others are invented on the spur of the moment. The book is filled with these native songs: a chant precedes every chapter and many are scattered through the intervening pages, the majority being given in both the native language and in English. The narrator is the main character Ropati, Robert Dean Frisbie himself. With the best of humor, Frisbie describes his story among the natives of the atoll in such vivid detail that the reader, while reading the book, can visualize the characters and life on the tropical island, its coral reef, its grass shacks and especially the building which served as the store in which Frisbie worked from time to time. Frisbie lives the native life, he sees the inhabitants with the intimacy which only long residence can impart, and his narrative is at once gay and discerning. Another important theme is the portrait of the author that is strongly present in the book. Frisbie praises the isolation in Polynesia and dislikes American civilization. He enjoys his isolated life on Puka-Puka among friendly, admirable and slightly comic Polynesians.

At Puka-Puka there ... I could be as indolent as I pleased, as lonely as I pleased, never disturbed by the hateful thought that it is my duty to become a useful cog in the clockwork of 'Progress.' (Frisbie 1929: 8)

Puka-Puka is home to the author of the book and as he says: "I hunted long for this sanctuary. Now that I have found it I have no desire, ever to leave it again" (Frisbie 1929: xxvi). Much of the charm of the book is derived from the fact that the author mingled with the interesting people of this island as one of them. He fished and swam with them, entered into the spirit of balmy, carefree days and dreamy exotic nights, learned the native dialect and finally married one of the youthful tribal beauties.

Frisbie's unique knowledge of the natives and their daily lives enabled him in *The Book of Puka-Puka* to create an impressive gallery of vivid, amusing, yet very real and plausible Polynesians. So the scope and purpose of the book are, aside from the author's extensive knowledge of the islanders, the vivid portraits of Polynesians. His natives, in fact, resemble playful children. Sometimes they are naughty, sometimes selfish, but their good spirits usually prevail. Thus, although Ura, the chief of police, out of spite imposes a fine of one shilling on every man in Leeward Village, who had "shamed him by catching more turtles than his own settlement," (Frisbie 1929: 107) no harm is done because, as Frisbie quickly notes, "the fines were a small matter, for at Puka-Puka no one ever pays them" (Frisbie 1929: 107). Even the lecherous old Bones and his sons, the only really evil people on the island, do little or no actual

damage and have their redeeming qualities. The sons, Letter and Table-Salt, are both unable to convert their intentions into action and thus give vent to their unwholesome desires by telling extravagant lies to each other about their exploits. Frisbie's attitude toward them is summed up in the following passage:

They are a sweet family, the Boneses – the salacious-minded old father and his two imbecile sons. But they have helped me to pass many a dreary evening. When I have nothing else to look forward to, I can at least promise myself a few moments' diversion by listening to the nightly altercation of Letter and Table-Salt, standing by to part the brothers when Letter brags about how he has just come from the murder of Table-Salt's favorite mistress. (Frisbie 1929: 214)

The passage is of course ironic, but the irony is too amiable to negate the idyllic tone of the book.

The natives of Puka-Puka have adopted a mode of life without having ever troubled their simple minds about the theories of government. The money received from the sale of copra is divided equally. No one is obliged to work and, aside from the picking of coconuts and the snaring of enough tropical fish to provide for the village, most of the Puka-Pukans confine their activities to lolling on the beach, capturing turtles, swimming in the lagoon and dressing up for Sunday church attendance. The reader becomes well acquainted with Ropati's friends, presented in a vividly human way, and even has a warm affection for many of them. There is Sea Foam, the native missionary who dozes when he is supposed to be teaching in school; William, the shameless heathen, who learned his English from whaling men and whose every other word is a curse; dear old Mama, his wife, who thinks of America as only a slightly bigger Danger island; George, the grandson of Ura, chief-of-police, who loves sonorous-sounding sentences and whose principal garment is an old army coat; the beautiful Little Sea, who buried the calico gown Ropati gave her so that the neighbors would not say she loved him for his money; Old Bones, the island rake, who is also the island wrestling champion, and many others.

Frisbie's characters, even the best of them, are at least a little grotesque. This distortion appears to be a legitimate comic device that makes the faults of the natives charming and their sorrows not too serious. When the natives, for example, go to church on Sunday, they resemble, in their castoff odds and ends of Western clothes, "a crowd of lunatics ... escaped from [a] state asylum" (Roulston 177). These characters, in short, are not saints. Like people everywhere, they can be petty, vindictive, vain, and selfish. As a result, they are not idealized but more human than their counterparts in far too many books about the South Sea Islands. And being more human, yet at the same time essentially good-natured, spontaneous, and generous, they are also more likable. I personally have been delighted by Frisbie's excellent characters and so were O'Brien, Nordhoff, Michener and other numerous reviewers who know that this reality of Polynesian life does not dispel the idyllic atmosphere of the islands.

The Puka-Pukans are simple, indolent, kindly gracious folk. In spite of the fact that their religion is primitive and their ideas of sexual morality likewise, the Puka-Pukans appear ridiculous only when they ape the white man's ways. They are lovable,

amusing people, and the reader leaves them with reluctance, as old William composes the burial chant for his friend Ropati, though the latter is very much alive.

The Book of Puka-Puka is a happy book, it is a creation of the author's illusions of being largely at peace with himself. His Puka-Pukan neighbours can both annoy and amuse him. But he is happy to discover the island "as dead asleep as it was before the three-fingered god Maui fished it out of the sea" (Frisbie 1929: 16). He is happy to live among the islanders and to loll about on the verandah of his house where he can „easily imagine [he is] living on anotherwise uninhabited island“ (Frisbie 1929: 33). For Frisbie everything is dreamlike on the island.

Although the prevailing tone of the book is happy, there are some ominous rumbles to disturb the prevailing tranquility. Not merely the storm that strikes Puka-Puka, but also Frisbie's spiritual tempests that rage throughout the pages of his later books, are presented in *The Book of Puka-Puka*. Ropati is dissatisfied because the civilization that he despises, has marked him forever and as such he cannot really live like the natives. At one point he confesses, for example:

When, at length, the coffee gave out I was in a miserable state. In the morning I would fry some rubbery mess; at noon, after eating taro and fish to repletion, I would raise from the table unsatisfied. I felt constantly the need of sugar. (Frisbie 1929: 218)

Frisbie admires Polynesian sexual permissiveness, but he cannot slough off his own prudery and when an unattached native girl walks shamelessly into his house and offers herself to him, he demurs. After his marriage to Little Sea, he is overcome by passion for her cousin Desire, but feelings of guilt plague him and he complains:

For all the fact that I have lived for so many years in the South Sea vestiges of my northern birth and training still remained with me. (Frisbie 1929: 265)

There is vivid evidence of the cruelty of nature presented in the book as well. Frisbie is depressed by it. One of the most striking examples is his account of the plight of the baby turtles that hatch on the beach. With little comment, Frisbie records the appalling waste of life that occurs after they wobble into the sea:

Then the tragedy begins, for there is no morsel daintier than a baby turtle, and every fish seems to be waiting for them. Of the hundred that leave the beach, not more than fifty reach the reef, and in crossing it eight or ten more are gobbled up by spotted eels. ...

How a baby turtle manages to escape its enemies during the first few months of life is a mystery to me. I have seen them hatch only once, and on that occasion, I am sure, not a turtle survived. (Frisbie 1929: 109)

For Frisbie, however, the most dramatically terrifying examples of the destructiveness of nature are storms. The one described in this book is relatively mild in comparison with the one on the Suvarrow atoll described in Frisbie's book *The Island of Desire* (1944). Although the violent and melancholy passages in *The Book of Puka-Puka* are few, the work concludes with an account of Frisbie and the blasphemous

old Heathen William sitting at night in a cemetery discussing native burial practices. William proceeds to point out who is buried where, and this happy book ends with the following chilling passage:

Do you see that blank space to the right? That's for Mama and me. ...
But there's plenty of room for three, Ropati! We'll leave a place for you.
Carramba! ... I will now compose the rest of your death chant! (Frisbie
1929: 336)

Frisbie wrote in a vivid, graceful style. His characters live well in the mind and the atoll of Puka-Puka comes to life. His descriptions of the islanders and the beauty of the island are excellent.

I found her before one of the first houses in the settlement. A tattered dress fell about her shoulders and her face was almost hidden in a great mass of loose hair as she leaned over her task of grating coconuts. ...
"What a little Cinderella!" I thought, moving toward the firelight vision.
(Frisbie 1929: 72)

Although *The Book of Puka-Puka* was favorably received by the reviewers of the daily press and by Polynesian enthusiasts like Charles Nordhoff (C. Nordhoff and J. N. Hall wrote the famous *Mutiny on the Bounty* in 1932) and Frederick O'Brien, it did not bring Robert Dean Frisbie the fame that greeted O'Brien and other authors of the South Seas. In spite of Frisbie's own high standards, he never achieved literary success.

In this series of sketches, closely knit, and drawing – with seeming random lines, stipplings, and bits of light and shadow – a picture full of art, of a life so remote from that of the world at large as to be almost unintelligible, Mr. Frisbie has shown real originality and skill. ...

The combination of qualities that make such writing possible is rare: imagination, close observation, a feeling for beauty, and a thoroughly pagan point of view are some of them. Add to these a long residence among the natives, and a background of reading and education few South Sea traders have, and it will be perceived that the combination is rare indeed. Mr. Frisbie's writing, done with a light touch, full of gusto and undertones of irony, suits the subject well.

If the reader of this review will follow my example, pick up this book after a judicious dinner, close the door of his study, light a pipe and make sure that a tall amber glass stands where it can be reached without raising his eyes from the page, I will guarantee him and evening clean out of the ordinary. These are, perhaps, strong words, but they are set down deliberately. ...

I found no dull page or paragraph, and when I closed the book at last, I realized that I had bore me a portrait – a portrait done with odd ironical skill and restraint – of a little pagan land, a pagan white man, and a native population still heathen at heart. ...

I have known Mr. Frisbie for many years, that he has lived on Puka-Puka long enough to make himself the only white man, so far as I know, who speaks the language and knows anything about the place, . . . (Nordhoff 510)

Just recently I came across a note by Nuku Rapana, who says that the work of Frisbie is still very much alive among the Cook islanders:

I am the President of the Pukapuka people in New Zealand. I was born [1960] and raised on the island atoll of Pukapuka in the northern group of the Cook Islands. Ropati[Robert], has captured for me a panoramic glimpse of my 'tupuna' [ancestors]. Several of the characters in his book are in my genealogy. In fact William the heathen is actually my great grand father who passed away at the age of 116. Through the genes in my body I am proud to be their link into the future. Ropati, through his marriage to Nga has contributed to the survival of our people which is estimated to be around 5000 worldwide. Our people will always be grateful to Ropati for the part he played in the recording of our culture through his writings. (Rapana 2000)

The second book of Robert Dean Frisbie to appear in print was *My Tahiti* (1937), a book of memoirs, published in Boston by Little, Brown & Co., dedicated to his second child, the first born daughter Florence Johnny Frisbie. This book was favorably reviewed too and with its charm and humor it is as delightful as *The Book of Puka-Puka* (Allen 21, A.C.R. 16, Davis n.p.).

The Golden Age of Tahiti had passed many years before the arrival of Robert Dean Frisbie to Tahiti (1920), but a few lost years remained for him, a few old natives whose dreams retained the glow of the past. And among them Frisbie lived, a wise young man with a liking for solitude that since his arrival in the Pacific had driven him farther and farther to sequestered islands. Here he has returned to those earlier years, to chronicle an idyll that can now be duplicated only, if at all, among the remoter islands of Polynesia.

My Tahiti is a book of 30 short stories about the author and his living among Tahitians. Again, Robert Dean Frisbie is the main hero in the book and as such the book is autobiographical in a sense as well. The story is about a young man who arrives in Papeete thirsting for romance and adventure after reading various books about South Pacific written by well-known authors.

Once more I glanced at the pages, this time to read: -

(He told me that he and two ship captains walked to the sea beach. . . .)
I rose, dressed slowly, and pack everything I owned in two suitcases. . . .
I could reflect later – in the moonlight and the shadows of a tropic island.
(Frisbie 1937: 6)

Papeete delights him with its carefree ways, but soon he begins to yearn for the real Tahiti, which lies somewhere over the mountains. In a remote village he discovers the paradise he has sought, but at the end, he is forced to leave it. With a cast of more

than fifty characters, most of them natives with names not easily assimilated, Frisbie describes the native characteristics and occupations of Tahitians colourfully.

My Tahiti resembles in form and to so many other works on Tahiti not because Frisbie lacked imagination, but because he was apparently being faithful to the pattern of his own experiences, which more or less paralleled the experiences of Melville, Gauguin, Stoddard, and O'Brien, all of whom, like Frisbie were mainly autobiographical in their accounts of the island. Frisbie, like the rest, was entranced by the beauty of the place, charmed by the amiability of natives, and delighted by the leisurely pace of life there. He also shared, with at least some of the others, dismay over the decay of Polynesian folkways and anger over the robbing of the natives' land. As a result, *My Tahiti* contains the customary castigations of puritanical missionaries and avaricious Chinese merchants.

This book is again a personal record which has charm and distinction as it has sincerity, which is in men, women and children of Tahiti, and which brings an effortless and unpretentious humor to depict a South Seas idyll and a quiet poise to withstand the insidious romance of the tropical islands.

Frisbie bought a piece of property on the persuasion of the Papeete inn-keeper who needed some money. It was a lovely bit of shore and woodland far out in the country, and he lived there happily for three years. He was happy, too, to become the adopted child of a sturdy islander Tuahu, who boasted that this foster-son of his was as strong a man as any Tahitian, and cheated gaily with the carrying of the plantain loads to make his boasts seem true. Tuahu guided him through the intricacies of life in a native village, taught him to fish expertly, to find and carry the mountain bananas, and to buy land that was usually communally owned by a hundred natives. Little Terii shared his happiness in the bamboo hut, and old Mama-Reretu trusted him literally with her honor, for when he explained that April First was "Lying Day," when lies were venial in America, she bought furniture on false credit and was promptly arrested.

Frisbie had as little use for the Chinese storekeeper of Vaitii as for the rest of his coolie tribe throughout the islands. They were creditors, all of them, "trusting" the naive native until his debts became so great they could seize his land. Nor was the missionary much better. Old Solomon and his sort of automobile, the "lightning wagon," which was usually drawn by Boulgasse, the horse, gave color if nothing else to the little community. And far inland, their houses perched on mountain peaks, their vision restricted by orange beer and a blank horizon, lived the gentle, psychopathic nature men. These, with a few of others, are the characters of a delightful book, and the scenes which Frisbie loved so well that he has drawn and fused them from his experience on other islands, Moorea certainly, and more than likely his own Puka-Puka. But they depict the Tahiti of his time as few books have done.

There are many amusing and generous incidents in these sympathetically written reminiscences, and some of them – especially the movie of Bill Hart, that is according to many the most interesting chapter (Allen 21) – are very funny. There was more gossip than cinema on that famous night; the strangely casual and yet intense spirit of the village swung worshipfully around Frisbie when he was discovered cheek by jowl with William Cowboy on the antique "flicker" film. The ethical problems raised by that movie were and still are real to a people but indifferently Christianized; when the

villain was pushed over the cliff why wasn't the poor man buried, and prayed for, too? Did the hero marry the heroine? One couldn't be sure (Davis n. p.).

The book is to be welcomed not only for the quality of humor or even sympathy, but for a well-roundedness of experience and observation which gives the reader a sense of island life. *My Tahiti* is delightfully written and most pleasingly illustrated (Macdonald) and thoroughly enjoyable.

Although *My Tahiti* is less original than *The Book of Puka-Puka*, because there were many who wrote at that time about Tahiti, but not about Puka-Puka, the book is pleasant reading. Incidents such as the account of how Frisbie becomes a great hero to the natives when the William S. Hart film, in which he played a small part, is shown in Tahiti, or the story of how the author's honor is saved when an aged Tahitian, Tuahu, carries a huge load of bananas down a mountain side for him and thus allows him to bring it into the village are narrated with considerable wit and skill. Frisbie uses rich diction when describing the tranquility of island life so passages like the following are effectively evocative:

For three years I lived on that cool, quiet verandah. There I would sit back in a steamer chair, my feet on the railing, drowsily listening to the distant mutter of reef combers; and sometimes thinking of the restless life I had left, thus better to enjoy my response. My verandah was conducive to laziness. Perhaps it was the mere comfort of the steamer chair, or Or it may have been the sea. She splashed upon the white coral beach, leaping: "This is all I have to do; this is all I have to do." And Tuahu and I, leaning back even more luxuriously, replied: "Yes: but we have nothing at all to do!"

...
Though no one, white or native, lived on that stretch of beach, I could see my brown neighbors fishing patiently in their strange ways, unmindful of the hot sun. Day after day I watched them from my verandah, lazily, sleepily, only half aware that they were there at all, until one of them, hooking a big fish, startled me with his high yodeling call. (Frisbie 1937: 36, 35)

Frisbie, in this book again, praises solitude:

I wonder why this love of bitter-sweet solitude had led me to the mountains, to Mexico, to the sea, and last of all to Tahiti; and I wondered to what distant lands it would lead me in the future. ... solitude would remain a necessary part of my life. (Frisbie 1937: 198)

Frisbie, as it is seen in the book *My Tahiti*, was not only deeply interested in the theories of Sigmund Freud (Roulston 186), but even more in the condition of his own psyche. He analyzes himself, but the focal point of the book is the island and his experiences on it. The book has few of the flashes of self-pity, self-castigation, and defensive boasting that mar Frisbie's later books. When, for example, Frisbie, commenting on a German living alone in the mountains of Tahiti, remarks: "Men living in solitude learn too much about themselves, and it frightens them" (Frisbie 1937: 140), the statement seems obvious and innocent enough.

With the rest of his rich material Robert Dean Frisbie has included myths and legends which are amusingly, if not always strictly, retold. He has presented a round picture of those years lost from the Golden Age, and I could say that this book is a book of understanding and interpretation, where Frisbie's aim was to recapture something of the spirit of native Tahitian life as he knew it during the first three years of the 1920s.

Robert Dean Frisbie's work ranks, with its quality, among the works of some best Pacific authors. Author's contribution to the South Pacific literature was enormous, because Frisbie, as I have said, with his unique knowledge of the Pacific islands and people and with his vivid descriptions in his books, has managed to attract readers and reviewers in the past and also today.

One by one remote islands were left astern, trackless stretches of ocean crossed, storms weathered, and long glassy calms wallowed through. The monotonous sea days wore slowly away and still the schooner moved farther and farther into a lonely sea, visiting islands even more remote from the populous haunts of men. I realized at last that the end of my journey was at hand. (Frisbie 1929: 3)

Maribor

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L'INSPIRATION THOMISTE DANS LES CINQ GRANDES ODES DE PAUL CLAUDEL

Boštjan Marko Turk

Abstract

L'étude présente s'applique 'à mettre en relief l'unité ontologique dominant l'écriture de Claudel. C'est l'unité thomiste, l'être en oeuvre, « *la bienheureuse harmonie* » que les *Cinq grandes Odes* reproduisent fidèlement. Mais il ne s'agit pas, de loin, dans cette grande poésie, d'un ouvrage laborieux qui sentirait l'effort, incarnant pesamment une idée abstraite. Nous tâchons de montrer que la synthèse est « flagrante » et le thomisme claudélien parfaitement spontané, sans en rien gréver la substance poétique. Il évolue gracieusement jusqu'aux derniers horizons de l'art « profane », jusqu'à la danse et à son érotisme voilé. La danse touche la fusion de l'âme et du corps, glorifiant *in extenso* la première. C'est dans cette rencontre que l'étude voit l'essentiel de l'inspiration thomiste dans les *Cinq grandes Odes*.

L'esthétique littéraire de Claudel – si vaste soit l'espace qu'elle englobe – présente de toute évidence une unité assurée par la permanence idéologique entre les modes d'expression les plus divers. C'est le schéma grâce auquel se constitue la continuité entre les genres littéraires les plus différents: c'est à la lumière de celle-là que se préserve l'identité formelle entre les deux pivots les plus éloignés: entre la subjectivité et l'objectivité claudélienne, allant d'une « composition en abîme » qu'incarnent ses *Journaux*¹ jusqu'à une théodicée que présente son *Art poétique*.² C'est à la lumière de cette continuité que se réunissent sous un seul dénominateur commun les lieux, les temps et les personnages de ses oeuvres: c'est celle-ci qui permet de réconcilier une palette des tons les plus différents, la tragédie rejoint l'humour et les banalités les plus surprenantes, tout cela se faisant parfois dans l'espace très réduit d'une ligne, d'un verset ou même d'une seule phrase. C'est cette unité d'inspiration que reflète l'extrait suivant:

« L'effort théorique de Claudel consiste en effet essentiellement, nous semble-t-il, à revêtir d'une cohérence les intuitions éparées, fragmentées et sans aboutissement du Symbolisme; de cette cohérence le ciment est son catholicisme qui lui fournit le fondement métaphysique et moral de

¹ Paul Claudel, *J1, J2*, Gallimard, Paris, 1968–1969.

² Paul Claudel, *Oeuvre poétique*, Gallimard, Paris, 1967.

sa construction esthétique: plus exactement c'est au coeur de la symbolique catholique qu'il s'est approprié, et en son point névralgique, cette mystérieuse et douloureuse figure féminine porteuse de la chute et du salut, que se rejoignent tous les fils d'une réflexion née avec le Symbolisme et poursuivie dans la solitude d'une Eglise intérieure ». ³

La forme de cette « cohérence », fondée en « symbolisme catholique », doit par une rigueur déductive relever du domaine de l'être. En fait, tous les procédés poético-logiques dont se sert Claudel, installent son écriture à la proximité immédiate de cette source unificatrice ainsi exprimée dans l'*Art poétique*: « *Aussi loin que l'action va de sa source, jusque-là la connaissance. Comprenez que plus une chose est générale, plus elle est génératrice* »⁴ L'unité de l'inspiration claudélienne semble donc équivaloir à l'unité (générative) de l'être, l'expérience poétique étant la saisie immédiate de la totalité entitative.

Les *Cinq grandes odes*,⁵ l'« unité centrale » de l'inspiration poétique de Claudel, rentrent visiblement dans le cadre de la poésie de l'être et ne peuvent être explorées qu'à partir de ce contexte: « *Dans l'ode il (le poète) n'est que l'instrument d'un objet extérieur qui l'émeut. D'un côté, introversion et de l'autre extraversion lyrique. L'ode sort le poète de ses gonds. C'est la poésie de l'être qui cherche à se surpasser* ».⁶ « *La poésie de l'être* » des *Cinq grandes odes* se justifie par les indications mises en exergue de chacune d'entre elles et c'est par ceux-là que s'expliquent abondamment les spécificités de cette poésie, tout ceci requérant « *la présence scolastique* »⁷ au plus intime du génie créateur.

1.

Pourtant, « *en toutes choses il faut commencer par le commencement, c'est à dire par la fin* ».⁸ Ainsi, de l'extérieur il faut s'emparer de l'intérieur: il faut surprendre la poésie « en idéologie », en commentaire, exposer le chemin. La parole qui se prépare au silence est impatiente, lourde. Elle est Epigraphe.

À voir celui-ci de pres, on constate que les épigraphes désignées sous le titre des *Arguments*⁹ renseignent par un style nominal sur la structure du monde où se cachent les énergies de cette force générante. Tout au début, le poète place l'adage qui permet de focaliser l'optique à travers laquelle s'opérera la prise de la réalité: « *Vision de l'Eternité dans la création transitoire* ».¹⁰ « *La création transitoire* » ne peut ne pas être soumise à la corruption, c'est pour cela que le poète introduit dans la proximité

³ Dominique Millet-Gérard, *Anima et Sagesse*, p. 756.

⁴ Paul Claudel, *Oeuvre poétique*, cit. supra, p. 158.

⁵ Paul Claudel, *Oeuvre poétique*, cit. supra, p. 219, dans le texte *Cinq grandes odes*.

⁶ Alexandre Maurocordato, *L'Ode de Paul Claudel*, 1, Archives des lettres modernes, Paris, 1974, p. 12.

⁷ Dominique Millet-Gérard, « Lecture scolastique de Cinq grandes odes: l'ordination de la parole poétique » in Paul Claudel, *Les Odes*, Les éditions Albion Press, Ontario, 1994, p. 58.

⁸ Dominique Millet-Gérard, *Anima et sagesse*, en exergue.

⁹ *PO*, pp. 233, 248, 263 et 277.

¹⁰ *PO*, p. 234.

immédiate du passage cité l'idée de la contingence, celle-ci complétant le schéma proposé: « *Élan vers le Dieu absolu qui seul nous libère du contingent* ». ¹¹ A partir de ces fragments commence à se dessiner la limite qui esquisse en même temps le rendement fonctionnel de l'action créatrice. C'est la césure qui sépare l'absolu de l'éventuel prenant compte du vaste univers de l'être ou tout s'ordonne vers l'ultime finalité. L'univers est la « maison fermée », système clos et fini imprégné littéralement dans chacun de ses moments synchro- et diachroniques de l'action entitative:

« Mon devoir premier est Dieu et cette tâche qu'il m'a donnée à faire qui est de réunir tout en lui. Contemplation de la Maison fermée ou tout est tourné vers l'intérieur et chaque chose vers les autres suivant l'ordre de Dieu. Ma Miséricorde est à la mesure de l'univers; elle est catholique, elle embrasse toutes choses et toutes choses lui sont nécessaires. Pour être capable de contenir, il faut que le poète lui-même soit fermé à l'imitation de l'univers que Dieu a créé inépuisable et fini ». ¹²

Il se dégage de ces lignes l'idée d'une unité sans pareille, de l'unité catholique sortant le poète de sa subjectivité, de ses « gonds » individuels. C'est l'unité qui fait taire même « *la nourrice des Muses* », leur aînée, ci-dite Mnémosyne, parce que c'est l'unité ineffable de l'être:

« L'aînée, celle qui ne parle pas ! L'aînée, ayant le même âge. Mnémosyne qui ne parle jamais ! (...) »

Elle est le poids spirituel. Elle est le rapport exprimé par un chiffre très beau. Elle est posée d'une manière qui est ineffable sur le pouls même de l'être ». ¹³

2.

En analysant le texte « immédiat » des *Cinq grandes odes*, celui ou le caractère discursif revêt la forme poétique sans pourtant rien perdre de son acuité intellectuelle, on éprouve un « fondamentalisme entitatif » dont n'est exempte aucune page. S'il fallait citer les exemples témoignant *in extenso* de cette typologie, on devrait mentionner les phrases suivantes:

« Je vois devant moi l'Église catholique qui est de tout l'univers ! Ô capture ! Ô pêche miraculeuse ! Ô million d'étoiles prises aux mailles de notre filet,
Comme un grand butin de poissons à demi sorti de la mer dont les écailles vivent à la lueur de la torche !
Nous avons conquis le monde et nous avons trouvé que Votre Création est finie,
Et que l'imparfait n'a point de place avec Vos œuvres finies, et que notre imagination ne peut pas ajouter

¹¹ PO, p. 233.

¹² PO, p. 277.

¹³ PO, pp. 222–223.

A cette gradation exclamative, « dramatisée » par des « envols hymnisants », on pourrait joindre de nombreux extraits dont la passion est encore plus exacerbée. Ainsi lorsque le poète rend louange à la perfection de l'acte créateur qui s'étend « *aux confins du monde où le travail de la création s'achève* », jusqu'aux « *nébuleuses* », ¹⁵ il se met à chanter les miracles de la création dans un style qui surprend par son lyrisme réaliste, tellement il fascine par sa métaphysique irrésistible. L'extrait suivant en témoigne et nous le rapportons presque intégralement étant donné sa force implicite à l'ensemble de l'ontologie claudélienne:

« Salut donc, ô monde nouveau a mes yeux, ô monde maintenant total !

Ô credo entier des choses visibles et invisibles, je vous accepte avec un cour catholique !

Où que je tourne la tete

j'envisage l'immense octave de la création !

Le monde s'ouvre et, si large qu'en soit l'empan, mon regard le traverse d'un bout a l'autre.

J'ai pesé le soleil ainsi qu'un gros mouton que deux hommes forts suspendent a une perche entre leurs épaules.

J'ai recensé l'armée des Cieux et j'en ai dressé l'état. (...) Ainsi du plus grand Ange qui vous voit jusqu'au caillou de la route et d'un bout de votre création jusqu'à l'autre, il ne cesse point de continuité, non plus que de l'âme au corps; le mouvement ineffable des Séraphins se propage aux neuf ordres des Esprits,

Et voici le vent qui se leve à son tour sur la terre, le Semeur, le Moissonneur!

Ainsi l'eau continue l'esprit, et le supporte, et l'alimente,

Et entre toutes vos créatures jusqu'a vous il y a comme un lien liquide ».¹⁶

Ce qui ressort au premier plan dans les extraits cités, c'est le caractere insistant de l'ontologie claudélienne. La réduction du « poete-faiseur » a ce qu'il supplie et invite, tout en invoquant la réalité de l'être dont lui seul partage les secrets, cette réduction n'étant que signe ultime de l'unité transcendante dans laquelle se tisse la trame de l'univers. Claudel est conscient de ce que le moindre défaut dans le schéma de cette « *continuité* » pourrait entraîner des conséquences néfastes occasionnant l'affaissement du monde, l'action créatrice étant soustraite à son agencement, le « *lien liquide* » s'étant dissout. Cela nous rapproche de l'exclamation traduisant succinctement la matière en question, c'est-à-dire, « *Qui ne croit plus en Dieu, il ne croit plus en l'Etre, et qui hait l'Etre, il hait sa propre existence* ». ¹⁷

¹⁴ PO, p. 289.

¹⁵ PO, p. 252.

¹⁶ PO, pp. 240-241.

¹⁷ PO, p. 254.

3.

L'ontologie thomiste fait dériver l'existence des êtres du simultanésisme de l'être même. C'est ce qui fait la distinction antinomique de sa philosophie; c'est cela dont a hérité Claudel faisant reposer sur cette distinction l'individualité de ses thèses. De ce premier principe selon lequel l'unité du monde repose sur la « *distinctio creaturarum* », Thomas en parle dans la *Questio XCVII*,¹⁸ introduisant ainsi les données les plus générales de son ontologie. La théodicée thomiste commence par la considération générale sur la différence entre les êtres, de laquelle sera dérivée la plus obligeante nécessité.

La production des choses en l'être n'est pas un verbalisme gratuit. C'est une affirmation qui entraîne une suite logique. Son premier élément est l'idée d'un ordre hiérarchique ou les entités se distinguent selon la participation qu'elles opèrent au sein de l'être. Plus une chose est parfaite, plus elle sera proche de la Cause générale et générante. La perfection uniforme et simple de l'être se confirme dans le monde par la diversité et par la multiplicité, toutes les deux étant soumises au principe de la réversibilité. L'imparfait va de pair avec le Parfait, la dernière et la plus imparfaite matière (minérale) est la « première » preuve de la perfection divine. C'est là le mystère ineffable de l'unité de l'être. Dans un langage plus rigoureux, c'est le primat de la forme sur la matière originelle, sur la vaste possibilité d'engendrer les choses nouvelles, bref le primat claudélien de l'« esprit sur l'eau ».

4.

L'affirmation de l'être ne s'exprime que par distinction, celle-ci se rapprochant de la soustraction, bref de la privation. Cette idée, Claudel la fait comprendre par l'intermédiaire d'un dialogue, celui-ci, en fait, n'étant qu'une apostrophe où la voix du poète reste irrévocablement seule. Pourtant, en avant-plan, cette poésie fait ressortir le paradigme de l'être pris dans son aspect positif: l'homme, et surtout le poète, « couronnant la création » se sent solidaire des êtres qui l'entourent, leur diversité spécifique étant en même temps preuve et de sa suprématie et de l'indicibilité de l'être:

« Qui peut savoir ce que tu me demandes ? Plus que jamais une femme.
Tu murmures à mon oreille. C'est le monde tout entier que tu me demandes !

Je ne suis pas tout entier si je ne suis pas entier avec ce monde qui m'entoure. C'est tout entier moi que tu demandes ! C'est le monde tout entier que tu me demandes ! Lorsque j'entends ton appel, pas un être, pas un homme, pas une voix qui ne soit nécessaire à mon unanimité. Mais en quoi ma propre nécessité ? A qui Suis-je nécessaire, qu'à toi-même qui ne dis pas ce que tu veux.

¹⁸ Cf. infra.

Où est la société de tous les hommes? Où est la nécessité entre eux de tous les hommes ? Où est la cité de tous les hommes ?

Quand je comprendrais tous les êtres,

Aucun d'eux n'est une fin en soi, ni

le moyen pour qu'il soit, il le faut.

Et cependant quand tu m'appelles ce n'est pas avec moi seulement qu'il faut répondre, mais avec tous les êtres qui m'entourent ».¹⁹

L'unité de l'être est l'unanimité du monde. C'est la nécessité générale de se présenter au plan des choses présentes, au milieu des systèmes complétant par leur insuffisance la vaste « cité de l'être ». C'est ce que reflètent les mots:

« Tout être comme il est un

ouvrage de l'Éternité, c'est ainsi qu'il en est l'expression.

Elle est présente et toutes choses lui sont présentes et se passent en elle ».²⁰

L'appel qui descend de l'ultime finalité est l'appel à la solidarité qui étreint la totalité de l'existant. Cette étreinte s'appelle la continuité. Elle est le schéma univoque que réalise la créativité transcendantale dans l'émission de l'être aux sphères inférieures. De la continuité abonde toute l'œuvre de Claudel et notamment les *Cinq grandes odes*. Cette idée se traduit parfois directement, mais dans sa forme implicite elle est assise à la plupart des phrases dans le recueil:

« Ainsi du plus grand Ange qui vous voit jusqu'au

caillou de la route et d'un bout de votre création jusqu'à l'autre,

Il ne cesse point de continuité, non plus que de l'âme au corps ».²¹

Ou d'une façon plus explicite: « Je ne vous vois pas, mais je suis continu avec ces êtres qui vous voient ».²²

Dans ces extraits les idées du thomisme ne sont pas difficiles à reconnaître. L'unanimité du monde est le reflet du fait que Dieu donne l'être afin de tout assimiler à sa perfection, à faire participer la créature à l'action même par laquelle il administre la synchronie actualisante de l'univers. La répartition des êtres soumis à la même Loi se traduit par l'idée de l'ordre. La continuité ne pouvant pas s'en passer, l'ordre s'établit comme son principe déterminant:

« Respondeo dicendum quod ipse ordo in rebus sic a Deo creatis existens unitatem mundi manifestat. Mundus enim iste unus dicitur unitatem ordinis, secundum quod quaedam ad alia ordinantur. Quaecumque autem sunt a Deo, ordinem habent ad invicem et ad ipsum Deum ut ostensum est ».²³

¹⁹ PO, p. 274.

²⁰ PO, p. 241.

²¹ PO, p. 241.

²² PO, p. 243.

²³ ST, I, 47, 3. Trad. fr.: « L'ordre même qui règne dans les choses, telles que Dieu les a faites, manifeste l'unité du monde. Ce monde en effet est d'une unité de l'ordre, selon que certains êtres sont ordonnés à d'autres. Or tous les êtres qui viennent de Dieu sont ordonnés entre eux... »

ST, I, 104, 2. Trad. fr.: « La conservation des choses par Dieu ne suppose pas une nouvelle action de sa part, mais seulement qu'il continue à donner l'être, ce qu'il fait en dehors du mouvement et du temps. Ainsi la conservation de la lumière dans l'air se fait par la continuation de l'influx solaire ».

5.

L'ordre et la continuité ne sont pas à considérer unilatéralement, dans une seule dimension, horizontale et statique. Par contre, l'ordre inébranlable est rempli d'un dynamisme sans pareil; la continuité, figeant les choses dans le monde est – elle aussi – souple et flexible, à vrai dire, liquide. Les deux « variables », il faut les considérer exclusivement sous leur aspect mobile, sous le signe d'une actualité éperdument renovatrice. L'être est faire sans cesse renouvelé, sous l'action immédiate de la Cause divine. L'acte créateur se distingue par une actualité permanente, la création se poursuivant dès le premier moment avec une seule et même insistance. Non que les choses aient été mises à l'être à un temps donné, elles « subissent » l'être d'un moment à l'autre, en dépendant radicalement dans le fait de leur actualité. C'est là le mystère de la création continuée et de la maîtrise sans aucune réserve et nulle restriction de Dieu.

L'être présuppose donc conservation et création, l'acte créateur est l'acte entitatif, l'oeuvre du monde est par les liens d'une indicible synchronie attaché à l'amour de son Auteur.²⁴ C'est une idée qu'on replace volontiers dans le contexte global des *Cinq grandes odes*. Les données de première évidence sont les extraits où Claudel parle directement de la création continue, s'exprimant en termes du présent créateur, mettant au centre l'idée de l'existence gratuitement accordée de l'instant à l'instant, tout cela provenant d'une source au-delà de l'espace et du temps.²⁵

« Je Vous salue ô monde libéral a mes yeux !
Je comprends par quoi Vous êtes présent,
C'est que l'Éternel est avec vous, et qu'où est la Créature, le Créateur ne
l'a point quittée.
Je suis en vous et vous êtes à moi et votre possession est la mienne.

²⁴ Cf. Alexandre Maurocordato, *L'Ode de Paul Claudel*, Droz, Giard, Genève, Lille, 1955, où l'auteur en paraphrasant les sources inspiratoires des *Psaumes*, aborde la Miséricorde éternellement présente sous le même angle que notre écrit, bien que de façon moins explicite: « Mais là où l'inspiration des *Psaumes* atteint son point culminant, c'est dans le commerce de l'âme avec Dieu. Tout change s'écoule, seul *Jéhovah* reste immuable; sa pensée pénètre le temps et son regard jusqu'au fond des ténèbres; où que l'on soit sa main nous soutient. Sa puissance est telle que la création et ses merveilles ne lui ont coûté qu'un mot: c'est lui qui conserve à tout l'existence, et, s'il détournait la face, tout s'écroulerait dans le néant », *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁵ Le présent « éternisé » ne siège pas uniquement aux bancs de la philosophie thomiste. Incarné au moyen d'une transposition négative, il a trouvé sa place prestigieuse dans la philosophie de l'absurde. Étant donné que vivre l'absurde coupe le sujet de l'espace-temps concret, l'homme absurde est un irréconcilié, refusant l'adaptation quelconque à la réalité ontologique. Il est ainsi un « détemporalisé », tout cela reflétant *per negationem* la vigueur créatrice de l'agir divin, tel que le propose et décrit la phénoménologie chrétienne et thomiste. L'éternité du présent absurde étant l'éternité du néant, celle du présent créateur, par contre, est l'éternité de l'être, on comprendra mieux l'extrait suivant. L'univocité du vocabulaire ne traduisant aucune équivalence, les mots identiques révèlent une différence vraiment inexprimable: « Le monde, les choses et moi-même sommes là sans cause et sans raison. Comme de purs objets, étrangers au sens et aux lois qu'on voudrait leur prescrire. L'absurde supprime la conscience du temps. L'homme absurde vit un éternel présent. Puisque tout est privé de sens il ne se passe jamais rien », François Ewald, « L'absurde et la révolte », in: *Magazine littéraire*, Paris, avril 1990, p. 44.

Éclate le commencement,
Éclate le jour nouveau, éclate dans la possession de la source je ne sais
quelle jeunesse angélique !
Mon cour ne bat plus le temps, c'est l'instrument de ma perdurance,
Et l'impérissable esprit envisage les choses passantes. Mais ai-je dit
passantes ? Voici qu'elles recommencent. Et mortelles ? il n'y a plus de
mort avec moi.
Tout être, comme il est un
Ouvrage de l'éternité, c'est ainsi qu'il en est l'expression. Elle est présente
et toutes choses présentes se passent en elle ».²⁶

Ainsi, les *Cinq grandes odes* ne manquent pas des réminiscences directes à la continuité de la création, prise sous l'angle exclusif de l'être et Claudel formule avec insistance – expressément et à maints endroits - la communauté factitive des termes en question: « *Phrase mère ! Engin profond du langage et peloton des femmes vivantes ! / Présence créatrice ! Rien ne naîtrait si vous n'étiez neuf!* »²⁷ En conséquence, l'unité de l'être créateur fait suspendre la limite entre ce qui est dans le temps et ce qui l'excède. Les choses passantes s'enrichissent de l'éternité en la « constituant » par le fait même de leur anéantissement. L'éternité se restitue par les moments qui la composent « antérieurement », et la nécessité de l'être affecte en première instance la nécessité d'un simultanésisme ou le temps de l'être, le temps « reçu », doit être rendu (restitué) afin que soit assurée l'unité ontologique et temporelle. La « *présence créatrice* » ne se comprend qu'en considérant le simultanésisme temporel résidant en Dieu.

6.

Cette attitude est en fait fondamentale: elle n'est pas difficile à « dépister » même aux endroits qui surprennent par leur « frivolité ». Elle apparaît plus particulièrement sous l'allégorie de la muse qui est la grâce, la plus belle femme qui soit, la grâce d'être et l'être de grâce, invitant le poète à participer à la grande danse théogonique. L'éternelle jeunesse que la Grâce lui accorde vient de l'éternelle perfection et le cour volage de la danseuse contient le même secret qu'engendre le monde – au fur et à mesure qu'avancent les pas du mouvement rythmé:

« Et je ne veux pas que tu aimes une autre femme que moi, mais moi seule, car il n'en est pas de si belle que je suis,
Et jamais tu ne seras vieux pour moi, mais toujours plus à mes yeux jeune et beau, jusque tu sois un immortel avec moi! ».²⁸

C'est la même idée qui se traduit dans les vers suivants, pleins d'une ambiguïté se rapprochant de l'oxymore que provoque « *le grand rire divin* »²⁹ à la veille de l'éternel matin: « *Avance-toi et vois l'éternel matin, la terre et la mer sous le soleil du*

²⁶ *PO*, p. 241.

²⁷ *PO*, p. 222.

²⁸ *PO*, p. 268.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

l'éternel matin: « *Avance-toi et vois l'éternel matin, la terre et la mer sous le soleil du matin, comme quelqu'un qui paraît devant le trône de Dieu* ». ³⁰ L'éclat insoutenable de la lueur brillante précédant le Soleil de la révélation finale fait bégayer les créatures et la muse: les choses se couvrent d'une ambiguïté volontaire, toutes emportées par la danse vive de la création immédiate:

« Ris donc, je le veux, de te voir,
Ris, immortel ! de te voir parmi ces choses périssables ! Et raille, et regarde ce que tu prenais au sérieux ! car elles font semblant d'être la et elles passent.
Et elles font semblant de passer, et elles ne cessent pas d'être la ». ³¹

7.

La mesure « du rire », à laquelle « *toute production véritable être si minime soit-t-il appartient* », ³² ne peut pas ne pas être Dieu, Sa Sagesse. Cette mesure est l'amour « *au-dessus de toute parole* », ³³ l'amour qui a produit le monde et qui le maintient en existence stable. Si jusqu'à présent notre attention a été surtout accordée à l'agencement des causes secondes réalisant *directe* la création continue, le large extrait précité fait appel surtout à la recherche de la Source même de l'être, de la Cause Subsistante, muette dans son silence créatif. Ainsi la « *creatio continua* » se voit opposer son aspect statique, dont le témoignage exclusif est la genèse du monde. L'attention que Claudel vouait au fait de la Création, nous évoque ostensiblement l'inspiration dont était imprégné son esprit poétique:

« Mon Dieu, qui au commencement avez séparé les eaux supérieures des eaux inférieures,
Et qui de nouveau avez séparé de ces eaux humides que je dis
L'aride, comme un enfant divisé de l'abondant corps maternel,
La terre bien chauffante, tendre-feuillante et nourrie du lait et de la pluie,
Et qui dans le temps de la douleur comme au jour de la création saisissez dans votre main toute-puissante
L'argile humaine et l'esprit de tous côtés vous giclent entre les doigts,
De nouveau après les longues routes terrestres,
Voici l'Ode, voici que cette grande Ode nouvelle vous est présente,
Non point comme une chose qui commence, mais peu à peu comme la mer qui était là » ³⁴

Claudiel reprend l'histoire de la Création au moment où apparaissent les premières formes de l'univers sensible. Ainsi la création claudélienne, prise sous l'angle statico-diachronique, se présente essentiellement comme un don de l'être. La, aux « prémices »

³⁰ *PO*, p. 269.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Cit. supra.

³³ Cit. supra.

³⁴ *PO*, p. 234.

de la création, à l'accomplissement initial des œuvres divines, on assiste à une ornementation de l'être, dont les traits pertinents sont la création et la distinction. En fait, la hiérarchie des natures se manifeste par celle des causes: « *Et ideo dicendum est quod sicut sapientia Dei est causa distinctionis rerum, ita et inaequalitatis* ». ³⁵ La Cause première engendre la distinction première et dans le monde objectif et dans la sphère de la subjectivité humaine. La création procède en distinguant: les eaux se séparent puis se séparent de l'amorphisme du monde hébété l'être intelligent, l'homme. L'homme est instauré maître du monde, il est l'ultime produit de l'œuvre divine:

« Moi, l'homme,
Je sais ce que je fais,
De la poussée et de ce pouvoir même de naissance et de création
J'use, je suis maître,
Je suis au monde, j'exerce de toutes parts ma connaissance. Je connais
toutes choses et toutes choses se connaissent en moi ». ³⁶

L'homme, premier au monde, est le dernier produit de la distinction qu'a opérée la Cause. C'est la distinction de l'être que replace l'homme au sommet de la Création et qui le distingue nettement de la Source entitative. Claudel fait suivre le passage cité par une « exégèse » de la distinction ontologique, où il affirme orgueilleusement que:

« Je regarde toute chose, et voyez tous que je n'en suis pas l'esclave,
mais le dominateur.
Toute chose subit moins qu'elle n'impose, forçant que l'on s'arrange
d'elle, tout être nouveau une victoire sur les êtres qui étaient déjà !
Et vous qui êtes l'être parfait, vous n'avez pas empêché que je ne sois
aussi !
Vous voyez cet homme que je fais et cet être que je prends en vous.
mon Dieu, mon être soupire vers le vôtre ! Délivrez-moi de moi-même !
Délivrez l'être de la condition !
Je suis libre, délivrez-moi de la liberté !
Je vois bien des manières de ne pas être, mais il n'y a qu'une manière
seule
Être, qui est d'être en vous, qui est vous-même ! L'eau ». ³⁷

8.

Pourtant, le discours cataphatique, l'orientation délibérée vers la quiddité des choses qui les connaît au moyen de la pénétration, cette dernière étant basée originellement sur l'intelligence n'est qu'un revers dissimulé des dires claudéliens. L'affirmation positive, dont le signe le plus éminent est le fourmillement de l'être,

³⁵ ST, I, 47, 2. Trad. fr.: « Aussi faut-il dire que la Sagesse de Dieu, qui est cause de la distinction entre les natures, est aussi cause de leur inégalité ».

³⁶ PO, p. 238.

³⁷ PO, pp. 238-239.

nous parle d'une certaine insuffisance de la démarche adoptée. En fait, le passage évoque l'idée de la différence analogique prélevée sur le caractère foncier de l'altérité. Cette altérité, Claudel l'a saisie à sa source même, assimilant un apophatisme rigoureux à la prolificité de l'être. En fait, la parole claudélienne est – malgré toute l'abondance – négative, l'expérience de Mnémosyne, mère des muses, s'élargit à travers l'oubli dans une indicibilité inexprimable. Elle se tait plus qu'elle ne parle, elle s'immerge dans un silence figé lorsqu'elle doit exprimer le secret même de l'être:

« L'ainée, celle qui ne parle pas ! L'ainée, ayant le même âge. Mnémosyne qui ne parle jamais ! (...) »

Elle est le poids spirituel. Elle est le rapport exprimé par un chiffre très beau. Elle est posée d'une manière qui est ineffable sur le pouls même de l'être ».³⁸

9.

Par-là, l'écriture claudélienne renoue avec une tradition essentielle de « *theologia negativa* », dont le promoteur est le Pseudo-Denys.³⁹ Thomas d'Aquin était son commentateur exhaustif, de même que Albert le Grand. Le concept thomiste de la réversibilité analogique de l'être est enraciné en chaque signe des *Cinq grandes odes*. L'être est réversible, coïncé dans le paradoxe de la relation d'identité ou le revers nie l'endroit, cette formule à double face étant l'explication de l'aspect apo-cataphatique dans le recueil. Dieu ne s'affirme que par la négation, par la soustraction des attributs qui le désignent,⁴⁰ par la substantialisation exclusiviste de toute accidentance.

³⁸ PO, pp. 222–223

³⁹ Pseudo-Denys, dit l'Aréopagite.

⁴⁰ Cf. les commentaires de Thomas des *Sentences* de Pierre Lombard et du Pseudo-Denys. La question qui se pose lorsqu'on s'approche de la *theologia negativa* concerne l'intersection de la pensée thomiste et l'auteur des *Noms divins* et de la *Hiérarchie céleste*. (Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite, Aubier, Paris, 1943). Ce problème s'aggrave par le fait que l'œuvre du Pseudo-Denys est inséparable de la tradition chrétienne occidentale; en tant que telle elle fait aussi figure d'autorité dans les écrits de Thomas. En vérité la carrière de celui-ci commence par le commentaire de l'Aréopagite et se termine dans le silence des silences (1), tel que le professait le mystérieux docteur. Le modèle de l'analogie thomiste semble être bien conforme à l'anagogie dionysienne, le paradoxe de la distribution entitative ressortant de toute évidence: « *C'est la théologie elle-même qui déclare Dieu Dissemblable, qui affirme qu'on n'a le droit de le comparer à aucun être, car, dit-elle, il diffère de tout, et suprême paradoxe, rien ne lui ressemble* », (*Les noms divins*, p. 158, cit. supra). Le « *suprême paradoxe* » est largement identifiable avec le prologue cité. L'affirmation de l'essence divine étant positivement impossible, elle s'affirme négativement, cette « affirmation » constituant le cœur sacré de tout existant. C'est l'unique « *théologie de la Transcendance* » qui ramène Thomas aux sources du mysticisme apophatique, là où toute affirmation pâlit en face de la Luminosité seule essentielle. « *Il faut que la négation ait pénétré au cœur même de l'affirmation pour que l'affirmation vaille. Et c'est dans cette affirmation transcendantale et purifiée que la négation elle-même se justifie. Par là, la théologie négative se présente comme une théologie éminente, comme la vraie théologie de la Transcendance* » (René Roques, « Signification de la pensée Dyonysienne », pp. 26–27 in: *Denys l'Aréopagite, La Hiérarchie céleste*, Cerf, Paris, 1958). Pourtant, la théologie négative, résultant en un agnosticisme définitif, ne saurait être la formule explicative de Thomas. La présence ontologique étant la présence réelle, l'univers thomiste est bien plus que celui de Pseudo-Denys imprégné de l'« analogie positive », accordant à tout la facticité de l'être.

Pour mieux sentir l'originalité spécifique de l'un et de l'autre, nous proposons le texte de l'Aréopagite qui parle de la dérivation entitative. Le texte est chargé de pronoms indéfinis qui devraient originellement

C'est pour cette raison que le traité thomiste sur Dieu s'ouvre par une postulation qui paraît de prime abord erronée, dans la suite elle se découvre essentielle. L'univers thomiste est l'univers d'« *exitus et redditus* » de toute nature partant de Dieu; tendant vers Dieu. C'est Dieu qui garantit l'existence de cette structure; il la garantit par l'essence même de son être. Or, plus que la pensée thomiste souligne que la dérivation « *ad extra* » n'est que reflet des relations « *ad intra* », de l'essence (nature) même de Dieu, plus elle affirme l'ineffabilité définitive de toute donnée « *ad intra* » et, par conséquence logique, aussi de celle « *ad extra* ». De cette ambiguïté vient le prologue célèbre, où Thomas d'Aquin met en valeur le problème de la connaissance de Dieu englobant le principe et la fin des choses, surtout de la créature rationnelle. Le prologue s'ouvre par la cataphore concernant le monde créé (Dieu principe évident de la fin des choses), pourtant à la fin le texte plonge dans une indicibilité définitive, englobant tout dans un mystère incommunicable:

Cette formule est un programme véritable de « *sacra doctrina* ». La science sacrée observant l'univers à la lumière de la dérivation analogique de l'essence divine, s'acharne sur l'épiphénoménologie du créé, voulant à tout prix systématiser et homogénéiser la création, c'est-à-dire, les milliers de ses innombrables formes finies et toute l'inepuisabilité de l'être. Elle retombe là dans un « paradoxe » qui constitue également le plan central de l'écriture claudélienne: réunir les données positives dans la vision de leur source négative, tout ceci en affirmant le fait de leur existence actuelle, actualisée et renouvelée d'un instant à l'autre. La clef de ce paradoxe sont les versets précités où Mnémosyne est à l'écoute du mystère ultime:

« Mnémosyne qui ne parle jamais! (...) »

Elle est le poids spirituel. Elle est le rapport exprimé par un chiffre très beau. Elle est posée d'une manière qui est ineffable sur le pouls même de l'être ».

10.

La poésie qui parle de l'être est celle qui ne parle pas. La mère des muses, étendue sur un espace inépuisable, réunissant les quatre directions de l'univers, est indescriptible: son rapport avec la source entitative est plongé dans l'ineffabilité. Ces

déterminer la totalité du nombre et de l'espèce. Néanmoins, le passage – débordant des êtres, finit par déborder de leur absence. L'indicibilité totale de la Cause suspend la totalité de ses effets (épiphénomènes), en les « punissant » d'une nullité toute logique et toute fondée. Par cette curieuse énumération, aboutissant à une parfaite *affirmatio per negationem*, la mystique onto-réaliste manifeste supérieurement sa différence essentielle, nous menant loin du thomisme et, en conséquence, loin de l'univers claudélien: « *Car cette Cause est le principe des êtres: c'est d'elle que procèdent l'être même et tout ce qui existe sous quelque mode que ce soit: tout principe, toute fin, toute vie, toute immortalité, toute sagesse, tout ordre, toute harmonie, toute puissance, toute conservation, toute situation, tout partage, toute intellection, tout raisonnement, toute sensation, toute propriété acquise, tout repos, tout mouvement, toute union, tout mélange, toute amitié, toute concordance, toute distinction, toute définition, et toutes les autres modalités qui, procédant de l'être, caractérisent tous les êtres* », Pseudo-Denys, *L'Hierarchie céleste*, cit supra, p. 133.

(1.) « *omnia quae scripsi, pala mihi videntur, respectu eorum quae revelata sunt mihi* », *Fontes vitae Sancti Thomae Aquinatis*, ed. D. Pruemmer, 1936, Toulouse p. 376

antinomies, pourtant, ne sont pleinement perceptibles qu'au niveau de la poésie de Claudel en tant que telle, c'est-à-dire, appliquée à ce que Claudel a ambiguëment exposé sous le nom de « *poein* », faire. Le secret des Muses se révèle par la mise en évidence de l'aspect multiple de chaque action venant de leur part,⁴¹ se couronnant, en instance finale, par l'inspiration catholique (thomiste: cf. La Prudence, la Force, la Tempérance et la Justice). A cela suit l'idée du poète, lui même étant étendu entre la totalité et le néant, entre la parole totale et le silence total. Il est peu de passages qui transmettent de façon plus aigüe le dilemme central de la poésie (*poein*) claudélienne. Nous le rapportons entièrement en raison de sa force d'implication:

« Mais comme le Dieu saint a inventé chaque chose, ta
joie est dans la possession de son nom,
Et comme il a dit dans le silence "Qu'elle soit!, c'est ainsi que, pleine
d'amour, tu répètes, selon qu'il l'a appelée,
Comme un petit enfant qui épelle " Qu'elle est" ».
O servante de Dieu, pleine de grâce!
Tu approuves substantiellement, tu contemples chaque chose dans ton
coeur, de chaque chose tu cherches
comment la dire!
Quand il composait l'univers, quand il disposait avec beauté le Jeu,
Quand il déclenchait l'énorme cérémonie,
Quelque chose de nous avec lui, voyant tout, se réjouissant dans son
oeuvre,
Sa vigilance dans son jour, son acte dans son sabbat!
Ainsi quand tu parles, ô poete, dans une énumération délectable
Proférant de chaque chose le nom
Comme un père tu l'appelles mystérieusement dans son principe et selon
que jadis
Tu participas à sa création, tu cooperes à son existence!
Toute parole une répétition.
Telle est le chant que tu chantes dans le silence, et telle est la bienheureuse
harmonie ».⁴²

En prenant le syntagme « *la bienheureuse harmonie* » dans le sens littéral, la polysémie foncière du monde se lève peu à peu, proposant une solution « positive » à l'énigme de l'indicibilité. La portée ultime des *Cinq grandes Odes* serait ainsi une certaine coexistence synesthésique dont les racines remontent très loin. La « *bienheureuse harmonie* » est un rapport préalablement perçu, par lequel le poète englobe tout l'univers, étalé devant lui dans ses formes multiples. Cette connaturalité du monde et de la parole, de l'être et du poète a toutefois les bases les plus sublimes qui soient. Elle seule permet de réunir l'oeuvre de Claudel dans ce qu'il a d'original et de génial.

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⁴¹ « J'ai dit le Nymphes nourricières; celles qui ne parlent pas et qui ne se font point voir; j'ai dit les Muses respiratrices et maintenant je dirai les Muses inspirées ».

⁴² PO, p. 230.

**PUNDONOR CALDERONIANO EN HISPANOAMÉRICA
(CON ILUSTRACIÓN EN *CRÓNICA DE UNA MUERTE ANUNCIADA*
DE GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ)***

Stanislav Zimic

*In memoriam Jože Jamšek
Cvetko Velikonja
Žarko Ivančič*

Abstract

El tema del artículo es atemporal, fuera de cualquier límite del tiempo, porque trata el concepto de honor en el mundo hispánico, ilustrándolo con ejemplos literarios. El autor dedica su especial atención a la novela de Gabriel García Márquez, *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*, cuyo tema principal es justamente el concepto de honor en el mundo hispanoamericano. Zimic se acerca al dicho tema desde la perspectiva histórica buscando las raíces en el Siglo de Oro español, sobre todo en la obra Calderón de la Barca.

Crónica de una muerte anunciada (CMA) de García Márquez se designa a veces como novela policíaca o detectivesca.¹ En una obra de esta clase, como es bien sabido, se investiga un crimen para descubrir al que lo ha cometido. Ahora bien, en CMA el crimen, sus autores, sus motivaciones y, en efecto, todas las circunstancias en que se perpetró se revelan ya en los comienzos de la obra. Por esto, recordando que García Márquez considera *Edipo rey* de Sófocles como la mejor obra detectivesca, por el hecho de que tras la asidua búsqueda del asesino de su padre, Edipo descubre que él mismo lo fue, algunos críticos han concluido que CMA es una obra detectivesca en un sentido análogo, pues el autor acabaría reconociéndose como el verdadero culpable

* Una versión abreviada de este estudio aparecerá en *Actas del Coloquio-Calderón 2000*, celebrado en Pamplona (Sept. 2000).

¹ El autor mismo la designó "como una narración policíaca vuelta al revés" (L.A. Girgado, *Crónica de una muerte anunciada. Guía de lectura*, A Coruña, Tambre, 1993, 79). Ver A. Rama, "García Márquez entre la tragedia y la policial o crónica y pesquisa de la CMA", *Sin nombre*, (13) 1982, 7-27. A. M. Hernández de López, "Sentido detectivesco en CMA", *Cuadernos de Aldeeu*, 1987, 105-114. Para todas las citas y referencias nos servimos de la primera edición de *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* (Bogotá, Ed. La Oveja Negra, 1981). Utilizamos la abreviación CMA y tras las citas indicamos, en paréntesis, la página.

de la muerte de un inocente, Santiago Nasar.² De acuerdo con esta tesis, no habría sido éste, sino el autor mismo quien desfloró a Angela Vicario, lo que motivó eventualmente la sangrienta venganza pundonorosa por parte de sus hermanos, Pedro y Pablo.³ A nuestro juicio, hay muy débil apoyo textual para tal interpretación: ¿Por qué iría el autor en búsqueda de un culpable, a quien ya conocía hartó bien? En todo caso, la identidad del supuesto seductor de Angela no es significativa, excepto en que no corresponde a Santiago Nasar, pues así lo exige, creemos, la ironía fundamental de la obra.⁴ Sin embargo, no resulta desacertado evocar a *Edipo rey*, si en *CMA* se percibe el determinado, intenso afán del autor—no interrumpido durante veintisiete años desde el truculento acto—de comprender las causas intrínsecas de éste, es decir, de encontrar al verdadero culpable, afán que, en efecto, culmina en un reconocimiento angustioso de que los “culpables podíamos ser todos” (107), todo el pueblo y, así, el autor también.⁵

El extraño comportamiento de Pedro y Pablo Vicario, vengadores de la supuesta deshonra de su hermana, antes y después del homicidio, se justifica en el pueblo “con el pretexto de que [se debe a ciertos] asuntos de honor” y que éstos “son estancos sagrados a los cuales sólo tienen acceso los dueños del drama” (127). Resuena muy clara y fuerte una ya temprana voz ibérica, reclamando la paternidad del concepto, repetida miles de veces a través de los siglos y con acento particularmente orgulloso e insistente en el teatro del Siglo de Oro—hecho de especial relevancia para esta ocasión: “El honor es un misterioso poder que se cierne sobre toda la existencia”, un dominio privilegiado, exclusivo, reservado a la persona capaz de sentirlo, entenderlo y defenderlo. “La honra se equipara a la vida” y “la deshonra se iguala con la muerte.”

² Varios críticos señalan este hecho para negarle categoría de novela detectivesca a *CMA* o para clasificarla como parodia de tal género (K. N. March, “*CMA*: García Márquez y el género policíaco”, *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos*, 1982-3, 61-70; E. Mottram, “Existential and Political Controls in the Fiction of García Márquez”, *García Márquez and Latin America*, Ed. A. Bhalla, Sterling Publishers, 1987, 6-24).

³ A. Rama, “García Márquez entre la tragedia y la policial...”, 15-18; R. D. Pope, “Transparency and Illusion in García Márquez’s *CMA*”, *Latin American Literary Review*, (XV) 1987, 189; A. S. Simpson, *Detective Fiction from Latin America*, Toronto, Associated University Presses, 1990, 167-75, entre otros.

⁴ Para algunos lectores es “la clave” para entender la obra (J. S. Christie, “Fathers and Virgins”, *Latin American Literary Review*, 1993, 21). De ser este “misterio” la preocupación central de la obra, resultarían irrelevantes casi todos sus episodios, pues nada tienen que ver con su revelación.

⁵ En los estudios sobre *CMA* se percibe a menudo la frustración al no poder identificarse el objeto de la búsqueda. G. Rodríguez de Vergara: “...búsqueda de algo que no precisa qué es exactamente (*El mundo satírico de García Márquez*, Madrid, Pliegos, 1991, 85). C. Alonso piensa, con varios otros críticos, que la búsqueda del autor es de todos modos fútil, pues “it cannot produce any new facts...., it repeats the report [del juez]...., it precludes the possibility of understanding the crime” (“Writing and Ritual in *CMA*”, en *Gabriel García Márquez: New Readings*, Cambridge University Press, 1987, 151-167). Según nuestra lectura, el autor conocía hartó bien los sucesos, pero sólo en el aspecto más externo. Al reconsiderarlos a través del tiempo y por medio de las entrevistas y conversaciones con la gente del pueblo, quiso comprender las causas más profundas, transcendentales de ellos. M. Rendon, “The Latino and His Culture: *CMA* by García Márquez”, *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* (4) 1994: “By translating memories into language the subject embodied in the chronicler recovers parts of himself that remained obscure, in his words, *confused*...., often being obsessed by its absurdity” (346). Con muy fina intuición, Canfield observa: “búsqueda de un sentido para un hecho absurdo...., que, de encontrarse, podría revelarse, justamente, como el hallazgo de una identidad y un destino” (Citado por L. E. Lasso, *La narrativa de García Márquez: Hacia la otra postmodernidad*, Neiva-Columbía, Charry, 1994, 13).

Por la honra “!todo se ha de dar!”⁶ “Por la honra”, declaran los hermanos Vicarios, “!mil veces”! hubieran vuelto a cometer su nefasto homicidio (66). Al disponerse a la matanza, tienen un fuerte deseo íntimo de no tener que cumplir con el “horrible compromiso que les ha caído encima” (77), pero se afanan mucho en disimularlo para que no lo malentienda nadie como titubeo o, aún peor, cobardía. ¿No se parecen quizás también por esta ambigua actitud a muchos notorios pundonorosos del teatro áureo español, quienes, a solas, suelen quejarse del “deber doloroso” que es su contemplada venganza de honor, que, en definitiva, llevan a cabo con diligencia y puntualidad? ⁷ Sorprendiendo a Santiago Nasar en su emboscada, Pedro y Pablo lo acribillan a cuchilladas, sin jamás darle ocasión de defenderse. Es que el “ofensor” a la honra es, “según las costumbres jurídicas antiguas”, un “enemigo declarado, al que no hay, por tanto, que retar; y a un enemigo así se le podía matar por sorpresa, o como se pudiera”.⁸ El castigo ha de ser “adecuado a la ofensa”⁹, por lo cual el modo de ser castigado el ofensor suele ser, de cierto modo, un emblema elocuente y tremebundo del espíritu ofendido del pundonoroso. Cada atroz cuchillada que infligen a Santiago Nasar es, en la intención de Pedro y Pablo, una orgullosa, definitiva demostración y reafirmación de su honra personal frente a todo el pueblo, en la plaza pública. Es, en parte, para efectuar tal demostración que la muerte de Santiago Nasar fue anunciada, directa o veladamente, a tanta gente por ellos mismos. No pudo menos de serlo, pues la notoria fórmula antigua del pundonor prescribe que “a secreto agravio” corresponde “secreta venganza” y “a público agravio, pública venganza”.¹⁰ Ni siquiera acabadas la fiestas de la boda, Bayardo devolvió a la, en su creencia, “impura” esposa, Angela, a su familia, con demostraciones muy teatrales de esposo traicionado, pronto advertidas por todos. ¡Qué alternativas tienen, pues, Pedro y Pablo sino hacer cuanto más pública su venganza! De todos modos, “la venganza pública, igual que la secreta”, se considera como “un acto social con que se honra toda la comunidad”¹¹, según lo sugieren con abundancia las aprobaciones exaltadas de monarcas y otras dignidades políticas, civiles y religiosas aún de los actos más horribles, en nombre del honor, en el teatro del Siglo de Oro.¹² En *CMA*, asimismo, casi todos aprueban la venganza sangrienta de Pedro y Pablo, incluyendo los familiares de éstos y las autoridades civiles y religiosas del pueblo. No defender el honor es “cobardía bastarda”, es “hacerse cómplice del atropello cometido por el ofensor en dano del honor colectivo”¹³, es una norma con que se apela a cada individuo de la comunidad. ¡He aquí una razón fundamental—siempre buscada

⁶ R. Menéndez Pidal, “Del honor en el teatro español”, en *De Cervantes y Lope de Vega*, Madrid, Espasa-Calpe, 1964, 149-150, 146.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 149, 147.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 154. En *El caballero de Olmedo* a D. Alonso lo matan en una emboscada y sus asesinos son unos cobardes rencorosos que de ningún modo pueden identificarse como defensores de su honor. No se percibe este hecho en los paralelos con *CMA* que se sugieren en el estudio de H. Méndez Ramírez, “La reinterpretación paródica del código de honor en *CMA*”, *Hispania*, 73, 1990, 934-42.

¹⁰ Menéndez Pidal, 147.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹² Ver, por ejemplo, los finales de *El médico de su honra* y de *El pintor de su deshonra* de Calderón. Advirtamos, sin embargo, que estas aprobaciones sólo son atribuibles a los personajes y no al autor.

¹³ Menéndez Pidal, 151.

por los lectores de *CMA*—por la cual nadie impide la muerte tan anunciada de Santiago Nasar! ¡Quién se atrevería a “hacerse cómplice del atropello cometido por el ofensor en dano del honor colectivo” en la opinión de sus vecinos! Por esta misma aprensión, es anónima la carta con que alguien quiere advertir a Santiago Nasar del peligro que corre (23).¹⁴ “Cumplir con el deber pundonoroso” es preciso, imprescindible, “aún cuando no se haya probado la culpa” del ofensor, pues “la deshonra basta imaginarla”¹⁵. En efecto, basta que la imaginen los otros para que el pundonoroso la sufra en su mente como real y en demanda de diligente venganza.¹⁶ Angela, como algunas notorias congéneres del teatro áureo, es, con toda probabilidad, inocente. Significativamente, algunos la consideran “boba” (45), quizás por su notoria ingenuidad y reticencia en asuntos sexuales, en que muchas coetáneas serían mucho más expertas y experimentadas. De todos modos, su confesión es extraída con bestial, cruel violencia: “pensé que me iban a matar”, recuerda Angela (64). Su madre y sus hermanos, obcecados por la deshonra de la casa, que consideran como hecho irrefutable, le exigen, bajo amenazas de mortales torturas, el nombre, un nombre cualquiera, del seductor, y ella no encuentra remedio sino proporcionándoselo: “Lo busqué en las tinieblas, lo encontré a primera vista entre los tantos y tantos nombres confundibles de este mundo y del otro, y lo dejé clavado en la pared con su dardo certero, como a una mariposa sin albedrío...” (65)¹⁷. Evidentemente muy consciente del cinismo de su mundo, a Angela ni se le ocurre explicar su “impureza” como consecuencia de un accidente. Y es lo más probable que sólo de esto se trate—sus compañeras aluden a la frecuencia de tales percances femeninos (53)¹⁸— pues, además de la personalidad misma de Angela que así lo sugiere, la absoluta superfluidad de la atroz venganza y de la obsesión colectiva, ocasionadas por una deshonra sólo imaginada, inexistente, se revisten de una ironía particularmente penosa, acerba. Condenada por su comunidad como mujer deshonrada, Angela es, con toda probabilidad, la persona más honrada entre todos ellos, y, claro

¹⁴ Lo sugiere también S. M. Hart, *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*, London, Grant-Cutler, 1994, 36.

¹⁵ Menéndez Pidal, 147.

¹⁶ D. Gutierre: “Pero imaginarlo basta / quien sabe, que tiene honor” (P. Calderón de la Barca, *El médico de su honra*, Jornada III, primera escena).

¹⁷ Santiago Nasar es un notorio seductor de mujeres y por esto su nombre le viene a la mente a Angela en el terrible momento de aprieto. Quizás también piensa, ingenuamente, que, por la riqueza y poder de su familia, “sus hermanos [no] se atreverían contra él” (145). A Pedro y Pablo, como hermanos de Angela, incumbe la defensa de la honra de la casa. Se encargaría de ella el padre, de no ser ciego y ya muy viejo y débil (ver, por ejemplo, *Las mocedades del Cid* de Guillén de Castro). Su ceguera por causa de su terca, insensata “honradez” de orfebre (“la vista se le acabó de tanto hacer primores de oro para mantener el honor de la casa”, 43) es reveladora de la dogmática, “ciega” educación pundonorosa que debió de impartir a sus hijos.

¹⁸ Sin embargo, aun admitiendo la posibilidad de un percance, a ninguna de las compañeras se le ocurre aconsejar a Angela que revele tal verdad al marido. Es que ya saben, como Angela, que no se le creería. La verdad sería considerada mentira, y ésta es, pues, la única alternativa que aun a la mujer más honesta le impone la maliciosa, cínica suspicacia pundonorosa. En tan precaria situación, Angela decide no dar explicación alguna. Por el paralizante miedo de no ser creídas por sus patológicamente suspicaces maridos, las trágicas heroínas del drama áureo de honor a menudo no se atreven a decirles la verdad de su integridad e inocencia, acabando al fin atrapadas en aparentes contradicciones, fatales para ellas. (Es clásico el caso de Doña Mencía en *El médico de su honra*). F. López propone otra posibilidad: “il faut qu’elle se soit déflorée elle-même, non par accident...” (“*CMA* de Gabriel García Márquez ou le crime était presque parfait”, *Bulletin Hispanique*, 1994, 557).

está, no sólo por no ser “impura”, sino, ante todo, por su conmovedora honestidad, por su “decencia pura” (119) en todos sus tratos con los demás y por la delicada humanidad con que consigue restaurar la honra y la vida de su “agraviado” marido, víctima, como ella, de una absurda creencia y de una injusta, cruel condena colectiva. Con su sencillo, sincero y persistente afecto—las 2000 cartas a Bayardo, símbolo tanto de esta firmeza amorosa como de la impermeabilidad del prejuicio—Angela logra al fin neutralizar, como por milagro, la monstruosa, anquilosada convención pundonorosa de su comunidad, aplicada con tan irracional, injusta irrelevancia a su matrimonio y a su vida.¹⁹

Por otra parte, todas las pretensiones pundonorosas de los que se presumen honrados y que por ello condenan a Angela, quedan negadas, de modo flagrante y sistemático, por sus propias contradicciones. Se presupone que el honor es atributo del espíritu noble, virtuoso, sobrio, sensible, del carácter cívico y moral ejemplar. Pedro y Pablo Vicario personifican más bien lo contrario. Aunque tienen “reputación de gente buena” (70) en la comunidad, lo que constituye un sugerente comentario en sí, son individuos de “naturaleza simple” (131), es decir, de limitada argucia mental, de basta sensibilidad y tosca educación moral, parranderos borrachines y putaneros habituales. Una de las incongruencias morales más grotescas de la obra ocurre cuando Pedro y Pablo acuden a la defensa de la “pureza” de su hermana directamente del burdel, empaados de trasnochada borrachera y hediondez venérea. No es por interés en el dato biográfico, sino con propósito de dar remate relevante, revelador de una congénita actitud moral hacia la vida, que se nos proporciona esta última noticia de Pedro: “se reintegró tres años después a las Fuerzas Armadas..., y una mañana espléndida su patrulla se internó en territorio de guerrillas cantando canciones de puta, y nunca más se supo de ellos” (109). Al evocar la conducta de Pedro y Pablo, el autor dice que lo dejó muy perplejo el hecho de que, en realidad, no querían cometer el crimen y que hicieron todo lo posible para que alguien se lo impidiera (68). La paradoja se explica, creemos, por el hecho de que estos individuos nunca sintieron ni podrían sentir el honor como una irrepresible necesidad íntima, sino tan sólo como

¹⁹ Se supera “el manejo... del honor en el reencuentro de la pareja que pervivió a la caída” (Lasso, 14). Por no percibirse esta importante implicación de la reconciliación de Angela y Bayardo, a menudo se la considera superflua temática y novelísticamente, melodramática (Hart, 49; D. M. Kercher: “syrupy drama..., melodrama... comedy” (“CMA: Notes on Parody and the Artist”, *Latin American Literary Review*, 1985, 97), desapercibiéndose así también la intención ideológica fundamental de la obra. Sobre la precaria situación de Angela en su injusto, cruel mundo machista, de doble estándar, ver el excelente estudio de M. Millington, “The Unsung Heroine: Power and Marginality in CMA” (*Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 66, 1989, 73-85), aunque algunas consideraciones, particularmente sobre el inconformismo sexual de la joven, nos parecen demasiado tendenciosas y arbitrarias. Como epígrafe de su novela, García Márquez evoca unos versos de Rubena de Gil Vicente: “La caza de amor es de altanería”, lo que ha suscitado ya muchas interpretaciones, todas muy tentativas, por no resultar clara su relación con los sucesos de la obra. (Ver, entre otros, B. M. Jarvis, “El halcón y la presa: Identidades ambiguas en CMA”, *En el punto de mira: Gabriel García Márquez*, Madrid, Pliegos, 1985, 219-229). Referidas a Angela, “garza guerrera”, presa “altanera” son metáforas de su excelencia personal, de su individualidad y de su aspiración a un amor libremente correspondido. Para algunas semejanzas posibles con la personalidad de Rubena, ver nuestro estudio en “Estudios sobre el teatro de Gil Vicente: Obras de tema amoroso”, (*Boletín de la Biblioteca de Menéndez Pelayo*, 1983, 11-39). También en el teatro áureo hay magníficos personajes femeninos concientes de su precaria situación en un mundo machista y determinados en afirmar su individualidad y libertad, de un modo u otro (ver, por ejemplo, *La dama duende* de Calderón).

una muy inoportuna, insidiosa convención social, que no obstante no se atreven a desatender por causa del “qué dirán”. El ser “honrado” ¿no depende, quizás, sobre todo, de la opinión en que los otros lo tienen a uno?²⁰ Nada deseosos de efectuar la venganza y muy aprensivos al no encontrar modo de evitarla, Pedro y Pablo se animan mutuamente con entumecimientos vináticos de la mente y con fanfarronas posturas de coraje machista. Ambos temen dejar dudosa su honradez y hombría en la opinión del otro.²¹ Quizás es para suprimir esta falta de convicción íntima, este paralizante miedo, que se lanzan con ferocidad tan frenética, como desalmados robots, sobre su indefensa víctima. No es, pues, con esa “serena decisión”, “heroicidad” y “fortaleza estoica” que se suelen atribuir a los notorios pundonorosos del pasado²², que Pedro y Pablo traman y llevan a cabo su “venganza de honor”. Consumada la venganza, el recuerdo de la horripilante masacre se ancla en su conciencia, para siempre, como una áspera condena, como una implacable, torturadora pesadilla. En vez de “purificar los ánimos”, como aseguran los preceptos tradicionales²³, la “venganza de honor” infecta el espíritu y el cuerpo de Pedro y Pablo de un corrosivo, doloroso, fatal veneno: “Llevaban tres noches sin dormir, pero no podían descansar, porque tan pronto como empezaban a dormirse volvían a cometer el crimen...; lo más insoportable para ellos en el calabozo debió haber sido la lucidez (103).

Habiendo ocurrido la supuesta deshonra de Angela antes del matrimonio, incumbe, de acuerdo con la tradición, a sus hermanos enderezarla. Sin embargo, Bayardo, el esposo, procura cumplir puntualmente con lo que considera su parte del “deber doloroso”, pues en la noche de bodas misma devuelve a Angela a su familia: “Gracias por todo, madre” (64). El aire solemne de víctima trágica, el ademán de “serena decisión” que Bayardo asume frente a la gente, en su casa, puerta adentro, se disuelven en patéticos berrinches infantiles y desenfrenadas borracheras, de los cuales lo salvan por fin su madre y sus hermanas. Estas acudieron a su lado, pero procurando, ante todo, recorrer las calles del pueblo ostentando su trágico sentir por la afrenta a la honra de la familia de tal modo que no pasase inadvertido por nadie: “cerradas de luto hasta el cuello...con los cabellos sueltos de dolor..., descalzas..., arrancándose mechones de raíz y llorando con gritos tan desgarradores que parecían de júbilo” (11). Esta y otras situaciones semejantes han hecho creer, comprensiblemente, que *CMA* es obra de gran entretenimiento cómico.²⁴ La pasión de Bayardo no es, pues, nada Wertheriana; su ridícula rabietta se debe sólo al hecho de que el negocio, tan meticulosamente calculado, no le ha salido bien. Su frenética búsqueda por todo el país de una virgen—de seguro que él mismo es de los que ha contribuido mucho a la aparente escasez del género—y las circunstancias en que escogió a Angela, demuestran

²⁰ Menéndez Pidal, 146.

²¹ Según D. Ramos, “los gemelos” tienen también la función de proporcionarnos “una especie de monólogo interior del verdugo, que vacila entre obedecer la orden o dejar con vida a la víctima” (*La muerte anunciada: Poder, secreto y violencia en CMA de Gabriel García Márquez*, Universidad de los Andes, Fund. Alejandro Ángel Escobar, S. A., 67). Mucho más importante es observar que en los diálogos de los gemelos se evidencia una vacuedad mental y una absoluta falta de dilemas morales.

²² Menéndez Pidal, 151, 152.

²³ *Ibid.*, 152.

²⁴ R. Williams: A book of “superb entertainment and not of profound resonance” (*Gabriel García Márquez*, Boston, Twayne, 1984, 139).

que deseaba una esposa de apariencia “honrada”, sin preocuparse en absoluto de su íntima honradez. En su mundo, uno es, sobre todo, lo que parece ser. El hecho de que en el pueblo algunos consideren a Angela “boba” es para Bayardo una fuerte garantía de su honradez presente y futura, pues la falta de agudeza la haría menos inclinada a artimanos de infidelidad.²⁵ Esta cínica desconfianza de la integridad femenina, extendida, sin causa alguna, apriorísticamente, a Angela, desdice, claro está, de la honradez que cabe suponer en la actitud del novio hacia su futura compañera de la vida. La patológica, irrelevante obsesión con la honra destruye de antemano la posibilidad de una honesta, digna relación matrimonial. Al devolver Bayardo a su “impura” esposa, se expone a la curiosidad entretenida de muchos, a la deshonra. Tal publicidad “es hacer la sangre aceite / y la deshonra extender”.²⁶ Es que no tiene alternativa, pues, según cree, en el pueblo hay quien ya sabe que Angela es “impura”: su seductor. Así, rehén del secreto compartido y del consecuente “qué dirán” colectivo, que anticipa como inevitable²⁷, Bayardo reacciona con toda intención de ese modo teatral, como prevención al ataque público a su honra que, repetimos, con muy penosa ironía, probablemente nunca fue mancillada por Angela.²⁸

La novia de Pablo Vicario procura poner de relieve, para la atención pública, su propia finura pundonorosa, declarando que no se casaría con él, en el caso inimaginable de que no hubiese cumplido “como hombre” con su deber de honrado, matando al seductor de su hermana: ¡“el honor no espera”! (84)²⁹. Por otra parte, esta novia, aparentemente con criterios morales vigentes sobre el honor en su comunidad, ningún desdoro en absoluto de su propia dignidad y honra personal, femenina, encuentra en la frecuentación habitual de los burdeles por parte de su novio.³⁰ La ironía con que se revela lo absurdo aquí y en otras partes de la obra hace evocar la típica sátira volteriana. Una grotesca incompreensión de los más fundamentales valores individuales y sociales,

²⁵ A. Penuel: “Bayardo’s interest in this most spiritless of women appears enigmatic” (“The Sleep of Vital Reason in García Márquez’s *CMA*”, *Hispania*, 68, 1985, 755). Lo sería, sin el complejo indicado.

²⁶ Versos de *El castigo del discreto* de Lope.

²⁷ Lo destaca también Ramos (83).

²⁸ Varios críticos consideran a Bayardo, su vida y su conducta impenetrables “enigmas” (J. Giordano, “Escritura de la irrealidad”, *University of Dayton Review*, 8, no. 1, 1986, 39; Hart, 31). Para el propósito de la novela, sabemos todo lo que necesitamos saber de él. De su ostentosamente “honrada” familia se nos proporciona la información esencial, ante todo, para comprender mejor la estrafalaria conducta del hijo. La sugerencia de que el materialismo de Bayardo—cruelmente deshonroso respecto al viudo Xius (51)—representa también “la invasión de Hispanoamérica por Norteamérica” (Hart, 31) nos parece descabellada y reflejo de cierta tendenciosa actitud política, considerada, por desgracia, obligatoria por bastantes hispanoamericanistas. Otro ejemplo relacionado con *CMA*: K. E. Breiner-Sanders, “La dimensión histórica-cultural de la violencia en *CMA*” (*Actas, Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas*, Frankfurt am Main, Vervuert, 1989, II, 475-83). Hay, sin embargo, algunas buenas intuiciones en este estudio sobre el viejo mundo “mediterráneo” y el “mundo nuevo” (477).

²⁹ En *El médico de su honra*, Leonor aprueba, sin vacilar, la cruel venganza pundonorosa de D. Gutierre, su futuro marido: “D. Gutierre: Si la doy [la mano]. / Mas mira que bañada en sangre. / Leonor: No importa; / que no me admira ni espanta” (Jornada tercera, última escena).

³⁰ El doble estándar es impuesto por la pundonorosa sociedad machista, claro está: “Cualquier hombre será feliz con ellas, porque han sido educadas para sufrir” (*CMA*, 44). Esta arbitraria actitud, particularmente respecto a los asuntos sexuales, se evidencia ya en los primeros dramas de honor en España (ver nuestro estudio de *Ymenea* de Torres Naharro, en *El pensamiento humanístico y satírico de Torres Naharro*, Santander, Soc. Menéndez Pelayo, 1978, vol. II, 139-192).

de los más nobles afectos humanos, se revela también en la madre de Pedro y Pablo. De seguro beata papasantos, veneradora ritual de la “mater dolorosa”, con gran fervor promueve y con el mayor orgullo aprueba la horrenda venganza pundonorosa de sus hijos, indiferente a la angustia de la madre de la víctima, de carne y hueso y su vecina. El corazón materno empedernido, incapacitado para la caridad, la compasión y el perdón es el síntoma más monstruoso y alarmante de la idolatría del honor y la consecuencia más triste, trágica de esta historia. A su “deshonrada” hija quiere “enterrarla en vida” (115). Al hacerla salir del pueblo, procura vestirla “de rojo encendido para que no se imaginara [nadie] que le iba guardando luto al amante secreto” (108). ¡Hay que proteger sobre todo las apariencias! Como dice Angela, esta “madre de hierro” está “consagrada al culto de sus defectos” (121), que en esa sociedad son virtudes.³¹

?Se ha visto jamás un auténtico pundonoroso, a quien, en defensa de su honra, se le hubiera ocurrido pedir la intervención de la autoridad civil, sin que por ello no desmereciese su hombría en la opinión común?³² También Pedro y Pablo se guardan mucho de no pedirla, aunque íntimamente la deseen, y el Alcalde del pueblo no se la da, aunque pretende hacerlo. Juego ridículo, hipócrita de pretensiones, paradójicamente, en nombre del honor. Para cumplir con su deber oficial, en el caso de que a alguien se le ocurra pedirle cuentas, el Alcalde les quita los cuchillos a Pedro y Pablo, pero obviando absurdamente el hecho de que a los dos, carniceros de profesión, de seguro no les faltan cuchillos. Debería quitarles la intención homicida, pero tal intento ?no supondría una grave contradicción a la propiedad pundonorosa? La superchera intervención del Alcalde se traduce así efectivamente en aprobación del homicidio, en complicidad criminal.³³

Contemplando frente a sí a los vengadores de su supuesta deshonra, todavía “empapados de sangre todavía viva” de su víctima, el Cura admira en ellos “una gran dignidad” y los consuela que “ante Dios, si ya no ante los hombres”, ellos son “inocentes” (67). La obsesión idolátrica del honor mundano ha suplantado la consideración de la caridad, de la compasión, del perdón cristianos hasta en el corazón del pastor de almas³⁴, al menos en ese momento, pues, al repensarlo, se siente “indigno de si mismo” (93).

En suma, se observan incongruencias absurdas, de mayor o menor bulto, en las actitudes y pensamientos de todos los pundonorosos del pueblo, por lo cual no extrana que, con algunas excepciones, como, notablemente, la prostituta Alejandrina Cervantes, cuyo “tierno” (86) corazón es un raro refugio de la compasión y de la decencia en ese

³¹ Con razón se ha sugerido la semejanza de este personaje con la pundonorosa, cruel Bernarda Alba de Lorca (Penuel, 756).

³² Menéndez Pidal, 148: “Esa venganza, lo mismo la secreta que la pública, no se hace judicialmente”.

³³ CMA muestra que el sistema judicial, en todos los niveles, es indulgente con los pundonorosos (G. Pellón, “Myth, Tragedy and the Scapegoat Ritual in CMA”, *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*, 12, 1987-8, 400). El castigo por el crimen de Pedro y Pablo es perfunctorio. Perfunctoria es, claro está, también la función judicial de las autoridades frente al crimen en el teatro áureo, cuando actúa en absoluto (ver, por ejemplo, el final de *El médico de su honra*).

³⁴ Muchos moralistas, como el famosos casuista Antonio de Escobar en su *Teología moral*, “reconocen el derecho del abofetado a matar a su agresor” (Menéndez Pidal, 146).

pueblo,³⁵ la comunidad apruebe la matanza, proclamándola como una “legítima defensa del honor” (66). Advuértase que así la exaltan hasta los que en su intimidación creen que Santiago es inocente. La “llamada de la venganza honrosa” oblitera hasta la cuestión de la culpa que supuestamente la motiva. Este pueblo vive de tales absurdos del modo más natural. Todos acuden al lugar del anticipado trágico evento armados con esa racionalización implícita, pero es evidente que para la mayoría lo más compelerente es la curiosidad, la anticipación mórbida de un sensacional espectáculo de horror, que, en efecto, quedan por completo gratificadas: “La gente..., alertada por los gritos, empezó a tomar posiciones en la plaza para presenciar el crimen...; ambos [Pedro y Pablo] siguieron acuchillándolo [a Santiago] contra la puerta...no oyeron los gritos del pueblo entero espantado de su propio crimen” (142, 153). La asumida dignidad y sensibilidad pundonorosas de este pueblo acaba identificándose, de modo claro y sugerente, con la patológica morbidez de esa parte del público que acude a las plazas de toros en espera perversa, hipócritamente disimulada, de un desenlace cuanto más sangriento, atroz, espeluznante³⁶, lo que se confirma después también por la “ansiedad” con que todos quieren “contemplar” el despedazado cuerpo de la víctima (96).

³⁵ Alejandrina Cervantes “arrazó con la virginidad de mi generación”, nos informa el autor (87). Sin embargo, es con sentimientos maternales, sobre todo, que contempla a todos estos jóvenes-clientes, por lo cual la muerte de Santiago Nasar la angustia tan profundamente (103). Cervantes es un nombre bastante común en Hispanoamérica, por lo cual, entre otras razones, no es convincente la sugerencia de que el autor lo escogió para exaltar a su “musa”, al autor del *Quijote* (Hart, 39; Rodríguez de Vergara, 110). Algunos nombres en *CMA* son altamente sugestivos: Pedro y Pablo, apóstoles y ejecutores de la anticristiana religión de la venganza pundonorosa. Angela, por su espíritu y amor puro, angelical. Nasar, hijo de inmigrantes árabes, económicamente prósperos en ese pueblo, para resaltar otra causa importante de la venganza pundonorosa, aunque, claro, no admitida: la envidia materialista y el rencor xenófobo del pueblo hacia el extranjero intruso. De que tales envidias y rencores xenófobos y antisemitas aguijaban a menudo al pueblo español en nombre del “honor”, hay elocuentes evidencias (ver nuestro estudio sobre *El casamiento engañoso* y *Coloquio de los perros*, en nuestro libro *Las novelas ejemplares de Cervantes*, Madrid, Siglo XXI, 1996). J. L. Méndez también destaca el “resentimiento moral” del pueblo, por la conducta libertina de Santiago Nasar (*Cómo leer a García Márquez: Una interpretación sociológica*, Río Piedras, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1989, 175). Es muy probable también esta motivación, pero como pretexto hipócrita y no como reflejo de una auténtica indignación moral, pues en ese pueblo aparentemente todos los hombres son asiduos cazadores de mujeres, vírgenes o no. La sugerencia de que Angela resintiese la indiferencia de Santiago Nasar hacia ella, “la boba” (Ibid., 177), abre una nueva, interesante posibilidad interpretativa, digna de otro estudio. Las identificaciones de Nasar con el Nazareno y de Santiago con Santiago el Mayor (Girgado, 83) nos parecen muy forzadas. En algunos estudios se ofrecen interpretaciones simbólicas de los nombres que son de veras descabelladas. El lector sabrá reconocerlas.

³⁶ Méndez: “Crimen presenciado, celebrado por todo el pueblo..., para poder ver mejor el macabro espectáculo” tomaron posición, “como si se tratase de una corrida de toros” (177). Teniendo en cuenta todas las motivaciones impropias de este pueblo, ajenas al honor, identificado con la dignidad personal y colectiva que caracteriza al pueblo de *Fuenteovejuna*, resulta por completo desacertado el paralelo que con esta famosa obra del honor colectivo a menudo se hace (Ibid., 175; Hart, 52, entre otros). Varios críticos han observado cierta “homogeneidad” en los personajes de *CMA* (Hart, 28, Penuel, 754). Es una característica que el autor quiere impartirles (Penuel, 754), pues esas preocupaciones pundonorosas tienden a destruir su conciencia y su individualidad, a convertirlos en masa no pensante, de componentes casi indistinguibles. El hecho de que Santiago Nasar no tenga “voice in the narrative” (Hart, 31) tampoco es señal de defectuosa caracterización, pues precisamente su imposibilidad de defender su inocencia se destaca como una consecuencia inevitable de la precipitada suspicacia y condena pundonorosa.

Teniendo bien en cuenta todas estas lamentables motivaciones, colectivas e individuales, resulta patente ya la superchería ya la mera ignorancia o estupidez de las explicaciones de la matanza como consecuencia de muchas coincidencias, que supuestamente la determinaron de modo inexorable. Hasta en el informe oficial se destaca, pese al escrúpulo del juez instructor, que la causa principal de la muerte de Santiago Nasar fue “la puerta fatal” (20) de su casa, que estaba cerrada cuando aquél quiso entrar, no pudiendo, por esto, evadir a sus asesinos (150). Cabe preguntar, ante todo: si a dichas “coincidencias” se atribuye la matanza, ¿no queda quizás la venganza pundonorosa subordinada a ellas, dependiente por completo de ellas y no de su propia necesidad? De no haberse dado todas esas “coincidencias”, ¿se habría realizado la venganza en absoluto?; ¿habría perdido su razón de realizarse? En toda vida hay coincidencias, independientes de la voluntad o del deseo de la persona afectada, claro está, y en *CMA* también las hay de este tipo, pero la mayoría de las “coincidencias” que así se designan en *CMA*, son, en efecto, meras disculpas ingenuas o hipócritas de una complicidad inmoral, criminal o, cuando menos, pasiva e irresponsable en el asesinato de Santiago. De modo muy sugerente, el Cura quien se sirvió del pretexto de la “coincidencia” por no haber prevenido el crimen, más tarde se siente “indigno de sí” (93). Con el tiempo, otros también llegarían por lo menos a intuir su culpabilidad, lo que se representa en el nauseabundo e imborrable “olor” de la víctima que los persigue y atormenta de continuo: “Todo siguió oliendo a Santiago Nasar” (103). La atroz venganza pundonorosa reclama así su propia inexorable venganza en el “ánimo” del pueblo. Tales consecuencias morales y psicológicas serían por completo injustificadas, de ser todo el asunto achacable sólo a las coincidencias. Estas, en sí, son irrelevantes; se hacen comprensibles y enteramente lógicas, al percibirse las motivaciones que las determinan: La ignorancia, la estupidez, la maldad, la envidia, la violencia, la adherencia irreflexiva, idolátra a ciertas convenciones heredadas, en este caso, la obsesión con la mera apariencia del honor, o más bien, con la opinión que los demás puedan tener de tal honor de una persona.³⁷ En este pueblo, la gente se escudrina

³⁷ También el autor se refiere a las muchas “coincidencias funestas” que “nadie podía entender” (20). Al fin, él comprende a qué se debían. La “buena literatura” evitaría tales “coincidencias” por demasiado inverosímiles, típicas de la “mala literatura” (116), pero, sugiere el autor, pese a tal impresión, algunas de aquéllas reflejan inevitablemente un modo absurdo de vida. Esas “coincidencias” no reflejan, pues, “the unlikely nature of the story”, como dice G. Alvarez-Bourland (“From Mystery to Parody: *CMA*”, *Symposium*, 1985, 244), sino todo lo contrario. R. Predmore: “Muchas casualidades tienen su explicación racional” y algunas son evidentemente creadas por los que no quieren intervenir. El alcalde, por ejemplo, “no se dio prisa” (175); el cura tuvo que ir al encuentro del obispo (131) (“El mundo moral de *CMA*”, *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, 130, 1982, 706). Piensan de otro modo muchos críticos: “...esta nueva tragedia griega, surcada de coincidencias funestas y de presagios irrevocables...; los hilos del azar tejen la trama de un destino, como todos, implacable...el *fatum* impera de nuevo” (J. G. Cobo Borda, *Para llegar a García Márquez*, Santa Fe de Bogotá, Temas de Hoy, 1996, 121, 128; Williams, 136; Hart, 47; Rodríguez de Vergara, 89, 91; A. López de Martínez, “El neorealismo de Gabriel García Márquez”, *En el punto de mira: Gabriel García Márquez*, 244, entre otros). El que García Márquez tenga ciertas supersticiones, como algunos sugieren (Hart, 44), no desaprueba el hecho de que los “presagios”, como preanuncios de la muerte de Santiago Nasar, son ridículos, irrelevantes, productos de la ignorancia o disculpas conscientes de conductas irresponsables en el trágico suceso. Las interpretaciones tanto de los personajes de *CMA* como de algunos críticos (Méndez-Ramírez, 937-8) de todos esos “presagios” son patentemente arbitrarias. Otra cosa son los “presagios” o sueños de individuos ya predispuestos a ellos por sus problemas personales, como se representa a menudo de modo impresionante en el teatro áureo.

de continuo con mutua cínica especulación, se rastrea con maliciosas adivinanzas y sospechas en las mentes igualmente suspicaces y maliciosas de los otros, “predispuesta para encontrar segundas intenciones” (44), o cualquier brotadura de chisme a su costa. Todos son rehenes, prisioneros de todos y, ante todo, de sus propias patológicas obsesiones, de sus “miedos aprendidos” (119), en esta alucinante mazmorra de la infame, cruel “fama” y de su abominable instrumento, el “qué dirán”. En suma, casi todas esas “coincidencias” fueron determinadas, en realidad, por el anuncio de Pedro y Pablo de emprender la venganza pundonorosa y por la anticipación y complacencia perversas, mórbidas del pueblo de verla efectuada, bajo el pretexto superchero del honor. Todas esas “coincidencias” se constituyen en la notoria “Fatalidad”, a cuyo inescrutable, cruel capricho se atribuye, por malicia o ignorancia, todo lo ocurrido, a veces en nombre de una sabiduría filosófica que es, en realidad, sólo una estrepitosa bobería: “la fatalidad nos hace invisibles” (147). Sin el conveniente disfraz de la “Fatalidad” se nos revela con toda claridad la complicidad del pueblo en el crimen o, cuando menos, su renuncia a la propia voluntad y conciencia.³⁸

A veces se opina que *CMA* es una parodia del drama de honor español y, en particular, del calderoniano, sin explicarse satisfactoriamente en qué sentido lo sería y a qué razones respondería tan anacrónica parodia literaria en esa remota región rural de Colombia.³⁹ Ante todo, cabe recordar que en el teatro áureo español, además de célebres obras, en que el honor se identifica con la moral, la virtud y la dignidad

En *El pintor de su deshonra*, por ejemplo, la esposa sueña con que su marido va a matarla, poco antes de que esto ocurra, con muy buena razón, pues vive de continuo en tal miedo. Los “presagios” de tipo simbólico-poético a menudo responden a condiciones análogas, (En: *El príncipe constante*, dice D. Fernando, en nombre de Calderón, que “los agujeros...” no son “para cristianos” (Jornada primera, escena sexta).

³⁸ Muchos críticos se atienen a la explicación de la tragedia por la “Fatalidad” (Rama, Williams, Hart, Cobo Borda, López de Martínez, J. Rufinelli, “*CMA*: historia o ficción”, *En el punto de mira*, 289, entre otros), pero otros perciben claramente la relación de la irracionalidad y la ignorancia y sus consecuencias, que el pueblo atribuye a la “Fatalidad”, al destino, al azar, etc. (Pellón, 403, 405; Penuel, 763; Alvarez-Bourland, 220; Predmore, 706, entre otros). Dice, con gran acierto Penuel: “The town’s collective character is its fate...; the town’s submission to the perverted values of its culture” (763). También el autor quizás atribuye inicialmente la tragedia a las “coincidencias” y a la “fatalidad” (126), pero su reconsideración de todo lo ocurrido le hace comprender claramente las verdaderas causas, que no tenían nada que ver con la “Fatalidad”. En las interpretaciones del drama de honor áureo prevalecen asimismo las que atribuyen los trágicos desenlaces a las coincidencias, al azar, a la fatalidad, pero de acuerdo con otras perspectivas críticas, con que coincidimos, al menos algunos dramaturgos las atribuyen más bien a factores humanos (ver, por ejemplo, *Los comendadores de Córdoba*, *El castigo sin venganza* de Lope; *El mayor monstruo los celos* de Calderón). Dice a este propósito un personaje de *El amor constante* de Guillén de Castro: “Hacéis siempre a vuestro modo / siguiendo injustas querellas, / y después a las estrellas / echáis la culpa de todo”.

³⁹ El más detenido estudio de tal “parodia” es el ya citado de Méndez-Ramírez, en que se hacen algunas valiosas observaciones y otras que, a nuestro juicio, quedan desvirtuadas por no considerarse atentamente los contextos de los paralelos sugeridos. Las semejanzas superficiales a menudo resultan irrelevantes. Ante todo, no queda clara la premisa fundamental: “a recast of a serious work for satirical purposes, directed, however, not against the model, but aimed at ridiculing contemporary customs or politics” (934). ¿Por qué necesitaría García Márquez “recast” los dramas de honor áureos, cuando la realidad cotidiana de su pueblo le proporciona todos los mismos elementos esenciales del pundonor antiguo? *CMA* documenta un asunto pundonoroso real, ocurrido, totalmente independiente del teatro áureo español. De que haya semejanzas entre el pundonor teatral y el del pueblo colombiano, que en efecto estamos señalando es, claro está, otra cosa.

humana (*Fuenteovejuna*, *El alcalde de Zalamea*, *El príncipe constante*, por ejemplo), hay otras, asimismo de las más célebres, en que el honor, precisamente por no identificarse con dichos valores, se critica, satiriza y parodia. Al menos desde ciertas recientes perspectivas críticas, ya el primer drama de honor en España, la *Ymenea* de Torres Naharro (1517), constituye una poderosa condena de la venganza pundonorosa, provocada por una ofensa sólo supuesta, y basada en la identificación del honor con la opinión ajena, con el “qué dirán”.⁴⁰ Con el estímulo parcial de esta obra o sin él en absoluto, en las décadas sucesivas y particularmente en el siglo siguiente, se reitera la misma condena severa, aunque a menudo de modo más sutil o ambiguo, en dramatizaciones de casos trágicos de personas buenas, virtuosas, honradas, en su mayoría mujeres, que viven en perpetua angustiada ansiedad por la omnipresente suspicacia que pesa sobre ellas como una espada de Dámocles, inocentes de las deshonras de que se las acusa, víctimas de atroces matanzas por parte de maridos o hermanos evidentemente acomplejados por su patológica sensibilidad o por sus propios defectos e insuficiencias personales: ciega obsesión, vanidad machista, celos, impotencia, inseguridad, libertinaje, disolución moral, etc. Considérense los maridos y los hermanos de *Ymenea* de Torres Naharro; *El castigo sin venganza*, *Los comendadores de Córdoba* de Lope; *El médico de su honra*, *El pintor de su deshonra*, *El mayor monruo los celos*, *La dama duende* de Calderón, para mencionar sólo algunos notorios ejemplos. Las venganzas por la honra, que más bien parecen asesinatos crueles, adquieren su carácter particularmente grotesco al pretender a veces relacionarse de algún modo con la fe cristiana (*El médico de su honra* de Calderón, por ejemplo). Esa terrible “Fatalidad” que todos los pundonorosos suelen culpar tanto por la deshonra de que se creen víctimas como por la atroz venganza que emprenden, se nos revela como mera conveniente racionalización de un modo de pensar y actuar patentemente irracional e inmoral. La “Fatalidad” corresponde evidentemente sólo a las debilidades, a los prejuicios y vicios de los pundonorosos. La forma cómica en que a veces se trata la patológica, injustificada preocupación con el honor no disminuye la seriedad del propósito ético, crítico (*El castigo del discreto* de Lope; la *Entretenida* y algunos *Entremeses* de Cervantes, por ejemplo).⁴¹

Menéndez Pidal y otros ilustres eruditos critican al lector que encuentra “odiosos” o reprehensibles en cualquier sentido a “los protagonistas de las venganzas maritales” y su “idea del honor” en las comedias del Siglo de Oro, pues tal actitud crítica surgiría, según ellos, de una radical incomprensión del hombre moderno, viciado por la visión libertina del siglo XVIII, por un modo de vida pretérito diferente.⁴² Resulta fácil achacar al hombre moderno tal incomprensión, pero ¿cómo explicar la condena de los extremos del pundonor por parte de escritores y moralistas del Siglo de Oro: Alemán, Cervantes, Lope y, en particular, todos los autores de vinculación erasmista que de ese tópico tratan? ¿No sería quizás porque los comprendían, angustiados, demasiado bien? Menéndez Pidal explica: “La novela, destinada a la lectura privada, invitaba a la reflexión condenatoria de una venganza sangrienta, mientras el teatro exigía entregarse

⁴⁰ Ver nuestro estudio citado en la nota 30.

⁴¹ Ver nuestros estudios de estas obras cervantinas en *El teatro de Cervantes*, Madrid, Castalia, 1992.

⁴² Menéndez Pidal, 145, 150.

a los sentimientos de mayor efectismo.... La novela, pues, y no el teatro, es campo apropiado para protestas contra la venganza de honor".⁴³ Coinciden con este juicio muchos críticos y, entre ellos, A. Castro, quien subraya que el teatro evita dramatizar la actitud racional y moral contra el honor como reputación, porque no representaba la opinión mayoritaria ni ofrecía las mismas posibilidades de sensacionalismo escénico.⁴⁴ En efecto, el dramaturgo de éxito es un conservador en el sentido de que presenta en la escena lo que su público ya siente y piensa. Sin embargo, ¿quiere esto decir que al escribir una obra de teatro suprime siempre su propia visión moral, que en muchos casos documentables es enteramente opuesta a la de su público? Esto es posible sólo por excepción, pues "la moral no es cuestión de géneros literarios".⁴⁵ Especialmente los estudios de Alexander A. Parker sobre Calderón han venido a recordarnos que las ideas del dramaturgo sobre el honor son a veces muy diferentes de lo que sugiere la estructura superficial de la obra. Hasta la aparente exaltación de la venganza puede revelarse ingeniosamente irónica, como una inherente reprensión moral de sí misma. La ambigüedad, la comicidad de muchos fillos, con que se dramatiza a veces el concepto del honor, las conclusiones "felices" que tan problemática y dudosa felicidad representan, son algunos de los elementos que apuntan a la disconformidad del autor al menos con parte de su público. Es muy probable que a menudo este público encontrase loables en una obra precisamente aquellas ideas y acciones que para el autor eran del todo reprobables. La comedia del Siglo de Oro revela así una capacidad excepcional de expresar de manera artísticamente coherente visiones distintas del mundo, que no revelan de inmediato su mutua incompatibilidad y que se ofrecen así como un "vehículo pequeño" y un "gran vehículo" para el pensamiento, según la distinción de Ortega y Gasset.⁴⁶ Así, el hecho de que la sociedad que rodea al pundonoroso aplauda sus truculentos actos en nombre del honor, no significa necesariamente que el autor quiera presentar éstos como loables de verdad. A menudo con ellos se dramatiza más bien una terrible obsesión colectiva, producida por el total abandono de la razón, por el olvido del espíritu de Cristo, que desorienta aun al individuo mejor intencionado, estimulándolo a cometer sus propios crímenes. Se dramatiza la muerte del alma que es, en efecto, la verdadera tragedia, desde el punto de vista cristiano.⁴⁷ La declaración de Lope en su *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* de que en el teatro los "casos de la honra...mueven con fuerza a toda la gente" se refiere tanto a las reacciones "colectivistas" de la masa irreflexiva, aprobatorias de las violencias pundonorosas, como a las "individualistas", condenatorias de las mismas. Creemos que en el Siglo de Oro el pundonor no era un mero tema teatral y que la gran apetencia popular por su dramatización en la escena reflejaba una preocupación intensa, corriente, activa por "los casos de la honra" en la vida real, cotidiana. Según ya se ha

⁴³ Ibid., 160-1.

⁴⁴ A. Castro "Algunas observaciones acerca del concepto del honor en los siglos XVI y XVII", *Revista de filología española*, 1916, 44.

⁴⁵ A. Castro "La ejemplaridad de las novelas cervantinas", *Hacia Cervantes*, Madrid, Taurus, 1957, 372-3.

⁴⁶ J. Ortega y Gasset, *La rebelión de las masas*, en *Obras completas*, Madrid, Revista de Occidente, 1957, t. IV, 146.

⁴⁷ Las últimas consideraciones se encuentran, ampliadas, en nuestro estudio sobre *Ymeneá*, en *El pensamiento humanístico y satírico de Torres Naharro* (ver nota 30).

dicho, el dramaturgo suele representar lo que el público ya siente y piensa, lo que a éste ya es familiar⁴⁸. Una valiosísima prueba de ello es precisamente *CMA*, pues, inspirada en un suceso real, comprueba la existencia de esa particular sensibilidad pundonorosa de la España antigua, reflejándola preservada intacta en la sociedad rural contemporánea de Colombia, a todas luces, sin interferencias significativas por parte del pundonor como tópico teatral.⁴⁹ Esa sensibilidad pundonorosa, como tantos otros elementos fundamentales del carácter español, vino al Nuevo Mundo ya con los primeros conquistadores y colonizadores, es decir, en una época precalderoniana y, en efecto, anterior aún a las más tempranas representaciones teatrales españolas del pundonor. *CMA* sugiere, por lo menos con referencia a ciertas zonas rurales de Hispanoamérica, que a través de los siglos esa sensibilidad se mantuvo inalterada en todas sus notorias manifestaciones, pero tendiendo a debilitarse siempre más como sentimiento, a sustentarse en el mero alarde y gesto pundonorosos, a convencionalizarse y a democratizarse en un aspecto aparentemente excepcional. En España, “según las ideas medievales, el noble es honrado, es decir, tenido en intachable opinión, por el hecho de su nacimiento...; por el contrario...el villano no puede sentir como un noble la misteriosa, la inmensa solidaridad social y familiar de los problemas de la honra... *La culpa de un rústico en él se acaba*”.⁵⁰ Ahora bien, en *CMA*, la preocupación con la honra se personifica en la gente común, particularmente los hermanos Vicario, carniceros de profesión. Pretensiones pundonorosas en individuos socialmente tan “infimos” sólo podrían ser objetos de burlas y sátiras en la España de la Edad Áurea.⁵¹ Entonces, ¿cómo se explica la presunción de “honra” en los rústicos o burgueses de *CMA*? Son múltiples y complejas, sin duda, las razones históricas, políticas, sociales, económicas, psicológicas, morales que debieran estudiarse a fondo para comprender el concepto, o más bien, los conceptos del honor hispanoamericanos en sí y en sus precarias relaciones con los de la antigua Madre Patria a través de los siglos. Una de ellas se nos insinúa con gran insistencia. En el Nuevo Mundo, en proceso de continuo poblamiento de gente de todos los rincones de España, a menudo entre sí por completo extrana, y mediando la gran distancia del Atlántico, ¿no habría sido quizás siempre bastante fácil, para el individuo que se lo hubiese propuesto, pretender cualquier

⁴⁸ Se ha debatido ya mucho el “realismo” de las venganzas pundonorosas en el teatro respecto a la vida cotidiana (ver, por ejemplo, C. A. Jones, “Honor in Spanish Golden Age Drama: Its Relation to Real Life and to Morals”, *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 35, 1958, 199-210); M. Stroud, “Further Considerations of History and Law in the Wife-murder Comedias”, *Hispanic Journal*, (8) 1987, 21-38. Para los que piensan que se trataba tan sólo de un tópico literario, es oportuno recordarles casos semejantes, de particular brutalidad, por razones idénticas, en nuestro propio tiempo, en Palestina, Jordania, (ver, entre otras informaciones, el artículo “Druse Honor Killings...”, *Austin American-Statesman*, December 21, 1995, A34) y, subrayemos, en el pueblo colombiano de García Márquez.

⁴⁹ Claro que el teatro áureo español dejó su huella en el Nuevo Mundo, particularmente en los escritores barrocos (Sor Juana) pero tales contactos culturales, artísticos, de carácter más bien individual, no pudieron forjar una psique colectiva, popular.

⁵⁰ Menéndez Pidal, 162.

⁵¹ *Ibid*: “El villano, salvo poquísimas excepciones, solía ser un tipo meramente cómico...en las comedias españolas...”. Peribáñez, protagonista de un drama de honor, es un labrador, pero “villano muy honrado”. Excepción del mismo tipo es Pedro Crespo, alcalde de Zalamea. *Fuenteovejuna* dramatiza “el honor colectivo de un pueblo” (163), que es, de hecho, su dignidad existencial. Excepciones que confirman la regla. De los pundonorosos de *CMA* dice Kercher: “absurd [el código de honor] especially because it plays out with the lower classes” (100).

misión religiosa se hace relevante en la obra, al considerarse que la palabra evangélica del amor y del perdón no se utiliza en absoluto para disuadir de la venganza pundonorosa. ¡Todo lo contrario! De que esta actitud anticristiana frente al honor en los representantes de la Iglesia Católica en el Nuevo Mundo es, asimismo, al menos en parte, herencia de la Madre Patria, lo sugieren los notorios casuístas españoles de los siglos XVI y XVII.⁵⁷ Para todos estos falsos o extraviados religiosos, antiguos y modernos, cantan todos los gallos del pueblo en *CMA* (26), evocadores del gallo de S. Pedro, traidor de Cristo.⁵⁸

Se especula a menudo acerca de la relación entre historia, periodismo y ficción en *CMA*.⁵⁹ No cabe duda, hay diferencias significativas de hechos y detalles entre los acontecimientos reales y los de su versión novelística, pero las modificaciones y cambios, lejos de falsear la historia, la documentan de modo aun más incisivo y preciso, revelando sus fundamentales, íntimas razones. Lo explica García Márquez mismo—coincidiendo, esencialmente, con la distinción aristotélica entre Historia y Poesía y de sus respectivas funciones—cuando habla de la realidad básica de todas sus obras, que, no obstante, no es idéntica a la realidad inspiradora. Esta aparece poéticamente “transmutada”, produciendo una imagen aun más verídica de la realidad.⁶⁰ *CMA* es así una novela que tiene también valor de auténtica *crónica* histórica, específicamente sobre ciertas actitudes multiseculares frente a la vida en ciertas regiones del Nuevo Mundo, debidas, en gran parte, a la herencia cultural de la Madre Patria. En cuanto revela la verdadera relación entre el trágico suceso y sus deplorables causas, es, en cuanto éstas perduren en la sociedad, simultáneamente, una profecía de otras muertes inexorables en el futuro que pueden ya anunciarse con precisión de auténtica “crónica” histórica.⁶¹ Sólo las causas de estas muertes, es decir, la ignorancia, la estupidez, el extravío espiritual, la renuncia a la razón y a la propia voluntad, combinadas en la ciega, absurda obsesión pundonorosa, constituyen esa “Fatalidad” que muchos culpan injustamente de caprichosa y cruel, sin comprender que ellos mismos la han determinado, que está en ellos mismos. Esta es la verdad terrible que el autor de seguro intuyó desde el principio y que viene a verificarla en el ánimo de su pueblo, muchos años después.⁶² Muchos todavía no han comprendido bien su culpa y quizás nunca la comprenderían bien, aunque cierto buen instinto natural⁶³, sobreponiéndose al automatismo de su obsesión pundonorosa, les hace sentir en lo hondo de las entrañas el mal en que de un modo u otro han participado. A casi todos se les ha pegado el

⁵⁷ Castro, “Algunas observaciones acerca del concepto del honor en los siglos XVI y XVII”.

⁵⁸ Penuel, 757; P. L. Avila, “Una lectura de *CMA*”, *Casa de las Américas*, sept.-oct. 1983, 31-2.

⁵⁹ Hart, 17; Alvarez-Borland, 592; McQuirk, 171; Ruffinelli, 278; y, en efecto, en casi todos los estudios acerca de *CMA*, al menos de modo transitorio, hay consideraciones sobre este problema.

⁶⁰ Sobre la verdad poética que se revela superior a la histórica que aquélla moldea, véanse nuestros estudios sobre *Numancia* y *El trato de Argel* en nuestro libro *El teatro de Cervantes*. El acercamiento literario de García Márquez a la realidad es, esencialmente, semejante al de Cervantes.

⁶¹ Entre las muchas consideraciones del sentido de esta “Crónica”, raramente se intuye la implicación indicada: “Already introduces the future in the past” (Hart, 26; Mottram, 19; Penuel, 759), pero casi todos perciben su carácter excepcional (Rodríguez de Vergara, 84: “hecho único”).

⁶² García Márquez “is probing insistently into the memory and psyche of the people concerned” (Mottram, 15).

⁶³ A los sanos, “más profundos instintos” de este pueblo se refiere también Lemaître (235).

“olor” del crimen, de la sangre de la víctima, que los persigue por todas partes y los atormenta como las Furias a Orestes, como la conciencia culpable a Caín, fratricida. Por el propósito de hacer pesar la culpa en la conciencia de todos y de amonestar a ésta para el futuro, *CMA* se concluye con una descripción, reiterada, de la masacre de Santiago Nasar, en todos sus horriblos detalles, confiriendo así a las últimas páginas una función análoga a la del “olor” que persigue al pueblo. Renuncia intencionada a cualquier catarsis, sustituida por una esperanzada anagnórisis psicológica y moral.⁶⁴ De tal anagnórisis participa también el autor, quien al fin comprende con claridad que los culpables son simultáneamente, en gran parte, también víctimas, víctimas de una herencia cultural que es perjudicial para la salud espiritual y física, y de la cual Hispanoamérica debiera separarse, independizarse moralmente. Esta anagnórisis, acompañada de la intuición, que algún que otro individuo ya tiene, de que “la honra” verdadera es “el amor” (127) representa la mejor esperanza contra el absurdo proceder que se designa por muchos como honor.⁶⁵

Independientemente de la familiaridad de García Márquez con las obras de Calderón y de su modo de interpretarlas, nuestra lectura nos sugiere que los dos grandes escritores están hermanados en su propósito de desmitificar y condenar en sus respectivas sociedades el “honor” que no es “amor” y, por eso, ni siquiera honor verdadero. Este es el sentido del auténtico “honor calderoniano”, que es también el de García Márquez y que no debe confundirse con el de sus absurdos personajes pundonorosos.

University of Texas, Austin

⁶⁴ Nos dejan muy perplejos las siguientes opiniones: “last pages [de *CMA*] totally anticlimactic” (Alonso, 260); “Playful ending” (Alvarez-Borland, 225); García Márquez “deja inconclusa la obra...no da solución” (Hernández de López, 215). A veces se hacen referencias a la “restauración de la armonía”, a la “purificación”, como en los sacrificios primitivos (Rama y otros). Este paralelo no carece de interés, percibiéndose en ello la gratificación de los instintos más animales, en suma, a la humanidad bestializada. Sorprendentemente, en su muy inteligente estudio, Millington concluye que “by opting for this ending, the narrator underwrites to a considerable extent the very codes which seem to produce such an unfortunate outcome” (80). García Márquez mismo explica que decidió acabar la novela con la escena del asesinato, y no con la de la reconciliación de Angela y Bayardo, pues no se trata principalmente de una historia de amor, por importante que ésta sea (Ver Girgado, 89). Esta descripción del crimen, llena de horripilantes detalles, que es de seguro “one of the most powerful murder scenes in modern literature” (Penuel, 765), tiene, repetimos, el patente propósito de sacudir la conciencia. Ver también la excelente tesina de J. E. Wright, *CMA: A Modern Literary Interpretation of Hispanic Honor*, The University of Texas, 1994, que tuve el privilegio y placer de dirigir.

⁶⁵ Algunas conclusiones semejantes en Méndez-Ramírez (940). Atraídos por las nuevas modas de la crítica literaria, algunos lectores de *CMA* insisten en el “proceso artístico”, desdendiendo el contenido ideológico, desentendiéndose del hecho fundamental de que la metáfora no tiene sentido alguno y que ni puede identificarse como tal, sin enjuiciarse en su relación con el tema. Observación perogrullesca, sin duda, pero todavía oportuna. García Márquez: “...tenía la convicción de que toda buena novela debía ser una transposición poética de la realidad...; yo creo que la técnica y el lenguaje son instrumentos determinados por el tema de un libro...; la fuente de creación al fin y al cabo es siempre la realidad, y la fantasía, o sea la invención pura y simple..., sin ningún asidero en la realidad, es lo más detestable, que pueda haber...; No hay en mis novelas una línea que no esté basada en la realidad. Lo que sucede es que yo también tengo una formación ideológica...; la gran contribución política del escritor es...ayudar a que através de su obra, el lector entienda mejor cuál es la realidad política o social de su país o de un continente, de su sociedad” (ver Girgado, 195-200).

LA CONCEZIONE DELL' UOMO IN HERMANN HESSE

Renato Gendre

La pubblicazione di *Peter Camenzind*¹ segna per Hermann Hesse l' inizio di una nuova vita.

Il successo, il primo grande successo editoriale di un libro, infatti, consente al suo Autore di abbandonare la professione di libraio, iniziata a Tubinga e continuata a Basilea dove intanto si era trasferito, per dedicarsi a tempo pieno a quella di scrittore.

Non soltanto.

Questo libro segna anche la fine della sua giovinezza. Infatti se la lunga stagione della giovinezza avrà, in qualche modo, “ prolungamenti tenaci fino alla morte ”², che lo coglierà per un' emorragia cerebrale nel 1962 a Montagnola nei pressi di Lugano, nella vita invece questa stagione può dirsi definitivamente conclusa nel 1904, con la pubblicazione di questo romanzo.

Nato nel 1877 nella cittadina sveva di Calw, da padre originario dell' Estonia e da madre svizzera-francese, entrambi in tempi e per tempi diversi missionari evangelici in India, fin da bambino subisce l' influenza di un' educazione familiare che si fa portatrice di una duplice esperienza spirituale, che risulterà fondamentale per la formazione della sua personalità. Da una parte, quella d' una religiosità di rigorosa marca pietista, cioè di quel movimento di riforma religiosa che da oltre un secolo affondava le sue radici e germogliava rigoglioso proprio in Svevia e che imponeva una fede severa in un Cristianesimo caratterizzato dalla presenza di un latente, ma costante senso di colpa. Dall' altra, il richiamo lontano ma persistente alla civiltà orientale, alle sue grandi religioni, ai suoi maestri di saggezza (da Buddha a Lao Tse), di cui erano imbevuti, per studio e per esperienza diretta, sia i suoi genitori, sia - sopra tutto - il nonno materno, Hermann Gundert, orientalista di fama mondiale.

*Relazione introduttiva presentata al dibattito, con gli studenti delle scuole astigiane, su “Hermann Hesse. Nobel per la letteratura 1946”, che si è svolto presso il salone del Consiglio Provinciale il giorno 01.02.1997 come ‘prologo’ alla mostra dedicata a “Hermann Hesse pittore”, organizzata dall' Assessorato alla Cultura della Provincia di Asti, dalla Biblioteca Astese e dalla Fondazione Mazzotta. Rispetto alla redazione originaria, si presenta ampliata, per le aggiunte e gli approfondimenti che si sono resi necessari al fine di fungere da relazione di apertura alla tavola rotonda su “Un pittore da leggere”, che si è tenuta presso la Biblioteca Astese il 14.02.1997 in occasione dell' inaugurazione della mostra. Naturalmente mancano le frasi di circostanza e sono state aggiunte le note. Le traduzioni, quando non diversamente indicate, sono nostre.

¹ HESSE 1904.

² CHIUSANO, p. v.

A queste esperienze spirituali, dobbiamo aggiungerne, per completare il quadro, almeno altre due di carattere ideologico e culturale, perché, non diversamente dalle prime, lasceranno anch' esse il segno nella sua produzione letteraria, sia pure in modi e spessori diversi.

Una è quella dell' internazionalismo.

Un sentimento questo che già permea tutta la sua famiglia: il padre vive nel Württemberg, ma è nato in Estonia ed ha passaporto russo; la madre, che ha nelle vene sangue franco-svizzero e tedesco, è nata in India. E questo sentimento sarà determinante per lui. Sia per la precoce ma definitiva scelta, come patria e residenza stabile, della Svizzera, cioè del paese europeo di più salde e antiche tradizioni neutraliste. Sia anche per certe sue scelte umane e politiche come quella, per esempio, di trasformare la propria condizione di relativa libertà che la Confederazione Elvetica gli riservava, in impegno civile, mettendosi al servizio della Croce Rossa, nell' Ufficio prigionieri politici di Berna, sopra tutto schierandosi apertamente a favore del pacifismo, come attestano, oltre la sua attività di pubblicista, anche il carteggio che ebbe con Romain Rolland³, di cui condivideva gli ideali, come spiega bene in una lettera del 1932 *An Herrn A. St.* (" *Al Sig. A. St.* "): "*Was ich mit Rolland gemein habe, und was uns beide von der Mehrzahl der deutschen Jugend trennt, ist unsere vollkommene Abwendung von jedem Nationalismus, den wir als eine rückständige Sentimentalität und als die grösste Gefahr der jetzigen Welt während der Kriegsjahre erkannt haben (...). So wie Rolland sein Anti-Nationalismus vor allem gegen seine französischen Landsleute wendet (...)* so fühle ich besonders für die jetzige deutsche Form von Nationalismus eine Abneigung und Feindschaft"⁴.

Scelte umane e politiche che, fatte con prontezza e vissute senza tentennamenti e ripensamenti, hanno sicuramente contribuito a consacrare la sua reputazione in tutto il mondo. Pensiamo al fatto che, lasciata la Germania agli inizi della Prima Guerra Mondiale, neppure alla fine, nonostante la caduta della monarchia guglielmina, egli trovò validi motivi per rientrare in quella ch'era la sua patria, per dare un contributo alla nascente democrazia tedesca.

Ma c'è di più.

Varii anni più tardi, nel 1931, avrà la forza di tagliare anche l' ultimo cordone che lo legava alla Germania, dimettendosi dall'Accademia Prussiana, che l' aveva accolto un lustro prima come socio straniero, per dare un segno forte del suo atteggiamento critico a proposito della politica della Repubblica di Weimar dei 'piccoli passi'. Scrisse, infatti, Hermann Hesse in una lettera del dicembre 1931 a Thomas Mann "*[...] der letzte Grund meines Unvermögens zur Einordnung in eine offizielle deutsche Korporation ist mein tiefes Misstrauen gegen die deutsche Republik [...]. Kurz, ich finde mich von der Mentalität, welche Deutschland beherrscht, genauso weit entfernt wie in den Jahren 1914-1918. Ich sehe Vorgängen zu, die ich als sinnlos empfinde, und*

³ Cfr. HESSE-ROLLAND.

⁴ HESSE 1964, p. 88 ["Ciò che ho in comune con Rolland e ciò che ci separa dalla maggior parte della gioventù tedesca è il nostro rifiuto totale di ogni nazionalismo, che durante gli anni della guerra abbiamo riconosciuto essere sentimentalismo retrivo e il più grande pericolo del mondo attuale (...). Come Rolland rivolge il suo antinazionalismo sopra tutto contro i suoi connazionali francesi (...), così io provo ripugnanza e ostilità in particolare per l' attuale forma di nazionalismo dei tedeschi"]

bin seit 1914 und 1918 statt des winzigen Schrittes nach links, den die Gesinnung des Volkes getan hat, um viele Meilen nach links getrieben worden. Ich vermag auch keine einzige deutsche Zeitung mehr zu lesen“⁵. Il taglio è stato netto, senza tentennamenti, ma - ne siamo sicuri - dolorosissimo, perché ha significato la perdita dell'ultimo legame con la sua terra, ch'egli amava profondamente, come traspare in filigrana, da quella “bellissima descrizione lirica della Selva Nera all'inizio del *Camenzind*”⁶.

Senza volere affrontare il problema del pensiero politico di Hermann Hesse, perché, come vedremo tra poco, il nostro scopo in questo intervento è un altro, una chiosa, a quanto appena detto, è doverosa, per non lasciare un' impressione sbagliata in chi legge.

Se nella posizione, che possiamo definire radicaldemocratica, di Hermann Hesse “è possibile vedere una decisa reazione alla ‘svolta a destra’ in atto nella politica tedesca, è anche vero che la democratizzazione della società tedesca dopo la fine della Prima guerra mondiale suscitava nello scrittore Hesse forti perplessità”⁷, tanto da fargli dire, certo avendo ben presente la *Ribellione delle Masse* di Ortega y Gasset: “Io vedo il mondo come artista e credo di avere idee democratiche, ma i miei sentimenti sono senz'altro aristocratici, cioè posso amare la qualità in ogni sua forma, ma non la quantità”⁸.

Ma non è per queste posizioni, che trovano la loro “ragione profonda in un pessimismo antistoricistico di stampo sciopenauriano, che vede nella politica un'attività priva di senso, attribuendo alla sola arte un significato davvero positivo”⁹ che Hermann Hesse gode di una fama indiscussa, e in parte gode ancora, al di qua e al di là dell'oceano, specie fra le giovani generazioni. Quella fama che, è doveroso sottolinearlo in sede di consuntivo, ha contribuito, forse anche in maniera determinante (come spesso accade, purtroppo) a condizionare la giuria che gli ha assegnato il premio Nobel per la letteratura nel 1946. Perché non c'è dubbio che, all'eccezionale successo di pubblico, in particolare di quello giovanile, che a suo tempo, lo ha ammirato come il precursore di Herbert Marcuse e come classico della cultura *hippy*¹⁰, non corrisponda, com'è giusto sottolineare, un'altrettanto eccezionale valore letterario, benché sicuro sia il suo posto tra i grandi scrittori del nostro secolo. Quello che intendiamo dire, cioè, è

⁵ HESSE-MANN, pp. 17-18 [“Il motivo ultimo del mio impedimento ad appartenere ad una corporazione tedesca ufficiale è la mia profonda diffidenza nei confronti della Repubblica tedesca (...). In breve, mi reputo distante dalla mentalità che governa la Germania tanto quanto lo ero negli anni 1914-1918. Assisto ad avvenimenti che reputo insensati, e io tra il 1914 e il 1918 invece del piccolo passo che ha compiuto la coscienza popolare verso sinistra, sono stato spinto a sinistra di molte miglia. Non posso nemmeno più leggere un solo giornale tedesco (...)”].

⁶ MITTNER, III/1, p. 1421 n.1. Il passo cui si fa riferimento è quello in HESSE 1904 [=HESSE 1957, I, pp.219-221].

⁷ MAYER, p. 140.

⁸ Citazione in MAYER, p.140.

⁹ MAYER, p.140

¹⁰ La causa di ciò va ricercata nella sua critica, dura sempre e spesso condivisibile, delle falsità su cui si fonda la società borghese se: “*Und sie ist, diese schäbige, stets enttäuschende und öde Wirklichkeit, auf keine andre Weise zu ändern, als indem wir sie leugnen, indem wir zeogen, dass wir stärker sind als sie*” (HESSE 1925 b [= HESSE 1957, IV, p. 483]) [“E questa, realtà meschina, sempre deludente e insulsa realtà, non è possibile mutarla, se non rinnegandola e mostrando che siamo più forti di essa”].

che l'ammirazione per Hermann Hesse, come ha scritto Viktor Žmegač “ non poggia tanto sul potenziale estetico della sua prosa, quanto piuttosto sulla dignità dei suoi principi umani “¹¹ sulla coerenza dei comportamenti e sulla vivacità di uno spirito che “ non ha mai evitato il confronto con nessun problema europeo, non si è sottratto a nessun appello della vita attuale, non si è mai adagiato in un quietismo, né intellettuale né estetico “¹².

L'altra esperienza è la psicanalisi.

Dapprima sperimentata su se stesso in una clinica di Lucerna, la psicanalisi gli è servita a risolvere conflitti che lo tormentavano fin dall'adolescenza (aveva quindici anni quando tentò il suicidio) e a superare, in una certa misura, la sua crisi esistenziale, le cui radici non c'è dubbio che affondino nell'azione pedagogica particolarmente severa del padre, nell'atmosfera che si respirava in una famiglia dominata totalmente da un ossessivo pietismo cristiano¹³ e nel trauma¹⁴ che ha subito nel seminario evangelico di Maulbronn, per la disperazione di non potere realizzare il suo obiettivo, che era quello di dedicarsi completamente alla poesia: “[...] *von meinem dreizehnten Jahr an war mir das eine klar, dass ich entweder ein Dichter oder garnichts werden wollt*”¹⁵. Le cause scatenanti, però, vanno cercate, con altrettanta sicurezza, nella debilitazione fisica ma sopra tutto in quella psichica che subisce al tempo della Prima Guerra Mondiale, per i duri e reiterati attacchi della stampa tedesca che finiscono, allontanando da lui molti amici, per isolarlo in una solitudine che gli provoca gravi sofferenze.

La psicanalisi però è servita altresì a dare una direzione alla sua ricerca; a condurlo alle origini eterne, universali dell'uomo; a portarlo al riconoscimento delle due polarità originarie, da cui scaturiscono tutte le altre categorie di polarità: la Madre (con la *M* maiuscola: mondo della notte, della morte; amore, matrice, e senso) e il Padre (con la *P* maiuscola: mondo della luce; spirito, pensiero e conoscenza).

Dunque pietismo, Oriente (più Cina, però, che India; più taoismo che buddismo)¹⁶, internazionalismo e psicanalisi trapuntano le pagine di Hermann Hesse, in trame più o

¹¹ ŽMEGAČ 1995, p. 301.

¹² MICHELS, p. 146.

¹³ “*Ich war das kind frommer Eltern, welche ich zärtlich liebte und noch zärtlicher geliebt hätte, wenn man mich nicht schon frühzeitig mit dem vierten Gebote bekannt gemacht hätte*” (HESSE 1925 b [= HESSE 1957, IV, p. 469]) [“Ero il figlio di genitori pii, che amavo teneramente e che ancora più teneramente avrei amato, se non mi avessero fatto conoscere troppo presto il quarto comandamento”].

¹⁴ Definito da Hugo Ball come “*Stiftlerneurose*” (BALL, p. 56).

¹⁵ HESSE 1925 b [= HESSE 1957, IV, p. 473] [“(…) dai tredici anni in poi, mi fu chiaro che volevo diventare un poeta o niente”].

¹⁶ “[...] *nannte man mich häufig einen 'Buddhisten', worüber ich nur lachen konnte, denn in Grunde wusste ich mich von keinem Bekenntnis weiter entfernt als von diesem*” [“mi chiamavano spesso ‘buddista’, cosa di cui potevo soltanto ridere, poiché in fondo da nessuna dottrina mi sentivo più lontano che da questa” (HESSE 1925 b [= HESSE 1957, IV, p. 482]). È ben vero, infatti, che è alla religione induista più che alla buddista che Hermann Hesse si sente vicino, come ci conferma anche V. Ganeshan (GANESHAN), lo studioso che più ha approfondito questo aspetto del pensiero hessiano. Tuttavia crediamo, con A. Hsia (HSIA), che nella formazione dello scrittore abbia pesato in modo più rilevante il pensiero cinese, il taoismo in particolare, che non quello indiano. Comunque, sia chiaro che “l’atteggiamento di H. Hesse nei confronti della filosofia e delle religioni orientali è singolarmente aperto [...]: trae spunto dal taoismo, dal buddhismo, dall’induismo e dal brahmanesimo, ma senza abbracciare esclusivamente una di queste religioni, bensì ricavandone un senso di religiosità generico e un’indicazione di amore universale” (PONZI, p. 80).

meno insistite da libro a libro; ma il tema centrale della sua produzione letteraria, il motivo fondamentale della sua opera è certamente quello inerente la sua concezione dell' uomo.

Ed è proprio questo motivo, tra i tanti altri possibili, che vogliamo seguire ed esaminare attraverso il nostro viaggio hessiano breve e talvolta rapsodico, come l' occasione impone, ma non senza qualche approfondimento. Sia per quanto riguarda quei dati bibliografici che possono aiutarci a cogliere e a chiarire il rapporto dello scrittore verso se stesso e verso il mondo e il suo tempo¹⁷. Sia mettendo bene a fuoco il fatto che, nell' esaminare il problema della concezione dell' uomo nell' opera di Hermann Hesse, bisogna tenere conto che essa si sviluppa e si evolve secondo una direzione costante di ricerca che costituisce l' apporto essenziale dello scrittore e nella quale confluiscono suggerimenti culturali e ambientali.

L' ampliamento dell' anima, anche se compiuta tra infinite sofferenze, è la continua, suprema meta delle figure create da Hermann Hesse. Quando l' anima si è talmente aperta da potere abbracciare il divino, raggiunge una sintesi che porta l' uomo nella totalità. Per questo lo scrittore respinge tutto ciò che potrebbe ostacolare lo sviluppo del singolo, il suo divenire umano.

Già nel 1932, Hermann Hesse¹⁸ aveva descritto le tre fasi fondamentali della *Menschwerdung*: *“Der Weg der Menschwerdung beginnt mit der Unschuld [...] von da führt er in die Schuld, in das Wissen um Gut und Böse, in die Forderungen der Kultur, der Moral, der Religionen, der Menschheitsideale. Bei jedem, der diese Stufe ernstlich und als differenziertes Individuum durchlebt, endet sie unweigerlich mit Verzweiflung, nämlich mit der Einsicht, dass [...] Gerechtigkeit unerreichbar, dass Gutsein unerfüllbar ist. Diese Verzweiflung führt nun entweder zum Untergang oder aber zu einem dritten Reich des Geistes [...] : zum Glauben. Einerlei welche Formen und Ausdrücke der Glaube annehme, sein Inhalt ist jedesmal derselbe: dass wir wohl nach dem Guten streben sollen, soweit wir vermögen”*¹⁹.

¹⁷ Di fondamentale importanza resta ancora la prima biografia, quella di Hugo Ball (BALL). Infatti, nonostante giunga soltanto al 1927, riveste un interesse particolare, poiché, scritta da un amico di famiglia e compagno dello scrittore, non si limita ad una ricerca obiettiva di dati, ma attinge ad affinità di ambiente e di sentire che superano il semplice compito del biografo e la rendono una fonte preziosa e privilegiata per capire Hermann Hesse e quindi anche per la definizione del nostro problema. L' influenza della psicoanalisi sulla concezione hessiana dell' uomo viene ripresa da Richard Matzig (MATZIG) in un lavoro che, però, risente troppo della unilateralità di un' interpretazione esclusivamente in chiave psicologica. Sulla stessa linea si colloca Luise Hackelsberger (HACKELBERGER) che, nella sua indagine sui rapporti tra le figure hessiane con la 'società' e con la 'comunità' - secondo la terminologia di Franz Tönnies (TÖNNIES) - riconosce ad esse i caratteri dell' uomo del nostro tempo, tra cui, *in primis*, la sua incapacità di un saldo e duraturo legame con la società e il conseguente isolamento dalla comunità. Non offre, invece, utili indicazioni per il problema che qui c' interessa il lavoro di Gerhard Kirchhoff (KIRCHHOFF) perché, pur non privo di spunti intelligenti (p. es., la sua valutazione di *Siddhartha*), non sembra tenere sufficientemente conto della formazione culturale e spirituale di Hermann Hesse. L' opera più completa e importante resta ancora quella di Edmund Gnefkow (GNEFKOW), verso la quale abbiamo, insieme al lavoro di Luisa Ponzio (PONZIO) più debiti di quanti sarebbe lecito attenderci. Semplici introduzioni alla lettura di Hermann Hesse, infine, si devono considerare la monografia di Franz Baumer (BAUMER) e la biografia di Bernhard Zeller (ZELLER).

¹⁸ HESSE 1932.

¹⁹ HESSE 1957, VII, p. 389 [“La strada del divenire umano *Menschwerdung* inizia con l' innocenza (...), da qui essa conduce nella colpa, nella conoscenza del bene e del male, nell' esigenza della cultura, della morale, delle religioni, degli ideali dell' umanità. Questo gradino, per chi lo vive con serietà e

Queste tre frasi vengono vissute dalle figure hessiane a cominciare dal *Demian*²⁰, con cui l'Autore, sotto lo pseudonimo di Emil Sinclair, affascinò i suoi lettori, specialmente i più giovani ed iniziò una nuova fase creativa, originata dall'esperienza della guerra e da quella psicanalitica.

Nella seconda di quelle tre fasi, cui abbiamo accennato, s'inseriscono i tre momenti fondamentali della 'vocazione', del 'risveglio' e del 'congedo' così ben rappresentati nel *Glasperlenspiel* ('Il gioco delle perle di vetro')²¹, l'ultima grande opera di Hermann Hesse, quella che rappresenta una visione complessiva di tutti i motivi trattati nelle opere precedenti; una che non è soltanto una *summa* dei motivi dell'opera hessiana: è piuttosto il risultato finale dell'esperienza maturata dallo scrittore. È, cioè, la 'sua' opera, nel senso che è l'opera che cercava e da tempo pensava se già nel 1924, dopo avere terminato il *Kurzgefasster Lebenslauf*, manifestava l'intenzione "*eine Art von Oper zu schreiben, worin das menschliche Leben in seiner sogenannten Wirklichkeit wenig ernst genommen, sogar verhöhnt wird, dagegen in seinem ewigen Wert als Bild, als flüchtiges Gewand der Gottheit hervorleuchtet*"²². Parole che potrebbero essere usate per il risvolto di copertina del *Glasperlenspiel*, di circa venti anni dopo.

Il romanzo - utopistico - si svolge nell'anno 2000 in Castalia, provincia pedagogica dello spirito, in cui una *élite* di altissima cultura (scienziati, pensatori, artisti) partecipa ad un gioco, che consiste in un esercizio di associazioni e combinazioni tra tesi e antitesi, di concetti derivati dagli ideogrammi cinesi, dalla musica e dal giuoco degli scacchi. Il protagonista, che incarna l'anima della Castalia è Josef Knecht ('servo'), la cui vita si manifesta nelle tre inevitabili componenti della 'vocazione', del 'risveglio' e del 'congedo'. Ognuno di questi momenti è una sintesi di molteplici esperienze e ognuno è contemporaneo all'altro. Per primo c'è la 'vocazione' (la 'vocazione' di Josef Knecht, che si manifesta nella gara con Plinio Designori, è quella di dovere conoscere e sperimentare la Castalia nella sua vita, coltivarla in se stesso, viverla realmente come completa unità), ma essa contiene già in sé il 'risveglio', perché nella decisione di Josef di sfidare Plinio è già presente il riconoscimento del polo opposto; infatti, "*der Gegensatz: Welt und Geist, oder der Gegensatz: Plino und Josef, hatte sich [...] aus dem Kampf zweier unversöhnlicher Prinzipien in ein Konzert sublimiert*"²³. Il 'congedo' è il terzo momento e inizia quando Josef riconosce che gli ideali di Castalia non sono più validi per lui e sente la necessità di superarli: "*Mein Leben [...] sollte ein Transzendieren sein, ein Fortschreiten von Stufe zu Stufe [...]*"²⁴.

come individuo differenziato, finisce immancabilmente con la disperazione, cioè con la convinzione che (...) la giustizia e irraggiungibile, la bontà è inattuabile. Ora, tale disperazione conduce o alla rovina o a un terzo regno dello spirito (...), alla fede. Non importa quali forme ed espressioni assuma la fede, il suo contenuto è lo stesso: che dobbiamo tendere al bene per quanto possiamo".

²⁰ HESSE 1919.

²¹ HESSE 1943.

²² DÜRR, p. 76 ["di scrivere una specie di opera in cui la vita umana nella sua così detta realtà viene presa poco sul serio e addirittura schernita, ma invece risplende luminosa nel suo valore eterno, come immagine, come veste transitoria della divinità"].

²³ HESSE 1957, VI, p.185 ["Il contrasto: mondo e spirito, o il contrasto: Plinio e Josef [...]si era sublimato da lotta tra due principi inconciliabili in un concerto"].

²⁴ HESSE 1957, VI, p. 511 ["La mia vita [...] doveva essere come un trascendere, un proseguire di gradino in gradino"].

In questo modo egli compie la sua evoluzione interiore, che si attua proprio nella necessità di superare ogni fase, ogni gradino della vita.

Sempre in *Ein Stückchen Theologie*, Hermann Hesse, pur denunciando la relatività della catalogazione, divide l'umanità in due tipi fondamentali contrapposti. L'uomo razionale che "glaubt an nichts so sehr als an die menschliche Vernunft"²⁵, che "glaubt [...] an Fortschritt"²⁶ e "sein gefürchtetster Feind ist der Tod, der Gedanke an die Vergänglichkeit seines Lebens und Tuns"²⁷. E l'uomo religioso che "glaubt, dass der Mensch ein dienender Teil der Erde sei"²⁸ ed egli "flüchtet, wenn das Grauen vor Tod und Vergänglichkeit ihn fasst, in den Glauben, dass der Schöpfer (oder die Natur) seine Zwecke auch mit diesen uns erschreckenden Mitteln anstrebe"²⁹.

Nelle prime due fasi ('vocazione' e 'risveglio') della sua *Menschwerdung*, l'uomo razionale e l'uomo religioso si trovano in inconciliabile opposizione, che si manifesta nel romanzo *Der Steppenwolf* ('Il lupo nella steppa')³⁰, con il sentimento della coesistenza fondata su di un' inimicizia mortale di due nature, di due esseri in una sola persona: il lupo della steppa spietato e divoratore e l'uomo gentile, con desiderio di calore e di affetto³¹. Con questo libro che, nonostante i suoi difetti³², rappresenta uno dei vertici della sua non comune produzione, Hermann Hesse mette in primo piano la crisi della società. Come sottolinea Viktor Žmegač, le annotazioni di Harry Haller³³ "uno scrittore che riversa sulla carta tutto il suo disgusto per le menzogne della società borghese e le 'conquiste' effettuate tramite lo sfruttamento della natura, sono una critica veemente contro la civiltà moderna, una critica che per certi versi anticipa le posizioni di Herbert Marcuse [...], per quanto essa resti impigliata in una sorta di irrazionalismo non meglio definito"³⁴.

²⁵ HESSE 1957, VII, p. 395 ["non crede a nulla se non nella ragione umana"].

²⁶ HESSE 1957, VII, p. 396 ["crede (...) nel progresso"].

²⁷ *Ibidem* ["il suo nemico più temuto è la morte, il pensiero della caducità della sua vita e della sua azione"].

²⁸ *Ibidem* ["crede che l'uomo sia un elemento al servizio della terra"].

²⁹ *Ibidem* ["si rifugia, quando l'afferra l'orrore della morte e della caducità, nella fede che il creatore (o la natura) persegua i suoi fini anche con questi mezzi per noi spaventosi"].

³⁰ HESSE 1927.

³¹ "Bei Harry hingegen war es anders? in ihm liefen Mensch und Wolf nicht nebeneinander her, und noch viel weniger halfen sie einander, sondern sie lagen in ständiger Todfeindschaft gegeneinander" ["Per Harry invece era diverso, in lui non correvano l'uomo e il lupo appaiati, né tanto meno si aiutavano l'un l'altro, ma si trovavano in continua, mortale inimicizia l'uno contro l'altro"] (HESSE 1957, IV, p. 225).

³² Cfr., p. es., l'analisi di Dieter Mayer: "I punti deboli del libro, che ne attenuano notevolmente l'acume analitico trasponendo il suo messaggio terapeutico sul piano dell'utopia, vanno cercati, da un lato, nella riduzione della materia narrativa al mondo interiore del protagonista, dall'altro in una critica manichea della borghesia e della *Zivilisation*, con cui Hesse pensava di liquidare gli Anni Venti [...]. Questa condanna indiscriminata della società del dopoguerra nasce dal rifiuto della società dei consumi e della crescente frenesia produttiva: la "caccia grossa all'automobile" descritta nel *Teatro magico* del *Lupo della Steppa* è un esempio di pessimismo antimoderno che contrappone all'oggi i valori di ieri e alla mediocrità, l'orgogliosa solitudine del lupo-artista" (MAYER, p. 141).

³³ La componente autobiografica, raramente assente nell'opera di Hermann Hesse, è particolarmente evidente qui, in cui il protagonista ha persino la stessa iniziale del nome e cognome dell'Autore come in tanti altri testi di questi anni. Cfr., p. es., *Kurgast* ['Cura termale'] (HESSE 1925 a) e *Die Nürnberger Reise* ['Il viaggio a Norimberga'] (HESSE 1928).

³⁴ ŽMEGAČ 1995, pp. 302-303.

Il lupo e l' uomo gentile, però, cessano di essere contrapposti e riconoscono la reciproca necessità, quando si vengono a trovare nella terza fase. Qui Mozart, che è un bel saxofonista spagnolo drogato, spiega ad Harry Haller l' inutilità dell' uccisione di Hermine, che l' aveva salvato dal suicidio, allo scopo di eliminare, novello Dorian Gray, uno dei suoi innumerevoli Io e gli insegna la saggezza della vita e che il vero dissidio è tra l' idea e il fenomeno, il cui simbolo è la radio, che diffonde sia la musica piú sublime, sia assordanti testimonianze di stupidità. Pensiamo a Josef e Plinio, che costituiscono i due poli opposti che si attraggono l' un l' altro. Pensiamo a Narziss, l' ascetico, l' uomo dello spirito e Goldmund, l' artista, il cui dissidio, nell' omonima opera (*Narziss und Goldmund* 'Narciso e Boccadoro')³⁵ è soltanto apparente, perché non soltanto si completano, ma sono l' unità dell' uomo, nella sua duplice componente di Spirito e Natura. Sintesi che Goldmund ha vissuto abbandonandosi al vortice della vita e che Narziss invece, pur isolato nel convento, l' ha comunque compresa, benché soltanto con il pensiero. Dice, infatti, quest' ultimo "*Es ist nicht unsere Aufgabe, einander näherzukommen, sowenig wie Sonne und Mond zueinander kommen oder Meer und Land. Wir zwei, lieber Freund, sind Sonne und Mond, sind Meer und Land. Unser Ziel ist nicht, ineinander überzugehen, sondern einander zu erkennen und einer im andern das sehen und ehren zu lernen, was er ist: des andern Gegenstück und Ergänzung*"³⁶.

La necessità di una fusione tra i due tipi trova la sua definitiva affermazione nel *Glasperlenspiel* e nel suo protagonista Josef Knecht, in cui Hermann Hesse rappresenta il suo ideale di uomo completo.

Le opere precedenti il *Demian*, invece, esprimono soltanto la ricerca e il tentativo dello scrittore d' indirizzare il proprio cammino spirituale e di definire il suo ideale di uomo. Infatti, i protagonisti, che compaiono nella produzione hessiana di questo periodo, falliscono tutti nel tentativo di inserirsi nel tutto della vita, di cui hanno sí avvertito il richiamo imperioso, ma non hanno compreso che l' ostacolo da superare era in loro stessi. Così Camenzind (*Peter Camenzind*) che, pur avendo tentato d' irrompere nel tutto della vita, non riesce a prenderne possesso. Rinunciando alla vita dell' artista, egli non affronta la vita; preferendole il piccolo ambiente di Nimikon, dove si riduce a gestire un' osteria, egli ha scelto il lato borghese che, di essa rappresenta soltanto un aspetto, un 'gradino', che dev' essere superato, come tutti gli altri, per riuscire a prenderne pieno possesso. Peter Camenzind non raggiunge la vita, perché non si apre senza riserve. "*Der Roman, wieviel er auch das Ganze, die Einheit 'Leben' darzustellen scheint, vom Gesamtwerk Hemann Hesses beurteil einen einseitigen und damit uneinheitlichen Menschen im Mittelpunkt*"³⁷. Così Giebenrath (*Unterm Rad*, 'Sotto la ruota')³⁸, vittima di una disciplina scolastica rigida e di un ambiente familiare chiuso, una volta sradicato non riesce piú ad opporsi agli assalti della sorte e dei sensi e le

³⁵ HESSE 1930 [= HESSE 1957, V].

³⁶ HESSE 1957, V, p. 49 ["non è nostro compito avvicinarci l' uno all' altro, così come non si avvicinano il sole e la luna o il mare e la terra. Noi due, caro amico, siamo sole e luna, siamo mare e terra. Il nostro fine non è di trasformarci l' uno nell' altro, ma di riconoscerci l' un l' altro e di imparare a vedere e a onorare nell' altro ciò che egli è: l' opposto e il complemento dell' altro"].

³⁷ KIRCHHOFF, p. 8 ["Il romanzo, anche se sembra rappresentare il tutto, l' unità 'vita', se si giudica dall' opera completa di Hermann Hesse, esso pone un uomo unilaterale e perciò non unitario al centro"].

³⁸ HESSE 1906.

acque lo trascinano alla deriva fin 'sotto la ruota'. Così Kuhn (*Gertrud*)³⁹ comprende che il ritirarsi nel proprio mondo, nell' individualità dell' Io, gli impedisce il contatto con la vita, cui pure anela; ma da tale situazione non ne esce che cercando una compensazione attraverso la musica. È con la musica, infatti, che il protagonista pensa di gettare un ponte verso gli altri uomini, nella convinzione che se essi non volevano amarlo avrebbero però dovuto almeno amare la sua opera. Così Veraguth (*Rosshalde*)⁴⁰, quando, spezzatosi con la morte del figlio Pierre anche l' ultimo legame con le costrizioni borghesi, fatte di preoccupazioni della casa e della famiglia, parte per l' India, sembra avere raggiunto la propria soluzione. Ma alla fine risulta chiaro che la rottura tra lui e la vita permane. Veraguth è e resta un *Draussenstehenden* (ingl. *outsider*), al quale "*es nicht gegeben ist, das Leben selber an sich zu heissen*"⁴¹. Egli è stato troppo a lungo segregato nel suo Io, per cui ora non gli resta che la "*seltsame, kühle, dennoch unbändige Leidenschaft des Sehens, des Beobachtens und heimlich-stolzen Mitschaffen. Das war der Rest und der Wert seines missglückten Lebens, diese unbeirrbar Einsamkeit und kalte Lust des Darstellens, und diesem Stern ohne Abwege zu folgen, war nun sein Schicksal*"⁴². E arriviamo a Knulp (*Knulp*)⁴³ che, a differenza degli altri protagonisti è già dalla parte dei servitori della vita, anche se non ha ancora saputo compiere il passo decisivo. Nel momento del 'risveglio' alla vita, si leva un rifiuto della vita, che si riassume nelle sue ultime parole: "*es ist alles, wie es sein soll*"⁴⁴. Perché un rifiuto? Perché Knulp, manifestando la sua serena accettazione di una morte precoce, si riserva un comodo posto di spettatore, quando invece la vita hessiana richiede all' uomo di essere protagonista.

In queste prime opere, dunque, l' uomo di Hermann Hesse non è ancora riuscito a fare maturare il proprio risveglio, nel senso dell' autorealizzazione. Neppure Knulp, perché, nonostante che si collochi al di sopra di un Veraguth, di un Kuhn, di un Camenzind, non ha ancora saputo compiere il passo decisivo. È certamente il precursore immediato degli *hohe Menschen*, ma non è ancora un *hoher Mensch*. Condizione, questa, che sarà raggiunta dal protagonista di *Demian*⁴⁵. Nel romanzo si precisa, infatti, il significato dell' autorealizzazione, che è la completa attuazione della possibilità che l' uomo ha in sé, che è così bene rappresentata nel disegno, che Emil Sinclair manda a Demian, di un uccello che tenta di uscire dal suo guscio: "*der Vogel kämpft sich aus dem Ei. Das Ei ist die Welt. Wer geboren werden will, muss eine Welt zerstören. Der Vogel fliegt zu Gott. Der Gott heisst Abraxas*"⁴⁶. Infatti, l' amico Demian, dopo averlo

³⁹ HESSE 1910.

⁴⁰ HESSE 1914.

⁴¹ HESSE 1957, II, p. 633 ["non è dato d' impadronirsi della vita stessa"].

⁴² *Ibidem* ["singolare, fredda e tuttavia indomabile passione di vedere, di osservare e di partecipare segretamente fiero. Questo era il resto e il valore della sua vita fallita, questa solitudine imperturbabile e desiderio freddo di rappresentare e seguire questo astro senza deviazione, ora era il suo destino"].

⁴³ HESSE 1915.

⁴⁴ HESSE 1957, III, p. 96 ["tutto è come dev' essere"].

⁴⁵ HESSE 1919. Questo romanzo scritto nel 1917, è stato pubblicato nel 1919 con lo pseudonimo di Emil Sinclair, che, tra l' altro, era il nome del compagno di Friedrich Hölderlin nel collegio teologico di Tübingen.

⁴⁶ HESSE 1957, III, p. 185 ["L' uccello lotta per uscire dall' uovo. L' uovo è il mondo. Chi vuole nascere deve distruggere un mondo. L' uccello vola a Dio. Il dio si chiama Abraxas"]. A parte il problema dell' interpretazione del simbolo di Abraxas (cfr., p. es., GNEFKOW, pp. 71-72; MATZIG), che ci

liberato, quand' era fanciullo, dalla malefica influenza di Kromer, un monello di strada, guida Sinclair nella via verso se stesso e poi gli fa incontrare la propria madre, Eva, la personificazione di un sogno che tanto aveva inquietato le notti del protagonista. Sollecitato da lei entra in casa: " *ich glaube, ich bin mein ganzes Leben lang immer unterwegs gewesen - und jetzt bin ich heimgekommen*"⁴⁷ e così, finalmente, varca la 'soglia' della consacrazione nella vita. In quest' attimo si definisce il 'risveglio' di Sinclair e si compie la sua autorealizzazione.

Con il *Demain*, nato nel mezzo di una guerra, nel crollo dei tradizionali valori spirituali, in un caos che sembra che stia per inghiottire l' intera umanità, Hermann Hesse vuole affermare la sua fede nell' uomo. Questa opera "*ist die Geschichte eines Menschen, nicht eines erfundenen, eines möglichen, eines idealen oder sonstwie nicht vorhandenen, sondern eines wirklichen, einmaligen, lebenden Menschen, das weiss man allerdings heute weniger als jemals und man schießt denn auch die Menschen, deren jeder ein kostbarer, einmaliger Versuch der Natur ist, zu Mengen tot [...]. Er ist auch der einmalige, ganz besondere, in jedem Fall wichtige und merkwürdige Punkt, wo die Erscheinungen der Welt sich kreuzen, nur einmal so und nie wieder. Darum ist jedes Menschen Geschichte wichtig, ewig, göttlich, darum ist jeder Mensch, solange er irgend lebt und den Willen der Natur erfüllt, wunderbar und jeder Aufmerksamkeit würdig*"⁴⁸. E rivolge all' uomo, con amore profondo, il suo monito e gli indica il compito: giungere a se stesso e vivere interamente il proprio destino. È un compito arduo, al quale è negato ogni compromesso e la cui difficoltà consiste nel fatto che l' uomo possiede una duplice natura (sensuale e spirituale) contrapposta e apparentemente inscindibile. Quale delle due nature spetta all' uomo di sviluppare? Esiste una supremazia di una sull' altra? La risposta di Hermann Hesse è che entrambe debbono essere sviluppate, potenziate e riunite in una unità.

Questo è il problema che, come abbiamo visto, già posto in *Narziss und Goldmund* e in *Der Steppenwolf* ritorna ora nel famoso *Siddhartha*⁴⁹, in cui l' esperienza del pensiero orientale si viene ad affiancare all' esperienza della psicanalisi.

Figlio di un bramano, Siddhartha si fa asceta con l' amico Govinda. Questi, però, rimane nel monastero, mentre Siddhartha si convince che "*keinem wird Erlösung zuteil durch Lehre*"⁵⁰ e capisce che l' uomo deve sperimentare con i sensi e con lo spirito, perché entrambi sono validi strumenti di conoscenza, ciò che il destino gli

porterebbe lontano dal nostro scopo immediato, il significato immediato e più evidente dell' immagine dell' uccello che tenta di uscire dal suo guscio è quella dell' uomo che lotta per liberarsi dalle proprie costrizioni, l' Io che si libera dal non-Io, la forma che nasce dall' informa, lo spirito che prorompe dalla materia. L' uccello che spezza il guscio è il simbolo della lotta di Sinclair per nascere alla vita.

⁴⁷ HESSE 1957, III, p. 232 ["credo di essere sempre stato in cammino per tutta la mia vita - e ora sono arrivato a casa"].

⁴⁸ HESSE 1957, III, p. 101 ["e la storia di un uomo, non di uno inventato, di uno possibile, di uno ideale o in qualche modo inesistente, ma di un uomo reale, unico, vivo. Ma questo, in verità si sa oggi meno che mai perciò si uccide in grande quantità anche gli uomini, ognuno dei quali è un tentativo prezioso, unico della natura [...]. Egli è anche l' unico punto, del tutto particolare, in ogni caso importante e singolare, in cui i fenomeni del mondo si incrociano, una sola volta così e mai più. Perciò la storia di ogni uomo è importante, eterna, divina, perciò ogni uomo, fin tanto che in qualche modo vive e adempie la volontà della natura, è meraviglioso e degno di ogni attenzione"].

⁴⁹ HESSE 1922.

⁵⁰ HESSE 1957, III p. 643 ["Per nessuno la salvezza giungerà attraverso la dottrina"].

assegna: *“beide, die Gedanken wie die Sinne waren hübsche Dinge, hinter beiden lag der letzte Sinn verborgen, beide galt es zu hören [...], aus beiden die geheimen Stimmen des Innersten zu erlauschen”*⁵¹. Per questo egli sperimenta ogni piacere dei sensi fino ad avvertire ribrezzo ed orrore al punto da pensare al suicidio. Ma mentre è tutto proteso verso la morte, si opera in lui la salvezza: *“da zuckte aus entlegenen Bezirken seiner Seele, aus Vergangenen seines ermüdeten Lebens her ein Klang. Es war ein Wort, eine Silbe [...] das heilige ‘Om’ und im Augenblick, da der Klag ‘Om’ Siddharthas Ohr berührte, erwachte sein entschlummerter Geist plötzlich, und erkannte die Torheit seines Tuns”*⁵². Ed è con questa sillaba nel cuore, che riconosce: *“Ich habe Verzweiflung erleben müssen, ich habe hinabsinken müssen, bis zum törichtesten aller Gedanken, zum Gedanken des Selbstmordes, um Gnade erleben zu können [...] Ich habe sündigen müssen, um wieder leben zu können”*⁵³. Riapertosi così alla voce dello spirito, Siddhartha, accanto al barcaio Vasudeva, impara ad ascoltare e a riconoscere la voce del fiume. Ma la sua esperienza non è finita: deve ancora provare la felicità e il dolore e questi sentimenti gli procurano l’incontro con il figlio e la separazione da lui. Soltanto dopo egli potrà finalmente capire che il moto eterno dell’acqua è la durata immutabile nell’alternarsi degli eventi; può finalmente imparare dal fiume la legge dell’eterno divenire, che tutto obbedisce ad una legge di necessità alla quale l’uomo deve abbandonarsi con fiducia e dedizione. L’uomo deve amare il proprio destino; diversamente non raggiungerà mai la condizione per l’autorealizzazione: *“die Liebe, o Govinda, scheint mir von allem die Hauptsache zu sein [...]. Mir aber liegt einzig daran, die Welt lieben zu können, sie nicht zu verachten, sie und mich nicht zu hassen, sie und mich und alle Wesen mit Liebe und Bewunderung und Ehrfurcht betrachten zu können”*⁵⁴.

L’uomo attua, dunque, se stesso dopo avere sperimentato in sé i poli, che vengono riuniti in una visione che abbraccia tutta la vita e le sue leggi e ne coglie il palpito eterno, divino. Infatti lo scopo della ricerca di Siddhartha è proprio realizzare il detto delle Upanishad: *“Deine Seele ist die ganze Welt”*⁵⁵.

Gia nel Siddhartha si era aperto un varco attraverso il tempo, che non era veramente annullato, ma, per così dire, spostato in una extratemporalità, in un ‘sempre’, in un flusso eterno.

⁵¹ HESSE 1957, III, p. 652 [“Entrambi, i pensieri e i sensi erano cose belle, dietro entrambi era nascosto il significato ultimo, entrambi era necessario ascoltare (...), da entrambi cogliere le voci segrete del più profondo animo “].

⁵² HESSE 1957, III, p. 683 [“Allora da zone remote della sua anima, dal passato della sua vita stanca scaturì un suono. Era una parola, una sillaba (...) il sacro ‘Om’ e nell’istante in cui il suono ‘Om’ toccò l’orecchio di Siddhartha, il suo spirito assopito si risvegliò improvvisamente e riconobbe la follia del suo agire”].

⁵³ HESSE 1957, III, p. 690 [“Ho dovuto provare la disperazione, ho dovuto sprofondare, fino al più folle di tutti i pensieri, al pensiero del suicidio, per potere provare la grazia (...). Ho dovuto peccare, per potere vivere di nuovo”].

⁵⁴ HESSE 1957, III, p. 729 [“O Govinda, l’amore, mi sembra essere la più importante di tutte le cose (...). A me importa soltanto di potere amare il mondo, di non disprezzarlo, di non odiare quello e me, di poter considerare quello, me e tutti gli esseri con amore, ammirazione e rispetto”].

⁵⁵ HESSE 1957, III, p. 620 [“La tua anima è il mondo intero”].

Nel *Morgenlandfahrt* ('Il pellegrinaggio in Oriente')⁵⁶, il pellegrinaggio di una lega di *Unsterblichen* ('i [grandi] immortali')⁵⁷ di ogni tempo, insieme ai personaggi delle loro opere e a quelli della giovinezza dell' Autore, conduce, attraverso tempi e spazii storici e geografici che vengono cambiati e rimossi come scene, in una dimensione 'altra'. Realtà e non realtà, dunque, prendono forma l' una accanto all' altra: "*Unser Morgenland war ja nicht nur ein Land und etwas Geographisches, sondern es war die Heimat und Jugend der Seele, er was das Überall und Nirgends, war das Einswerden aller Zeiten*"⁵⁸.

Alla base di questo racconto, sta la profonda convinzione dell' Autore che soltanto attraverso una formazione spirituale è possibile ottenere un mondo migliore. Il protagonista è Leo, che è l' oggetto della ricerca di Hermann Hesse, il quale, diventato schiavo del suo intelletto, ha perso la fede nella missione della lega, precipitando in una disperazione da cui si solleva, però, al riconoscimento che la "*Verzweiflung ist das Ergebnis eines jeden ernstlichen Versuches, das Leben mit der Tugend, mit der Gerechtigkeit, mit der Vernunft zu bestehen und seine Forderungen zu erfüllen. Diesseits dieser Verzweiflung leben die Kinder, jenseits die Erwachten*"⁵⁹. Nella condizione di 'risvegliato', Hermann Hesse ritrova la sua fede e compie la sua fusione con Leo, il suo ideale, e attraverso questa egli raggiunge lo spirito, mentre Leo, assolto il suo compito di mediatore, può annullarsi, scomparire.

La missione che Hermann Hesse ha iniziato con il *Demian*, che ha proseguito, per indicare le tappe principali, con *Siddhartha*, *Steppenwolf*, *Morgenlandfahrt* e che trova la sua conclusione con *Glasperlenspiel* e l' ininterrotta ricerca di realizzare un uomo che, in mezzo al caos e all' avvicinarsi sempre più frenetico di sistemi e di teorie, mantenga intatta la sua dignità e la sua grandezza.

Le parole dello scrittore contenute nella lettera *An eine deutsche Studentin* ("Ad una studentessa tedesca") nel marzo 1954 possono essere considerate come una professione di quella sua incrollabile fede: "*Meine Dichtungen sind alle ohne Absichten, ohne Tendenzen entstanden. Wenn ich aber nachträglich nach einem gemeinsamen Sinn in ihnen suche, so finde ich allerdings einen solchen: vom 'Camenzind' bis zum 'Steppenwolf' und 'Josef Knecht' können sie alle als eine Verteidigung (zuweilen auch als Notschrei) der Persönlichkeit, des Individuums gedeutet werden. Der einzelne, einmalige Mensch mit seinen Erbschaften und Möglichkeiten, seinen Gaben und Neigungen ist ein zartes, gebrechliches Ding, er kann wohl einen Anwalt brauchen [...]. Denn diese Leser spüren, dass es mir weder um die Zerstörung der Ordnungen und Bindungen zu tun ist, ohne die ein menschliches Zusammenleben unmöglich wäre, noch um die Vergottung des Einzelnen, sondern um ein Leben, in dem Liebe, Schönheit und Ordnung herrschen, um ein Zusammenleben, in dem der Mensch nicht zum*

⁵⁶ HESSE 1932 b.

⁵⁷ Dei quali già si faceva cenno in *Steppenwolf* (cfr. HESSE 1957, IV, p. 252) e ai quali è dedicata una poesia omonima in *Die Gedichte* (cfr. HESSE 1942 [= HESSE 1957, V, p. 378).

⁵⁸ HESSE 1957, VI, p. 24 ["Il nostro Oriente non era soltanto un paese e un dato geografico, ma era la patria e la giovinezza dell' anima, era il Dovunque e l' In-Nessun-Luogo, era l' unificazione di tutti i tempi"].

⁵⁹ HESSE 1957, VI, p. 68 ["La disperazione è il risultato di ogni tentativo serio di sostenere la vita con la virtù, con l' equità, con la ragione e di adempiere le sue richieste. Al di qua di questa disperazione vivono i fanciulli, al di là i risvegliati"].

*Herdenvieh wird, sondern die Würde, die Schönheit und die Tragik seiner Einmaligkeit behalten darf*⁶⁰.

E per concludere, vogliamo sottolineare, ancora una volta, l' impegno dello scrittore nel difendere la posizione di dignità e di grandezza morale dell' uomo. Al di sopra di ogni presupposto culturale, Hermann Hesse ha creato una galleria di figure, nella caratterizzazione delle quali si avverte la tendenza a salvare i tesori più intimi della creatura umana.

Per questo, a differenza di Ferruccio Masini, che ha visto nell' opera di Hermann Hesse il tentativo, di stampo nietzschiano, di superare "il modello classico-umanistico in cui l' ideologia borghese aveva collocato il fondamento del suo mondo di valori"⁶¹, noi vi troviamo, invece, il messaggio di chi anela a vedere rinascere nella società contemporanea quei valori eterni che gli sembrano essere definitivamente cancellati. Di chi, in altre parole, intende esprimere e salvaguardare, con profondo amore, quell' ideale di uomo che appartiene alla più alta tradizione umanistica.

Università di Torino

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⁶⁰ HESSE 1964, pp. 418-419 ["Le mie opere sono nate tutte senza intenzioni, senza 'tendenze'. Ma se a posteriori vi cerco un significato comune, trovo proprio questo: dal "Camenzind" fino allo "Steppenwolf" e al "Josef Knecht" tutte possono essere interpretate come una difesa (e a volte anche come un' invocazione di soccorso) della personalità, dell' individuo. L' uomo singolo, unico, con le sue eredità e possibilità, le sue doti e le sue inclinazioni, è una cosa delicata, fragile, può avere bisogno di un difensore [...]. Poiché i miei lettori sentono che io non mi preoccupo né della distruzione degli ordinamenti e dei legami, senza i quali sarebbe impossibile la convivenza umana, né della divinizzazione del singolo, ma di una esistenza in cui regnino amore, bellezza e ordine di una convivenza, in cui l' uomo non diventi uno del gregge, ma possa serbare la dignità, la bellezza e la tragicità della sua unicità " [HESSE 1961, pp. 569-571].

⁶¹ La citazione di Ferruccio Masini si legge in PONZI, p. 124.

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SUMMARIES IN SLOVENE – POVZETKI V SLOVENŠČINI

UDK 929 Ludvik D.

Anton Janko

PROFESOR DR. DUŠAN LUDVIK (1914-2001) IN MEMORIAM

Članek je posvečen spominu profesorja dr. Dušana Ludvika (1914-2001), germanista, pesnika in prevajalca, ki je v letih 1954-1983 deloval na Oddelku za germanske jezike in književnosti Filozofske fakultete v Ljubljani. Poglavitno področje njegovega znanstvenega zanimanja je bila starejša nemška književnost in starejši nemški jezik, še posebej se je ukvarjal z zgodovino nemškega gledališča v Ljubljani, proučeval pa je tudi obiske tujih popotnih gledaliških skupin na Slovenskem. Ker je bil tudi sam pesnik (izdal je 4 samostojne pesniške zbirke) in odličen prevajalec Goetheja in nekaterih nemških viteških pesnikov, mu je bila blizu tudi prozodija. O tem je objavil dve pomembni razpravi v zbirki *Literarni leksikon*, ki ga izdaja SAZU. Kot profesor je dr. Dušan Ludvik merodajno prispeval k izobrazbi številnih generacij slovenskih germanistov.

UDK 821.111.09-1 Larkin P.

Jason Blake

O POEZIJI PHILIPA LARKINA

Kot izhodišče za svoje razpravljanje o poeziji Philipa Larkina in o pesnikovem odnosu do bralca avtor izbere domnevno grobo in navidez pesimistično pesem "This Be the Verse". Larkinove pesmi, ki so bralcu lahko dostopne, so napisane v vsakdanjem jeziku in so pesniku pridobile sloves "pesnika iz ljudstva" in tudi "malomeščanskega filistra". Toda navkljub vsej svoji "surovosti" je Larkinov način pisanja vedno kazal njegovo jasno zavedanje o distančnih vidikih modernizma. Drugače rečeno, Larkin se ni le zavedal sodobne pesniške tradicije, temveč je zavestno pisal v nasprotju s tistim pesniškim ustvarjanjem, ki ga je smatral kot elitistično umetnost. Ob koncu članka se

pisec povrne k omenjeni pesmi in preverja moralni pomen Larkinovega ironično trpkega stavka: "Get out early as you can, and don't have any kids yourself".

UDK 821.111(94).09 Flanagan R.

Mirko Jurak

SLOVENSKI IZSELJENCI V AVSTRALIJI V ROMANU RICHARDA
FLANAGANA *THE SOUND OF ONE HAND CLAPPING*

Jedro razprave predstavlja strukturna in tematska analiza romana avstralskega pisatelja Richarda Flanagana *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (*Zvok ploskanja ene roke*, 1997). Zgodba je osrediščena na prikaz življenja Sonje Buloh, hčerke slovenskih izseljencev, ki so prišli v Avstralijo leta 1954. Večina dogajanja je postavljena v leti 1989 in 1990, ko se junakinja znajde v hudi duševni stiski: njena mati je še v Sonjinem otroštvu napravila samomor, Sonja in oče sta kmalu nato prekinila stike, in njeno trenutno stanje ni rožnato, saj je izvedela, da je noseča. Ker ni pripravljena nadaljevati bežnega ljubezenskega razmerja, ji je najbližja misel na splav. Toda Flanagan optimistično sklene roman s Sonjinim zbližanjem z očetom in z otrokovim rojstvom. Ob analizi romana se avtor študije posluži informacij slovenskega zdravnika, psihiatra, ki je več let deloval med izseljenci v Melbournu in je dodobra spoznal tipične vzroke za psihične krize izseljencev. Nadalje opozori avtor študije na bogato Flanaganovo metaforiko in na razne literarne aluzije iz del avtorjev kot so, n.pr. Eugene O'Neill, John Keats, W. B. Yeats itn. V duhovnem smislu, se zdi, da je na Flanagan močno vplival indijski filozof Osho (= Bhagwan Shree Rajneshi, 1930-1990), ki je napisal meditacije o življenju z istim naslovom, kot ga je za svoj roman uporabil Richard Flanagan. Roman je vsekakor zanimiv tudi za slovenske bralce, saj odstira čustveno in duhovno življenje slovenskih izseljencev v Avstraliji.

UDK 792.02(41):821.111.09 Shakespeare W.

Igor Maver

»NOTHING WILL COME OF NOTHING«:
INTERVJU S SIROM RICHARDOM EYROM

V članku je predstavljen intervju s sirom Richardom Eyrom, dolgoletnim direktorjem The Royal National Theatra v Londonu in režiserjem leta 1997 uprizorjene postavitve tragedije Williama Shakespeara *Kralj Lear* v tem gledališču, ki je doživela tudi uspešno filmsko verzijo. Sir Richard je izčrpno in odkrito spregovoril o svojih režiserskih dilemah in procesu postavitve igre, iskanju primernih igralcev za posamezne vloge, vajah in končni uprizoritvi ter nekaterih ključnih scenah, ki jih je nekoliko po

svoje interpretiral, čeprav se je v osnovi trdno držal teksta in bolj klasičnega načina uprizoritve te znamenite Shakespearove tragedije.

UDK 821.111(94).03 Mansfield K.=163.6

Andrej Podbrežnik

KATHERINE MANSFIELD V SLOVENSKIH PREVODIH

Katherine Mansfield je v svojem kratkem življenju (1888-1923) ustvarila številne kratke zgodbe, ki se uvrščajo v sam vrh svetovne književnosti. Avtor študije poskuša ugotoviti, koliko je njeno delo znano slovenskim bralcem.

Prvi prevodi njenih zgodb so izšli v periodičnem tisku od leta 1958 dalje. Pisateljico in njeno delo je slovenskim bralcem najceloviteje predstavil Jože Udovič, ki je iz njenih zbirk izbral in prevedel osemindvajset zgodb ter jih leta 1963 izdal v knjigi *Katherine Mansfield: Družba v vrtu*. Prevodom je dodal tudi spremno besedo o pisateljici in njenem delu. Knjiga je bila na Slovenskem lepo sprejeta; o tem pričajo tudi zelo pozitivni odzivi slovenskih literarnih kritikov, ki so vsi hvalili tako pisateljčino kot tudi prevajalčevo mojstrstvo.

Potem pa Slovenci več kot dvajset let nismo dobili nobenega novega prevoda zgodb Katherine Mansfield. Šele leta 1988 je Katarina Mahnič s prevodom zgodbe „Ura petja“ opozorila na stoletnico pisateljčinega rojstva. Seveda pa je med zgodbami Katherine Mansfield še veliko takih, ki bi bile zanimive za slovenske bralce in bi jih obogatile s svojimi idejami in vtisi.

UDK 821.111(73).09 Frisbie R. D.

Nataša Potočnik

JUŽNI PACIFIK V DELIH ROBERTA DEANA FRISBIEJA

Robert Dean Frisbie (1896-1948) je eden izmed ameriških pisateljev, ki so živeli na Južnem Pacifiku in pisali o svojem življenju med domačini. Za časa svojega življenja, med leti 1929 in 1948, je izdal šest knjig. Frisbie se je rodil 16. aprila 1896 v Clevelandu, Ohio. Obiskoval je šolo Raja Yoga Academy v Kaliforniji, kasneje pa se je priključil vojski, a jo je moral zaradi zdravstvenih težav zapustiti. Po krajši novinarski karieri je Frisbie leta 1920 odpotoval na Tahiti.

Na Tahitiju je imel pisatelj velike načrte za pisanje, po štirih letih pa se je odpravil na Cookove otoke, kjer je preživel preostali del svojega življenja. Poročil se je z domačinko Ngatokoruo in si ustvaril družino. Družinska sreča mu je dajala navdih, da je pisal. Leta 1929 je v knjigi *The Book of Puka-Puka* izšlo 29 kratkih zgodb, ki pričajo o pisateljevem življenju med domačini na majhnem atolu Puka-Puka. Druga knjiga *My Tahiti* (1937) predstavlja avtorjeve spomine na življenje na Tahitiju. Po smrti

Frisbiejeve žene je pisatelj posvečal vso svojo skrb vzgoji svojih otrok. Kmalu pa je družina zaradi pisateljevih zdravstvenih problemov morala zapustiti atol Puka-Puka in se preseliti na otočje Samoa in kasneje na Rarotongo. Robert Dean Frisbie je umrl na Rarotongi novembra leta 1948.

Frisbiejev prispevek k literaturi Južnega Pacifika je velik, saj pisatelj s svojim preprostim jezikom, smislom za humor ter živimi opisi narave ter domačinov izjemno približa tamkajšnji svet ter življenje domačinov bralcem. Pisateljeva prva knjiga *The Book of Puka-Puka* je izšla v New Yorku leta 1929. Predstavlja avtorjevo najbolj priljubljeno in izvirno delo. Delo je sestavljeno iz kratkih zgodb, ki pričajo o življenju pisatelja na atolu Puka-Puka, na Cookovih otokih. V zgodbah se pisatelj izogiba ameriški in evropski civilizaciji in opeva samoto ter idilo Polinezije. Hkrati pa delo predstavlja portret Frisbieja samega in je kot takšno dnevnik, ki priča o njegovem vsakdanjem življenju. Knjiga je bogata z realističnimi opisi domačinov na atolu.

Druga knjiga Roberta Deana Frisbieja *My Tahiti* (1937) je prav tako knjiga spominov, ki je izšla v Bostonu. Sestavlja jo 30 kratkih zgodb o pisatelju in njegovemu življenju med domačini na Tahitiju. Delo sestavljajo avtobiografske zgodbe, saj se poleg življenja domačinov v njem zrcali še življenje pisatelja. Tudi tukaj je tako kot v delu *The Book of Puka-Puka* izrazil pisateljev smisel za humor ter živ opis domačinov, kar dopolnjuje opise idile na Tahitiju.

UDK 821.133.1.09 Claudel P.

Boštjan Marko Turk

TOMISTIČNA INSPIRACIJA V PETIH VELIKIH ODAH PAULA CLAUDELA

Pričujoča študija si prizadeva opozoriti na ontološko unijo, ki jo izkazuje Claudelov opus. To je tomistična unija, bit na delu, blažena harmonija, ki jo zvesto poustvarjajo tudi velike Ode. Želimo pokazati, da je sinteza bistvena in življenska in da je Claudelov tomizem lahkoten, saj sega celo na področje plesa, koder je v fuziji duše in telesa še posebej razviden. To pojmuje kot bistvo tomistične inspiracije pri Claudelu.

UDK 821.134.2(7/8).09 García Márquez G.

Stanislav Zimic

CALDERONOVSKO POJMOVANJE ČASTI V HISPANOAMERIŠKEM SVETU (S PRIMERI IZ DELA *CRÓNICA DE UNA MUERTE ANUNCIADA* GARCIE MÁRQUEZA)

Tema tega članka je brezčasovna, saj gre za problematiko koncepta časti v španskem svetu in literaturi. Avtor se osredotoča na delo Garcie Márqueza *Crónica de*

una muerte anunciada (*Kronika napovedane smrti*), v katerem pisatelj piše o konceptu časti v hispanoameriškem svetu. Pisec razprave skuša to problematiko obravnavati historično in hkrati poiskati njene globlje korenine v španskem svetu in v mišljenju ljudi ter posega par stoletij nazaj, v Zlato dobo španske književnosti (od srede 16. stoletja do srede 17. stoletja); predvsem išče primere pri Calderonu. Avtor članka misli, da je tema povsem aktualna, saj je vprašanje človekove časti tako rekoč brezčasovno.

UDK 821.112.2.09 Hesse H.

Renato Gendre

KONCEPT ČLOVEKA V DELIH HERMANNA HESSEJA

Bralcem je dobro znana zavzetost Hermanna Hesseja pri obrambi človekovega dostojanstva in njegove moralne veličine. Pisec pričujoče razprave pa še posebej poudarja, da Hesse v svojih delih nima predvsem namena, da bi presegel klasični humanistični okvir, temveč da bi obravnaval tisti ideal, ki pripada najvišji humanistični tradiciji.

