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The Price That Women in Renaissance Drama Pay for Taking Initiative: Isabella's Soliloquy in Act IV of *The Spanish Tragedy*

Jonathan S. Rebetz

Abstract

The article is a close reading of Isabella's soliloquy in act IV of *The Spanish Tragedy* by Thomas Kyd. Pointing at the difference between the role of women in Early Modern reality and their function in contemporary plays, it demonstrates the perversity of a society where women were regularly marginalized and where, even in theatre, their transgressions of the boundaries imposed on them by the patriarchal social apparatus led to extremely unfavourable repercussions. Isabella, emotionally crushed by the foul murder of her son, decides in her helplessness to take her own life. In a world dominated by men, she does not quietly accept her passive role, but works within its limitations to become a character that takes action, albeit action that ends her life. Before making the symbolic gesture of stabbing herself, she exclaims against the circumstances which drove her to it. Her speech can be seen as one of the climactic points of the play.

Keywords: Renaissance drama, Senecan tragedy, Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, patriarchy, soliloquy, suicide

INTRODUCTION

The Spanish Tragedy by Thomas Kyd is a play in the tradition of Senecan tragedy, and it is fairly loyal to its mother genre (Bevington 3). There are properties, however, that differentiate it from the prototypical Senecan play: it is meant to be staged; it disregards the unities of time, place, and action; and it brings the violence from behind the curtains into plain view. Violence itself is an important part of the revenge tragedy, a genre that *The Spanish Tragedy* initiated (Lamb 33–37), and in tandem with eloquent, powerful speeches written in perfect iambic pentameter, it resonates particularly strikingly. One such powerful speech can be found in the second scene of act IV of *The Spanish Tragedy*. Isabella, driven to despair by the foul murder of her son and her husband's seeming incompetence to revenge Horatio's death, decides to end her life. She goes to the scene of the original crime, the garden of her own house, takes her anger out on the arbour in the garden where her son was hanged, calls once more upon Hieronimo to pursue the deaths of Horatio's killers, and stabs herself in the chest. In her pre-suicide soliloquy, Isabella is equated to the arbour she destroys. The (double) perversity[1] of laying harm first upon her symbolic self, then upon her physical self, reflects the perversity of a society in which women seemingly had no power to act, despite their irrepressible impulse to do so.

THE VOICE OF WOMEN AND THE DUTY OF KINGS

Act IV is the last act of the play. Previously, the Portuguese Viceroy's son, Prince Balthazar, had led a rebellion for Portuguese independence, but his forces were defeated and he himself was taken prisoner by the oppressing nation. Lorenzo, the Spanish king's nephew, and Horatio, son of the Knight Marshal, dispute over who captured Balthazar. Lorenzo essentially takes credit for something he had no part in, but the King nevertheless gives half of the spoils of victory to him. Furthermore, he leaves Balthazar in Lorenzo's charge, which infuriates the real captor Horatio.

To complicate matters, Lorenzo's sister Bel-Imperia falls in love with Horatio (despite having previously loved his best friend Andrea, an officer who fell in battle under Balthazar's sword), and all the while, Balthazar himself is becoming enamoured with Bel-Imperia. When Lorenzo discovers Horatio and Bel-Imperia's romantic connection, he does not dawdle but immediately starts convincing the Portuguese heir to help him to get rid of Horatio. This goes in line with the Spanish king's decision that a marriage between Balthazar and Bel-imperia would

1 Suicide was at the time seen as an abhorrent act and a deadly sin (Steltzer 67–68).

be an excellent way to repair the peace with Portugal.[2] Lorenzo and Balthazar calculatingly murder Horatio, stabbing him and hanging him from an arbour in his family's garden. When Horatio's parents find him thus assassinated, his mother Isabella loses her mind. Even though her husband Hieronimo later learns the identity of their son's killers and even though he is the Knight Marshal, the executor of the law, he cannot find justice for Horatio. Sadly, even his high office is none compared to the authority of the King – the King himself, it must be underscored, being tied by blood to one of the responsible parties.

In the second scene of act IV, Isabella, disappointed with her husband and the world, decides to end her life and stabs herself in the chest. Her tragic if self-inflicted demise foreshadows the violence that is to follow, but also, and more importantly, sheds light on the helplessness of women in an aggressively male world. Renaissance women were treated legally and socially as inferior to men and had no obvious channel to voice their disagreement with this discriminatory order. Of course, "critiques of sexual inequality and tentative proposals for rectifying women's inferior social roles" were nascent in 17th-century Europe, and they had started to pave the long way to equality (Gwyneth Ross 276–77), but the average genteel Renaissance woman's voice was mainly restricted to her household, while the household was represented outwardly by the *pater familias*. As such, it was nearly impossible for a woman to become a renowned philosopher of womanhood, a humanist fighter for the feminist cause, an intellectual star of literary salons. Such women did exist, and their names are now famous,[3] but they are the brilliant exception to a rather unfair rule. Isabella of *The Spanish Tragedy* is unfortunately not one of them. She desperately has something to exclaim in a public forum but cannot not do so because of her situation as a woman. Wanting to express her tragic helplessness, her character turns to the audience with the most moving soliloquy of Kyd's tragic play.

Isabella begins her speech by expressing her impatience and frustration, exclaiming against the "monstrous homicides" (4.2.1). Homicides can either be the persons committing murder or the acts of murder themselves. The ambiguity in meaning makes Isabella denounce both at the same time, which is efficient and carries much rhetorical weight. The idea is that homicide is a monstrous deed, which makes anyone performing it monstrous by association. A great portion of Isabella's vocabulary, in fact, has several possible meanings; this makes her speech rich in allusion and metaphorical association. Line 2, for example, contains two graphically very similar words, *piety* and *pity*: "Since neither piety nor pity moves / The King to justice or compassion" (4.2.2–3). Both emotions are associated more with the feminine than with the masculine, and indeed in Isabella's eyes the King

2 Indeed, a morganatic marriage between Horatio and Bel-Imperia would be much less fortuitous.

3 Christine de Pizan, Mary More, Batsua Makin, Lucrezia Marinella, to list just four.

does not feel them, or is at least unmoved by them. The two near-homographs become truly illustrative when we look at them closely. According to the Oxford English Dictionary,[4] "piety" had two groups of meanings at the time when the play was written: one was related to "the quality of feeling or showing pity", while the other was related to devotion, as in the "faithfulness to the duty naturally owed to someone". The second definition adds a layer of meaning to what Isabella is conveying: it hints at the King's duty as the sovereign to be reverent to God, the source of his power, and, accordingly, to rule justly, punishing those who deserve to be punished. Since "pity" not only means "the disposition to mercy or compassion", but also "a ground or cause for pity", Isabella is implying that because the King is not acting compassionately despite having good cause to do so – in her mind, acting compassionately would mean finding and punishing Horatio's murderer – he is neglecting his divine duty.

Frustrated with the King's passivity, Isabella decides to act herself, and in doing so, she transgresses the boundaries of her traditional gender role. Most Renaissance scholars agree that it was untypical of women in Early Modern society to undertake operations beyond the domestic sphere (Camden; Fletcher; Rose). Biblical "evidence" in support of this hierarchy was often put forward,[5] mainly, but not exclusively, because it was difficult to argue against the Holy Scriptures. And even though *The Spanish Tragedy* in its entirety does not closely observe a Christian vision of the world – its eschatological crux essentially being a Classical pagan one (Aggeler 330) – orthodox beliefs nevertheless pervade the work. The orthodox patriarchal structure of Renaissance society meant that possibilities for women were very restricted: they had fewer legal rights, virtually no access to education, and no real professional opportunities. Their submission to male authority was regarded as a necessity and, as it was mentioned earlier, they were mostly limited to the confines of their household. If decision-making and taking up various forms of action were tasks dispensed to men, women were expected to wait for male authorization or, better yet, intervention. This had been the case ever since the Middle Ages gave way to the Renaissance and "the relations of the sexes were restructured to one of female dependency and male domination" (Kelly 20). Even though she was "in charge" of her house and household, the married woman was legally still *in potestate mariti*.[6] Such a subdued position was naturally a great source of frustration for powerful women, as can be seen in the example of Isabella.

4 All subsequent definitions of lexical items are taken from that source.

5 The commonest references were the story of Adam and Eve from Genesis (e.g. Gen 2:5–7 and Gen 2:15–24) and the letters of Saint Paul (e.g. Eph 5:22–30 and Col 3:18–19).

6 Before getting married, of course, she was under the authority of her father. The only women who did not have to answer to anyone in this manner and who enjoyed relative independence were widows.

ISABELLA'S ACTION AND ITS SYMBOLISM

Isabella of *The Spanish Tragedy* is torn between being an active and being a passive character. Working within the limitations of being a woman, she wants to "revenge [herself] upon [the] place / Where thus they murdered [her] beloved son" (4.2.4–5). Since on her own she is unable to prosecute the culprits legally or kill them in a duel (or some other form of physical confrontation),[7] the main object of her wrath becomes the garden arbour. One could imagine this arbour as "a bower or shady retreat, of which the sides and roof are formed by trees and shrubs closely planted or intertwined" or as "lattice-work covered with climbing shrubs and plants". Either explanation works within the context of this speech and play. The former is supported by the use of vocabulary in the passage, while the latter would be easier to build and use onstage.[8] The arbour reappears several times in the play and at this point of the narrative symbolically refers both to the past and to the future. Horatio was hanged from it, so it symbolizes him, the unfair circumstances of his death, and, through synecdoche, death itself.[9]

As for its future signification, it is when Isabella revisits the arbour that the reader gets a hint at what she is about to do. Even without the connection to the two previous deaths, one might suspect the development of the scene: an arbour, being an arch-like construction, adopts the symbolism of the arch; arches, looking somewhat like doors, are symbolic passageways, symbols of transition (O'Connell and Airey 10), and since transition in tragedy is seldom something other than death, the arbour is a foreshadowing of Isabella's suicide. It emphasizes Isabella's determination to take action, even if this means her simultaneous demise. The stage directions call for Isabella to cut down this arbour while she exclaims,

> Down with these branches and these loathsome boughs
> Of this unfortunate and fatal pine!
> Down with them, Isabella, rend them up. (4.2.6–8)

Then, in line 9, Isabella mentions burning "the roots from whence the rest is sprung". This directly refers to the roots of the growth on the arbour, but it is

7 As a woman she would not be educated at arms.

8 The arbour they used in the Renaissance production would likely have looked like a hybrid between the two kinds of arbours described above, but a question arises when talking about the staging of this particular scene. Would Isabella actually destroy the arbour onstage? Two arguments speak against this supposition: one is pecuniary (despite it being made of wood, building a new arbour for every performance would be simply too expensive and inefficient), while the other is dramaturgical (the noise of axing down the arbour would interfere with the gravitas of the words being said, possibly even drowning them out).

9 This symbol is enhanced when the arbour likely reappears as the gallows where Pendringano is executed.

also a metaphor later repeated in lines 35 and 36 that go: "And as I curse this tree from further fruit, / So shall my womb be cursèd for his sake." It is not hard to see that in both cases Isabella is making a metaphorical parallel between a woman and a fruit-bearing tree. In Latin, the word for tree, *arbor*,[10] is feminine because it gives birth to leaves and fruit.[11] Both women and trees are begetting entities, so to speak. Line 9 is a variation of this metaphor. It replaces (α_1) the tree and (β_1) its fruits by (α_2) the roots and (β_2) the parts of the tree that are not the roots but spring from the roots. Isabella sees herself as the roots that gave birth to Horatio, but more broadly, she identifies herself with the arbour in its entirety. This identification is at the very heart of her speech. By cursing and felling the arbour which has, she finds, complotted her misery, she is, in fact, attacking herself. With this desperate act she is pointing at the twistedness of the society that does not leave her any alternative ways of asserting that she is an active character.

A woman taking an active role in the action of the play is actually a crucial mechanic in Renaissance drama. In many plays of the period, "women […] seem continually to be evading what is expected of them" (Eisaman Maus and Bevington xxxvii), sometimes to a greater and sometimes to a minor extent. If Isabella does not exactly take action against the murderers of her son, she does not mourn in a closed chamber either. She will not be one of those grieving mothers whose loss has rendered them hopeless and inert, she will not passively pine away in silence and submission – she will do something, even if it is just symbolic. This break with social convention is not unique to her character. In Renaissance drama – as opposed to contemporary Early Modern reality – it is quite common for women to act contrary to the expectations of the misogynous society. By doing so, they rise above the mundane and often render themselves more interesting than their male counterparts (against whom they have, among other things, a numerical disadvantage[12]).

Even if one restricts oneself to *The Spanish Tragedy*, one can find another example of such female unconventionality. Bel-Imperia is in fact even more rebellious than Isabella. She constantly defies her male relations: first by taking a morganatic lover, then, after the former dies, by getting involved with his friend despite all interdictions. Following her involuntary betrothal to the Prince of Portugal, she ruins the wedding by first killing the Prince, then herself. In the context of Renaissance theatre in general, "play after play contains unforgettable

10 The Latin *arbor* is in fact not an etymological predecessor, but merely a distant cousin of the English *arbour*. The OED traces the origins of *arbour* to the Latin *herbarium*, a collection of grass and herbs. It is evident that the word has undergone great change of signification and form.

11 Grammatical gender in Latin is interestingly based partly on semantic criteria, which is relatively rare and does not hold true for languages that developed from Latin (cf. French *un* arbre).

12 For almost all English Renaissance plays it holds true that there are fewer female roles than there are male roles.

portraits of strong-minded, articulate, intelligent women [whose] very transgressiveness makes them dramatically interesting" (Eisaman Maus and Bevington xxxviii). In fact, their transgressions frequently prove decisive for the denouement. They themselves, however, are dealt with in the spirit of the time: one need only remember the fates of the Duchess in *The Duchess of Malfi* and Beatrice-Joanna in *The Changeling*, who "elude patriarchal control by joining themselves to servingmen […] and transgress both class and gender hierarchies" (Suzuki 43). They are severely punished for their guilt – guilt, which from today's perspective is dubious at best.

Returning to the soliloquy of Act IV, when Isabella enumerates the parts of a tree, this is a clear demonstration of her earnest wish to take action:

> I will not leave a root, a stalk, a tree,
> A bough, a branch, a blossom, nor a leaf,
> No, not an herb within this garden plot. (4.2.10–13)

After she has razed the arbour with the ground, she wants that piece of garden to stay forever empty and unproductive (again, she is playing with the double meaning of words, "fruitless" signifying both). Her wish is that the soil there remain barren and that "whosoever / imagines not to keep it unmanured," (4.2.14–15) be blissless. The unnatural stress in lines 14 and 15 makes for an eerie tone that goes very well with her curse: the traditional foot in Renaissance drama is an iamb, repeated five times, but lines 14 and 15 both begin with a trochee, and only then continue with four iambs. This breaks up the rhythm in a peculiar, cacophonous way. There is also a metaphor hidden in lines 14–16: just as Hieronimo is not tending to justice for their son, no one should take care of the garden.

Strong imagery follows to support this demand. All the senses are evoked: the rustling wind can be heard and felt, the unpleasant odours smelled, the swirling snakes seen. All will keep away from this ungodly place "for fear to be infect". The word *infect* means not only "tainted with disease", as from a snake bite, but also "morally corrupted". Isabella suggests that even by approaching, people could become contaminated with vice. They will therefore rather stand at a distance and solemnly discuss the importance of the unlucky garden plot. The plot is, of course, unlucky through association to Horatio. Isabella exclaims: "Ay, here he died, and here I him embrace. / See where his ghost solicits with his wounds / Revenge on her that should revenge his death!" (4.2.23–25). The use of the present tense in line 23 is meaningful. She says "embrace", not "embraced". She is not referring to scene 2.5, where she and Hieronimo found Horatio in the garden and discovered he was dead. The tense indicates that she is embracing Horatio as she speaks, although we know he is not there anymore. Horatio is on a different metaphysical

plane, but she can nonetheless see him. Because she is so close to death herself, the boundaries between this world and the other are blurred for her, so she sees Horatio's ghost and reads in his wounds a cry for vengeance – vengeance that she as a woman sadly cannot bring to fruition.

Isabella then hails Hieronimo, declaring that "sorrow and despair hath cited [her] to hear Horatio plead with Rhadamanth" (4.2.27–28). Her careful use of law-specific vocabulary in lines 22–27 is very important. She says that Horatio's ghost *solicits,* the personified Sorrow and Despair *cite,* and Horatio himself *pleads.* These evocations of the judiciary process put her – in anachronistic terms, of course – in the middle of a courtroom, where she, too, is on trial. She is being accused of not avenging Horatio's death, although this accusation is clearly unfair. Hieronimo is the male character, he is the one with administrative power, he is the one with the ability to administer justice, he is the one who can make himself heard outside the sphere of his household. Alas, he does not do so because he is too afraid of the king. Not acting despite having the ability to act, he is failing their son more than Isabella is failing him by committing suicide. It is no wonder Isabella chides Hieronimo for this with her final words:

> Make haste, Hieronimo, to hold excused
> Thy negligence in pursuit of their deaths
> Whose hateful wroth bereaved [Horatio] of his breath.
> Ah, nay thou dost delay their deaths,
> Forgives the murderers of thy noble son,
> And none but I bestir me – to no end. (4.2.29–34)

CONCLUSION

Isabella – despite her passive role as a woman and even though it was ultimately to no avail – still did more than the (supposedly) active male Hieronimo. With a terrifying symbolic gesture she showed that the murder of her son remained unpunished. Her misplaced retribution through self-sacrifice speaks strongly of the time's societal structure: it points out the inability of women to voice their grievances, help themselves, take action into their own hands, and it stresses their reliance on men to act in their stead. In this light, Isabella's son's solicitation for her to do something – which is of course only a figment of her grief-struck imagination – is unfair. Horatio pressures Isabella into action, knowing perfectly well she cannot act.

As the close reading of this passage has proved, Isabella is a hapless victim of a world dominated by male violence, forced to destroy herself because of the sins of others. Nevertheless, what she does can readily be described as active and

dynamic, even if her actions fall somewhat short of Bel-Imperia's. But what unites both is the headlong termination of their earthly existence, which comes hand in hand with their transgression of gender boundaries and links them to other "disorderly" women in Renaissance drama. Speaking in more general terms, *The Spanish Tragedy* reveals the paradox of women's marginalization in contemporary reality and their prominence in dramatic works, even if that prominence always comes at an excessively high price.

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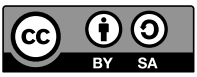

Cena, ki jo morajo ženske v renesančni drami plačati, če prevzamejo pobudo: Izabelin samogovor v IV. dejanju *Španske tragedije*

Prispevek je poglobljena analiza Izabelinega samogovora v IV. dejanju *Španske tragedije* Thomasa Kyda. Članek pokaže razkorak med podrejeno vlogo žensk v renesančni dobi in njihovo pomembno funkcijo v dramskih delih tistega časa ter obelodani perveznost družbe, kjer so bile ženske marginalizirane in kjer je celo v dramatiki vsakršna prestopitev mej, ki jim jih je določil patriarhat, imela zanje izjemno neugodne posledice. Izabela, ki jo čustveno grudi pokvarjeni umor njenega sina, se v svoji nemoči odloči, da si bo vzela življenje. V svetu, ki ga vodijo moški, glasno zavrne svojo predpisano pasivno vlogo in znotraj njenih omejitev najde dejanje, ki bo vsaj na simbolični ravni aktivno. Preden se zabode, vzklikne proti okoliščinam, ki ji vežejo roke in so jo do tega pripeljale. Njen samogovor je ena klimaktičnih točk dramskega dela.

Ključne besede: renesančna dramatika, seneška tragedija, Thomas Kyd, *Španska tragedija*, patriarhat, samogovor, samomor

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James McAuley's Verse Collection *Music Late At Night: Poems 1970-1973* and Georg Trakl's Poetry

Igor Maver

Abstract

The article discusses James McAuley's translations of the poems by the Austrian poet Georg Trakl (1887-1914), as well as the latter's influence on McAuley's own late verse in *Music Late at Night: Poems 1970-1973*. This is especially true of Trakl's collection of verse *Music in the Mirabell Garden* translated by McAuley. Some of James McAuley's early and later work also bears an indelible stamp of Trakl's poetry.

Keywords: James McAuley, Georg Trakl, Australian poetry

MUSIC IN THE MIRABELL GARDEN

James McAuley's posthumously published book of Georg Trakl's poems, rendered in his superb English translations and entitled *Music in the Mirabell Garden: Georg Trakl* (Trakl 1982), was published six years after the death of this acclaimed Australian poet. The 'Tasmanian' poet Gwen Harwood contributed the Introduction, Larry Sitsky supplied the music score for the accompanying book in a double set, "A song cycle for soprano and eight players", John Olsen provided the drawings, and John Winter did the editing, printing and design. John Winter's poem "Printing James McAuley during the Falklands War" (Winter 1989), another important point of reference published in the book, consists solely of three stanzas, of which the first one gives a description of his rather monotonous routine of printing that remains curiously indifferent to everything else that may happen around it, including the war. The war for the Falkland Islands between the United Kingdom and Argentina in the South Atlantic took place in the middle of 1982:

> Your prose moves neither
> Left nor right, but drives
> Straight down the page ...

In the middle of the second stanza, however, there suddenly emerges a violent intrusion of contemporary events, whereby the previous monotony is shattered, creating a strong startling effect, art does seem to make a difference after all.

> Ravens fly blood-splashed and
> Stick cracked beaks through crazed
> Heads of children gone silly
> As geese on an Atlantic green.
>
> Your Trakl holds steady –
> Scarce a change in the copy –
> But tells the horror in order
> As in disorder too.

The ravens that "fly blood-splashed", and which are so frequent in Trakl's poetry, metaphorically stand for the military (British and Argentinian airplanes, raiding the Falklands and each other's navy). "Geese on an Atlantic green" could be interpreted as airplanes and soldiers-parachuters in their khaki uniforms being dropped from the sky. Still, Winter's subtle poetic puns and *double-entendres* in this extract are perhaps harder to grasp. What the poet must also have had in mind were John Olsen's drawings in *Music in the Mirabell Garden,* depicting Trakl's imagined phantasmagoric and nightmarish atmosphere, where ravens

literally "stick cracked beaks trough crazed / Heads of children". The juxtaposition of the two situations is not without foundation: Trakl's vision was haunted by the monstrosities of the Great War, whereas Winter feels uneasy today, about the then waged Falkland War, which has been extremely rarely reflected upon in poetry. It seems as if the poet feels that McAuley's translations of Georg Trakl's lyric reflect a constant *penchant* for horror in human nature, by telling "the horror in order as in disorder too". Nevertheless, the final stanza brings in a more promising and optimistic tone, as it suggests a possible way out. The solution offered is art, however unconclusive its role may be in influencing and changing real life:

> It is time to put the press to bed.
> Tomorrow, with platen, ink damped paper,
> Black art in three dimensions,
> We'll try to set things right.

As mentioned earlier, the Australian composer Larry Sitsky completed the music score for *Music in the Mirabell Garden* in December 1977, and it should be noted that it was commissioned by the German Goethe Institute in Australia. A separate book of music sheets, the photocopies of Sitsky's manuscript, thus accompanies the translations. Sitsky makes a specific point in the Prefatory Note by saying that "verbal, visual and auditory effects were intended to merge". His Programme Note gives a good insight into the genesis of the book:

> The translations from Georg Trakl are by the eminent Australian poet James McAuley; only a few short months before McAuley's death, I corresponded with the poet, and outlined my desire to see some of his Trakl translations. McAuley not only sent me a great number of these translations but also a long text of a special broadcast he had prepared dealing with Trakl, a poet with whom he closely identified for many years. My librettist, Gwen Harwood, considers these translations to be among the best available of Trakl in the English language.

Indeed, Sitsky and Harwood have had a long-standing collaboration in musical projects. As Harwood points out in the Introduction, Sitsky's first opera from 1965 was modelled on the eponymous Edgar Allan Poe's horror story and is titled *The Fall of the House of Usher* (the early Trakl's prose is likewise very much reminiscent of Poe), while the second one was titled *Lenz* (1970), describing "the breakdown of a poet's mind".

Affinities between Trakl and Sitsky are numerous. Gwen Harwood in the Introduction gives a short biography of Trakl in his native Salzburg, including the incestuous relationship with his younger sister Margarete (James McAuley in his essay on Trakl uses the diminutive name Gretl (McAuley 1975). Both Grete and

Georg were throughout their lives persecuted by the fear of madness, they were said to have been involved in an incestuous relationship in which she was not strong enough to resist and committed suicide, but Trakl's family life, including his mother and his much-indebted father, was extremely complicated. The anguished and isolated Trakl, who had very early taken refuge in drugs and alcohol, was in 1914 called up as a reserve officer and a war pharmacist at the Galicia front during World War One. Overcome by the grief of his sister's death and the victims of the battle of Grödek, which he so movingly depicted in his poem "Grödek", he was taken to a military hospital in Cracow mentally disturbed, and there he poisoned himself at the age of 27. Parallel traits can certainly be drawn between him and the English 'Trench' Poets, who describe the atrocities of French battlegrounds and their battle trenches.

James McAuley himself commented on the reasons for being attracted to Trakl' s sometimes difficult and hermetic poetry laden with despair. It was his "intense longing for redemption" that drew him to Trakl, McAuley admits (cf. Harwood), quoting his own poem "The Tomb of Heracles":

> Look, cranes still know their path through empty air;
> For them their world is neither soon nor late;
> But ours is eaten hollow with despair.

The main feature that drew McAuley to Trakl, then, was the image of the world as decay, death and utmost despair, although the *fons et origo* of these, of course, is to be looked for elsewhere with both poets. Harwood (1982) is also quite right in emphasizing Trakl's "image-filled expressionist poetry", in which images interact as colours in a painting often resulting in strong synesthetic effects. The Symbolist, later even Expressionist and above all Romantic-Decadent quality of both Trakl's and the late verse by McAuley is one of the common features of both. McAuley's indebtedness to Trakl's usage of the so-called "colour-language" (Macainsh 1985) is discussed here, as well as McAuley's translations partly in a thematic comparison with their German originals (see Macainsh 1984). McAuley's poetic response to Trakl's poetry is examined as reflected in McAuley's collection *Music Late at Night: Poems 1970–1973,* published posthumously in December 1976, two months after the poet's death (McAuley 1976).

MCAULEY'S VERSE SYMBOLISM AND DECADENCE

Carmel Gaffney examined Trakl' s impact on McAuley's later poetry and finds that contrasts rather than similarities are, in fact, more obvious between them (Gaffney 1976). She further maintains that "both are also aware of the divided

soul caught helplessly between despair and affirmation" (Gaffney 1976, 407). True, Trakl and McAuley are good examples of divided "Romantic souls in agony". Important issues were raised by Noel Macainsh, namely that McAuley's later verse can be directly linked with his early poems, when the poet was very much under the influence of two other Austrian poets: Rainer Maria Rilke and Stefan George (Macainsh 1985, 331). This is true of McAuley's short statements, pauses that separate the description of individual impressions and especially the adoption of George's punctuation, i. e. full-stops between the enumerated or juxtaposed impressions from the natural landscape: "The late sky clears ... wet pavements shine ..." (McAuley 1975, 204). Macainsh points out that McAuley was fully aware of this connection:

> It seems that in the last decade I have some full circle back to the kind of poem I began with, but with a greater depth of experience which has brought me closer to fulfilling the persistent desire to write poems that are lucid and mysterious, gracefully simple, but full of secrets, …. (Ibidem.)

James McAuley's early poems were since 1935 until 1938 for the most part published in the University of Sydney literary magazine *Hermes.* Apart from the parallels on the simply formal level, one can notice a certain continuation as far as themes and the mood of the poems are concerned. By 1936 the themes of woeful passion, love and death emerged in his verse, showing strong, sombre influences of the French Symbolists in which despair is also one of the basic traits as in *Music Late at Night: Poems 1970-1973* (1976), not to forget the visible use of symbolic elements, coupled with subtle colour language. The last line in French in McAuley's "Broken Incantation" (1936), for example, is taken from Jean Moréas's famous poem "Nevermore":

> (Blood, blood on the lips and on the eyes,
> Blood in the heart in the brain!)
> Come away, come away, my beloved,
> For the springtime is over and gone
> *Et l'hiver fauche sur les landes.* (McAuley qtd in Coleman 1980, 7)

Not only can the link between the Symbolists (Paul Verlaine, Arthur Rimbaud) and James McAuley be drawn along these lines, for the Decadent late Romantics, too, represented a significant source for the young and the old McAuley. In 1938 he wrote an MA thesis on the Symbolist poets and was very much familiar with the French Decadent poets, especially Charles Baudelaire, on whom McAuley modelled some of his early works: "*Ange Plein de Gaîté*" from 1938, for example, takes its theme from *Les Fleurs du Mal,* No. XLV, from Baudelaire's poem "Réversibilité".

In a book on McAuley, Leonie Kramer gives a historiography of his interest in Trakl. McAuley translated his first poem "Winter Nightfall" ("*Ein Winterabend*") in 1958 (Kramer 1988, xviii), returning to him only in 1970, saying that Trakl had produced "perhaps the finest poetry written in our century" (Ibidem.). Kramer comments upon McAuley's essay "The Poetry of Georg Trakl", which includes several translated poems and where McAuley draws a clear distinction between Trakl's early lyrical pieces and the later Expressionist poems, echoing a very personal, expressive, clearly subjective and distorted vision of reality inspiring pain and fear of the imminent Great War, the suffering and casualties it brought, and its aftermath. Although Trakl wrote over one hundred poems, McAuley was solely interested in the lyrical ones. It should be emphasized that McAuley's remark about Trakl's Decadence mostly eluded critical reviews of McAuley's work. He himself writes that in Georg Trakl's work "traces of the stage properties of early twentieth-century literary Decadence linger here and there" (McAuley 1975, 202). The Decadent and Symbolist quality most certainly helped to incite McAuley to translate the Austrian poet from Salzburg, considering Art as a contemplative refuge from the world of strife and pain. As a result of the desire for an artistic haven, Symbolist poetry showed a keen sense of mortality and a sense of the malign power of sexuality.

MUSIC LATE AT NIGHT: POEMS 1970-1973

Looking closely at James McAuley's poems from *Music Late at Night: Poems 1970–1973* (McAuley 1976) in terms of the affiliations it has with Trakl's poems in McAuley's translation from *Music in the Mirabell Garden* (McAuley 1982), there are some distinct characteristics of poetic diction hold true for both poets. In the opening poem "World on Sunday" there are an irregular but still very persistent use of rhyme, short statements, powerful Imagist imagery with Impressionist undertones, and a recurrent use of the image of the moon set against the ever-changing sky, both taking on explicitly symbolic significance:

> Brown lilac, roses filled with rain;
> Hayfever streaming off mown grass ...
> Disordered beds where we have lain;
> Life and death offered at Mass; ...
> It isn't easy to explain.
> I turn back from the sunset stain.
> A huge moon yellow like dull brass
> Lengthens my shadow down the lane.
>
> *(Music Late at Night* 3)

A huge moon, "yellow like dull brass", bears an ominous significance for the poet, "lengthening his shadow" and thus reducing his existence from a real human being to a shadow. The reference to the "sunset stain" is interesting, for the common stock metaphor from the Romantic arsenal is turned upside down. Generally pleasant is, for the speaker, the "stain" of Man's mortality, a sight one should turn away from. On the other hand, the simile used for comparing the moon to dull brass is not all that startling, but its recurrent use makes it a symbol in the collection.

"Nocturne" is a beautifully rendered Impressionist depiction of the melancholic feeling with the absent poetic *persona*. This time the setting is clearly set in Australia, probably McAuley's Tasmania. It should be said that McAuley tried to balance out the European/Salzburg settings of the poems in the discussed collection by moving freely between the Salzburg and Australian locales, to no detriment of the poems themselves. Moreover, this *procédé* highlights the 'Mirabell' poems much more effectively against the Australian pieces. We see the gull fly and casuarinas sigh, while the omnipresent moon is, once again, "congealed in cloud", where it hangs motionless:

> A gull flies low across the darkening bay.
> Along the shore the casuarinas sigh.
> Resentful plovers give their ratcheting cry
> From the mown field scattered with bales of hay.
> The world sinks out of sight.
> The moon congealed
> In cloud seems motionless.
> The air is still.
>
> *(Music Late at Night* 5)

In the poem "Private Devotions" we see the poet's characteristic treatment of the moon. The grey clouds are still there, but it is essential to note the poet's possible reference to Percy Bysshe Shelley and his short lyrical "The Waning Moon", which by extension also determines the poet's own stance:

> Gathered starlings chatter loud
> In the late night; the clocktower chimes;
> Ghostly-pale a full moon climbs
> Out of the folds of linen cloud.
>
> *(Music Late at Night* 6)

> And like a dying lady, lean and pale,
> Who tatters forth, wrapped in a gauzy veil,
> Out of her chamber, led by the insane
> And feeble wanderings of her fading brain,

The moon arose up in the murky East,
A white and shapeless mass -
(Percy Bysshe Shelley,
"The Waning Moon", 1961)

The "ghostly-pale" moon thus in both cases "climbs out of her chamber", shrouded in her "gauzy veil". This is perhaps a rather unexpected image for McAuley, but its recurrent use in the collection elevates to the stature of a symbol. It can be said it stands for a hypersensitive, isolated and lonely Romantic poet, shunned by society at large because of his difference, and as a result of this, overtaken by despair. We would contend that such symbolism probably entitles us to place McAuley, regardless of other labels, also among the Neo-Romantics, particularly in his later stage. However, his Romantic quality is enriched with the elements of Symbolism, and the echoes of Decadence. It is an interesting mixture indeed, and a very successful one, too.

In "Autumn Images" clouds fill the enormous sky, whereas in the poem "Madonna" the sky "runs cracks of jagged glare". Its oppressive presence is very much reminiscent of Baudelaire's *le ciel qui pèse comme un couvercle* (Baudelaire 1963). The poem "Winter Drive", probably written by McAuley upon learning about the death of the Australian poet Kenneth Slessor (Coleman 1980, 108), is of seminal importance for this line of analysis, as well as a genuine lyrical neo-Romantic gem:

Fallow fields, dark pewter sky,
Steady light on the wet plain,
Evening falls in freezing rain
With a promise and a lie.
Promise in the leaden sky,
In the leaden fields' bleak shine,
In the slate vats full of wine,
In the knowledge that we die.
But the lie is in the soul,
And it rots the world we have.
Till there's nothing left to save.
Dying world and deadened sky,
Traffic roars beyond control.
What is left to make us try?
(*Music Late at Night* 8)

The final verse of the first stanza clearly reveals McAuley's ambivalent attitude towards despair, subsumed in the image of rotting decay, which makes it different from Georg Trakl's all-embracing pessimism. McAuley, unlike Trakl, always allows for at least a spark of hope, "a promise", although he accepts the inevitability

of a "lie". Contrary to what one would expect, the poet still finds promise in the "leaden sky", regardless of his awareness that everybody must die. This leads us to believe that his attitude to death is rather one of stoical acceptance, very much in the sense of Michel de Montaigne's thoughts on death, suggesting that everyone should get used to the idea of dying (cf. Montaigne's essay "Sur la Mort", *Essais).* The double aspect and consequent interchangeability of hope and despair is in keeping with McAuley's Romantic strain, attributing the "promise" to the natural element, the sky and the landscape, however leaden they may seem. The root of all evil, the "lie", is in his view to be found in the *condition humaine* of every single individuum. To die "rots the world we have" and the poet sees no immediate solution to this state. The concluding ontological question into the purpose of Man's existence thus remains merely on the rhetorical level. As it will be shown later, Trakl's attitude is different in so far as there is no trace of hope, for Trakl is caught in the impasse of the capitalized Despair and Decay, both being reflected in the landscape of his *Weltschmerz* that cannot be individualized.

Geographical references are, on the other hand, perfectly clear in the poem "In the Gardens", which was written during James McAuley's visit to Trakl's native Salzburg in 1973. The Mirabell castle and park (gardens) are set in the heart of the old town of Salzburg, not far from Trakl' s home, now turned into a museum boasting exquisite eighteenth-century monuments from the Salzburg archi-episcopal reign, with the citadel crowning the city of spires and turrets. The gardens with its rose garden, orangerie (now a palm house) and statues (of dwarves), fountains reflect the French-type of a symmetrical *jardin à la française* and represent a symbol of power and glory in "a fearful symmetry" of the Baroque period of Prince-Archbishops: the garden was built in 1606 by Dietrich Wolf. The speaker of the poem "In the Gardens" practically follows in Trakl's "footprints," brooding over the transcendence of the vision of the nymph's "blank eyes", so much reminiscent of Trakl's "faun" who looks "with dead eyes after / Shadows that glide into the dark":

> Softly gleams the lily-pond.
> A late bee hovers round the rose. And the
> gentle nymph's blank eyes Seem to seek
> and see beyond
> The park, the city, and the skies.
> *(Music Late at Night* 10)

> Ancestral marble has gone grey.
> A birdflight wavers into space.
> A faun looks with dead eyes after
> Shadows that glide into the dark.
> (Georg Trakl, "Music in the Mirabell Garden")

In the next poem of the collection *Music Late at Night,* "Watercolour," we are suddenly transposed back to an unmistakably Tasmanian setting in which we find McAuley's masterly use of the colour-language. He juxtaposes the Mirabell Garden and a familiar garden from back home in Tasmania, growing "in the rock pools", where "over mussel-beds the tide flows". The reader notices the various shades of that are attributed to Australian setting, with the ever-present symbol of the moon rising in "darker blue". The brightness of typical Australian light and sharp contrasts that can be seen in Australian water-colour art and painting are set in contradistinction to the "soft gleam" of the Mirabell pond in Salzburg:

> The sky, the bay, are filled with blue.
> In the rock pools a garden grows.
> Over mussel-beds the tide flows.
> A cormorant sinks in the blue ...
> What colours wink in the wet sand -
> Sparkles of violet, green and blue?
> Above a headland of dark pines
> A white sea-eagle holds the view.
> Whatever it was we thought we knew
> Grows hazy as the sun declines.
> The moon comes up in darker blue.
> *(Music Late at Night* 11)

"Morning Voluntary" introduces the atmosphere of snow, cloudy skies and a generally cold atmosphere, of which perhaps "very little can indeed be said":

> Clouds have a brown look of snow.
> Cat comes limping from the shed.
> The white birch with arms outspread,
> Having changed its wealth for gold,
> Drifts it down into the mould.
> Stalky vines glow darker red ...
> Very little can be said.
> Cold inconstant breezes blow.
> Starlings comment in a row.
> Spots of black invade the red.
> *(Music Late at Night* 12)

Leonie Kramer maintains that the colours in McAuley's poems frequently assume a liturgical significance (Kramer 1988, xxv), which can be sustained with McAuley's own statement about the colour-language and synesthesia in Trakl's poems:

> In Trakl's world, colours take on meanings. The colours of life tend to become tainted and suffused with evil suggestions: for example red, the red of blood, the red of the red blouses of girls, has often a negative value. So too has yellow. The good colours are those of heaven: the blue and gold of the sky and the sun are named as God's colours. But also white, the cold glitter of stars, or the white of bloodless flesh or ghosts, often implies a purity superior to the colours of life. (McAuley, 1975, 221)

In a Structuralist analysis Noel Macainsh, however, points out that colour is in this McAuley's collection the most significant metaphoric feature and device:

> The function of colours in the late poems is not fulfilled simply in suggestions of sense impressions but also in their prompting of reflection. Colours, which are themselves general impressions, gain specific meaning from their context, from their empirical origin. (Macainsh 1985, 339)

Another possible explanation of the colour-language in "Morning Voluntary" can be given. In this poem there are three basic colours: white, identified with coldness of snow and clouds, thus representing a negative value in terms of hostile natural phenomena; red, likened to the elemental life force, energy and *élan,* which can, along with its creative impetus also be ultimately considered destructive for Man; and black, which seems to be the very distillation of the poeticizing subject's despair. How are we, then, to interpret the crucial and mysterious statement "Spots of black invade the red?" In the physical landscape red leaves get black autumnal spots, but the reference is also to the poet's cancer (black) infected blood (red). In the landscape of the mind, black is one aspect of his conscience, eating into his vital forces ("red spots"), massively destroying them and leaving behind but a "decay". In Bergsonian terms one could even draw a parallel between the clash of the "deep" and "surface" ego within the poet's mind, as it can be found, for example, in Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* or in the colour red-black imagery of Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter.* In any case, it is for each reader to project his own associations into the full understanding of the usage of colours in McAuley's discussed later verse, which, in turn, depends largely on the civilization and cultural background horizon of the reader and the significance they ascribe to each individual colour.

"Motel, Burnie" brings the reader back to Tasmania again, as well as "Saturday Morning," in which he introduces the adjective "sodden". The same *epitheton ornans* is employed in the next poem, "In Northern Tasmania", which depicts a pastoral idyll disturbed by an ominous "silent raven", symbolizing the poet's undercurrent of despair. The image of a raven is also used in "Saturday Morning", and one unfortunately gets the impression that it is, like the adjective "sodden", used

all too frequently, in one poem after another. Still, the impression and sensibility of these poems is again a very Romantic one.

The concluding poems in *Music Late at Night: Poems 1970–1973* are the record of James McAuley's trip to Salzburg, a veritable pilgrimage to Trakl's hometown. In his essay on Trakl he, for example, gives us direct references to the places, statues and the like he was not able to find while in Salzburg in 1973 (McAuley 1975, 222). The imagery used before is in these poems enriched by auditory effects. The church bell chimes in Trakl's and McAuley's poetry signify sadness (cf. also Rowe 2000), *Weltschmerz*, supposedly mourning, without precisely indicating for whom the Donne-like tolling of the bells is intended. The poem "Trakl: Salzburg II. In the Mirabell Garden" is thus directly inspired by Trakl, describing rather the "tableaux of lust and violence" in a grey Baroque marble, with the indispensable ominous bell-strokes that "pulse the air". The description of the graves, mortality and its intimations and the waning flowers in the churchyard ("Trakl: Salzburg III. In a Village Churchyard") unequivocally affiliates McAuley's poem to Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," which also shows McAuley's (pre)Romantic bent:

> Their graves have holy-water stoups, for prayer;
> And little lamps they try to keep alight
> To make the bed of darkness faintly bright;
> And flowers of course, renewed with constant care.
>
> (*Music Late at Night* 19)

The title poem of the collection (and the last one "Autumn on the Wachau") *Music Late at Night: Poems 1970–1973* bears a clearly Traklean stamp: the shades of black, white and red colours, decay, "the soulless music" of bells and clouds of grief and despair. The poet evidently wrote this poem in the small hours, when even the moon "sails cold" and the empty streets wait for the new day to commence, for a new beginning. But this time there will be no second chance, because the despair is just too overpowering, "the rigid silence is complete". The music that the speaker of the poem 'hears' in the Mirabell Gardens is the music of silence, late at night, announcing the arrival of the end, death, and strongly reflecting McAuley's knowledge of his incurable disease of which he died only three years later:

> Black gashes in white bark.
> The gate is clouded with spicy prunus flowers.
> The moon sails cold through the small hours.
> The helpless heart says, hold and wait. ...
> Again that soundless music: a taut string,

> Burdened unbearably with grief
> That smiles acceptance of despair.
> *(Music Late at Night* 23)

Comparing Georg Trakl's poems from the book of James McAuley's translations *Music in the Mirabell Garden* with McAuley' *Music Late at Night,* only the most obvious similarities shall be pointed out as regards the use of imagery and themes, most of which are also contained in McAuley's own essay on Trakl. He devoted more than one page in the essay to Trakl's fine and probably best known poem "Grödek", speaking in greater detail about the significance of red colour:

> The scene is the battlefield named in the title, with the sound of the guns, the cries of the wounded and dying, the day ending in a red sunset like the gathered blood of the slain. Night falls, the moonlight and stars appear over the battlefield; in the darkness the poet's sister appears to welcome the souls of the heroes who died in battle. (McAuley 206)

The imagery of the poem is, in fact, quite Imagistic, in its shocking concreteness, reminding us of similar *procédés* used by the American writer Stephen Crane, a precursor of Imagism in prose in *The Red Badge of Courage:*

> A darker sun; night embraces
> Dying warriors, the wild complaint
> Of their broken mouths.
>
> Yet quietly there gathers in the pasture-ground
> Red cloud, in which dwells an angry god,
> Red blood gathers, lunar coolness.
> All roads lead into black corruption.
>
> *(Music Late at Night* 46)

The Romantic convention of using a solitary figure walking in the natural landscape in a "pensive mood", as Wordsworth would have it, with all the senses absorbing the tiniest details, is common to both Trakl and McAuley. The poems are set in autumn and at dusk, with a cold wind blowing in a cloudy, "leaden" sky where only a "ghostly-pale" moon can occasionally be discerned. Where Trakl uses a blackbird, McAuley has a raven. Trakl's original well-known poem "Music in the Mirabell" (Trakl 1982), like most of McAuley's poems, shows the effacement of a *persona,* whereas the meaning is conveyed to the reader, not through statements, but rather through descriptions and musical score of the words. It can be seen on a marble table (*Trakl Gedichttafel*) in the Mirabell garden itself, paying homage to this site that Trakl and later McAuley visited, as well as many other poet-hunters

and art pilgrims: it was the central poem for McAuley late verse and the one that gave rise to his Trakl translations.

"Musik im Mirabell"

Ein Brunnen singt. Die Wolken stehn
Im klaren Blau, die weißen, zarten.
Bedächtig stille Menschen gehn
Am Abend durch den alten Garten.

Der Ahnen Marmor ist ergraut.
Ein Vogelzug streift in die Weiten.
Ein Faun mit toten Augen schaut
Nach Schatten, die ins Dunkel gleiten.

Das Laub fällt rot vom alten Baum
Und kreist herein durchs offne Fenster.
Ein Feuerschein glüht auf im Raum
Und malet trübe Angstgespenster.

Ein weißer Fremdling tritt ins Haus.
Ein Hund stürzt durch verfallene Gänge.
Die Magd löscht eine Lampe aus,
Das Ohr hört nachts Sonatenklänge.
(Georg Trakl, 1912)

Trakl's poem "Suburb in the Föhn" clearly shows his Romantic "exoticized" nature and disposition. For one thing, he introduces elements of exoticism and downright orientalism, and a wish to escape to far-away, unknown places, such as, for example, the land with the "rose-coloured mosques". The poet notices in the afternoon sky the beams of piercing sunrays, emerging through a sporadic cloud, as on the paintings by the old Flemish painters. In his daydreaming he imagines them bringing a different kind of life. We sense a "Romantic" and downright orientalist nostalgia for the mediaeval past in "fine carriages, gallant horsemen". The use of colours here possibly suggests the influence of Arthur Rimbaud, while a similar escapist theme can be found also in Trakl' s poem "Decay" ("Thus over clouds I follow those far journeys"):

Out of clouds shimmering avenues emerge,
Complete with fine carriages, gallant horsemen.
The one sees a ship run aground against cliffs,
And often there are rose-coloured mosques.
(Music in the Mirabell Garden 36)

An example of Trakl's Decadent streak, which has surprisingly passed almost unnoticed by the critics, is the "Farm-girl". It is reminiscent of Baudelaire's depiction of the beautiful and, at the same time, rotting aspects of an object, but even more so of E. A. Poe's iconographic usage of the death of a young, beautiful woman (cf. "Annabell Lee"). The figure of the farm-girl thus appears in striking contradictions: youth – death and beauty – rotting decay. The distant tinkle of a bell, similarly to McAuley's poems, indicates the state of mourning, while the originally blue sky gets covered by "black cloths", as the farm-girl's death becomes imminent. The imagery of decay used is Imagist and Decadent again, shocking but effective indeed: her mouth is compared to a wound, buzzing with flies, which brings Baudelaire to mind ("*Une Charogne*", A Carrion), depicting putrefication (Baudelaire 1963, 44-46):

> And the sky looked at the superb carcass
> Like a flower blossoming.
> The smell was so strong that there on the grass
> You believed you might faint/…/.
> (Charles Baudelaire, *Fleurs du mal* 44-46)

> And the bright blue of the sky.
> And the wind brings to the window
> The distant tinkle of a bell.
>
> Shadows glide across the pillow ...
> She breathes heavily in her pillow
> And her mouth is like a wound ...
> Clouds above the silent forests
> That are covered with black cloths ...
>
> She lies quite white in the darkness.
> A cooing of doves sounds under the eaves.
> Like carrion in bush and darkness
> Flies are buzzing round her mouth.
> (Georg Trakl, *Music in the Mirabell Garden* 22)

However, despite several common traits between Trakl and McAuley, Decadence remains one that did not specifically attract McAuley in composing his *Music Late at Night Poems: 1970-1973,* albeit he chose for translation many Trakl's poems with Decadent themes and sensibility.

CONCLUSION

The parallels and literary affiliations between the Austrian poet Georg Trakl's early lyrical poems, many of which James McAuley from Australia masterly translated into English in the book of verse translations from Trakl's verse *Music in the Mirabell Garden,* and McAuley's later verse from *Music Late at Night: Poems 1970–1973*, are manifold. Both poets display a 'divided' soul in a Romantic 'agony', torn between the depths of despair and (especially McAuley) affirmative hope, the reasons of which are, of course, quite different for each of the two poets, whether the loss of religious belief or awareness of illness in McAuley's case (Gaffney 1976, 408), or the emotional imbalance that is enhanced by the Expressionist feeling of guilt and the horrors of the Great War in Trakl's verse. They both use the description of the landscape, although in a much more elaborate and complex way than Eliot's concept of "objective correlative" would have it. Landscape charged with an intrinsic symbolic negative value does not merely reflect the psyche of the poet, for it also influences the poet's mind and mood (cf. Page 2014). The relationship of influence is, so it seems, a mutual one. The landscapes of despair, on the other hand, are darker in Trakl's poems, because McAuley shows a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards utmost despair and generally does not share Trakl's Expressionist violence, death, sexuality and the apocalyptic vision of the world. Both poets, however, express more than just physical reality but rather their own subjective emotional experience of the moment.

The "ghostly-pale" moon and "leaden" sky are present in the verse of both poets writing out of decay, the moon possibly representing their solitary neo-Romantic nature, isolation and outcast state, which in turn throws them into disgust (Trakl) and despair (McAuley). It is rather paradoxical to describe McAuley the poet as a neo-Romantic, especially since McAuley the critic expresses such a "commensurate distrust of the Romantic emphasis on feelings which, while it has unfortunate tendencies to undervalue the expression of strong personal feeling in works of literature, is justified to the extent that it reminds us that a culture of the feelings which is hostile to the intellect is itself suspect" (Robinson 1983, 206). Still, comparing the two poets, relatively far apart chronologically, one can contend that they were Romantics at heart, with Symbolism being more explicit in McAuley and Decadence and Expressionism in Trakl, although they were both fascinated by the German *Der Blaue Reiter* (The Blue Rider) journal group of Expressionist artists, especially the painters Franz Marc and Wassily Kandinsky. This holds true only for McAuley's late poetry which has been discussed here, and which can be related to his early poetic attempts. It is therefore interesting to see how, after decades of different preoccupations, he returned to his original poetic stance. Through Georg Trakl's Decadent strain and *fin de siècle* affiliations

(George, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, since his strongest literary affiliation lies with this particular Symbolist French poet), whom McAuley translated into English in the collection *Music in The Mirabell Garden: Georg Trakl*, it is possible to establish James McAuley's fascination with these poets as well. James McAuley's collection *Music Late at Night: Poems 1970–1973* published after his demise thus belongs to some of the finest verse he wrote. Trakl was a major literary influence on McAuley's late poetry, whose verse was (linguistically and culturally) mediated through McAuley's verse translations of the Austrian poet, thus working both ways.

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Zbirka *Music Late at Night: Poems 1973-1976* Jamesa McAuleyja in poezija Georga Trakla

Članek obravnava angleške prevode avstralskega pesnika Jamesa McAuleyja iz poezije avstrijskega pesnika Georga Trakla (1887-1914), kakor tudi Traklov literarni vpliv na McAuleyjevo lastno ustvarjanje v posthumni zbirki *Music Late at Night: Poems 1970–1973*. To velja predvsem za Traklovo pesniško zbirko prevedene poezije v angleščino *Music in the Mirabell Garden*, sicer pa nekatere zgodnje in pozne pesmi Jamesa McAuleyja prav tako kažejo močan pečat Traklove simbolistične in kasneje tudi ekspresionistične poezije.

Ključne besede: James McAuley, Georg Trakl, avstralska poezija

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Hamlet – A Never-Ending Story

Dieter Fuchs

Abstract

This article fuses a survey of the play's most important standard interpretations with those aspects which may be considered particularly fascinating about this text: the conflict of England's catholic past with the rise of protestant culture in the early modern period; the meta-dramatic dimension of the play; the theatricality of Renaissance court life; the play's reflection of the emerging modern subject triggered off by the rise of reformation discourse. To elucidate some aspects which tend to be overlooked in the scholarly discussion of *Hamlet*, the article will bring two important topics into focus: the courtly discovery of perspective and the dying Hamlet's request to tell his story to the afterworld at the end of the play.

Keywords: Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, revenge, modern subject, reformation discourse, meta-drama, manipulation of perspective, never-ending narrative loop

In this article, I am going to present my thoughts on *Hamlet* from a twofold vantage point: I intend to fuse a survey of the play's most important standard interpretations with those aspects which may be considered particularly fascinating, innovative and thrilling about this text. In the case of *Hamlet*, these fascinations include the conflict of England's catholic past with the rise of protestant culture in the early modern period; the meta-dramatic dimension of the play; the theatricality of Renaissance court life documented in this text; and last but not least the play's reflection of the emerging modern subject triggered off by the rise of reformation discourse. As I shall argue, all these aspects present a set of heterogeneous voices that articulate a national identity crisis Elizabethan England had to face at the time when *Hamlet* was written. And it is this polyphonic multiplicity of voices that makes Shakespeare's *Hamlet* a most fascinating drama. To elucidate some aspects which tend to be overlooked in the scholarly discussion of *Hamlet*, I will bring two important topics into focus: first, the courtly discovery of perspective and its manipulative management which I will call 'observed observation'; second, the dying Hamlet's request that his confidante Horatio tells his story to the afterworld at the end of the play. This final request does not only transform the drama into a narrative, but first of all into a never-ending story: as the tale to be told after its end concludes with Hamlet's request to tell his story, each end triggers off a new beginning in a cyclical – i.e. infinite, self-repetitive, procrastinating – narrative loop of Derridean différance. But let us begin with some standard background information.

Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* around 1600 and 1601. Whereas the 1590s, following the victory over Spain in 1588, were the boom years of Elizabethan England as a nascent nation state, the turn of the seventeenth century may be considered a time of collective crisis. Everyone knew that the reign of Elizabeth I was drawing towards an end in the near future owing to the fact that the Queen was approaching the age of 70 at that time. As the Virgin Queen had no children, there was no lineal successor, and the House of Tudor would die out as soon as the aged Queen would pass away. As Elizabeth refused to name an heir to the throne, nobody knew what the future would bring.

To secure the ownership of *Hamlet* for Shakespeare's theatre troupe, the Danish play was entered into the Stationer's Register in 1602. As far as the editorial history of the play (cf. Schülting 533-4) is concerned, the earliest textual variants are a quarto edition from 1603 (Q1), a more recent quarto from 1604/5 (Q2) and the folio-edition of Shakespeare's collected works from 1623 (F). As the first quarto is only half as long as a modern text edition would be, scholars considered it a rather faulty pirated copy reconstructed from *Hamlet* as it was performed in the playhouse. In its brevity, however, this allegedly 'bad' quarto also has its assets: it gives us an idea about early modern theatre practice. Whereas we tend to enact

textual monuments and attend performances of plays that last up to three or four hours, the Elizabethans were not so patient. They wanted to hear a concise and thrilling story in a performance that should not exceed a maximum of about two and a half hours (cf. Castrop 107).

As the second quarto was considered more reliable than the first one – and as it contains about 230 lines that are not to be found in the folio text – traditional editorial policy tended to conflate it with the folio. More recent editions such as *The Arden Shakespeare* edited by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor in 2006, however, acknowledge these textual variants as various stages of the play as a dynamic text – stages that respond to the political and socio-cultural climate of their respective times of performance by way of topical allusion.

The second quarto, for instance, was printed one or two years after Queen Elizabeth's death and may respond to her successor James I, who – with a grain of salt – may be considered a real-life counterpart of Hamlet: when James was a young man, his mother, Mary Queen of Scots had a lover who murdered her husband in 1567. When the murderer and the widowed Queen married soon after, the young James was left in the Hamlet-like situation of the dispossessed son and prince (cf. Schwanitz 2006: 16).

Having very briefly considered the textual history of the Danish play, I will now proceed to the source material of the Hamlet-plot used by Shakespeare (cf. Schülting 534-5). Although *Hamlet* has an exceptional reputation among Shakespeare's works, its plot is far from original. Shakespeare is not an original playwright as far as the invention of plots is concerned. Very often Shakespeare bases his plots on pre-existing stories. The originality of his art lies in the way he rewrites, re-contextualizes and recombines his source material; and this is also the case in *Hamlet*. Shakespeare's *Hamlet*-plot is based on three major sources.

The first one is the *Historica Danica* – a late twelfth century Danish chronicle written by a scholar who called himself Saxo Grammaticus. Saxo tells us about the Danish Prince Amleth who takes revenge on his uncle. Amleth's uncle killed his elder brother the King of Denmark in order to become king himself; and to disinherit the murdered king's son and heir Amleth, the uncle marries his brother's widow, which medieval and early modern culture considered an incestuous and thus unnatural match. And this constellation of the challenged family triad of father, mother and son constitutes the Hamlet-plot in a nutshell. In contrast to Shakespeare's Hamlet, the medieval Prince Amleth does not hesitate to kill his uncle by way of revenge and becomes the new King of Denmark. Revenge is presented as a legitimate means to restore justice.

When we compare Shakespeare's *Hamlet* with the medieval source material from Saxo Grammaticus, we not only discover that the Bard, too, presents the constellation of the disturbed family triad as the structural backbone of his play.

We also discover that Shakespeare deviates from the medieval chronicle when he debates revenge as a problematic issue. Whereas the Amleth-figure from the *Historica Danica* is more than ready to take revenge, and becomes king to sanction his semi-anarchic deed, Shakespeare's Hamlet suffers under the ethical problem of private justice and procrastinates his retaliation as long as possible. To atone for the fact that the code of honour requires him to kill the avuncular murderer Claudius to requite his father's unnatural death, Hamlet dies after he has accomplished his revenge. Thus the ethical debate of private justice may be considered one of the most important aspects of the Shakespearean rewriting of the medieval Amleth-tale. So what does this ethical dilemma look like?

If the state apparatus fails to restore justice by way of law and order, the only way to do so is via private revenge. If we restore justice in this way and requite a crime against our family with the same deed, however, we become involved in criminal action ourselves: if we kill the person who murdered a member of our family we become killers ourselves. Is there a way to cope with the semi-anarchic paradox that we have to engage in the crime of homicide in order to avenge a murder and restore justice? And what about the matter of sin? On the one hand, the Old Testament of the Bible recommends to take "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," and so on (Exodus 21; 24); this would mean that to requite murder with homicide may be considered an appropriate way to restore justice. On the other hand, the New Testamentarian Jesus renounces this archaic code and commands us to love and forgive our neighbours: "[…] whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Mt 5; 39). So what's to be done to cope with this aporia? And what about the Biblical passage: "[v]engeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12; 19)? This is one of the unresolved questions that interest Shakespeare most when he rewrites the medieval Amleth-case. But let us let us return to the documentation of Shakespeare's source material.

The second version of the Hamlet-story relevant for our context is a collection of French Romance tales: Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques* from 1570. Whereas the medieval Prince Amleth from Saxo Grammaticus survives and becomes king to legitimize his vindictive restoration of justice, Belleforest's early modern Hamlet-figure dies like his Shakespearean counterpart after he has accomplished his revenge.

The third source for Shakespeare's play is the so-called *Ur-Hamlet* from ca. 1589. This is a Hamlet-drama whose text has not survived, and we may speculate about its content and authorship only. A German adaptation of the *Ur-Hamlet* from 1710, however, still exists, and this variant gives us some clue what the lost play may have looked like. The German adaptation is entitled *Der Bestrafte Brudermord*. The authorship of the *Ur-Hamlet* is usually attributed to Thomas Kyd, who founded the Elizabethan genre of revenge tragedy, and we will see that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is deeply imbued with the aesthetics and conventions of

revenge drama – the sub-genre which debates the ethical problem of private justice mentioned above.

As the foundational text of the *Ur-Hamlet* is lost, we have to look at another prototype of revenge tragedy in order to find out more about the generic conventions at work in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587) as the earliest surviving source of Elizabethan revenge drama. The generic features presented in this play include the appearance of ghosts, the play within the play, the revenger's feigned madness and his deferral of revenge up to the very end. Revenge tragedy applies these aspects as a means of an ethical debate which may not only be attributed to the Biblical background mentioned above. It may also be attributed to the classical tradition represented by the Stoic philosopher and playwright Seneca. As a playwright, Seneca wrote eight drawing room tragedies dealing with the excessive violence resulting from uncontained passion as a vicious circle of revenge and counter-revenge; as a Stoic philosopher, by contrast, Seneca suggests self-moderation and self-control as a way to contain the dilemma of private justice represented in his plays.

Having considered the source material of the Hamlet-plot and the generic context of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in terms of revenge tragedy, let us now take a look at the play as such.

The play opens with the newly-wed couple of Hamlet's widowed mother Gertrude and his uncle Claudius. Hamlet's father has recently died under suspicious circumstances, and his younger brother Claudius has succeeded the Danish throne by way of marriage policy. Although Prince Hamlet would have been the lineal successor as his royal father's son and heir, he was dispossessed of his father's crown by the uncle. As Denmark is an elective rather than hereditary kingdom, Claudius has succeeded in gaining the support and the votes of the royal court. And as a clever politician, Claudius treats Hamlet like a beloved son in order to get the young man's support to fashion himself as the allegedly legitimate successor to the throne.

Yet there is something fishy about all that, and this makes Hamlet suspicious and gloomy: his father's all too unexpected and sudden death is followed by an all too sudden marriage of the late king's widow with her late husband's younger brother – an aspect which may not only be considered a sacrilege owing to the already noted circumstance that early modern culture regarded the match of a widow with her brother-in-law incestuous; the sacrilege lies also in the fact that the widow skipped the obligatory mourning year: rather than spending at least one year mourning for her late husband in prayer and chastity, Hamlet's mother Gertrude remarried only two months after the funeral, or as the Shakespearean text puts it:

> […] The funeral baked meats
> Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables. (1.2.179-80)

And rather than pray and fast, the widow and the late husband's brother drink, feast and have sex: the funeral is followed by a never-ending orgy of lust, gluttony and lechery. In addition to this posthumous profanation of his father's honour, Hamlet will soon have to find out that his father was murdered by none other than Claudius. To restore justice, Hamlet feels obliged to take revenge on Claudius, but he procrastinates his revenge over and over again. This delay may be considered one of the generic features of revenge tragedy mentioned above. Whereas other revenge plays present rather flat characters and apply the delay of action as a cliff-hanger to build up tension, however, this is not the case in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. In contrast to the standard pattern of revenge tragedy, *Hamlet* presents a highly individualized main character whose philosophical scepticism makes him delay his revenge over and over again.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Freudian scholar Ernest Jones (1910) attributed Hamlet's deferral of vindictive action to the Oedipus complex. According to Freud, every son loves his mother. Being the first woman he meets, the son feels sexually attracted to her. Rather than making love to the son, however, the mother makes love to the son's father and this fills the son with jealousy; mortal jealousy that results in filial fantasies of patricide. According to Freud, every son dreams of killing his father and making love with his mother. Seen from such an Oedipal vantage point, Ernest Jones argues that Hamlet hesitates to take revenge on his uncle, since Claudius committed the very deed the young prince dreamt of in his own Oedipal fantasies: to kill his father. Rather than overthrowing his father himself, the uncle has already done that and that's why Hamlet subconsciously sympathizes with Claudius. So far so good.

Psychologically interesting as such a Freudian analysis may be, one cannot but note the a-historical dimension of such an approach. Historicists argue that Shakespeare's early modern plays must not be viewed from the 'presentist' vantage point of early twentieth-century psychology. Rather than that, one has to acknowledge the Elizabethan approach to the human psyche that Shakespeare was familiar with. According to the Elizabethans, the human body consists of four bodily liquids or humours, and it is the mixture of these humours that regulates man's psychological disposition: the mixture of blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile. The respective predominance of one of these four liquids constitutes four major character types: the hearty sanguine, the sluggish phlegmatic, the hot-tempered choleric and the gloomy melancholic. Hamlet is a melancholic if not to say the most famous melancholic of world literature.

Melancholics are said to be gloomy intellectuals who cannot cope with practical life. Their intellectual brilliance makes them undecided as they find as many pros and cons when they debate a problem, and this makes them hesitant like Hamlet. Rather than making a clear-cut decision, they think rather than act – and

this thought-tormented disposition brings them to the verge of insanity despite their intellectual genius. Thus it is owing to his melancholic un-decidedness that Hamlet procrastinates his revenge over and over again. Although he reflects on what is to be done, there always remains a feeling of doubt and uncertainty. To stress this disposition, Hamlet's exterior appearance looks like that of a school-book melancholic: he is skinny and pale, dressed in black, has a gloomy facial expression and is presented as a thought-tormented reader of books. Rather than being brought to the brink of madness by fits of depression, however, Hamlet applies the melancholic inclination to insanity as a means of disguise. As he says, Hamlet puts on an "antic disposition" (1.5.173) and plays the madman in order to deceive his antagonist and to find out more about his father's all too sudden death – and it is this fondness for acting and role-play that makes Hamlet a paradigmatic theatre-man like Shakespeare and the *Hamlet*-drama a play about role-playing – role-playing in the theatre and the empirical world alike. We will have to consider this meta-dramatic aspect of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in detail later on.

Having attributed Hamlet's unwillingness to take action, and to procrastinate what is to be done, to his melancholic disposition, we can now move on to Hamlet's encounter with his father's ghost as another stock motif of revenge tragedy. The ghost confirms the suspicion that "[s]omething is rotten in the state of Denmark" (1.4.67) as far as the late king's enigmatic death and the speedy remarriage of the widow with the younger brother are concerned:

> Ghost. I am thy father's spirit,
> Doomed for a certain term to walk the night,
> And for the day confined to fast in fires
> Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
> Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
> To tell the secrets of my prison-house
> I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
> Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
> Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres,
> Thy knotty and combined locks to part,
> And each particular hair to stand on end
> Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.
> But this eternal blazon must not be
> To ears of flesh and blood. List, Hamlet, list, O, list!
> If thou didst ever thy dear father love–
> Hamlet. O God!
> Ghost. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.
> Hamlet. Murder!
> Ghost. Murder most foul, as in the best it is,
> But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

Hamlet. Haste, haste me to know it, that with wings as swift
As meditation or the thoughts of love
May sweep to my revenge.
Ghost. I find thee apt,
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear.
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me. So the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abused. But know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.
Hamlet. O my prophetic soul! Mine uncle?
Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts–
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce! – won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen. (1.5.9-46)

There is, however, something suspicious as far as the authority of this ghostly revelation is concerned. On the one hand, the ghost tells Hamlet the pre-history of the murder and commands him to take filial revenge, as the traditional code of honour would have it. On the other hand, Hamlet is asked not to "[t]aint" (1.5.85) or burden his mind. But as already noted, the restoration of justice by way of revenge cannot but produce further guilt and cannot but burden one's conscience. Thus the words of the ghost as an otherworldly messenger turn out to be as paradoxical as the problem of revenge – and this ambivalence brings us to an important aspect: the topic of religion, which is the focus of Stephen Greenblatt's study *Hamlet in Purgatory* (2001). To understand the Hamletian relevance of the concept of purgatory mentioned in the title of Greenblatt's book on *Hamlet*, let us reconsider some of the lines quoted above:

Ghost. I am thy father's spirit,
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confined to fast in fires
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away. […] (1.5.9-13)

The paternal ghost claims to come from purgatory and reminds the son to take revenge on the murderer Claudius so that his poor soul will eventually come to rest. It is, however, not only the shame of his unavenged murder that makes the

ghost of Hamlet's father live in purgatory for some time. As Hamlet's father was poisoned while asleep, he had no chance to confess his sins to a priest in order to prepare for death and the afterworld; rather than being delivered from evil with the help of a priest and immediately proceeding into heaven, the unprepared king's soul has to go to purgatory in order to be cleansed of the un-confessed sins committed on earth. The purgatory as the poor souls' waiting room for heaven is a deeply catholic concept – and this brings us to Greenblatt's reading of *Hamlet* as a play that features an early modern power struggle triggered off by the rise of protestant discourse: the conflicting memory of England's catholic past with the new power and knowledge produced by the reformed religion.

From the protestant vantage point of Hamlet's Denmark and Shakespeare's England alike, the ghost as a representative of the Roman Catholic religion is seen as an agent of evil rather than a poor soul waiting to be delivered of its sins. Protestantism rejects the catholic notion of purgatory as an iconoclastic and simoniac institution. 'Simoniac' is an adjective that refers to the deliverance of sin in exchange of money – a widely spread catholic practice that triggered off the protestant movement at the beginning of the sixteenth century. As the Pope needed huge sums of money to build Saint Peter's Cathedral and the Vatican Palace, the sinners were offered Papal letters of indulgence in exchange of money: rather than to confess and pray, a poor soul could pay her way to heaven; and to make the sinners willing to pay rather than pray, purgatory – or the more suggestive German term 'Fegefeuer' – was invented to make them afraid of a period of hell-like fiery tortures to atone for their un-forgiven (i.e. un-paid) earthly sins, or as the German Simoniac preachers of indulgence famously put it: "When money in the box resounds, the soul then from the fire bounds." And this is, of course, a corrupt and evil practice the protestant reformers tried to abolish with good reason.

To stress further the ambivalence of the father's ghost with regard to catholic Purgatory, Hamlet is fashioned as a representative of the reformed religion: he studies at the University of Wittenberg where Martin Luther initiated the Protestant movement in 1517. In contrast to the deliverance of sin by catholic rituals of pardon, reformed discourse locates the conflict of good and evil within the isolated individual's conscience. Thus the conscience-struck individual has to cope with his guilt without the assistance of confessions and other penitent rituals such as letters of pardon to be bought with money. Seen from this vantage point, the encounter of the conscience-struck protestant son with the fatherly ghost from the catholic past represents the early modern reformatory conflict in a nutshell. As can be seen from the ghostly appearance of Hamlet's father from purgatory, the old religion and its consolatory rituals forbidden by the protestant state apparatus were not yet dead and lived on in the minds of the Elizabethans – hence the ghost's conflicting identity as a poor soul to be assisted and remembered by the

living via prayer *and* a hellish demon from the pre-reformed past calling for the mortal sin of murder disguised as revenge to lead Hamlet's protestant soul astray.

When the catholic rituals were forbidden by the Elizabethan state, the cultural memory of the pre-reformed past was secularized, stored and re-enacted in the playhouse – an aspect which can be observed not only from the catholic subtext of *Hamlet*, but also from the genre of English Renaissance drama as such. As the English tradition of early modern drama emerged from Catholicism, the Elizabethan plays derived from the pre-reformed morality plays and mystery cycles functioned as a storehouse of the old religion. In fact, there are many facets that show that a dramatic performance in the early modern playhouse may be considered a secularized substitute of the catholic mass – and this brings us to the next topic relevant for our *Hamlet*-analysis: meta-drama.

When the new religion teaches Hamlet to listen to his conscience, the authority of the ghostly voice from the catholic past is challenged by reformed discourse. As the metaphysical sphere has lost its absolute power in this way, it is Hamlet himself who has to find out whether the ghost has told the truth or not. As the ghost might turn out to be a devilish trick to induce him to murder and lead his soul astray if seen from the protestant point of view, Hamlet looks for empirical, or circumstantial evidence to find out the truth about his uncle's putative guilt. And as a means to reveal the truth, Hamlet stages a play within the play to be performed before Claudius and his court. To "hold as 't'were the mirror up to nature" (3.2.22) – or to make visible what otherwise cannot be seen – Hamlet asks the meta-dramatic actors to stage the murder of his father in exactly the way he was told by the ghost. If Claudius is the murderer, he will recognize his deed performed on stage, panic and reveal his guilt by way of psychological evidence. Or as Hamlet puts it "[t]he play's the thing [w]herein I'll catch the conscience of the King" (2.2.606-7). Should Claudius be innocent, however, he will consider the performance a mere piece of fiction and remain emotionally untouched. It is owing to this tricky dimension that Hamlet's meta-dramatic play is called 'the mousetrap.' And of course Claudius panics when he sees his murder re-enacted on stage. As a secularized form of white magic or exorcism, the play reveals what cannot be seen (cf. Greenblatt and Schwanitz 2006: 63). The revelatory or confessional function that used to be monopolized by the old religion has now become absorbed by the playhouse. And according to Dietrich Schwanitz (1993 & 2006), this secularized revelatory function may be attributed to the early modern discovery of perspective at work in the mousetrap-scene as a play within the play.

As we will see now, it is owing to Hamlet's management of perspective that it is only he and the audience of the play proper – and not the meta-dramatic audience – who recognize Claudius's panic as a revelation of guilt. When in the inserted play the player king is poisoned while asleep, the audience in the playhouse

and the meta-dramatic audience on stage observe the performance from conflicting points of view. The audience in the playhouse is familiar with Hamlet's vantage point and recognizes the re-enactment of the murder of Hamlet's father by Claudius as it was told by the ghost. The meta-dramatic audience on stage, in contrast, remains ignorant of this aspect: owing to Hamlet's management of perspective, it interprets the scene the other way round, as Hamlet as the stage director calls the meta-dramatic murderer the king's nephew rather than the king's brother (cf. 3.2.232): to foster his revenge strategy as a madman in disguise, Hamlet makes the meta-dramatic audience believe that the staged regicide presents his allegedly mad self as the new king's nephew rather than Claudius as the late king's brother as the murderer. Owing to Hamlet's theatrical management of perspective, the meta-dramatic spectators think that the mad prince stages the play as a barely disguised threat to kill his uncle Claudius in order to usurp the throne and to become king himself. Thus it is only Hamlet and the audience in the playhouse proper who decode Claudius's panic as a circumstantial proof of his guilt, whereas the meta-dramatic audience on stage attributes the king's reaction to his nephew's "antic disposition" (1.5.173) as a madman.

Hamlet's management or manipulation of perspective is not only inextricably tied to meta-drama, which, like Elizabethan drama in general, reveals what cannot be seen by way of the secularized white magic of the catholic past – a development which may be traced back to the already noted fact that early modern English drama emerged from the rite of the catholic mass via the mystery and morality play tradition. Hamlet's management or manipulation of perspective is also inextricably tied to his strictly secular experience as a courtier – and this brings me to the next important aspect: early modern court life, which may be considered a secularized meta-drama in its own right.

Whereas medieval culture determined a person's rank in society by the right of birth and lineage, early modern culture invented the court as a new political sphere where the aristocrats had to vie with their peers for their authority in terms of impression management (Goffman 1959). As the monopoly of courtly power is in the hands of the monarch, the courtiers cannot fight for their political position by way of open combat, which would challenge the proto-absolutist power of the king. Rather than that, they have to represent their merit by carefully staged performances of a public image. *Image-propaganda* – or *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* as Stephen Greenblatt (1980) puts it – becomes the new strategy to present oneself as a person of authority to the proto-absolutistic ruler, to appeal to him, to advise him and thus to have a share in the execution of stately power. Like players on the theatrical stage, aristocrats become actors in a political drama performed at court. This dramatization of early modern culture in terms of courtly role-play is not only foregrounded by the ambiguous term 'to act' – which may refer to action

proper, the assumption of a theatrical role, or feigned activity – but, first of all, by the extremely popular early modern metaphor of the 'world as a stage' presented in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, for instance:

> All the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women merely players.
> They have their exits and their entrances,
> And one man in his time plays many parts […] (2.7.139-42)

Be it on the stage of the playhouse proper or the stage-like situation of the court, stage-like role-play, or performativity, determined one's social rank in the early modern period. And this role-play involved the insight that one not only observes others, but that one is simultaneously being observed while observing the others (cf. Schwanitz 1993). It is this experience of the new secular sphere of the early modern court fused with the medieval white magic of the catholic mass, which leads to the discovery of perspective and induces Hamlet to stage his meta-drama as a mirror technique presented from the various vantage points we considered above. Owing to his mastery of theatrical enactment, or Renaissance Self-Fashioning, Hamlet is presented as the champion of the Danish court – as an ideal gentleman schooled in the courtly mirror technique of observed observation:

> O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
> The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,
> Th'expectancy and rose of the fair state,
> The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
> Th'observed of all observers, quite, quite down! (3.1.153-57)

Having discussed the rise of court culture and the growing awareness of perspective, let me now complement these observations with two contrasting philosophies of court life: the idealist stance of Neo-Platonic humanism and the strictly realist vantage point of Machiavellianism. When Ophelia calls Hamlet a soldier and scholar in the text passage quoted above, she refers to the Neo-Platonic ideal of the humanist gentleman politician – a concept which may be traced back to an early modern standard work on courtly behaviour: Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* (1528), or *The Courtier* (1561), adapted and translated for Elizabethan England by Sir Thomas Hoby. Hamlet's uncle Claudius, in contrast, cherishes the counter-approach elucidated in Machiavelli's *The Prince* ([ca. 1513] 1532). Whereas Hoby propagates the ideal of gentlemanly fairness and ethical integrity, Machiavelli sanctions courtly intrigue and dissimulation as an amoral but highly efficient key to power. Although Machiavelli does not recommend this policy of betrayal for its own sake, he is realistic enough to see that politics is a dirty

business, in which one can only survive by way of intrigue and counter-intrigue as a wit combat of observed observation. To shed light on this Machiavellian ambivalence, Shakespeare's Claudius is, on the one hand, presented as a sinister murderer – a coward, who poisons his brother while asleep rather than challenging him in fair combat. On the other hand, however, the selfish murderer has his positive sides as a pragmatic and effective politician. Whereas the late king waged a meaningless war against Norway, Claudius as a court professional succeeds in solving this conflict by way of diplomacy and thus contains further bloodshed among his people as a civilising process.

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Considering all the contexts looked at so far, I would argue that the delay of Hamlet's revenge may be attributed to a whole cluster of unresolved socio-cultural, philosophical and religious tensions at work in the Elizabethan period. As shown by Jonathan Dollimore (1984), these tensions – which I exemplified in the fields of religion, court life and so on – may be considered parts of a large-scale conflict: a conflict between the traditional belief in a world metaphysically ordered by divine justice – E.M.W. Tillyard's *The Elizabethan World Picture* ([1942] 1948) – and a set of new, strictly secular and amoral approaches to worldly power such as Machiavelli's political philosophy. It is this conflict of metaphysical and empirical concepts of the world, which may be considered an important context of the turn of the seventeenth century national identity crisis mentioned by way of introduction – a crisis which culminates in the final years of Queen Elizabeth's reign when Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was written and performed on stage. Thus Hamlet's delay of action articulates an epistemological crisis – a feeling of ubiquitous doubt, which culminates in the unresolved question what the future will bring when the House of Tudor has died out owing to the childless queen's death in the near future. Should the queen be succeeded by an incompetent ruler, all of the sixteenth century's achievements in the fields of power and knowledge would have been in vain and the nascent English nation state as an emerging global player would be reduced to provincial meaninglessness.

When every claim of truth turns out to be contingent, the only certainty that remains is the radical doubt represented by Prince Hamlet. To overcome his scepticism and to take action, Hamlet must cease to think and substitute his doubt by way of spontaneous un-reflected action. In other words: he must turn off his melancholic brain to be able to act. Hamlet's thought-ridden dilemma culminates in the best-known monologue of world literature – the famous "to be or not to be" speech:

> To be, or not to be; that is the question:
> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
> And, by opposing, end them? […] (3.1.58-62)

Owing to the fact that the only certainty in life is death as its inescapable end, Hamlet doesn't see any meaning in his revenge project either, and debates suicide as an alternative. Whereas Seneca as the classical model of revenge tragedy considers suicide an honourable means to flee worldly affliction, Hamlet casts doubt not only on the classical but also on the Christian tradition, which considers suicide an unpardonable sin resulting in hellish damnation. Although he doubts the Christian concept of the human soul's afterlife in heaven or hell, Hamlet still cannot be hundred percent certain about the finality of death. It is owing to his "dread of something after death" that he refrains from putting his life to an unnatural end:

> [...] Who would these fardels bear,
> To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
> But that the dread of something after death,
> The undiscovered country from whose bourn
> No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
> And makes us rather bear those ills we have
> Than fly to others that we know not of?
> Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
> And thus the native hue of resolution
> Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought (3.1.78-82)

As Hamlet attributes his resolution to stay alive to "conscience" – which makes "cowards of us all" – his father's ghostly voice from the catholic past is challenged by the protestant rise of the modern self. Although it still affects his thoughts, the authority of the catholic fatherly generation becomes more and more substituted by the reformed son's psyche. As already mentioned, the protestant movement interiorizes the conflict of good and evil within the isolated individual's conscience rather than to exteriorize it as a catholic *theatrum mundi* enacted as a public spectacle of mankind or *Everyman*. Thus the conscience-struck individual has to cope with his guilt without the assistance of priests and penitent rituals, whose morality play-like white magic even succeeds in overcoming the mortal sin of Everyman's rejection of God and his grace. It is owing to this reason that the conscience-struck Hamlet may, up to a certain point, be called the first modern individual.

Hamlet's thoughts about being and non-being are interrupted by the appearance of Ophelia. Hamlet and Ophelia were lovers before the late king was murdered and the young prince is about to break up the match. We can only speculate why Hamlet rejects the woman who truly loves him. Is it to foster his disguise as a madman and not to involve the beloved woman in the crisis of his life, which will not only result in the vindictive killing of Claudius, but also in his own death as a most likely 'collateral' damage? Or has Hamlet become a misogynist owing to his mother's betrayal of her late husband's love? Does he renounce Ophelia because he generalizes his mother's unfaithful fickleness as a characteristic feature of every woman: "[…] frailty, thy name is woman–" (1.2.146)?

It is, however, not only because of her cruel lover – but also because of her equally cruel father – that the young woman will not survive the rejection of her love; Ophelia's father is the king's courtly advisor Polonius who instrumentalizes his daughter to spy on Hamlet on behalf of Claudius. Most likely this is the reason why Hamlet rejects her: being surrounded with court spies, he mistakes Ophelia for a courtly collaborator rather than a forced victim (cf. Schwanitz 2006: 65). And to stress the pimp-like way in which Polonius utilizes his daughter to spy on Hamlet, the young prince treats her like a whore in fact – an aspect which is conveyed by way of linguistic punning and wit. Hamlet's "[g]et thee to a nunnery" (3.1.123), for instance, puns on the fact that 'nunnery' is an Elizabethan slang word for brothel rather than a catholic institution of chastity. This makes Ophelia a victim of phallogocentric misogynist discourse.

As a further facet of the meta-dramatic dimension already looked at, it is not only Ophelia who spies on Hamlet. Her father Polonius, too, tries to find out more about the young prince's uncanny behaviour by way of (un-)ob-served observation. Polonius, however, is presented as a parody of the paradigmatic court Machiavellian. Rather than manipulating others by snaky words as a means of intrigue, he is a man of many but meaningless words: someone who talks without saying anything. In his disguise as a madman, Hamlet shows that the blathering old Polonius is a foolish opportunist who agrees with anything his princely superior says:

> Hamlet. Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?
> Polonius. By th'mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.
> Hamlet. Methinks it is like a weasel.
> Polonius. It is backed like a weasel.
> Hamlet. Or like a whale.
> Polonius. Very like a whale. (3.2.364-70)

The only friend who remains true and faithful to Hamlet is his confidante Horatio who – like the young prince – studied at Martin Luther's University of

Wittenberg. In contrast to the courtly manipulation of language as an unreliable means of intrigue and deferral of meaning, Martin Luther as the translator of the scriptures insists on the representational stability of the word. As can be seen from the Lutherian maxim "sola scriptura", the only way to salvation is the study of the eternal truth of God's word written down in the Bible – hence the protestant rejection of confessional rituals in favour of meditative self-examination. Rather than using the priest as a go-between, the only way to salvation is to study the scriptures and thus enter a private dialogue with God to explore one's conscience. Thus it is protestant book culture and the written word that guarantees Horatio's integrity as Hamlet's only trustworthy friend.

Claudius, in contrast, *tries* to embrace the Biblical word and prays in vain to God to atone for his sin of regicide. As a Machiavellian courtier he fails to meditate the scriptural words and thus reveals his fall from grace as an obdurate sinner:

> My words fly up, my thoughts remain below.
> Words without thoughts never to heaven go. (3.3.97-8)

When Hamlet sees Claudius at prayer without being seen himself, this situation would be the perfect opportunity to perform his revenge as an unobserved observer. But the thought-tormented prince hesitates and refrains from action when he realizes that his enemy tries to communicate with God to confess his capital sin of regicide in order to avoid damnation and hellish pain after death:

> Now might I do it pat, now he is praying,
> And now I'll do't,
> *He draws his sword*
> and so a goes to heaven,
> And so am I revenged. That would be scanned:
> A villain kills my father, and for that
> I, his sole son, do this same villain send
> To heaven.
> [...]
> No!
> *He sheathes his sword*
> Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hint.
> When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
> Or in th'incestuous pleasure of his bed,
> At gaming, swearing, or about some act

> That has no relish of salvation in't,
> Then trip him that his heels may kick at heaven,
> And that his soul may be as damned and black
> As hell, whereto it goes. […] (3.3.73-95)

Eleanor Prosser (185-9) considers Hamlet's decision not to kill Claudius at prayer a most sinister act. As Hamlet decides to wait in order to slay his uncle in the state of sin and corruption rather than repentance and prayer, Prosser concludes that the young prince wants to send his uncle to hell: that he wishes to kill both body *and* soul of his antagonist. This would be a Machiavellian practice and would denounce Hamlet's integrity as a conscience-stricken prototype of the emerging modern individual. Prosser, however, fails to acknowledge the principle of vindictive equity emphasized by the radical protestant faction of the Puritans: as can be seen from the Old-Testamentarian dictum "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" (Exodus 21; 24) cherished by Puritan doctrine, revenge has to requite an act of injustice by way of strictly measured vindictive compensation. Applied to Hamlet's revenge, this means that Claudius has to die in the state of sin owing to the fact that the poisoning prevented Hamlet's father from making his peace with God (cf. Schwanitz 2006: 95-6 & 143). Owing to his sudden death while asleep, Hamlet's father could not prepare for the after-world and confess his sins – hence his already mentioned confinement in Purgatory. By way of dramatic irony, however, Hamlet does not know that the praying Claudius tries in vain to communicate with God and remains in a state of mortal sin.

In the next scene Hamlet enters his mother's closet to confront her with the guilt inherent in the betrayal of her late husband. What Hamlet does not know, however, is the circumstance that he once more becomes an observed observer in a meta-dramatic scene. Even in his mother's most private room, Polonius is hiding behind a curtain to spy on the young prince on behalf of his Machiavellian master Claudius. And, owing to a misunderstanding, the voice of the unseen but talkative Polonius is heard. For Hamlet it is obvious that the only man that might be found in his mother's most private room must be Claudius and he stabs the unseen person through the curtain. As we can see once more, Hamlet's revenge must be spontaneous – an automatic reaction before he has a chance to think. Unfortunately, however, he has killed the wrong man: Ophelia's father. Having already been let down by Hamlet, Ophelia will be driven into madness, despair and suicide by the passing of Polonius.

Moving from the plot-centred to the structural level, Hamlet's killing of Polonius may be again considered in terms of the meta-dramatic mirror technique already mentioned: having caused the deaths of Polonius and Ophelia and insulted

the Polonius family honour, Hamlet induces Polonius's son Laertes to take revenge. Thus the young prince becomes simultaneously the subject *and* object of revenge. Constituting a parallel plot, the issue of revenge and counter-revenge is presented as a vicious cycle of honour that nobody can escape. Like all the meta-dramatic aspects mentioned so far, this doubling technique holds "the mirror up to nature" (3.2.22), as it debates the topic of revenge from conflicting, subject-centred vantage points of fallible, and hence *mixed* characters. To show that "there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so" (2.2.251-52), even Hamlet as a fairly knowledgeable character makes mistakes, happens to become involved in crime and becomes a villain from Laertes' point of view, whereas Claudius as a stage villain proper has, politically speaking, some positive sides such as his already mentioned diplomatic talent. And, owing to the fact that the topic of revenge functions as the mere tip of an iceberg-like set of much more serious epistemological and socio-cultural tensions, this mirror technique shows that there are no simple answers to the complicated problems Elizabethan society has to face around 1600.

To stress both the complexity and omnipresence of these problems, Shakespeare's play even adds a third revenge plot and thus presents a kaleidoscopic set of reflections and refractions of this issue. This third revenge plot focuses on the Norwegian Prince Fortinbras who seeks to take military revenge for his father's death in a battle against Denmark under the rule of the late king. Whereas the young Hamlet is circumspect and refrains from action, the hot-tempered Fortinbras is ready to act – and it is only owing to Claudius's diplomacy that peace between Denmark and Norway is restored as a civilising process. But let us return to the central plot of Hamlet's revenge on Claudius.

Having been challenged by Hamlet's meta-dramatic Mousetrap-play and Polonius's death to be avenged by his son Laertes, Claudius decides to get rid of his nephew, who proves to be an increasingly uncontainable danger. To get rid of Hamlet, Claudius asks his nephew's schoolfellows Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to accompany the prince on a sea-journey to England and to deliver a secret letter to the English monarch. In this letter Claudius asks the English crown to execute Hamlet without a legal trial. By way of coincidence, however, Hamlet finds and reads the epistle and substitutes the names of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern for his own. During the journey, he thus saves his life and returns to Denmark as a sea-changed person.

The experience of his imminent death changes Hamlet's philosophy of life and makes him less hesitant to act – and this aspect is stressed when he meets the two gravediggers. Being about to prepare Ophelia's funeral, the gravediggers happen to dig up the skull of the court jester Yorick whom Hamlet remembers from his infant days. When Hamlet sees his former friend's skull, he becomes aware of the

vanity of life (which, by the way, is a catholic concept that enters his protestant mind). The only thing that is certain and cannot be avoided in life is death – and it does not really matter whether this happens sooner or later:

> [...] There's a special
> providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis
> not to come. If it be not to come, it will be now. If it
> be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all. […] (5.2.165-68)

It is owing to this insight into the vanity of life that Hamlet faces his uncle's counter-intrigue without fear. As Hamlet challenged his uncle by way of the meta-dramatic Mousetrap performance, Claudius decides to requite this challenge and stages a meta-dramatic duel between Hamlet and Laertes. Of course this alleged sports-event offers Laertes a barely disguised means of killing Hamlet in revenge for Polonius and Ophelia. Should Hamlet survive the duel, Claudius and Laertes have two Machiavellian backup plans: on the one hand, Laertes poisons his rapier so that even a minor wound will lead to the prince's death; on the other hand, Claudius prepares a poisoned cup of wine. Although Claudius's scheme seems watertight, two unexpected things happen: both Hamlet *and* Laertes suffer a minor scratch by the poisoned rapier and Hamlet's mother Gertrude drinks the poisoned cup of wine to the health of her son. As the poison works quickly, Gertrude dies in a trice and Laertes tells Hamlet that they are both doomed to die an equally speedy death by poison. And it is owing to his imminent end that Hamlet is finally able to perform his revenge on Claudius. As there is no more time for thoughtful introspection, he strikes Claudius with the rapier. To take due revenge for his father's death by poison, he forces his murderous uncle to drink the remaining part of the poisoned wine.

Although Horatio offers to embrace the Stoic ideal of suicide to die together with his best friend, Hamlet asks him to stay alive and report his cause to the living – he wants posterity to know the truth hidden behind his vindictive role-play in order to restore his honour and the legitimacy of his revenge: what began as the drama of Hamlet thus ends as a narrative to be told by Horatio. Although the dying Hamlet says that "the rest is silence" (5.2.310), his story lives on by way of Horatio's testimony. As the end of the Hamlet-drama coincides with the request that Horatio tells Hamlet's tale from its beginning once again, the end is simultaneously the beginning, and this makes Shakespeare's *Hamlet* a never-ending story that perpetuates itself into eternity (cf. Hawkes 312 & Schwanitz 2006: 147) as a Mobius strip: ∞.

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Having approached the end of my illustrative analysis of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, let me conclude with a few afterthoughts. I approached the Shakespearean text with a special focus on the aspects of its scholarly interpretation that fascinate me most: the afterlife of the catholic past, meta-drama, the early modern discovery of perspective, the theatricality of court life and the emerging condition of the modern subject triggered off by the rise of the protestant religion. I have argued that the topic of revenge in general and all these aspects in particular elucidate the socio-cultural and epistemological tensions that late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Elizabethan England had to face – tensions which may be attributed to the conflicting voices of the ghostly fatherly generation from the catholic past and the new generation of protestant sons such as Hamlet as the focal point of the play.

As my survey focuses on a historicist reading of *Hamlet* as a play that reflects and articulates the crises of early modern culture, I have omitted some of the more traditional approaches such as the New Criticism which, for instance, focuses on the play's timeless poetic imagery of poison and rottenness; or Jan Kott's (1964) 'presentist' approach that considers Hamlet our contemporary rather than an early modern character. And it would have equally gone beyond the scope of this article to offer a survey on the stage history of *Hamlet* and the numerous rewritings of the play such as Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1966). Conversely, a sketch of the afterlife of Ophelia in Romantic and Victorian art and poetry had to be omitted.

What has to be mentioned, however, is the special relevance of *Hamlet* for Germany. Hamlet is not only a character that inspired the art of Goethe and other German imitators of Shakespeare. In the context of German history, Hamlet also becomes a political *persona* who contributed greatly to the making of the German nation as a national identity formation process in the nineteenth century. In the Vormärz-period (1830-1848), Germany was a territory of scattered small states rather than a unified nation and, according to the poet Freiligrath, the Germans failed to succeed in the making of a unified nation state owing to their Hamlet-like thought-tormented disposition, which made them unwilling to act: "Deutschland ist Hamlet" (1844): hence the proverbial self-identification of Germany as a Hamletian country of great thinkers and poets (i.e. 'das Land der Dichter und Denker'). Considering the two world wars that followed the making of the German nation state, however, one must say that it would have been better if Germany had remained in this thought-tormented passivity rather than taken nationalist action. No matter if one affirms or critically rejects the Hamletian identification of Germany, one has to stress the historical relevance of the Hamlet figure as a secular German national saint adopted from England.

Whereas the Germans idolized *Hamlet* as a play to give answers to the question of nineteenth and early twentieth century national identity, my historicist approach focused on the questions the Shakespearean play addressed to Elizabethan

England as a collective identity crisis at the turn of the seventeenth century. And this brings me back to the Oedipal dilemma of the challenged family triad mentioned at the outset in order to bring my remarks full circle.

As already mentioned, a Freudian character analysis constitutes an anachronistic endeavour similar to the celebration of Hamlet as a romantic and post-romantic German national saint. If we generalize Freud's character-centred approach in terms of Jungian archetypes and the collective unconscious, however, the Oedipal dilemma seems to offer some clue to the interpretation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* indeed. From a Jungian point of view, the constellation of the dispossessed son recurs in any family triad. Like the never-ending text of Hamlet re-told by Horatio over and over again, the Oedipal or Hamletian conflict is re-enacted every generation anew. Owing to its timeless cyclicality, the recurrence of the Oedipal dilemma may be thus considered a symptom of both socio-cultural crisis and regeneration: to continue the reproductive circle of death and life, the father figure representing the past generation, old age and sterility has to be overthrown by his filial successor representing the future generation, youth and fertility. The absence of this Oedipal mechanism thus indicates that the regenerative conflict of young and old has come to a standstill and that a community is about to age and die rather than to reproduce and renew itself.

In late sixteenth and early seventeenth century England, this standstill is represented by the absence of the conflict of father and son and the omnipresence of the pseudo-mother figure of the ageing but childless Virgin Queen who rejected the family triad by her refusal to marry. If a prince is dispossessed by a fatherly usurper and betrayed by his royal mother, this is a dynastic scandal such as the one experienced by the young Prince James sold out by Mary Queen of Scots in 1567. If there is no son and no father figure at all owing to the queen's virginity, however, there will be a national collapse: the country will be reduced to orphan-like helplessness when the great mother figure of the queen has to die. This is the already noted trauma that paralyses Tudor England around 1600 – and I would argue that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* articulates this unspeakable horror vision as a layer of meaning which tends to be overlooked. Focusing on the struggle of the son-like prince and his pseudo-fatherly uncle resulting in mutual death, we tend to pay too little attention to the passing away of the Danish Queen Gertrude as an unchaste, or all-too human counterpart of the English Virgin Queen Elizabeth. Shakespeare's management of perspective directs our gaze at the tragedy of Hamlet as the dispossessed son, but distracts our focus from the death of the royal mother figure Gertrude and thus diverts our attention from the imminent death of the Great Queen enacted on stage before our eyes.

As a possible affirmation of James of Scotland succeeding the English Queen in 1603, the throne falls to the Norwegian Prince Fortinbras after the Danish

dynasty has died out. On the other hand, however, James's agency as the potential successor of the Great Queen is deconstructed by presenting the moribund Hamlet as a counterpart of the young James dispossessed by his actual mother Mary Queen of Scots.

And of course this is a further example of Shakespeare's meta-dramatic art of perspective derived from courtly culture – a cross-eyed art of confusion, which both directs and escapes our eyes by holding "the mirror up to nature" (3.2.22). T.S. Eliot called *Hamlet* "The Mona Lisa of Literature" (144) to express his dissatisfaction with Shakespeare's Danish play, which he considered an artistic failure owing to its radically foregrounded subjectivity; I, in contrast, would argue exactly the other way round. I would claim that – although both pieces of art emerged independently of each other – Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* elucidates Shakespeare's art of the emerging modern subject as an 'objective correlative': Like Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Leonardo's Gioconda-Portrait confuses its observer by its cross-eyed interplay of conflicting subject-centred vantage points.

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Hamlet: nikoli zaključena zgodba

Članek združuje pregled najpomembnejših sandardnih interpretacij s tistimi vidiki, ki bi lahko bili še posebej fascinantni o tem tekstu: konflikt angleške katoliške preteklosti s protestantsko kulturo v obdubje zgodnje modern, meta-dramatsko dimenzijo igre, teatraličnost renesančnega dvornega življenja, itd.

Ključne besede: Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, maščevanje, pripovedna zanka, reformacijski diskurz, meta-drama

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The Critique of American Racism in Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley*

Danica Čerče

Abstract

Written in the light of critical discourse about the social value of literary sympathy and against the backdrop of critical whiteness studies, the article deals with John Steinbeck's non-fiction book *Travels with Charley in Search of America*. Framed by an interest in how the writer responded to the racial separation in the United States, the article demonstrates that this work, which is often dismissed as a "charming portrayal of America," is a serious intervention in all sites of discrimination and domination.

Keywords: American literature, John Steinbeck, destabilising whiteness, cross-cultural relationality

American philosopher Martha Nussbaum, among others, contends that good literature is "disturbing" in a more effective way than history and social science writing usually are (359). The key to better understanding of the issues embodied in the represented worlds of literature is imaginative sympathy, by which readers respond to the experiences of the characters with more powerful emotions, disconcertment and perplexity, and which can lead them to confront with their own thoughts and "alter some of [their] standing judgments" (363). Written in the light of this view and framed by an interest in how John Steinbeck responded to the public dynamics of racial separation in the United States in his *Travels with Charley in Search of America* (1962), hereafter referred to as *Travels,* the article will demonstrate that this seemingly "bland travelogue" (Parry 150) or "charming portrayal of America," as the book was introduced to Slovene readers, is a troubling critical commentary on several aspects of American society, engaging readers to dismiss some experiences, particularly the intense racial hatred, as detrimental and unacceptable.

Steinbeck became famous for his Depression-era novels *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), *In Dubious Battle* (1936) and *Of Mice and Men* (1937), each a hard-hitting critique of the capitalist dynamics of corporate farming in California, exposing the agricultural system that produced flagrant violations of migrant workers' civil and human rights. Working as a labourer and spending a lot of time with migrant workers, ranch hands and Mexican immigrants, Steinbeck was well-equipped for sensitive depictions of their powerlessness, poverty and victimisation, as well as for their desire to retain their dignity or settle land of their own. Particularly *The Grapes of Wrath*, the cornerstone of Steinbeck's 1962 Nobel Prize award, functioned as a "distress call," arousing readers towards action to halt social injustice (DeMott 148).

Later in his career, no longer willing to be the chronicler of the Depression-era subjects, Steinbeck went afield to find new topics and new forms, which indicates that his achievement as a writer extends well beyond the modes and methods of traditional realism or documentary representation. Just when many critics were commenting that his best writing was behind him, Steinbeck drew attention with his final works of non-fiction, *Travels* and *America and Americans* (1966). The analysis of critical evaluations of the two works reveals that the former is usually described as a "private discourse" (Heavilin and Pugh vi), thus not a reliable representation of America, and the latter as a "more thorough attempt […] to analyse the nation and its people (Hughes 87). This study will show that *Travels* also deals with several key social ills of the time, including pollution and the degradation of the environment, overpopulation, the threat of atomic war and racism.

When Steinbeck was writing *Travels*, racism was a particularly searing social problem in the United States. The desire to confirm a vital sense of identity and

self-worth that James Baldwin articulated in his non-fiction book *The Fire Next Time* (1964) was expressed by a number of other black Americans experiencing the debilitating aspects of racism in the country. Reading *Travels* reveals that, despite the shift in thematic and philosophical orientation in Steinbeck's later works, the writer remained susceptible to any kind of oppression and continued to confront the social context in which "people were doing injustices to other people" (Steinbeck 1989, xxxiii). By challenging what Sara Suleri calls the "master-myth" about "the static lines of demarcation" between empowered and disempowered cultures (112), *Travels* envisages a space where alternative discourses of race can exist.

WRITING DARKNESS

In *Innocents Abroad* (1869), Mark Twain wrote that "travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness and many people need it sorely on these accounts." Steinbeck did not need travelling on any of these accounts. What urged him to set out on a few-month-long road trip around the United States described in *Travels* was his desire to "learn about his own country," as he explained in his 25 May 1960 letter to his friends Frank and Fatima Loesser (Steinbeck and Wallsten 666). His idea about the journey had been conceived about six years earlier than he loaded his truck named after Don Quixote's famous steed Rocinante and left New York in the company of his wife's French poodle Charley. As Steinbeck confessed to his literary agent Elizabeth Otis in June1954, he realized that he had "lost track of the country," having been "cut off for a very long time (Benson 767). Similarly, Steinbeck reveals early on in *Travels* that for several years, he was writing about the America he remembered, but "the memory is at best faulty, warpy reservoir" (11).

According to Sally E. Parry, Steinbeck must have felt that the America he "had known and loved was veering onto a dangerous path" (148) and it did not take him long to realize that his concerns and fears had been fully justified. Even before witnessing the country at its worst, he was bitterly disappointed by what he saw. Constantly comforting himself with the view that his perception of America was unique to his own experience, influenced by the factors in his life at a given time – the view that resembles the theories introduced by Louise Rosenblatt and Wolfgang Iser of how readers participate in the creation of texts they read – Steinbeck was hoping in the existence of other realities of American society in addition to how he perceived it. As he observes not long after leaving home, his representation of the country "is true until someone else passes that way and rearranges the world in his own style" (70), recalling how his impressions of Prague

were considerably different from those of Joseph Alsop, a famous journalist he talked to during his return flight to America. However, the demonstration of intense racial hatred Steinbeck stumbled upon in New Orleans, following the integration of the city's schools, shattered the last shred of his confidence when he most needed assurance that what he had feared was not true.

Compelled by curiosity and fear to witness the scene of Southern mob violence, Steinbeck got involved in a conversation with a white taxi driver whose intolerance, savagery and crude energy fully uncovered the citizens' contempt for black Americans, hidden behind the façade of civilization and appearing under various guises, or manifested in blatant and insidious forms:

> 'Why, hell, mister. We know how to take care of this. […] Out to take them out.'
> 'You mean lynch them?'
> 'I don't mean nothing else, mister." (Steinbeck 1962, 219)

When observing the howling crowd, mirroring the racially stratified, segregated and polarized society, Steinbeck searched in vain for the faces of kind and gentle people he knew and had spent time with – of those who would not hesitate to protect "the small, scared, black mite" (223) and oppose the wilderness of segregation and disfranchisement. To his dismay, all he could see were faces of those thirsty for "watching any pain or any agony" and enjoying in it (223).

The "show of Cheerleaders," as Steinbeck refers to the cheering of the madding hordes that accompanied the insulting screaming of white women at a small black girl and the white man who "dared to bring his white child to school" (221), is in several ways reminiscent of the incident in Georgia depicted in James Weldon Johnson's 1912 novel *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. As the brutal execution of the mob's black victim in Johnson's novel, which robbed the narrator of his hope and left him humiliated, bewildered and embittered by an unbearable shame, so did the incident in New Orleans more than half a century later affect Steinbeck so deeply that he decided to return home to escape the ugliness he had experienced. As he writes, his journey "was over before [he] returned […] and left [him] stranded far from home" (236). Remembering the Cooper's, a decent and respected black family from Salinas, Steinbeck was not prepared for the kind of America in which the blacks were considered "an inferior race" (212) and – in Toni Morrison's words – merely allowed "a shadowless participation in the dominant cultural body" (129). His perception of black identity based on his memories of Mrs. Cooper's shining kitchen, Mr Cooper's honest running of his small truck business and the three boys' outstanding performance at school did not match the derogatory representations he encountered. His first thought was that "the authority was misinformed" referring to them as "dirty," "lazy" and "dishonest" (212).

Witnessing a precarious borderline between the two races and cultures and sensing numerous areas of contestation arising from the politics of polarity, Steinbeck envisioned the consequences of the boiling tension: "Could there be no relief until it burst," he asks himself, bewildered by the most logical answer (231). In this state of mind, Steinbeck was not different from black American poet and activist Langston Hughes, who in his poem "Dreams Deferred" (published as part of the 1951 volume-length *Montage of a Dream Deferred*) asks a similar question and predicts the inevitable result: "What happens to a dream deferred? / Does it dry up / Like a raisin in the sun / […] / Or does it explode?"

Racial polarization in its overt or covert forms is not the only threat and indicator of society in a state of conflict that Steinbeck encountered on his travel across the United States, but it surely was the one that saddened and worried him most. After observing the "insane rage" of the New Orleans crowd, he writes:

> No newspaper had printed the words these women shouted. On television the soundtrack was made to blur or had crowd noises cut in to cover. But now I heard the words, bestial and filthy and degenerate. […] My body churned with weary nausea, but I could not let an illness blind me after I had come so far to look and hear." (Steinbeck 1962, 222–223)

Indeed, Steinbeck never let himself be blind for miseries arising from unbridled egoism and the arrogance of power, although several critics whose expectations were based entirely on *The Grapes of Wrath* suggested the opposite, wondering what changed the spirit and opinion of a man who had, until then, "represented the best in America" (Lustig 3–4). Neither did this journey veil Steinbeck's vision; the evidence of legal and cultural barriers of racism and the ongoing reproduction of colonial differences made him feel "helpless" (223) and "ill with […] sorrow" (224).

However, what seems to have worried Steinbeck even more than the whites' authoritative rhetoric was the recognition that the dominant European discourses that had relegated the blacks to a subordinate status were deeply ingrained not only among the whites but also among the blacks themselves. The latter's "massive psycho-existential complex," as Frantz Fanon refers to the psychological internalization of the illusion of white superiority (xvi), is particularly well seen in the episode in which Steinbeck tries in vain to establish a conversation with an old black man whom he offered a ride. Rather than being involved in a talk, the old man requests to be "let down," finding walking safer than riding with a white man (230). "I was foolishly trying to destroy a lifetime of practice," realizes Steinbeck, alluding to the deeply rooted ideology underpinning slavery and white supremacy. He recalls a similar experience years before, when his black employee in Manhattan

did not help a tipsy white woman, fearing a false accusation: "If I touched her, she could easy scream rape, and then it's a crowd, and who believes me? […] I've been practising to be a Negro [sic!] a long time (230).

Michel Foucault points out that a "limit is discovered not by tracing already existing boundaries but by crossing them." In this way, transgression "forces the limit to face its imminent disappearance to find itself in what it excludes" (35). Witnessing what George Lipsitz recognises as "the exclusionary concept of whiteness," held in place to preserve the "racialised nature of social policy in the United States" (4–5), Steinbeck conveys a similar idea through the confession of an elderly white man from the South, who admits that it is hard for whites and blacks to "change a feeling about things" (226), whereas in day-to-day interactions across the colour line, there are some acknowledgements that this can be done:

> "I have an old Negro [sic!] couple […]. Sometimes in the evening we forget. They forget to envy me and I forget they might, and we are just three pleasant … things living together and smelling the flowers." (227)

Clearly, in line with his own view that an artist has to come forward when he or she is needed (Lisca 860), Steinbeck promotes a vision of broader humanity, with no division between "man and beast" and "black and white" (227). He wanted America to be for "everyone, white and black […], all ages, all trades, all classes" (231). That black Americans will demand and reclaim what has been withheld from them is particularly evident in Steinbeck's discussion with a passionate black student, a potential "conscious antagonist," as Edward Said refers to an individual who, "compelled by the system to play subordinate or imprisoning roles within [the society]," reacts by "disrupting it" (335). The student is not satisfied with Martin Luther King's "teaching of passive […] resistance" (234). As he says, "I want it faster, I want action, action now" (234).

Although Steinbeck seems somehow reluctant to draw a general conclusion, reminding the reader again that he is not presumptuous to consider his portrayal of the South as undeniably correct, he closes his reflection in line with Walter Mignolo's view that "there are no democratic possibilities without undoing the colonial and imperial differences" (392), predicting the inevitability of change:

> "I know it is a troubled place and a people caught in jam. And I know that the solution when it arrives will not get easy or simple. I feel with Monsieur Ci Git that the end is not in question. It's the means - the dreadful uncertainty of the means." (Steinbeck 1962, 235)

In her famous speech delivered at the "First Conference of Black American Writers" in 1959, black American playwright and activist Lorraine Hansberry said:

"All art is ultimately social. One cannot live with sighted eyes and feeling heart and not know or react to the miseries which afflict this world." In line with this assertion, Hansberry used the stage to advocate a political imperative for liberation of black people from their subordination. In *Travels*, Steinbeck does not explicitly call for change but sees the inevitability of it – "The breath of fear was everywhere. I wanted to get away, a cowardly attitude, perhaps, but more cowardly to deny" (231). However, this makes the book no less important in terms of its social relevance; French critic Pierre Macherey has even noted that "what is important in the work of literature is what it does not say" (86). Steinbeck does not say but nevertheless compels readers to face up to and confront the actions that have institutionalized group identity in the United States through the creation of social structures that protect the privileges of whites at the expense of communities of colour. As other Steinbeck's works, *Travels* gives evidence that Steinbeck never ceased to denounce any kind of injustice and tyranny. Moreover, he managed to cut through readers' "self-protective stratagems," as Nussbaum refers to the self-protective strategies that keep the knowledge about people and society provided in a literary work at a distance (359), while urging them to see and react to that knowledge.

Although not as "deeply engaging" and "utterly consuming" as *The Grapes of Wrath* (DeMott 148), Steinbeck's acknowledged masterpiece, *Travels* is a powerful critical account of contemporary American society, exposing the dissonances between American ideals and reality. The book is particularly effective in dramatizing the cross-racial encounter and serves as a sort of brief on the country's political, institutional and cultural reproduction of white privilege and entitlement. By offering a reader a way of experiencing the ongoing dialectic of self and 'other' accepted by the people of the South "as a permanent way of life" (Steinbeck 1962, 231), while creating bonds of identification and empathy, Steinbeck manages to make readers see and respond to the social maladies unveiled in the book with strong emotional reaction. In this sense, and in line with Nussbaum's views about political and ethical implications of literary imagination, reading *Travels* "will not give us the whole story about social justice, but it functions as a "bridge both to a vision of justice and to the social enactment of that vision" (364).

TRAVELS ON EAST EUROPEAN MARKETS

In post-war communist Eastern Europe, literature was considered an important locus for ideological discourse and one of the paths to social progress (Čerče 2018). Literary works that were in accord with the officially promoted precepts of social realism were manipulated by communist propagandists, whereas those that

lacked historical substance of class struggle, scientific inquiry and philosophical debate or instigated any ideological doubts were subjected to fierce criticism and consigned to oblivion. In the 1940 and early 1950s, Steinbeck was among those American authors whose writing appealed to and unwittingly served the ruling communist regimes. The credit for his popular acclaim went to the social necessity and documentary integrity of his Depression Era novels, particularly *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), which not only conformed to but also strengthened the bleak picture of the United States that had been systematically presented by the state-controlled media in these countries (Kopecký 205).

Travels, on the other hand, was among the works that failed to meet the criteria of political correctness. The marginalization of the book was also connected with the fact that it was published in the climate of critical antipathy and even antagonism towards Steinbeck due to his venturing into new topics and forms in his later works and his anti-communist stance in the 1950s and 1960s. In Slovenia, for example, where the only translation of the book dates from 1963, hardly any critical interest was paid to what an anonymous author of the 1964 *Knjiga* book review dismissed as a "charming portrayal of America" (9). Among those few who reviewed *Travels* were Marija Cvetko and Slavko Rupel. Cvetko observes that "many would be ashamed of this work" and reprimands the author for his "lukewarm personal involvement and the lack of intensity of his critical insight" (7). However, and despite discrediting Steinbeck on ideological grounds, Cvetko still depicts the book as a "unique piece of travel writing," highlighting the author's "caring and painful engagement with the issues discussed" (7). Rupel expressed a similarly contradictory view, lamenting over the lack of communist rhetoric and, at the same time, praising Steinbeck's sincere stance in discussing American foreign policy and its domestic problems (15).

Clearly, and unlike in other East European countries, where the writer was repeatedly under critical attacks for his ideological deviations already in the late 1940s, in Slovenia, a relatively positive reception of Steinbeck's works continued well into the 1960s. As Petr Kopecký has observed, in the early 1960s, a "small backlash against the tendency to discredit Steinbeck" was also seen in the former Czechoslovakia (211). For example, reviewing *Travels*, Czech critic Antonín Přidal argues that the book clearly demonstrates that Steinbeck "was not politically naïve," as he was dismissed in several ideologically charged reviews, and ironically concludes that he would probably have done better "by writing textbooks of political economics instead of novels" (51).

It was not until after the democratic changes in communist Eastern Europe at the beginning of the 1990s that *Travels*, just as several other works by Steinbeck that had formerly been received with scepticism, prejudice and misunderstanding or had been neglected altogether, got the possibility to be assessed from new,

insightful and politically unbiased perspectives of contemporary critical engagement. However, and although Steinbeck is currently enjoying a renewed level of acceptance, my recent statistical evaluation of relevant bibliographies (2017) has shown that, unlike several other works by Steinbeck, *Travels* has not yet attracted many translators or reviewers in European post-communist countries.

CONCLUSION

This discussion has shown that *Travels,* a presumably "charming portrayal of America," is a serious social commentary on the diversity and complexity of American society in the early 1960s. Inspiring distrust of the country's moral conventions and promoting dialogue and interconnectivity as antidotes to cultural collisions, it is no less reliable, responsible and responsive than *America and Americans*, the work *Travels* is often compared to. Given that several ethical questions about societal, political and cultural violence and abuse Steinbeck raises during his road trip continue to haunt us all in the 21st century, *Travels* participates in a larger cultural conversation about race, gender and class relations, facilitating the recognition that "difference […] does not allow for indifference" (Lévinas 61), let alone discrimination. If not for anything else, it is for this humanistic view that *Travels* deserves to be more widely translated and disseminated.

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Kritika ameriškega rasizma v Steinbeckovem *Potovanju s Charleyjem*

Prispevek se ukvarja z neleposlovnim delom ameriškega pisatelja Johna Steinbecka, *Travels with Charley in Search of America.* Z izhodiščem v kritiški misli o družbeni vlogi literarne empatije in opirajoč se na postkolonialno kritiko, raziskuje, kako se pisatelj odziva na rasizem v ZDA. Končna ugotovitev je, da knjiga nikakor ni »očarljiv portret Amerike«, kot so jo omalovažujoče označevali nekateri kritiki, ampak resna problematizacija vseh oblik diskriminacije in dominantnega diskurza.

Ključne besede: ameriška književnost, John Steinbeck, destabilizacija evropocentrizma, medkulturnost

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"I am not what I am": Corpus-based Analysis of Shakespeare's Character Iago from *Othello, the Moor of Venice*

Teja Furlan, Monika Kavalir

Abstract

The paper uses keyword analysis as the empirical basis for the characterization of Shakespeare's character Iago from *Othello, the Moor of Venice*. The aim of the paper is to determine how Iago's manner of speech reflects his deceitful and manipulative nature and how it differs from the speech-styles of non-deceitful prominent characters: Othello, Cassio, Roderigo, Desdemona and Emilia. Keywords for the chosen characters are based on the corpora of character speech and the Sketch Engine tool is used to process the data. The results are then interpreted and discussed on the basis of six interconnected points of discussion: focus, adjectives, use of the expression *Moor*, references to the handkerchief, poisoning-the-ears technique, and pronouns, all of which confirm that Iago's manipulative nature is indeed evident in his speech and that there is a clear difference between his speech-style and the speech-styles of other, non-deceitful, prominent characters.

Keywords: characterization, corpus linguistics, keyword analysis, Othello, William Shakespeare, Iago

INTRODUCTION

A fictional character is brought to life in the mind of the reader or spectator through their actions and their words, and this relationship is particularly intriguing when there is a mismatch between the two. The aim of this paper is to use keyword analysis to determine whether the cunning, deceitful and manipulative nature of Shakespeare's character Iago from *Othello, the Moor of Venice* is evident in his speech-style and if so, how Iago's speech-style then differs from that of some of the other, non-deceitful, prominent characters within the play, such as Othello and Cassio.

The first part of the paper reviews the existing literature on characterization in Othello and proposes keyword analysis as an attested method of corpus stylistic research. In the methodology section, the preliminary steps of the study are described alongside the specific parameters used within the *Sketch Engine* tool. In the third part of the paper, the quantitative results of the keyword analysis are given in the form of tables with keywords for each of the chosen characters: Iago, Othello, Cassio, Roderigo, Desdemona and Emilia. These statistical results are then discussed, interpreted and compared to previous studies in the fourth, qualitative and final part of the paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As one of Shakespeare's prominent works, *Othello* has been extensively analyzed and interpreted, with the character of Iago receiving much of the scrutiny. Recently, the development of corpus stylistics has brought with it new ways of approaching familiar texts and there are already a host of studies examining various Shakespearean characters. This section summarizes what has so far been proposed about Iago (and to a lesser extent other characters in *Othello*) as well as the current developments in corpus stylistics.

The master and the puppets: characters in *Othello*

As pointed out by John W. Draper in his article "Honest Iago," there is a general agreement among scholars and critics of Shakespeare across centuries, from Johnson, Coleridge, Swinburne and Shaw to Bradley, Canning, Herford, Stoll and Winstanley, as well as visible German and French writers and academics, that Iago is "a villain of the deepest dye" (724). There is thus a consensus that Iago is a villainous, manipulative, dishonest and deceitful character, even if researchers may disagree on his motives. In his article "Iago—An extraordinary honest man," Weston

Babcock for instance agrees that Iago is an exceptionally clever manipulator (299–300; 301) yet ascribes this behaviour not to his wickedness but to his frustration stemming from a socially inferior rank of which he is constantly reminded by other characters, something also apparent in the characters' use of *thou* and *you* (298).

Bradley, Arenas and West, on the other hand, characterize Iago not as a wronged or understandably envious man but as a psychopathic schemer. A. C. Bradley in his *Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth* chooses what Arenas describes as a "humanizing approach to literary characters" (Arenas 43) and arrives at similar conclusions as Arenas does in his article "Causal attribution and the analysis of literary characters", where he uses Covariance Theory of Causal Attribution (CTCA) to review Bradley's claims about Iago. Arenas thus uses a cognitive approach to confirm Bradley's characterization of Iago as an exceptionally clever schemer with a tendency to deceive (Arenas 56; cf. Bradley 211) and succeed at it (Arenas 59; cf. Bradley 192), turning other characters, primarily Othello, into his puppets (Arenas 57; cf. Bradley 195). Fred West goes a step further in his article "Iago the Psychopath", stating that there was great interest in (what we now know as) the field of psychology during Shakespeare's time (27), that Shakespeare himself must have been familiar with it (34) and that he constructed Iago as a clinically accurate example of a psychopath (27). West also revises Bradley's description of Iago and claims that it clearly depicts Iago as a psychopath (33) even though Bradley never uses the term himself. Similarly, Marvin Rosenberg in his article "In defense of Iago" analyzes Iago as having a neurotic personality. Rosenberg uses a psychoanalytic approach and relies upon the theoretical contributions of Karen Horney to explain Iago's manipulative scheming (151) and his exceptional abilities as well as his desire to deceive (152) as a consequence of a "severe function disorder" (155).

Earl L. Dachslager, on the other hand, points out that what makes Iago a superb character is precisely the elusiveness of his motives (5), which are also, he claims, rather unimportant as he merely does what he is supposed to do as a dramatic character: perform his function of the villain (10). In a similar manner, instead of focusing on Iago's motives, Jacobsen, Beier, Altman and Vickers focus on Iago's superb rhetorical skills which he uses to gain power over other characters. In the article "Iago's art of war: the 'Machiavellian moment' in *Othello*," Ken Jacobsen writes that Iago's smooth and convincing manipulation (502) is largely informed by Machiavelli's text *The Art of War* (498). Iago, as analyzed by Jacobsen, employs Machiavelli's military techniques transferred to the level of speech in order to gain power over other characters, as military strategy (Iago as the general) and rhetoric (Iago as the orator) are closely connected (505).

Benjamin V. Beier in the article "The art of persuasion and Shakespeare's two Iagos" similarly describes Iago as "the play's exemplary sophist" (36) since his

goals as well as his methods are unethical and his skill of manipulation extraordinary (38), and claims that it is through Iago (especially in comparison with Iachimo from *Cymbeline*) that Shakespeare explores the dangerous powers of sophistry. Brian Vickers in "Power of persuasion" marks Iago as "Shakespeare's greatest rhetorician" (434 qtd. in Beier), and in his study *The Improbability of Othello,* Joel Altman, labelling *Othello* as the most intimate portrait of "rhetorical anthropology" (22), analyzes Iago's great skills of manipulation on the basis of the Greek sophists Protagoras, Gorgias, and Isocrates (23). In "Talk, small talk and silence in *Othello*," Robert Frost uses discourse analysis to characterize Iago as a manipulative and cunning initiator of dialogue based on the manner Iago chooses to get Othello's attention. Iago is also described as an initiator in Alexander G. Gonzalez's article "The infection and spread of evil: some major patterns of imagery and language in *Othello*." Gonzalez analyzes Iago's technique of infecting other characters with his manner of speech and thought and then letting them finish his job for him (37).

Iago's status as a villainous master manipulator is thus largely agreed upon by a majority of scholars and critics employing various methodological tools. Seen either as a wicked man, a wronged man, a psychopath or the Devil itself, Iago is commonly regarded as a deceitful, lying and cunning character. Othello, on the other hand, is commonly thought of as a good, noble and trustful character, not unintelligent yet not as sharp as Iago (cf. Bradley 189), which is why he also fails to recognize Iago's intrigue. He is, however, not to be blamed for his inability to see through Iago's manipulation, as none of the characters are in fact able to see through him (cf. Bradley 192; Arenas 56; Jacobsen 508; Draper 725–6; Beier 43, 46-7; Rosenberg 152), not even his wife Emilia, whose love for and loyalty to Desdemona proves crucial in the end (cf. Bradley 239–40; Babcock 301; Jacobsen 529). Emilia and Desdemona are commonly regarded as likeable characters (cf. Gonzalez 39), as is the character of Cassio (ibid.), who is regarded as a good-natured and handsome character loyal to Othello (cf. Bradley 238–9). One of the least important characters per se yet crucial for Iago's plan is the character of Roderigo, who primarily functions as Iago's most easily manipulated tool (cf. Gonzalez 46).

Corpus stylistic approaches to Shakespeare

Despite developing rather late compared to other areas of corpus research, corpus stylistics has had an important impact on literary critical work since the early 2000s. What is more, Sean Murphy, Dawn Archer, and Jane Demmen demonstrate that corpus stylistic methods to Shakespeare are "well established" with a number of different studies already undertaken in this vein (224). An

important contribution to corpus stylistic studies of Shakespeare is the 2020 special issue of *Language and Literature*, entitled *Shakespeare's Language: Styles and meanings via computer,* which offers a selection of corpus-based studies of Shakespeare's plays.

One such corpus-based approach, also used in this paper, is keyword analysis, used early on in Shakespearean stylistics by Jonathan Culpeper, whose corpus-based study "Computers, language and characterisation: An analysis of six characters in *Romeo and Juliet*" from 2002 this paper is largely informed by. In his innovative study, Culpeper analyzes the dialogue in *Romeo and Juliet* using keyword analysis to demonstrate how this computational approach can be used to determine the speech-styles of different characters. He also emphasizes how function words such as pronouns can be an important factor in determining style (27). "Style," as explained by Culpeper, "is a matter of 'frequencies', 'probabilities' and 'norms'" (12). Style-markers can be equated with words whose frequencies in the text under investigation are significantly skewed compared to their frequencies in some reference text(s), which corresponds very well to the statistical notion of "keyword" (cf. Culpeper, "Keyness" 30). In his 2009 article, Culpeper analyzes key part-of-speech and key semantic domains in addition to keywords, once again using *Romeo and Juliet* to illustrate how these additional research techniques may be of great contribution to keyword analysis with regard to characterization.

Keyword analysis can thus be used as a starting point for characterization, as "the text for each character is highly likely to constitute a different, and sometimes radically different, kind of style" (Culpeper, "Keyness" 31). In their study "Depictions of deception: A corpus-based analysis of five Shakespearean characters," for example, Dawn Archer and Mathew Gillings also use keyword analysis, in combination with some additional techniques, to characterize five deceptive Shakespeare's characters: Aaron, Tamora, Lady Macbeth, Falstaff and Iago. Their findings reveal that the five examined characters exhibit different deceptive speech-styles consistent with their different character traits. They also confirm a correlation between Shakespeare's depictions of deceptive language and a real-life use of deceptive language features. They analyze Iago on the basis of six keywords: *money*, *purse*, *Roderigo*, *lieutenant*, *sleep*, and *angry*, and discuss how these keywords reveal Iago's cunningness although this may not be readily apparent (253–4). They also examine the characters' use of pronouns and find that, across the board, deceptive characters statistically overuse other-oriented references (e.g., you, he, she, him) as opposed to non-deceptive characters, who predominantly use self-oriented references (e.g., I, me, my). Furthermore, they find that this feature is, even among the deceitful characters, especially typical for Iago, who proves to be particularly skilful at keeping himself out of others' focus (261).

METHODOLOGY

Keeping in mind its historical nature and potential problems such as spelling variation and the existence of various editions of *Othello*, the online version published on *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*[1] webpage was used. This was followed by the choice of characters to be examined and compared to Iago and the compilation of corpora and reference corpora. First, the three most prominent male characters were included who are characteristically different from Iago, that is, not presented as cunning and deceitful: Othello, Cassio and Roderigo. Then the two most prominent female characters were added, Desdemona and Emilia. Excluding stage directions and other non-speech material, six different corpora were compiled, each consisting of the lines spoken by the target character only: Iago Corpus, Othello Corpus, Cassio Corpus, Roderigo Corpus, Desdemona Corpus and Emilia Corpus. Each character corpus was then paired with a corresponding reference corpus, consisting of a combination of all the lines spoken by other characters.

Sketch Engine was selected as the tool to be used for corpus analysis, and each character was examined for seven different types of keywords as the "key items that reflect the distinctive styles of each character compared with the other characters in the same play" (Culpeper, "Keyness" 34):

- positive single-words (with the parameter for the rare-common focus set at 1000)
- negative single-words (rare-common focus: 1000)
- positive multi-words (rare-common focus: 1000)
- negative multi-words (rare-common focus: 1000)
- positive common/grammatically oriented single-words (rare-common focus: 1000000)
- negative common/grammatically oriented single-words (rare-common focus: 1000000)
- positive rare/lexically oriented single-words (rare-common focus: 0.001)

Here, the term *multi-words* refers to combinations of two words. *Positive* keywords are items that are overrepresented in a character's speech compared to other characters' lines, and *negative* keywords are items that a character uses less commonly than the other protagonists. When it comes to the last group of rare/lexically oriented keywords, only positive single-words were considered, since positive as well as negative rare multi-words turned out to be extremely similar or identical (e.g. Roderigo) to keywords (1000): (negative or positive) multi-words, probably

1 http://shakespeare.mit.edu/index.html

due to the smallness of the corpora. It is for the same reason that the minimum frequency was set to 1 and only the top 10 keywords were considered with some interesting and interpretatively important exceptions discussed below. The attribute for all of the corpora was set to lemma.

The last step was to deal with spelling variation, which has been deemed "perhaps the greatest obstacle in the statistical manipulation of historical texts" (Culpeper, "Romeo and Juliet" 14). In this case, using a single play facilitated the manipulation of the data, as the small size of the datasets allowed manual scrutiny (cf. Culpeper, "Keyness" 31), so examples of spelling variation which were parsed incorrectly, such as *ti* or *t* for *tis*, for instance, were rare and did not present an issue as the concordances in such cases were simply manually checked.

RESULTS OF KEYWORD ANALYSIS

Table 1: Keywords for Iago

	keywords (1000): single-words	**negative keywords (1000): single-words**	**keywords (1000): multi-words**	**negative keywords (1000): multi-words**	**common/ grammati-cally orient-ed keywords (1000000)**	**negative common/ grammati-cally orient-ed keywords (1000000)**	**rare/ lexically oriented keywords (0.001)**
1	Roderigo	Iago	good lieutenant	honest Iago	you	my	mark
2	lieutenant	heaven	good name	o thou	he	I	thief
3	Moor	willow	noble nature	good night	in	me	trash
4	may	thou	noble lord	good Iago	his	O	sometimes
5	which	O	honest man	virtuous Desdemona	him	thou	second
6	mark	husband	fair Desdemona	whole course	be	Iago	directly
7	his	die	inclining Desdemona	o devil	a	do	degree
8	yourself	me	lusty Moor	thou diest	and	have	clink
9	money	my	great ability	good faith	Cassio	heaven	chair
10	Cassio	deed	timorous accent	good lady	as	it	apt

Table 2: Keywords for Othello

	keywords (1000): single-words	negative keywords (1000): single-words	keywords (1000): multi-words	negative keywords (1000): multi-words	common/ grammatically oriented keywords (1000000)	negative common/grammatically oriented keywords (1000000)	rare/ lexically oriented keywords (0.001)
1	thy	lord	honest Iago	o heaven	of	you	moon
2	Iago	Moor	whole course	good liutenant	the	him	story
3	once	him	o devil	good lord	thou	he	soft
4	thee	may	st thou	noble lord	thy	lord	earth
5	turn	help	o thou	virtuous Desdemona	Iago	I	wake
6	thou	alas	gentle Desdemona	other course	O	be	pitiful
7	handkerchief	willow	brave Iago	good faith	she	his	oh
8	whose	his	o brave Iago	warlike isle	her	in	heed
9	heaven	he	such accomodation	heavenly light	thee	will	yond
10	moon	watch	old acquaintance	nether lip	my	Moor	wont

Table 3: Keywords for Cassio

	keywords (1000): single-words	negative keywords (1000): single-words	keywords (1000): multi-words	negative keywords (1000): multi-words	common/ grammatically oriented keywords (1000000)	negative common/ grammatically oriented keywords (1000000)	rare/ lexically oriented keywords (0.001)
1	ha	lord	virtuous Desdemona	good night	the	do	ship
2	drunk	say	good Iago	honest Iago	me	her	past
3	reputation	thy	divine Desdemona	o heaven	I	as	exquisite
4	general	Cassio	bold Iago	good liutenant	of	lord	expert
5	Bianca	as	good ancient	sweet Desdemona	Iago	Cassio	enemy
6	save	husband	haste-post-haste appearaance	good lord	here	you	drinking

7	bold	when	own powerful breath	noble lord	general	say	divine
8	ancient	these	powerful breath	honest man	ha	if	arrive
9	God	handkerchief	poor caitiff	st thou	drunk	thy	Fore
10	Iago	her	great contention	whole course	reputation	not	worser

Table 4: Keywords for Roderigo

	keywords (1000): single-words	**negative keywords (1000): single-words**	**keywords (1000): multi-words**	**negative keywords (1000): multi-words**	**common/ grammatically oriented keywords (1000000)**	**negative common/ grammatically oriented keywords (1000000)**	**rare/ lexically oriented keywords (0.001)**
1	signior	love	lascivious Moor	good night	I	the	wheel
2	return	Cassio	wise consent	honest Iago	have	he	votarist
3	Barbatio	lord	fair daughter	o heaven	me	love	unkindly
4	reason	speak	great devotion	good liutenant	will	for	tush
5	myself	see	inhuman dog	o thou	if	Cassio	transport
6	issue	such	much experience	sweet Desdemona	it	a	torment
7	tell	there	full fortune	good Iago	but	his	tie
8	jewel	must	good guard	good lord	to	lord	thinkest
9	courtesy	upon	common hire	noble lord	not	by	thicklip
10	house	their	knave of common hire	honest man	can	as	suppliest

Table 5: Keywords for Desdemona

	keywords (1000): single-words	negative keywords (1000): single-words	keywords (1000): multi-words	negative keywords (1000): multi-words	common/ grammatically oriented keywords (1000000)	negative common/ grammatically oriented keywords (1000000)	rare/ lexically oriented keywords (0.001)
1	willow	Desdemona	good night	honest Iago	I	the	unkindness
2	lord	she	good faith	o heaven	my	and	falsely
3	Emilia	more	green willow	good liutenant	lord	she	sing
4	praise	Iago	noble Moor	o thou	him	her	unpin
5	sing	up	dear absence	sweet Desdemona	do	of	trespass
6	him	devil	finger ache	good Iago	me	it	sooth
7	talk	ti (*tis*)	last article	homest man	willow	this	morn
8	bad	thus	such baseness	st thou	not	a	more
9	lose	which	unkind breach	virtuous Desdemona	you	ti (*tis*)	education
10	alas	nothing	maid call	other course	so	more	dinner

Table 6: Keywords for Emilia

	keywords (1000): single-words	negative keywords (1000): single-words	keywords (1000): multi-words	negative keywords (1000): multi-words	common/ grammatically oriented keywords (1000000)	negative common/ grammatically oriented keywords (1000000)	rare/ lexically oriented keywords (0.001)
1	husband	of	good madam	good night	husband	of	villany
2	villany	sir	o villany	honest Iago	have	to	frailty
3	jelaous	much	o heaven	good Iago	O	and	despite
4	madam	one	t Iago (*"give it to Iago"*)	noble lord	lord	in	yonder
5	lady	at	cruel Moor	honest man	she	me	wicked
6	alas	these	dull Moor	st thou	for	him	west
7	false	him	o thou dull Moor	virtuous Desdemona	do	be	wedlock
8	us	night	thou dull Moor	other course	speak	the	wayward
9	lie	yet	great affinity	o devil	some	love	wager
10	speak	Othello	filthy bargain	thou diest	it	I	venture

FROM KEYWORDS TO KEY CHARACTER TRAITS

Generating a list of keywords "does not in itself constitute an analysis" (Bondi 3) and "only by examining the usage of those keywords can [one] determine whether a keyword has anything to do with characterisation" (Culpeper, "Romeo and Juliet" 18). The characterization of Iago as a deceitful character is carried out by comparing his keywords to the keywords of the other five examined characters. The interpretative analysis of the obtained data is divided into six (interconnected) points of comparison: focus, adjectives, the use of the expression Moor, references to the handkerchief, poisoning-the-ears technique, and pronouns.

Focus

Iago's top three keywords (1000: single-words), referred to here as the character's focus, are *Roderigo*, *lieutenant*, which refers to Cassio, and *Moor*, which refers to Othello. The three unlucky characters in Iago's focus all end up fighting, wounded and/or dying either of each other's or their own hand, which goes to prove how successful a manipulator Iago is, as this is one of his goals (cf. Beier 39).

Othello's top keywords (1000: single-words), in comparison, show his preoccupation with Iago, as *Iago* is his second top keyword. Furthermore, Othello's first keyword is *thy* which is used predominantly to refer to Iago and Desdemona, or to Emilia, speaking to her about Iago, for example in the often repeated phrase "thy husband". As *honest Iago* is Othello's top multi-word keyword (1000), his preoccupation with and what seems a kind of dependency on Iago can again be interpreted as proof of Iago's successful manipulation of Othello (cf. Arenas 57; Bradley 196–7; Gonzalez 37). Cassio, on the other hand, does not seem to pay much attention to Iago as his top three keywords are *ha*, *drunk* and *reputation,* yet his lack of attention (cf. Bradley 238) makes him just as easy a pray (Gonzalez 46). It is also clear that Cassio ignorantly trusts Iago, as *good Iago* is Cassio's second multi-word (1000) keyword, which again confirms Iago's manipulator status.

Adjectives

At first glance, some keywords may seem irrelevant for the present analysis yet they prove to be important tools of manipulation when considered in context (Archer and Gillings 252). The adjectives Iago uses point to his manipulative nature as they are either flattering or pejorative, often about the same referent, depending on the situation Iago finds himself in (cf. Jacobsen 507 on Iago's adaptation of his manner of speech to different interlocutors). The group of the

most interesting and relevant keywords for this point are the positive and negative (1000) multi-word keywords.

As pointed out by Archer and Gillings, to disguise his ill intentions regarding Cassio, for instance, Iago cunningly refers to him as *good lieutenant,* but only after he has already revealed his cunning scheme[2] to the audience (253). In this situation the flattering adjective thus clearly points to his manipulative MO (cf. Frost on Iago's increasingly ironic use of *noble lord*). Another subtle proof of his manipulation is the way he describes Desdemona. As he is carefully trying to convince Othello of her infidelity yet retain the façade of good intentions, he calls her *fair Desdemona* and *inclining Desdemona* but never *virtuous Desdemona*, a phrase which we in fact find in his negative keywords. Lastly, adjectives reveal further evidence of his success in Othello's top multi-word keyword (1000): *honest Iago.* This makes it clear that Othello, just like the other characters, trusts him (cf. Bradley 192; Arenas 56; Jacobsen 508; Draper 725–6; Beier 43, 46–7; Rosenberg 152) which is additional proof of his successful manipulation.

Moor

Not unlike adjectives, the use of the arguably pejorative expression *Moor* by different characters is another interesting feature. As pointed out by Maggie Bayles in "Othello: The 'Other,'" the expression *Moor* functions as an othering device used in tandem with animalistic and hyper-sexualized imagery evident in expressions such as *black ram*[3] and *thicklip* (cf. Roderigo's keywords) to continuously emphasize Othello's position of an outsider. As mentioned above, *Moor* is Iago's third top keyword (1000), as this is a common expression he uses to talk about Othello to other characters. When he is speaking to Othello directly, however, he uses the fourth top multi-word keyword (1000), *noble lord,* again revealing his deceitful nature, as argued already by Frost. Tables 7, 8, and 9 list additional negative keywords (1000, multi-words) for *Moor.*

Table 7: Iago's negative keywords *(1000) multi-words* featuring *Moor*

24	cruel Moor
25	dull Moor
26	lascivious Moor
27	noble Moor
28	o thou dull Moor
29	thou dull Moor

2 "with as little a web as this will I / ensnare as great a fly as Cassio" (2.1.157)

3 "An old black ram / is tupping your white ewe" (1.1.89–90)

Table 8: Othello's negative keywords *(1000) multi-words* featuring *Moor*

25	cruel Moor
26	dull Moor
27	lascivious Moor
28	lusty Moor
29	noble Moor
30	o thou dull Moor
31	thou dull Moor

Table 9: Cassio's negative keywords *(1000) multi-words* featuring *Moor*

33	cruel Moor
34	dull Moor
35	lascivious Moor
36	lusty Moor
37	noble Moor
38	o thou dull Moor
39	thou dull Moor

As we can see, Iago somewhat carefully only ever uses the expressions *Moor* and *lusty Moor* even when he is speaking to other characters. He is, it seems, always careful not to reveal his villainous nature (cf. Bradley 216; Dachslager 6). If we then examine the usage of other expressions featuring the word *Moor* in the tables above, we see that *lascivious Moor* is used by Roderigo, *noble Moor* interestingly by Desdemona and the rest, *cruel Moor*, *dull Moor*, *o thou dull Moor* and *thou dull Moor* by Emilia. This seems to suggest that it is in fact Iago's wife who dislikes Othello the most. However, as proposed by Culpeper in his "Romeo and Juliet" article, "[a]n important factor … in determining whether keywords relate to a particular character or not is whether they are localised or well-dispersed throughout the play" (39). Emilia uses all those labels in the final act, where Othello, enraged by jealousy that Iago instills into him, murders Desdemona, so they are rather an expression of her distress in this particular situation (cf. Bradley 240) and not so much a reflection of her general dislike for Othello (cf. Culpeper 2009, 41 with regard to the character of Romeo). What is more interesting although less apparent is that Cassio never, not once, uses the expression *Moor*, which additionally even appears as his thirteenth single-word negative keyword (1000), and only ever refers to Othello as *general*, which is his fourth top single-word keyword (1000). This suggests that Cassio is an honest character and reinforces the interpretation that he is truly devoted to Othello (cf. Bradley 238–9; Gonzalez 39).

Handkerchief

Further evidence of Iago's successful manipulation, as well as Cassio's ignorance of it, can be found in the presence and absence of the keyword *handkerchief*. The handkerchief is used by Iago to seemingly prove to Othello that Desdemona is having an affair with Cassio yet it does not appear in his keywords. Iago only subtly plants the idea in Othello's – at the time already manipulated and thus suspicious – mind[4] (cf. Bradley 186; Jacobsen 519; Beier 43): "Tell me but this, / Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief / Spotted with strawberries in your wife's hand?" (3.3.443–5). It is Othello who then becomes preoccupied with it (cf. Beier 41; Gonzalez 47–8): it appears in seventh place among his single-words (1000) keywords. Cassio, however, has no idea about Iago's plan (cf. Bradley 239), which is supported by the fact that *handkerchief* not only does not appear within his positive keywords, but even appears in his negative single-word (1000) keywords and thus emphasizes his ignorance as well as the success of Iago's cunning plan.

Poisoning the ears

Subtle planting of ideas into other characters' minds seems to be Iago's speciality (cf. Jacobsen 521; Beier 41) and yet additional proof of his cunningness (cf. Arenas 56; Bradley 192; Jacobsen 517) as apparent in his speech (Jacobsen 528; Gonzalez 36–7). This aspect of his subtly manipulative speech (cf. Jacobsen 516) can also be observed in his frequent use of expressions such as *may, mark* and *see* (Iago's eleventh positive single-word keyword: 1000), all of which appear on his list of keywords (single-words: 1000), also in combination with *sometimes* (cf. handkerchief), appearing in his rare or lexically-oriented keywords (0.001), which further points to his careful and indirect smooth-talking and manipulation (cf. Jacobsen 502; Beier 40, 43).

Instead of bluntly telling his victims what he wants them to believe, Iago carefully guides them towards certain conclusions in such a way that the victims think they saw everything on their own: "You shall observe him / And his own courses will denote him so / That I may save my speech: do but go after / And mark how he continues" (4.1.229–32). First, he delicately pours the poison, all the while making sure he is efficient yet not too direct: "Foh! one may smell in such a will most rank / Foul disproportion thoughts unnatural / But pardon me; I do not in position / Distinctly speak of her, though I may fear…" (3.3.238–41). Then he provides further guidelines such as: "Didst thou not see her / … didst not mark that?" (2.1.246–7), or, "I say, but mark his gesture" (4.1.77), "And mark the fleers,

4 "The Moor already changes with my poison" (3.3.335).

the gibes, and notable scorns / That dwell in every region of his face" (4.1.72–3). He thus carefully creates and then controls the situation yet cunningly positions himself outside of it, presenting himself merely as an objective observer.

Pronouns

A similar technique can also be observed in the most interesting and perhaps the most telling feature of all, Iago's use of pronouns, especially when compared to other characters. Pronouns normally appear in the positive and negative grammatically-oriented single-word keywords (1000000) presented below.

Table 10: Pronouns among positive and negative grammatically-oriented single-word keywords (1000000)

	Iago +	**-**	**Othello+**	**-**	**Cassio +**	**-**	**Roderigo +**	**-**	**Desdemona +**	**-**	**Emilia +**	**-**
1	you	my		you			I		I			
2	he	I		him	me	her		he	my			
3		me	thou	he	I		me			she		
4	his		thy						him	her		
5	him	thou		I							she	me
6						you			me			him
7			she	his				his				
8			her									
9			thee			thy			you			
10			my									I

As proposed by Archer and Gillings, the pronouns are divided into "(singular and plural) self-oriented references and (singular and plural) other-oriented references" (257). The findings confirm their claim that other-oriented references are more typical of deceptive characters as they suggest that the character is "taking the focus away from himself" (261). Especially telling is the fact that the pronoun *I* appears among Iago's negative keywords and his positive keywords consist mostly of other-oriented pronouns such as *you, he, his* and *him* (ibid.).

In contrast, other, non-deceitful, characters predominantly tend to use self-oriented references, something particularly obvious in Cassio's, Roderigo's and Desdemona's speech, which further supports Archer and Gilling's findings although these three characters were not included in their research. Othello, interestingly, does not use self-oriented pronouns. That, however, is rather the consequence of him being completely taken in by Iago's schemes (cf. Arenas 57). He consequently mainly focuses on Desdemona (*thy*, *she*, *her*). He also tends to focus on Iago, but

in a non-threatening, dependent way. This goes to prove that Iago's cunning and manipulative nature is indeed expressed in his speech and stylistically differentiated from the speech of other, non-deceitful characters.

CONCLUSION

Keyword analysis is a useful and already established method in the research of stylistic features of language, including when it comes to the characteristics of fictional characters' speech. In this paper keyword analysis is used to determine whether the status of the villainous character Iago from Shakespeare's tragedy *Othello, the Moor of Venice* as a manipulative puppet-master is also reflected in his speech-style. This is confirmed on the basis of six points of discussion: focus, adjectives, use of the expression *Moor*, references to the handkerchief, poisoning-the-ears technique, and pronouns. While keyword analysis is a form of computer-assisted research and the interpretation of the data requires a certain amount of subjectivity, all of the discussed features show that Iago's cunning nature is indeed reflected in his speech and that there is a clear difference between his speech-style and the speech-styles of other, non-deceitful, prominent characters, especially Othello and Cassio.

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»Tisto pa več nisem jaz«[5]: korpusna analiza Jaga iz Shakespearove tragedije *Othello*

Prispevek na podlagi analize ključnih besed obravnava Jaga iz Shakespearovega *Othella*. Namen prispevka je raziskati, kako se v Jagovem načinu govora odraža njegova manipulativna narava in kako se njegov govor potemtakem razlikuje od govora nemanipulativnih osrednjih likov, in sicer Othella, Cassia, Roderiga, Desdemone in Emilije. Diskusija temelji na analizi ključnih besed posameznih dramskih likov z orodjem Sketch Engine in je razdeljena na šest medsebojno povezanih delov: fokus, raba pridevnikov, raba izraza *Maver*, omemba Desdemoninega robčka, Jagova tehnika zastrupljanja ušes in raba zaimkov. Raziskava potrjuje, da se Jagova manipulativna narava resnično zrcali v njegovem govoru, ta pa se tudi jasno razlikuje od govora ostalih obravnavanih likov.

Ključne besede: karakterizacija, korpusno jezikoslovje, analiza ključnih besed, Othello, William Shakespeare, Jago

5 Shakespeare, William. *Othello*. Trans. Milan Jesih. Mladinska knjiga, 1996.

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Responses to *Gone with the Wind* among Slovenians on the Other Side of the Atlantic

Janko Trupej

Abstract

The article discusses the reception of the novel and the film *Gone with the Wind* in serial publications published by Slovenian immigrants in the United States of America. The analysis encompassed relevant articles that appeared in publications with different ideological orientations before the mid-1950s, i.e. until the onset of the modern African American civil rights movement. The reception by Slovenian Americans is compared with the contemporary general reception of the novel and the film in the United States. Taking the historical context into consideration, the article also endeavours to establish the reasons for the differences in the reception.

Keywords: Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind*, Slovenian Americans, serial publications, reception, American literature

INTRODUCTION

In the 1930s, several writers from the former Confederate States of America published novels dealing with the Civil War—some of them tried to rehabilitate the image of the South (Gómez-Galisteo 15–16). Margaret Mitchell's 1936 bestseller *Gone with the Wind*, along with David O. Selznick's extremely successful 1939 Hollywood production of the same name, are examples *par excellence* of the latter endeavour.[1] *Gone with the Wind* has had considerable influence on the general public's perception of the antebellum American South, the War Between the States and its aftermath (Gómez-Galisteo 60, 69–70, 177; Schuessler; Stewart). However, some aspects of the narrative that initially may not have been perceived as particularly problematic became an issue as audiences' 'horizon of expectations'[2] about the portrayal of black people in fiction changed along with the gradual changes regarding the (un)acceptability of racism in society; for decades, *Gone with the Wind* has thus been challenged on the grounds of exhibiting racist attitudes towards African Americans, using racial slurs, perpetuating racial stereotypes, etc. (see, e.g., Asim 131–33; Gómez-Galisteo 7, 57–60, 177–78; Haskell 19–20, 32, 205–11; Ryan 22, 26, 48; Sova 167; Stewart).[3] In spite of such criticisms, both the novel and the film have remained popular (Gómez-Galisteo 3, 101; Haskell 4–6; see also Wiley, "Epilogue" 424–26), although not as critically acclaimed as they once were (Gómez-Galisteo 176); however, *habent sua fata libelli*: in 2012, the Library of Congress (N. N.) included *Gone with the Wind* in an exhibition entitled *Books That Shaped America*.

The present article will analyse the reactions to *Gone with the Wind* (both the book and the film) in serial publications published by Slovenian immigrants in the USA before the mid-1950s.[4] A study about the reception of Mark Twain's works among Slovenian Americans showed that the ideological orientation of

1 For instance, Jacqueline Stewart stated that the film "looks back nostalgically at idyllic days that are no more (because they never were)".

2 *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Baldick 116) defines this concept—as used by Hans Robert Jauss—as "the set of cultural norms, assumptions, and criteria shaping the way in which readers understand and judge a literary work at a given time. It may be formed by such factors as the prevailing conventions and definitions of art (e.g. decorum), or current moral codes."

3 The controversy has intensified recently: in June 2020, amid Black Lives Matter protests, HBO removed *Gone with the Wind* from its streaming service, citing the film's 'racist depictions' as the reason. When it was made available again, the film was accompanied by two videos of scholars discussing its historical context (Stewart; see also Schuessler).

4 By the time *Gone with the Wind* again made major headlines upon the film being re-released for the centennial of the beginning of the Civil War in 1961, many Slovenian immigrant serial publications had ceased to exist. In addition, some are not available in the Digital Library of Slovenia, which was used to compile the corpus for the present analysis.

a particular publication profoundly influenced the way the author was perceived (Trupej, "Ideological" 143–50), while a study about the Slovenian reception of selected novels including racist discourse established differences between the pre- and post-World War II responses to *Gone with the Wind* on the territory that now constitutes the Republic of Slovenia (Trupej, "Recepcija" 222–24).[5] It can therefore be presumed that the discourse about *Gone with the Wind* in Slovenian American publications may also have been influenced by ideology.

To establish a frame of reference, an overview of the contemporary general reception of *Gone with the Wind* in the United States will be presented first. Afterwards, the responses to the novel and the film by Slovenians across the Atlantic will be analysed, and the possible reasons for the differences between the reception in different serial publications will be discussed.

THE INITIAL RECEPTION OF *GONE WITH THE WIND* IN THE SOURCE CULTURE

Gone with the Wind became an instant bestseller when it was published in 1936 and would eventually go on to sell more copies than any other literary work in the United States of America up to that point; it received numerous positive reviews (even garnering comparisons to classic works of world literature, including *War and Peace* and *Vanity Fair*), and was awarded both the Pulitzer Prize and the American Booksellers Association prize (Gómez-Galisteo 17–18; see also Haskell 22–23; Jeff; Schuessler; Wiley, "Prologue" XXII–III).[6] However, critical opinions about the novel's artistic value were also expressed;[7] an aspect of Mitchell's writing that was frequently criticized was her journalistic prose style or even lack of style (Gómez-Galisteo 25, 28; Haskell 23). Furthermore, some, for instance the scholar L. D. Reddick (qtd. in Gómez-Galisteo 22), warned that because of its immense popularity, this novel—"written with a passionate sectional and racial bias"—might influence the public's perception of the Civil War and the Reconstruction, while influential literary critic Malcolm Cowley (qtd. in Haskell 23) declared it "an encyclopaedia of the plantation legend". While communist and other left-wing reviewers offered particularly severe criticism of Mitchell's

5 The novel was translated into Slovenian twice: the first translation by Mirko Košir (under the pseudonym M. Rožič) was published in 1939/1940, and a retranslation by Janko Moder was published in 1965. After World War II, the film was also shown in Slovenian cinemas.

6 *Gone with the Wind* has sold more than 28 million copies worldwide (Haskell 6) and has been translated into over 30 languages (Gómez-Galisteo 22).

7 For instance, commenting on the novel, F. Scott Fitzgerald (one of the uncredited screenwriters for the film) stated that he "felt no contempt for it, but only a certain pity for those who consider it the supreme achievement of the human mind" (qtd. in Haskell 159).

portrayal of slavery and racial relations, this issue was largely glossed over in the mainstream media at the time of the novel's initial publication (Gómez-Galisteo 57, 59), and *Gone with the Wind* was also referred to in positive terms upon the author's death in 1949 (see Wiley, "Epilogue" 423–24).

The writer herself rejected criticism of her portrayal of African Americans in *Gone with the Wind*, remarking that "most of the negro characters were people of worth, dignity and rectitude" (Mitchell 65).[8] She later asserted that she never had the intention of 'insulting the Race'; quite the contrary, Mitchell claimed that her "relations [with African Americans] have always been those of affection and mutual respect" and that throughout her life, she often tried to help them in different ways.[9] Furthermore, she stated that the African Americans she knew personally had expressed positive opinions about the book, and she speculated that *Gone with the Wind* was a pawn in the game of the radical left trying to incite Southern African Americans to join the Communist Party (Mitchell 223–24). She also expressed disapproval of the second incarnation of the Ku Klux Klan, while at the same time praising its predecessor:

> The original Klan grew from a bitter necessity and Southern people respected it for they owed much to it. The present day Klan was a despicable organization and one abhorrent to all decent Southerners. In the early 1920s we suffered much from Klan activities here in Georgia. […] I personally would feel very sorry if the moving picture version of "Gone With the Wind" helped even in a small way to bring it back to life. (Mitchell 119)[10]

Groups advocating for the rights of African Americans, for instance the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), raised objections against *Gone with the Wind* immediately after its publication (Jeff; Schuessler), and after the film was announced, they began to demand that certain racist elements of the novel be excluded. As a result, its racism was somewhat toned down; for instance, the slur 'nigger' is never used, and the Ku Klux Klan is completely absent from the movie (Asim 144–45; Gómez-Galisteo 59; Haskell 202–3; Jeff; Ryan 70–71; Schuessler; Stevens 367). Upon the film's release, some African Americans praised it for eliminating some of the racism (Jeff), while others

8 *Gone with the Wind* screenwriter Sidney Howard praised the characterization of African Americans, claiming they were "the best written darkies […] in all literature" (qtd. in Mitchell 28).

9 For an overview of Mitchell's support of African American individuals and institutions, see Gómez-Galisteo (60). However, in her youth, she reportedly asked to be removed from a class which was also attended by a 'Negro' student (Haskell 200).

10 Through both parents, Mitchell descended from prominent Atlanta families, and thus had heard stories about 'Mr. Lincoln's War' and the 'Lost Cause of the Confederacy' from a very young age (Gómez-Galisteo 16, 23, 27; see also Haskell 106, 194; Wiley, "Prologue" XXI).

condemned the film and picketed it (Haskell 214; Jeff; Ryan 71).[11] Despite such controversy, it became one of the most successful motion pictures of all time and received ten Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Supporting Actress, which was awarded to Hattie McDaniel for her role as Mammy (Haskell 5, 31–32)—she was the first African American ever to get nominated (Jeff). However, even after she won an Oscar, she was criticized, for instance, by the president of the NAACP for portraying a stereotypical black character (Haskell 214).

RESPONSES TO *GONE WITH THE WIND* IN SLOVENIAN AMERICAN SERIAL PUBLICATIONS

Gone with the Wind was sporadically mentioned in the conservative newspaper *Ameriška domovina*. In 1937, it is referred to as an interesting and frequently discussed novel in one article,[12] as a best-seller in another,[13] while an article published the following year reports that a certain Slovenian American female claimed that she had read the novel in only two days and that one of her friends needed four days to finish it.[14] In 1949, *Ameriška domovina* reported that sales of the novel had reached six million copies, which made it second only to the Bible in all-time sales figures.[15] When reporting on Mitchell's death, the newspaper erroneously stated that she wrote "one of the greatest films"[16] (she did not participate in writing the screenplay at all), and that she played the main role in it—Scarlett O'Hara was portrayed by Vivien Leigh.[17]

Several times the novel and/or film were mentioned in Catholic serial publications. In *Glasilo K. S. K. jednote*, Vital Vodušek mentions that *Gone with the Wind* is a best-seller,[18] while someone writing under the name 'Father Kapistran' reports on the meticulous research that Mitchell supposedly conducted before she decided on the name 'Gerald O'Hara' for one of the important characters; she wanted to make sure that no one with this name lived in Savannah then or had lived

11 See Stevens (367–70) for a more detailed overview of the reactions to the film *Gone with the Wind* in African American serial publications.

12 N. N. Margaret Mitchell. *Ameriška domovina*, 25 May 1937, p. 3.

13 N. N. Rev. Vital Vodušek. *Ameriška domovina*, 9 October 1937, p. 4.

14 N. N. Eleanor Suhadolnik. *Ameriška domovina*, 31 March 1938, p. 6.

15 N. N. Gone with the Wind Hits 6 Million Sale [sic]. *Ameriška domovina*, 25 February 1949, p. 5.

16 Quotations not originally in English were translated by the author of the present article.

17 N. N. Margareth [sic] Mitchell umrla. *Ameriška domovina*, 17 August 1949, p. 1.

18 J. Z. Rev. Vital Vodušek, Missionary, Travels to aid Daraga Seminary. *Glasilo K. S. K. jednote*, 13 October 1937, pp. 7–8.

there in the past.[19] The following year, Kapistran claims that the novel "is popular only by [sic] artificial advertising".[20] *Nova doba* remarks that *Gone with the Wind* is both the longest and the most expensive film in history[21] and later reports on its success at the Academy Awards.[22] This newspaper also reports on the re-release of the film, stating that people cannot seem to get enough of it, since—according to a survey—30% of those who already saw *Gone with the Wind* on the big screen during its original theatrical run, plan on seeing it at the cinema again.[23] In *Ave Maria*, another Catholic newspaper, someone writing under the name 'Friar Fritz' expresses the following sceptical opinion about the novel: "Books of 'Mein Kamp' [sic] and 'Gone with the Wind' calibre are mere fleeting fads. Didn't the last mentioned certainly 'hit the breeze' awfully fast?"[24]

Neither the novel nor the film received much attention from the editorship of the monthly magazine for Slovenian American youth titled *Mladinski list*.[25] The only semi-noteworthy mentions of the novel come from letters sent to the magazine by its readers: John Poklar Jr. refers to it as a 'good book',[26] while Jennie H. Padar states that what she remembered the most about Georgia's exhibit at the 1939 New York World's Fair were copies of *Gone with the Wind* in many different translations.[27]

Gone with the Wind was not prominently featured in *Enakopravnost* either; this liberal newspaper reports that when Kurt Schuschnigg—former Austrian chancellor of Carinthian-Slovenian descent[28]—was held under house arrest by the Gestapo in 1939, he read *Gone with the Wind*;[29] in an article a decade later, it is mentioned in passing that Mitchell is one of the authors who addressed issues concerning black people.[30]

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19 Kapistran, Father. For God, home and country. *Glasilo K. S. K. jednote*, 29 March 1939, p. 8.

20 Kapistran, Father. For God, home and country. *Glasilo K. S. K. jednote*, 6 March 1940, p. 8.

21 N. N. Random Statistics. *Nova doba*, 7 February 1940, p. 6.

22 N. N. Najboljši film. *Nova doba*, 6 March 1940, p. 2.

23 Monitor, Fraternal. Take a Tip From "Gone with the Wind". *Nova doba*, 26 November 1941, p. 7.

24 Fritz, Friar. Let's Review the Catholic's [sic]. *Ave Maria*, February 1942, pp. 38–39.

25 Mark Twain's work (especially his novel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, which addresses the issue of slavery), was discussed a few times during the same period in *Mladinski list*; in some of the articles about Twain, socialist/communist sympathies were expressed (see Trupej, "Ideological" 148–49).

26 Poklar, John. His Hobby is Reading. *Mladinski list*, March 1939, vol. 18, nr. 3, p. 32.

27 Padar, Jennie H. The New York World's Fair. *Mladinski list*, October 1939, vol. 18, nr. 10, pp. 13–14.

28 The Slovenian version of his last name is 'Šušnik'.

29 N. N. Dr. Šušnik je žrtev nezaslišanega sadizma nacijskih [sic] gestapovcev. *Enakopravnost*, 17 November 1939, p. 1.

30 N. N. Hrup julija meseca. *Enakopravnost*, 27 December 1949, p. 3.

In *Zarja*, a magazine published by the Slovenian Women's Union of America, *Gone with the Wind* is described as an interesting novel that turned its author into a millionaire and earned her the Pulitzer Prize,[31] while in a later article it is mentioned that the novel is set during and after the Civil War, and its protagonist Scarlett O'Hara is characterized as "selfish, wilful, magnetic and daring".[32] Furthermore, *Zarja* reports that in the northern United States, there are calls to boycott the film because it allegedly misrepresented the Union Army's actions in the South; the article—which was published shortly after Nazi Germany invaded Poland—concludes that the value of the film is in showcasing the grim realities of war, which should make people strive for peace.[33]

A few noteworthy articles mentioning or discussing *Gone with the Wind* were published in the progressive newspaper *Prosveta*. Mary Jugg refers to it when discussing the status of women in the United States; she remarks that "[a]ccording to Margaret Mitchell's highly interesting and lengthy novel, 'Gone with the Wind', the status of American women since the Civil War period has changed in no small degree."[34] Anna P. Krasna—a self-proclaimed reader of *belles-lettres*—reports that at the book fair in the Rockefeller Center in New York, *Gone with the Wind* was prominently displayed and received considerable attention. She states that she overheard a man declaring the following about the novel:

> It is American, it does not propagate anything new, and it does not condemn anything old in the social sense. […] The romance is presented in a romantic way, but at the same time in a way that makes it appear really modern. This appeals to our sophistical [sic] bourgeoisie, which took to the book like crazy. All our women who want to be perceived as cultured, modern and sophistical [sic] have *Gone with the Wind* in their hands while on the train, in a waiting room or when meeting somebody.

On the other hand, Krasna also reports on seeing a group of primary school children being led to the stand where *Gone with the Wind* was displayed, and one of their teachers heaping the highest praise upon the novel—even proclaiming it an 'unsurpassable historical study'. The author of the article rejects this notion and concurs with the former sceptical opinion; she goes on to criticize the American South because of its racism, lynchings, poor working conditions for labourers, etc.[35] Even more severe criticism of the novel was expressed in the same newspaper by John Spelich:

31 N. N. Ali se je izplačalo spisati novelo "Gone with the Wind"? *Zarja*, June 1937, vol. 9, nr. 6, p. 168.

32 N. N. Gone with the Wind. *Zarja*, May 1937, vol. 9, nr. 5, p. 160.

33 N. N. Popis civilne vojne je povzročil ostro debato. *Zarja*, October 1939, vol. 11, nr. 10, p. 320.

34 Jugg, Mary. Women's Round Table. *Prosveta*, 14 October 1936, p. 8.

35 Krasna, Anna P. Književni semenj. *Prosveta*, 23 November 1936, p. 4.

> A young woman, Margaret Mitchell wrote a novel a few months ago. That, in itself, is no new thing. This book, "Gone with the Wind," marches on and on until it arrives at more than a thousand pages. It is just a good ordinary novel, a novel that one can take or leave alone. Like more than a million other folks, I tried to read "Gone with the Wind" and never get [sic] far enough to find out who it was that had gone with the wind nor where they went. I'll bet anything that ninety per cent of the folks who tried to read this best seller stopped on some pretext or other before getting halfway through. I know during my partial reading of the book, I was looking for a good excuse to lay the thing down. I'd leave it at a word even if the word had to do with sipping a glass o [sic] suds. But everyone said, "Oh, you must read Gone with the Wind," so I tried to. In my humble opinion, it is an excellent book—to block open the door so the cat can come in. Yet, in spite of my opinion, this novel has sold more than a million copies. The reasons are, we think, due to a rather extraordinary good press agent and the well-known sheep-like tendencies of the human race. Those are our sentiments and we will have to stand pat.[36]

However, not all the writing on *Gone with the Wind* published in *Prosveta* was as dismissive as the above examples; for instance, in 1940 it is simply reported that everybody is going to the cinema to see the film.[37]

Perhaps the most ideologically charged condemnation of the novel appeared in the socialist oriented newspaper *Proletarec*, where the author of the article states that, having read the book, he or she has no intention of going to see the film based on it, since it glorifies the aristocratic slave-holding society of the American South. In the continuation, the author quotes lengthy passages from an article[38] by James Dugan, which begins as follows:

> The issues of the Civil War were not solved by Appomattox; a decade of social struggle ensued in the South to decide whether the Negro was really to be free as an economic, political, and social man. It is the era of Reconstruction, 'The Tragic Era' of reactionary usage, which is most vilified in the literature of the Bourbons, now embalmed in the four hour film 'Gone with the Wind'. The picture brings up in typical distorted form the hated symbols of Reconstruction — the carpetbagger, the Freedman's Bureau, the slogan 'Forty Acres and a Mule,' the increased taxes upon the landholders and the Union Army in occupation. The shocked bitterness of the slaveholders at finding themselves suddenly living in a democracy, and the forms of their counter-democratic action, such as the KKK, are idealized in 'Gone with the Wind'.

36 Spelich, John. Mohawks 573. *Prosveta*, 15 June 1938, p. 6.

37 Fifolt, J. F. Off the President's Bat. *Prosveta*, 14 February 1940, p. 7.

38 This article was originally published in the Marxist magazine *New Masses* (Dugan 28–30).

The ensuing passages of the article by Dugan condemn the film by referring to particular scenes as evidence for the above claims.[39] However, not all the mentions of *Gone with the Wind* in *Proletarec* are ideologically charged. For instance, the newspaper reports that Vivien Leigh won the New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Actress for her performance in *Gone with the Wind*.[40] Furthermore, when discussing the contemporary economic system and the way it affects the working class, two articles in *Proletarec* state that some people do not want to acknowledge the reality of the situation, instead opting for the same *modus operandi* that Scarlett O'Hara had when she said: "I'll not think about that today; I'll think of it tomorrow."[41] Towards the end of the 1940s, Raymond S. Hofses again expresses a more critical opinion, remarking that "[i]n reading such books as 'Gone with the Wind,' one gathers that slavery was altogether tolerable for those who lived in the upper strata of the slave class."[42]

CONCLUSION

Gone with the Wind was frequently mentioned/discussed in Slovenian American serial publications from 1936, when the novel was published, to 1940, i.e. the year after its big screen adaptation was released. In later years, *Gone with the Wind* was seldom mentioned, although a few noteworthy articles appeared in 1949—the year of Mitchell's untimely death.

The conservative newspaper *Ameriška domovina* reported on the great commercial success of *Gone with the Wind*, praised the narrative and voiced no critical opinions about it. The Catholic oriented newspapers *Nova doba*, *Ave Maria* and *Glasilo K. S. K. jednote* also focused on the novel's and film's commercial success, but the latter two publications expressed some doubts about *Gone with the Wind*'s artistic value.

Gone with the Wind was mentioned only in passing in the youth magazine *Mladinski list* and the liberal newspaper *Enakopravnost*. It was discussed somewhat more at length in the women's magazine *Zarja*, but the articles about it do not have a clear ideological agenda.

The situation was markedly different in the progressive newspaper *Prosveta* and the socialist newspaper *Proletarec*, where—although not all mentions of the novel and/or film were ideologically charged—*Gone with the Wind* was severely criticized both for its alleged lack of artistic value and for clearly favouring the *status quo ante bellum* as far as social and especially racial relations are concerned.

39 J. D. "Gone with..." *Proletarec*, 14 February 1940, p. 6.

40 N. N. How Did Your Favorite "Star" Rank This Year? *Proletarec*, 15 January 1941, p. 6.

41 N. N. Labor, Capitalism And [sic] Socialism. *Proletarec*, 1 July 1942, p. 6; Hofses, Raymond S. Bluffing Is a Great Profession. *Proletarec*, 23 April 1947, p. 6.

42 Hofses, Raymond S. Reflections. *Proletarec*, 8 September 1948, p. 6.

The lack of criticism of *Gone with the Wind* in most Slovenian American serial publications can perhaps be at least partially attributed to the fact that Slovenians only began to immigrate to the United States in large numbers after the Civil War and the Reconstruction had ended (Drnovšek 17), and thus had little to no personal involvement in the events from the period in which the narrative is set. Furthermore, Slovenian immigrants mainly settled in the Midwest and Northeast (Ohio, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Minnesota, etc.), not the South—a further possible reason why even right wing Slovenian American publications did not have a highly ideological agenda when reporting on *Gone with the Wind*, as opposed to publications in states where racial segregation was in full effect, for instance Georgia, where the story takes place. The newspapers *Proletarec* and *Prosveta*—the former being openly socialist and the latter with clear socialist sympathies (Pogačar 345–46, 350)—were exceptions; this is in line with left-wing organizations, for instance the Communist Party USA, frequently supporting African Americans' struggles against discrimination during the inter-war period (Ling 118, 125–27; Waldrep 136, 142, 163).

It can thus be concluded that ideology did somewhat influence Slovenian Americans' criticism of *Gone with the Wind*, while the lack of critical opinions in the majority of publications may be attributed to historical and geographical reasons.

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Odzivi na *V vrtincu* med Slovenci na drugi strani Atlantskega oceana

Članek obravnava recepcijo romana in filma *Gone with the Wind* v serijskih publikacijah slovenskih izseljencev oz. zdomcev v Združenih državah Amerike. Analiza je zajemala relevantne članke, ki so bili objavljeni v publikacijah z različnimi ideološkimi usmeritvami do sredine petdesetih let 20. stoletja, tj. do začetka intenziviranja afroameriškega gibanja za državljanske pravice. Recepcija v slovensko-ameriških publikacijah je primerjana s splošno sodobno recepcijo romana in filma v ZDA. Upoštevajoč zgodovinski kontekst so v članku obravnavani tudi razlogi za razlike v recepciji.

Ključne besede: Margaret Mitchell, *V vrtincu*, ameriški Slovenci, serijske publikacije, recepcija, ameriška književnost

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Ishiguro's Japanese-English Identity and His Reception Internationally and in Slovenia

Polona Ramšak

Abstract

Kazuo Ishiguro is a British author of Japanese descent who has established himself globally as an award-winning writer of bestselling books. This article deals with the hybridity of the author, who is both Japanese and English, a popular writer who stirs reader emotions but is at the same time respected by critics. The article begins by addressing the 'Japaneseness' in Ishiguro's work that is both obvious and skilfully concealed. In the second part, the article examines the reception of Ishiguro's work by Slovenian readers and discusses potential reasons for their seeming lack of response.

Keywords: Kazuo Ishiguro, Slovenian reception, globalisation, national identity

INTRODUCTION

The second half of the 20th century brought a significant change for the British in the character of their literary and national identity: the novel in English superseded the English novel in importance but also in persuasiveness. Once found in the margins of canonical literature, the new literatures in English now enjoys the limelight. Post-colonial English and black British literary works are being read and critically acclaimed. Even though contemporary English novelists are important, those that dictate the parameters of literary debate and attract the most attention are the non-English novelists who write in English (Shaffer 2007: 15). Part of this context is Kazuo Ishiguro, an Englishman from Japan who has seemingly achieved the perfect inclusion of people who immigrate at an early age. He is Japanese, while his speech and etiquette are British. Nevertheless, his accent and manner of speaking reveal his Japanese upbringing. In this article, we will analyse Ishiguro's hybridity and its potential influence on his reception by Slovenian readers.

JAPANESE-ENGLISH ORIGIN

A comprehensive approach to Ishiguro's work cannot afford to overlook the author's hybrid identity. His first novel, *A Pale View of the Hills*, is set in Japan and England, the second one, *An Artist of the Floating World*, in Japan, whereas *The Remains of the Day* takes place in England alone. *The Unconsoled* moves to a central European city, and *When We were Orphans* is set partly in England and partly in Shanghai. All these novels deal with the themes of self-discovery and disappointment; they are all pensive and concerned with the past. Ihab Hassan (1989: 160) wonders if *The Remains of the Day* is a novel about the Japanese vision of England or, rather inconspicuously, an English version of Japan. Watching Stevens, the butler, and his obsession with dignity and loyalty, we are reminded of a Japanese samurai or ronin. In ancient Japan, a ronin was a free servant who voluntarily remained bound to his master. Gregory Mason (1989: 49) defines this class of people as homeless samurai who hold on to the long-gone code of honour, as people who maintain existential dignity while all around them traditional values are crashing. By serving his feudal lord, Stevens seems a prototype of this, almost completely embodying the "bushido" values, i.e., the rules of samurai life. His approach to fulfilling his duties, his attitude towards his father, and his loyalty to Lord Darlington link him to *Hagukare*, the collection of rules and anecdotes depicting correct samurai behaviour. Stevens can thus be seen as an uptight English butler, a parody of a parody, similar to Wodehouse's Jeeves, or someone

completely different – a covert Japanese samurai (Bay 2010: 23-33). Similarly, in *A Pale View of the Hills*, the protagonist's father is appalled by the lack of respect and blind obedience of his former students after the war because he expects bushido to remain valid.

Several characters in Ishiguro contribute to a broad perspective of 'Japaneseness' with their stereotypical and non-stereotypical behaviour and thinking. They are frequently in conflict with the change in their values, mostly because of the war. These old-fashioned values are often the remains of Japanese ethics, followed by the samurai class. Ishiguro's imaginary Japan leans on the samurai ethics. In his stories "The Summer after the War" and "A Family Supper", the young protagonists deal with the bitter reaction of their older relatives to the decay of traditional Japanese values, replaced by American influence. The latter even depicts a samurai suicide.

In *A Pale View of the Hills*, Etsuko, the narrator, moves to England from Japan. After her daughter's suicide, she recollects the time she spent in Nagasaki. On the one hand, Etsuko represents the post-WWII change, moving to a better place and marrying a businessman, while at the same time, she remains dependent on her husband, keeping the façade of a happy marriage, thus proving the stereotype of Japanese families being patriarchal. The novel features another Japanese stereotype: that working women are to be pitied and despised.

An Artist of the Floating World, Ishiguro's only book set entirely in Japan, depicts a post-war Japan still ruled by old structures and samurai values. The sisters Setsuko and Noriko embody a struggle between different values. Setsuko behaves in the typically Japanese way, respects the elderly and accepts traditional values but at the same successfully manipulates conversation to get what she wants. Noriko openly jokes about their father, while wanting to become the stereotypical Japanese housewife. The protagonist Masuji Ono recognizes this conflict, since he once had to choose between his own path and following bushido. He deals with questions of filial respect, loyalty to his own sensei[1] and in the end even seppuku.[2]

Ishiguro's penultimate novel *The Buried Giant* is set in fantasy England after the rule of King Arthur. It focuses on forgotten crimes through the parable of a dragon that uses its mist to cloud people's memories. The giant in the title represents repressed ethnic tensions. Again, Ishiguro is concerned with countries and their dark past, whether Britain, Japan or another country.

In some of his interviews, Ishiguro stresses that he is no expert on everything Japanese. He even admits that his Japanese is insufficient to read Japanese newspapers. When asked if he was conscious of his language and tone, since there is something Japanese that always comes across in his style, Ishiguro replied:

1 A teacher (in martial arts).

2 Another term for hara-kiri.

> At the beginning of my career it was quite deliberate. *A Pale View of Hills* was set in Japan. My characters were Japanese, so of course they had to speak in a Japanese kind of English. And in *An Artist of the Floating World,* the characters were not only Japanese but they were meant to be speaking in Japanese even though it was written in English, so I spent a great deal of energy there finding an English that suggested there was Japanese being spoken or translated through. Maybe some of that effort has stayed with me. I use a formal, careful kind of English, but to some extent that may just be my natural or preferred way of using the language. For example, the butler in *Remains of the Day* is English, but he often sounds quite Japanese. And I thought that was fine, because he *is* a bit Japanese. (Chang 2015)

On Ishiguro's 'Japaneseness', the critics disagree. Haruki Murakami, a leading Japanese author, says that *The Remains of the Day* "looks like a Japanese novel – in its mentality, its taste, its colour," (cited in Iyer 1994: 58), while Kenzaburo Oe, another Japanese literary legend, mentions that Ishiguro's books make him feel that the power of the characters is not very Japanese, that the books are about people from England (Oe & Ishiguro 1991: 115).

Ishiguro sees the biggest difference between Japan and England in the peace and quiet of the English countryside.

> The kind of England that I create in The Remains of the Day is not England that I believe ever existed […] What I'm trying to do there […] is to actually rework a particular myth about a certain kind of mythical England […] an England with sleepy, beautiful villages with very polite people and butlers […] taking tea on the lawn […]. (Su 2009: 174)

Hunnewell (2008: 184) adds that to Ishiguro, Japan seems dizzily full of images and sounds, whereas England emerges as rural, simple, black and white.

In the early 1980s, Ishiguro was often mentioned alongside Timothy Mo and Salman Rushdie as one of the three writers to whom one had to pay attention because they were adding new layers to the British literary landscape. The critic Bruce King (1991: 192) congratulated them for bringing interculturalism to the general cultural milieu. Since they were bringing new, non-English voices to the literary discussion, their attracting attention was no surprise.

Caryl Phillips, a Kittitian-British novelist, (1997: xv) believes that Ishiguro's early prose creates conditions that provoke genuine intercultural dialogue and exchange. He chose nine pages of *The Remains of the Day* for his anthology *Extravagant Strangers*: *A Literature of Belonging*. In the preface, he claims that for many British people, to accept the idea that their country has a long, complex history of immigration would be to undermine their basic understanding of what it is to

be British. The excerpt features Stevens pondering the nation's greatness. Phillips explains that even though Ishiguro's life might seem unburdened with the signs of the Empire, his work often expresses a microscopically precise care for the nature of Britishness (see Sim 2009: 125, 126). Despite the importance of the British part of his identity, critics rarely say Ishiguro is a British author, period. He is usually identified as a Japanese-British author, this description serving to stress his interculturality and composite identity.

Identifying potential influences in the contemporary globalized literary cosmos, in which a clear impact of an author or work on another one can rarely be singled out, is a sensitive speculation. Yet in the case of Ishiguro, we can identify a few potential sources of influence. Ishiguro himself claims to have read much Japanese literature, albeit in English translation, especially twentieth-century novelists, such as Natsume Soseki (1867-1916), Junichiro Tanizaki (1886-1965), and Yasunari Kawabata (1899-1972), so certain similarities with the three Japanese authors are unsurprising.

An obvious similarity between Soseski and Ishiguro is their mixed origin. The gap between Soseki's Eastern roots and Western cultural integration was a predicament with which he was obsessed his whole life. As a child, he focused on Chinese fiction and poetry and rejected learning English, despite the new wave of enthusiasm for everything Western. At sixteen, he changed his mind only to become the second student ever to graduate in English from Tokyo University. While remaining reserved about his knowledge of the language and believing that he would never truly master it, in 1900 the Japanese government chose him for a fully funded pilot study programme in England (Gessel1993: 45, 46). Later in his career, Soseki used his writing to oppose the Japanese tendency to mimic all that is Western, in which he saw the suppression of national pride and a serious threat to Japanese values and morals. Ishiguro fought this battle in the opposite direction as a Japanese writing in English, and he is constantly reminded of his Japanese heritage, even though he sees himself primarily as an Englishman.

Coping with change is a motif that connects Ishiguro to Junichiro Tanizaki, who began writing as a result of his enthusiasm for the West. He is popular among Japanophiles in the US, while according to Gessel (1993: 48), most Japanese readers resent this controversial author, who in his early novels touches on the delicate subject of incest, fantasizing about his own mother, and other erotic and sexual extremes, which inspires controversy in contemporary Japanese society. His themes differ from Ishiguro's, but similarities can be found in Tanizaki's 1944 novel *Makioka Sisters*, where a family struggles to keep their integrity during the war. Social changes and their influence on individuals are a frequent theme with Ishiguro, but the stability and integrity of his families and individuals are seriously disturbed and have none of the permanence and stability shown in *Makioka Sisters*.

Yasunari Kawabata, the first Japanese recipient of the Nobel Prize for literature, also shares characteristics with Ishiguro, particularly the isolation of his characters, one of Kawabata's most typical, possibly autobiographical features. Ishiguro (1986: 2) believes that Kawabata strove for traditional Japanese prose under the influence of European realism, a tradition that valued lyricism, mood, and reflection, not just plot and characters. The influence of this style can be seen throughout Ishiguro's work, particularly in *A Pale View of Hills* and *An Artist of the Floating World*, where the mood is created by thoughts and words that are never uttered.

Kawabata's passivity during the war, war propaganda and support for the army are reflected in Ishiguro's novels, but he never stresses exterior events. He too focuses on the individual's inner struggle, not the struggle of a group of people or a nation. Kawabata's observation about war can be linked to Ishiguro's third novel:

> I consider that my life after the war consists of ‚remaining years' and that these remaining years are not mine but a manifestation of the tradition of beauty in Japan. (cited in Gessel 1993: 180)

This reminds us of Stevens's reflection on the pier at the end of *The Remains of the Day*:

> Perhaps, then, there is something to his advice that I should cease looking back so much, that I should adopt a more positive outlook and try to make the best of what remains of my day. After all, what can we ever gain in forever looking back and blaming ourselves if our lives have not turned out quite as we might have wished? (Ishiguro 1990: 244)

In Ishiguro's novels, the plot moves smoothly back and forth through events stretching across decades of the protagonist's life, through different worlds, the past, the present or dreams, spinning a huge web of personal and historical trauma. This is true whether the protagonist is a grieving mother, an aging artist, a professional butler, or a world-renowned pianist. Ishiguro admits that moving to England was what made him want to write about Japan, because the memories had started to fade (Sim 2009: 10). Later, this feeling of alienation and removal became one of his trademarks:

> There was a part of me that wanted to find out if my acceptance was conditioned on the fact that I was acting as mediator to Japanese culture. I wanted to see if people could appreciate me purely as a novelist as opposed to a Japanese novelist. (Su 2009: 159)

Sim (2009: 19-21) summarizes Ishiguro's claim that he does not see himself as a Japanese writer but as a writer about common topics. His multicultural

background makes him a writer without a home. Ishiguro says that the realisation that he has never belonged to either country or society gave him the opportunity to become an international writer, but at the same time he felt enormous relief once he moved his story environment from Japan to England.

In a 1991 TV interview with Clive Sinclair, Ishiguro enumerated his most influential Western literary influences as George Eliot, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and others, claiming that his work originates from the Western realistic tradition. Mason (1989: 48) explains that with his ironic distance, Ishiguro evidently shows his deviation from the Japanese experience and identification as a Western writer. The distance between the past and the present and all the unspoken that lies between comprise the golden thread of all his novels.

Ishiguro displays a more pensive and indifferent attitude than the previously mentioned Japanese authors. His novels show the necessity to face the past, although this can be a difficult and complex process. He does not only focus on after-war changes but also the broader transitions: he researches psychological dilemmas of Western and Japanese culture because he feels close to them both. Etsuko from *A Pale View of the Hills*, Ono from *An Artist of the Floating World* and Stevens from *The Remains of the Day* are all representatives of individuals that have faced their past.

In his conversations with Kenzaburo Oe, Ishiguro explains that he was forced to write more internationally because of his lack of knowledge about Japan. In Oe's opinion, Ishiguro's style has a double structure with two or more intertwined elements, which Oe finds more English than Japanese (Ishiguro & Oe 1991: 115-118). Furthermore, Oe believes that a real novelist should be international: "My conclusion is that, rather than being an English author or European author, you are an author who writes in English …" (ibid.).

Ishiguro was also influenced by Japanese films, especially by Ozu Yasujirō, which shows in many of his novels, especially in *An Artist of the Floating World*. Just like young people in Ozu's films from the same time, Masui Ono's grandson is excited about American pop culture. Ono's daughter Noriko, who has difficulty finding a life partner, is reminiscent of Ozu's films *Late Spring* and *Early Summer*, which focus on finding husbands for unrelated characters named Noriko. In the films, Noriko is played by the Japanese actress Hara Setsuko. Mausi Ono's daughter is called Setsuko, which might suggest the source of inspiration (Medhurst 2015).

Kawabata's succinct point that despite his Japanese origins, he is not a Japanese writer and despite writing in English, he is not an English writer is indeed an essential part of Ishiguro's artistic identity. However, Slovenian readers still see Ishiguro mainly through this prism of double nationality, which might present an obstacle for relating to his work.

CRITICISM AND AWARDS

Moreover, the critical image of Ishiguro often centres on the fallacy reducing him to his cultural background. After his first two novels, critics described him as "an English writer with Japanese influences", and later turned the definition around by characterizing him as "a Japanese who writes in English in a style that is more English than the English" (Patey 1991: 135). This focus on the influence of Japanese philosophy and culture on Ishiguro's work often leaves Ishiguro speechless. When critics insist that his novels are firmly set in the British literary tradition, that is equally erroneous. In reality, Ishiguro should be viewed simply as one of the new international writers who offer readers formerly unknown worlds.

If critics initially praised Ishiguro's taciturnity, his refined sense of time, and the quiet tones of his Japanese heritage, later novels seem to trigger mixed reviews. *The Unconsoled* was lauded by many for its ambition, excitement, and humour, while others claimed the novel was too long and did not appeal to the reader. James Wood even wrote in *The New Yorker*:

> His previous novel, Never Let Me Go (2005), contained passages that appeared to have been entered in a competition called The Ten Most Boring Fictional Scenes. […] But in his new novel [The Buried Giant] Ishiguro runs the great risk of making literal and general what is implicit and personal in his best fiction. […] The problem is not fantasy but allegory, which exists to literalize and simplify. The giant is not buried deeply enough. (Wood 2015)

The London Review of Books went the other way:

> In An Artist of the Floating World, Ishiguro's most accomplished and moving book, and one of the best novels published in the Eighties, the cinematic effect is used with even greater sensitivity, leading to the creation of a world of subtle perceptual richness unsurpassed by either Ishiguro's other work or the works of most of his contemporaries. (Chaudhuri 1995)

Ishiguro has received many awards for his literary work. His first novel *A Pale View of the Hills* won the Winifred Holtby Prize from the Royal Society of Literature. For his second novel, *An Artist of the Floating World*, Ishiguro was awarded the Whitbread Prize, and for his third, *The Remains of the Day,* he received the prestigious Booker Prize in 1989. He was also awarded an OBE as well as the French title of Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. In 2008, *The Times* placed him on the list of the 50 best British writers since 1945. In fact, most of his works were nominated for prestigious literary awards. In 2017, Ishiguro was the recipient of both the American Academy of Achievement Award, and the Nobel Prize for Literature. A year later, he received the gold and silver star of the Order

of the Rising Sun and was appointed Knight Bachelor for services to literature. Such an abundance of awards should normally guarantee an enthusiastic response among foreign-language readers; however, the reception in Slovenia, dealt with in the following section, failed, at least partly, to meet this expectation.

RECEPTION IN SLOVENIA

Only three of Ishiguro's novels have been translated into Slovene: *The Remains of the Day, When We Were Orphans,* and *Never Let Me Go*. *The Remains of the Day* was published by Cankarjeva založba in 1995, six years after it was written. The translator Srečko Fišer was awarded the Sovre Award for the translation. *When We Were Orphans* (*Ko smo bili sirote*, translated by Ingrid Kovač Brus) was published in 2005 by Celjska Mohorjeva družba, five years after its original publication. On the Mohorjeva website, the novel is classified as "Japanese literature" and is accompanied by Samo Rugelj's (2005) review from *Bukla* magazine, in which he explains that the novel was short-listed for the Booker Prize and that it offers literature lovers a magical journey into the time between the wars. In his review in *Večer*, Matej Bogataj finds the novel very British, very English, meticulous, bitter, and a little cynical. Ishiguro's sixth novel, *Never Let Me Go (Ne zapusti me nikdar),* was translated by Katarina Jerin and published by Učila International in 2006, the same year that the novel was first published in the UK. The novel was also reprinted once. *Joker* magazine says that the novel is futuristic and triggers in readers a scary awareness of something that could actually happen or may already be happening. The *Portal besed* community categorize it as science-fiction but stress the importance of the characters' feeling and emotions, their thoughts, experiences, and hopes. They also believe there are inconsistencies in the manner of narration. The novel is also mentioned on the web page of RTV Slovenia, but not before 2009, that is four years after it was published. The article was prompted by the premiere of the film based on the book and was scheduled for 2010. The article mentions Ishiguro's numerous literary awards, the success of *The Remains of the Day*, a short summary of the novel and an interesting contemplation about the characters in *Never Let Me Go*:

> What probably surprises us most as the observers of the fate of the three friends is their resigned and calm acceptance of their own destiny, of which the world is in denial because it is too big a burden to be accepted without the feeling of guilt. But guilt is something that the world cannot allow, because there is no way back to the dark ages where spouses, partners, and friends were dying from cancer or heart disease. It is thus easier to see Hailsham students as expendable 'freaks', just the opposite from what the reader sees in them. (M.K. 2009, translated by P.R.)

Despite numerous awards and the broad success of Ishiguro's novels and films, Slovenian readers remain lukewarm towards his prose. Comparing the Slovenian reception of his work in 2016 and four years later, after he received the Nobel Prize, there is almost no difference in the enthusiasm of Slovenian readers, at least judging from book loan numbers in Slovenian libraries and the supply of his works in Slovenian bookshops. In 2016, EMKA, the online bookshop with the largest stock in Slovenia, yielded fifteen hits for "Ishiguro". That same year, some Ishiguro novels were available in Slovene, English, Croatian, Hungarian, Italian, Serbian, and French; there were also two volumes of his short stories in English and three films on DVD. In 2000, Radio Slovenia produced a short radio play *Maestro* by Draga Puc that included the translation of a short excerpt from *The Unconsoled*. In 2002, Ingrid Kovač Brus made a literary portrait of Ishiguro for RTV Slovenija, which was aired again in 2014 when the writer celebrated his 60th birthday. The newspaper *Delo* published an article in 2016 about Ishiguro's latest novel *The Buried Giant*, explaining that Ishiguro seemingly got the idea for the novel from the crumbling of ex-Yugoslavia and the Rwandan genocide.

After receiving the Nobel Prize in 2017, Ishiguro briefly appeared in the Slovenian media. The newspaper *Dnevnik* called him "a careful investigator of the depths of human emotions", referring to the motivation of the Nobel Prize Jury which saw Ishiguro as someone "who, in novels of great emotional force, has uncovered the abyss beneath our illusory sense of connection with the world" (Šučur 2017, translated by P. R.). Laura Paukovič (2018) of *Mladina* believes that in Slovenia, Ishiguro is still best known as the Japanese who received the Nobel Prize for literature. He does not, however, enjoy the same recognition as Haruki Murakami, who is generally better appreciated and more widely read. This seems quite unjust, firstly because Ishiguro's works can not only contend with Murakami's but surpass them in bravura, and secondly because Ishiguro is not primarily Japanese.

The newspaper *Delo* offered a few excerpts from translated interviews with Ishiguro after the award, dealing with the writing of *The Remains of the Day*, the reasons for writing through memories, his origin as an author and his attitude to England and Japan. Alenka Koron (2019) included Ishiguro in her book *Razgledi na tuje*, comprising nine discussions about important world literature works or authors of the 20th and 21st centuries that stimulate reflection on the state and dilemmas of contemporary Slovenian prose. Radio Slovenia 1 prepared an insight into the "surprising Nobel award winner" with Nejc Gazvoda, the director and author of the play *Ljudje kot smo mi* that was based on *The Remains of the Day* and staged in the Anton Podbevšek Teater in 2017.

By January 2021, Ishiguro's recognition in Slovenia had somewhat improved. EMKA has twenty-one hits for "Ishiguro". The Slovenian translation of *The Remains of the Day* is unavailable, indicating either the enthusiasm of Slovenian

readers to keep a copy in their private libraries or a lack of interest from publishers who do not see Ishiguro as a source of revenue.

The same is true for the other two Slovenian translations: apart from his other novels and two volumes of short stories in English, which can be bought, four volumes presenting Ishiguro in a literary-historical and genre context are available. Holdings in Slovenian libraries are slightly better in 2021 than in 2016. Ishiguro's novels are now available in Korean, German, and Spanish, and in a Slovenian Braille edition. The loan numbers, however, are not in the thousands, as is the case with more popular authors and titles. *Never Let Me Go* was loaned 955 times in the last two years, *When We Were Orphans* 456 times and *The Remains of the Day* 1116 times. Other Ishiguro novels in English rarely leave the libraries – each fewer than 50 times in the last two years. The question looms whether the Nobel Prize for literature is relevant at all to the average reader and to what extent it influences the popularity of an author. A glance at comparable reception studies shows that there is no identifiable rule regarding the popularity of internationally acclaimed authors with the Slovenian readership. The 2013 Canadian Nobel Prize winner Alice Munro, for example, was first translated into Slovene about four decades into her writing career (2 short story collections), and the Nobel Prize stimulated three more volumes in three consecutive years; her popularity in Slovenia, however, is still not huge (Mohar 2016: 134-136). The contemporary British playwright and 2005 Nobel Laureate Harold Pinter is, on the other hand, one of the modern playwrights most frequently translated into (and staged in) Slovene (Onič 2016b: 167); however, most of his opus was translated before the Nobel Prize, with only few re-translations after that. The translations and stage productions suggest his popularity with theatre professionals, since his style allows for great creativity (see Onič 2016a), while this is – despite a slight growth after 1999 – still not fully reflected in performance numbers (Gavez 2016: 58). The situation is different with earlier Nobel Prize winners, whose popularity was established over the decades and now often provides too strong competition for more recent authors like Ishiguro or Munro. Such an example is Hemingway, whose celebrity status and associations with the Isonzo front in *A Farewell to Arms* contributed to his popularity in Slovenia (see Maver 1990). According to Zupan (2020: 144-145), the total loans of Hemingway's 40 Slovene editions, averaging around 1000 per year, increased by 20% in the last two decades. This figure is almost 3 times higher than the Ishiguro average, and even though Hemingway partly owes the high numbers to the inclusion of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in the Slovene *Matura* examination in the early 2000s, his popularity is still high; it will be interesting to follow the same phenomenon with Ishiguro, whose *Never Let Me Go* has just entered the *Matura* this year. Such reception unpredictability can further be shown through the popularity of authors who are not major award winners but commercially extremely

successful, like Karl May, who was – similar to Ishiguro – the author of bestsellers and popular in Slovenia in the past but much less so in recent decades (Trupej 2020), or Edgar Allan Poe, increasingly popular in Slovenia in the inter-war period, with a peak in the 1960s, despite his extraordinarily low popularity in the USA, his home country (Zupan 2015: 121).

In Slovenia, most Nobel Prize wins for literature from 2000 to 2021 meant at least one new translation, possibly a newer piece of the laureate's work. Among few exceptions in the last twenty years, is the 2012 Chinese Nobel Prize winner Mo Yan, who received no attention from Slovenian booksellers. Ishiguro, too, almost went unnoticed. In the year after the award, the old translation of *The Remains of the Day* was reprinted, but his twenty-eight-year opus following that was overlooked.

E-mail correspondence with the publisher and editor Samo Rugelj (2021) reveals that he is not surprised by the weak response to Ishiguro in Slovenia. He believes that a foreign author only stays alive if adopted by a strong publishing house with an interested editor and a constant translator. Otherwise, s/he will slowly fall into oblivion. Ishiguro was shared by three publishers, yet nobody "took him under their wing". Andrej Ilc (2021), the editor at Mladinska knjiga, agrees with Rugelj and adds that the lack of Slovenian interest in Ishiguro, even after the Nobel Prize, could be attributed to sparse and irregular translations as well as a lack of advertising for authors of his type. Again, there are exceptions, like the Canadian multi-genre author Margaret Atwood, whose world-wide popularity needs no advertising, and whose positive reception is guaranteed even without a Nobel Prize in Literature (Mohar et. al. 2021, Onič et al. 2020).

Another possible reason for Ishiguro's lower popularity could be the "Japaneseness" of his works; however, it would be a challenge to measure how much Japanese culture *per se* appeals to Slovenian people and to what extent a Slovenian reader recognizes the Japanese touch in Ishiguro's work. Even when blended with the geographically, historically and culturally more familiar English culture, it still has an air of remoteness and alienness, particularly if elements of futurism and science-fiction are added to the mix.

CONCLUSION

Ishiguro's global success can be attributed to his immense range of themes and his biculturalism, which appeals not only to the Japanese but also to the global reader. He is among the handful of authors who have both sold millions of books and received heaps of critical praise. His books have been translated into 40 languages, and his BookScan records show more than 1.4 million copies from 1998

to 2017. Critics first focused mostly on the influence of Japanese philosophy and culture on his work and praised the quiet tones of his Japanese heritage blended with quintessential Englishness, while his later works received mixed reviews, *The Buried Giant* even facing an accusation of being written only to capture wider audiences. But his last novel *Klara and the Sun* leads the 'Booker Dozen' as by far the standout bestseller of the 2021 longlist. It has been called brilliant by the critics, although it feels quite similar to *Never Let Me Go*, again exploring what it means to be not quite human. Then again, Ishiguro did reveal 'his dirty little secret' in a 2015 interview – that he tends to write the same book over and over (Preston 2021).

Despite his world-wide fame, Slovenians remain relatively cold towards Ishiguro. Only three of his novels have so far been translated into Slovenian, and judging by the library statistics, only the first of the three made even a moderate impression on Slovenian readers. After receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2017, Ishiguro was briefly in the Slovenian media limelight. He is still often mistaken for Haruki Murakami, who is the more widely known author of Japanese origin. This is surprising in the time of globalisation, since his cosmopolitan, international work appeals to global readers. The reason for this lukewarm reception in Slovenia cannot be pinpointed, but there are several possible factors that might contribute to this. It could be the Japanese traits in literature that at first glance seem British or perhaps the lack of interest in or understanding of Japanese culture in Slovenia. More likely it is just the lack of interest from Slovenian publishing houses who have not seen Ishiguro as someone worth investing in.

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Ishigurova japonsko-angleška identiteta ter njegov mednarodni in slovenski sprejem

Kazuo Ishiguro je britanski pisatelj z japonskimi koreninami, ki se je po vsem svetu uveljavil s svojimi romani, črticami in scenariji ter postal eden izmed najbolj nagrajenih pisateljev knjižnih uspešnic. Prispevek obravnava pisateljevo hibridno poreklo, ki je hkrati angleško in japonsko, in sposobnotm da s svojim delom vznemirja bralce, istočasno pa ga kritiki spoštujejo. Poleg vpogleda v sprejemanje njegovih del v Sloveniji se članek ukvarja tudi z vprašanjem, zakaj je tukajšnja njegova branost nižja od pričakovane.

Ključne besede: novi britanski roman, slovenska recepcija, globalizacija, narodna identita

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Un-taming the Shrew: A Modern Take on Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*

Kübra Baysal

Abstract

This article discusses the adaptation film, *Shakespeare Retold: The Taming of the Shrew*, as compared to original play, *The Taming of the Shrew*, by Shakespeare by highlighting the different modern perspective of the film. Likely to be interpreted as a valuable addition to the play with the ending it proposes and the way it handles the issue of taming, the film brings the play to the attention of the modern audience by clarifying the vague details and contextualising it in the modern English. In this respect, the article aims to bring the film and the play into focus by introducing a fresh and lively re-interpretation of *The Taming of the Shrew* to the Shakespearean drama studies.

Keywords: Shakespeare, adaptation, film, modern interpretation, feminism

Planned as a remaking of Shakespeare's romantic comedy play, *The Taming of the Shrew*, the film, *Shakespeare Retold: The Taming of the Shrew*, is produced by "Shakespeare Retold Series" of BBC in 2005 and is directed by David Richards, written by Sally Wainwright and starred by Shirley Henderson in the role of Kate and Rufus Sewell as Petruchio (IMDb "ShakespeaRe-Told"). Reflecting a very modern, innovative and entertaining version of the original play along with a modern language preserving the general frame of the key dialogues in the play, the film presents some distinct changes as well as new perspectives to the play. Clarifying the originally ambiguous end of the play or imagining what may have happened in Kate and Petruchio's marriage afterwards, which seem to satisfy or even tingle the expectations of the modern audience, the film keeps the most crucial details such as names, places and the general plotline as they are in the original source, which possibly serves to preserve its credibility as a Shakespearean adaptation.

The Taming of the Shrew can be considered a distinct play when compared to Shakespeare's other plays. It is known as the "most adapted" play but which also cannot be performed "straight" due to the ambiguities in the "wife-taming plot" (Stevens 491) and the mysterious silence of the female protagonist, which are interestingly unearthed if not completely dissolved in the film version. With this perspective, the film has a nice touch for presenting alternatives to the audience and clarifying ambiguities. There are certain alterations in the film as a modern re-telling of the play.

To begin with, the story takes place in London instead of Padua and Katharina Minola, or rather, Kate, is an MP who feels she is forced to change her lifestyle and get married to be able present herself as a more sympathetic politician to the public and to become a candidate to the position of Prime Minister. On the other hand, also diverging from the original source, Bianca is a super model who is adored by a lot of men, which nevertheless keeps the difference of sisters alive as in the original source. Furthermore, Kate and Bianca have a mother, Mrs. Minola, who is not oppressive and arrogant towards Kate as Baptista Minola of the play, who speaks of getting rid of Kate with Bianca's suitors as seen in Gremio's words:

> I am agreed, and would I had given him the
> best horse in Padua to begin his wooing that would
> thoroughly woo her, wed her, and bed her, and rid
> the house of her. Come on. (I. i. 144-7)

In contrast with the father figure, Mr. Minola of the film is a modern, open-minded and a more affectionate parent figure towards Kate. Another different point in the film is that Lucentio, whom Bianca meets on the plane, is a handsome Italian youth much younger than Bianca and seemingly naïve, but who indeed has the

ulterior motive to get her money through marriage. Also being different from the play, Bianca does not marry Lucentio as when she asks for a marriage contract, he pretends to be offended despite his materialistic pursuits. Thus, their romantic affair ends abruptly. Finally, Hortensio, who is named Harry in the film, is both Bianca's manager and suitor offering Petruchio to marry Kate, which partially complies with the original text. However, at the end of the film, he marries Mrs. Minola, which is quite a twisty addition to the original source.

In the same line, despite being true to the main plotline, the production does not always remain compatible with the text. It mostly appeals to the taste of the twenty-first century audience with Petruchio's "turbulent childhood experiences" and the domination of the issues such as the twenty-first-century politics and gender roles ("The Taming" par. 6). What is more, the film presents characters, especially the protagonists, in a distinctly dramatic manner. Despite following the original source, Kate is reflected as an extremely aggressive person in the film. She insults people and says "swivel" whenever she is mad at them and even slaps her assistance in the first scene of the film. Furthermore, she topples tables at a restaurant because a couple ask for an autograph from Bianca and she smashes the guitar on one of Bianca's guests in one of her house parties, which points out that Kate's aggression. In fact, the scenes of violence seem a bit excessive in the production, probably for encouraging the comic effect on the modern audience as a comedy film. The actress in the film, Shirley Henderson, in that respect becomes "a magnificent shrew who manages to make her pretty face utterly shrewish through a kind of tense gurning which is as funny as it is effective while shouting 'swivel'" ("A Review" par. 4). With this in mind, whenever Kate feels trapped in language to express her reaction, she applies to physical force as "[h]er aggression arises from the category of shrew itself, because the behaviour her sister displays can look desirable only in comparison to extreme displays of feminine aggression [in Kate]" (Crocker 148). In other words, she is made as such shrewish a character in the play and the film--with the latter emphasising her aggression-- that she is presented in a sharp contrast with her feminine sister, Bianca. From another perspective, through her anger, bitter tongue and physical force "Shakespeare molds her to the needs of farce"(Coppélia 88), which creates the comic relief through her extremely aggressive physical reactions.

On the other hand, Petruchio is depicted as slightly different from the original character. He, who wants to warn off his wife-to-be, Kate, about his real character and to tame the shrew, appears in transgender clothes on their wedding day. Despite being explained in the play that Petruchio is in cross dress, his appearance and behaviours in those clothes are exaggerated for its comic effect once again, for which role the actor, Rufus Sewell, gets nominated for the best actor by the BAFTA Television Awards ("A Review" par. 4). Petruchio in the

film is in the complete costume with the make-up, nail polish and fishnet socks in full contrast with the masculine way he walks and talks. He shocks the crowd mostly including Kate's family, acquaintances, colleagues and politicians with his appearance and violent behaviours. Through an alternative point of view, he may be showing Kate that he is an extraordinary man, so she should at once realise his difference from the other men and act as such. In other words, "Petruchio is more afraid of looking conventional than queer or weird […] in unusual and ridiculous clothes at the wedding […] so as to suggest that just as Katherine can be feminine in being aggressive and shrewish, Petruchio can be masculine in dressing as a woman" (Villano 279-280). In that respect Kate and Petruchio emerge to be an extraordinary couple both transgressing the gender codes and managing to preserve their roles in marriage although they switch the roles in the film as a modern couple after they have children. So, both Rufus Sewell and Shirley Henderson bring about "multidimensionality" to the original characters "as they vacillate between vulnerability and toughness, but it is their mutual respect which wins the day" ("A Review" par. 4).

Likewise, Petruchio and Kate's relationship as reflected in the film starts at a party, which can be regarded the epitome of the modern popular culture. They meet at Bianca's party upon Hortensio's plan and soon they get stuck in the elevator. As in the original play, Petruıchio starts taming Kate right at the first moment they meet, calls her Kate insistently despite her aggression that he should call her Katharina or Ms. Minola, which is quite similar in the original source:

> PETRUCHIO. You lie, in faith, for you are called plain Kate,
> And bonny Kate, and sometimes Kate the curst.
> But Kate, the prettiest Kate in Christendom,
> Kate of Kate Hall, my super-dainty Kate
> (For dainties are all Kates)—and therefore, Kate. (II. i. 193-7)

In the same vein, with Petruchio's method of calling Katharina as Kate, it is convenient to dwell on the word "cate" for it means commodity, something to be bought and sold, which is Kate's case especially in the play as her father wants to give her like a commodity to anyone who wants to take her. So, Petruchio "likens Kate's planned domestication to a domestication of the emergent commodity form itself, whose name parallels the naming of the shrew" (Korda 109) which is also observed in the following lines:

> PETRUCHIO. She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,
> My household stuff, my field, my barn,
> My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything. (III. ii. 236-8)

Upon the naming incident in the film as followed by the taming process, Petruchio even more daringly tells Kate that he wants to sleep with her right then and there. He says he likes everything about her, which drives her extremely mad and breaks her will one step at a time, which reflects Petruchio's sexist attitude towards Kate in the film. Then again, in one of the funny scenes, Petruchio acts like a mad man in the street and yells at people when he is with Kate as a method to tame her. Likewise, as previously stated, he wears woman's clothes at their wedding to embarrass and tame her even better and thus emerges as Kate-the-politician's trans-gender husband in public.

By the same token, Petruchio forces Kate into a game of submission when he takes her to Verona for their honeymoon, where the taming shall be completed, and Kate is finally to be transformed into the submissive wife. He treats her arrogantly leaving her hungry, tired and sleepless while he constantly humiliates her. With the brutal attitude towards his shrewish wife, Petruchio succeeds "in fashioning Katharine to suit his pleasure" and thus leaves the "subjection of a wilful woman to the will of her husband" (Crocker 144). As he makes Kate change the flat tyre, chases her in the mansion where they stay for their honeymoon, threatens to rape her, shouts at her and finally throws her suitcase into the pool, the process of taming the shrew is in the last phase. Until the end of the third act, Kate resists the patriarchal oppression and arrogance of Petruchio as an opinionated young woman and prefers to see him hanged rather than marrying him. But she gets married and "tamed" soon as she eventually complies with whatever her husband says. She passes Petruchio's tests and learns how to love and accommodate him within the confines of Elizabethan [also the modern, since the film is set in a modern context] marital conventions (Greenwood 73). After they consummate their marriage, Petruchio keeps taming her and says "moon is shining" although it is the sun and Kate finally agrees with him, which is almost the same with the play: "Petruchio. Good Lord, how bright and goodly shines the moon!/ Katherine. The moon? The sun! It is not moonlight now" (IV. v. 3-4). Moreover, Kate has turned from the sharp-tongued woman with principles into a wife kissing her husband in the office among her colleagues, which is the direct opposite of the scene in the play: "Petruchio. First kiss me, Kate, and we will./ Kate. What, in the midst of the street?" (V. ii. 147-8). Similarly, as the family has gathered before Bianca's wedding to discuss whether Bianca should have a marriage contract with Lucentio, Kate surprises everyone with her famous soliloquy about the need for a wife's submission to her husband's will. Thus, Petruchio has proven Kate's loyalty to him since she accepts whatever he says, holds his feet and kisses him as in the play: "Katherine. And place your hands below your husband's foot;/ In token of which duty, if he please, /My hand is ready, may it do him ease" (V. ii. 193-5).

Nevertheless, the ending of the film forges a great irony and introduces a valuable addition to the play along with the general plotline that exposes Petruchio's successful taming of shrewish Kate thoroughly. When Kate tells Petruchio that she is pregnant to triplets at the end of the film, she lays some conditions to him that she will not give up her career for kids and that he must raise them, which conveys her feminist stance to the modern audience as a young woman with a strong mind:

> Kate: I'm pregnant.
> Petruchio: What? That's amazing!
> Kate: However, you'll have to look after them because I'm not giving up my career.
> Petruchio: Yes! No, you can't.

Despite her previous unconditionally submissive behaviours, Kate stands her ground as a woman, a wife and a mother and eventually comes to an understanding with her husband. More surprisingly, despite his plan of taming Kate, Petruchio becomes the one sitting at home and taking care of children, cooking and doing the dishes in the end while Kate runs the country as the Prime Minister. Hence, from a feminist perspective, the ending of the film is somewhat satisfactory when compared to the original source. After all, Kate proves that she is not "as conformable as other household Kates" (II. i. 293). Yet, she "appears to be happily subdued, basking in the stability and love provided by her relationship with Petruchio" ("The Taming" par. 5) and the initially unfitting couple have morphed into a great happy family.

All in all, as a reproduction of the play, the film *ShakespeaRe-told: Taming of the Shrew* is brilliantly interpreted, enriched and lightened with its humorous mood, lively music and modern-day characters. This version appears to be more appealing and mind-opening than the original source as the audience gets to see Kate and Petruchio after the original play ends, as a married couple with children and Kate as a strong woman, who achieves what she desires in her life whereas Petruchio emerges to be a kind, dedicated as well as funny husband and father as opposed to his representation as a misogynist and oppressive patriarchal figure in the play. In short, the film version is more life-like and the characters are more associable in the end, which draws the attention of the modern audience.

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Razveljavitev trmoglavkine ukrotitve: moderni pogled na Shakespearovo *Ukročeno trmoglavko*

Članek se ukvarja s filmsko adaptacijo *Shakespeare Retold: Taming of the Shrew* (2005) v primerjavi z izvirno igro in se osredinja na moderno perspektivo filma.Članek skuša v študije o Shakespearu vnesti nov focus pri interpretaciji filma in komedije *Ukročena trmoglavka*.

Ključne besede: Shakespeare, adaptacija, film, sodobna interpretacija, feminizem

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Moral Code of a Person: Cognitive Approach to Interpretation of R. Kipling's "If"

Eldar Veremchuk

Abstract

The paper reveals the moral code, extolled in the renowned Kipling's poem "If" by means of cognitive interpretation. The author's message containing his idea of moral code is unraveled in minimum meaningful spaces of the poem (usually one or two lines), which are analyzed in depth. Each space highlights the trajector features of character and the corresponding reference frames (domains), which serve as background for their understanding. The peculiarity of moral concepts consists in the fact that they are based on the evaluative component and therefore they form binary oppositions. The antagonist for the moral concept within such opposition serves as its benchmark, since the essence of a moral value is revealed only when it is contrasted to its opposite, therefore the paper makes an attempt of alignment trajector domains with the benchmarks. In order to delve into the Kipling's understanding of moral code the distinguished ethical values were arranged in the form of field model. The nucleus of the model comprises most frequently actualized values from the moral code, while periphery includes values with lower rate of actualization. Along with cognitive analyses of Kipling's moral doctrine the paper highlights the peculiarities of poetic narration, which include abstract dictum, use of subjunctive mood and symbolism. Particular attention is also paid to the use of personification and metaphor.

Keywords: R. Kipling, moral code, character feature, ethical value

INTRODUCTION

One of the salient aspects of Kipling's literary heritage along with imperialism and colonialism is his focus on human values that underlie moral principles. Its quintessence is revealed in his effervescent poem "If", published in 1910 in the collection of stories "Rewards and Fairies" in the chapter "Brother Square Toes". Originally meant to be the testament of the writer to his beloved son, it ultimately appeared to become the code of behavior bestowed upon the whole humanity. "*It is in 'If' that his ethical code is most resonantly expressed* (Mathhews, 1971, 338).

Unlike in his many other literary works in "If" Kipling takes the mantle of moral mentor providing the readers with the code of conduct, which highly correlates with Christian norms of behavior. The inspiration for the characteristics of an ideal person, which he describes within the framework of Muscular Christianity, was taken from Leander Starr Jameson, who failed in his raid in 1865-1896 against the South African Republic. As Longford (1982) mentions "*Jameson was later to be the inspiration and hero of Rudyard Kipling's poem If…*". R. Kipling himself acknowledges this fact in his autobiographical work "Something of myself": "*Among the verses in Rewards was one set called "If", which escaped from the book, and for a while ran about the world… They were drawn from Jameson's character, and contained counsels of perfection most easy to give*" (Kipling, 1990, 146).

It's worth mentioning that for the time being there exists a number of studies, dedicated to the analysis of Kipling's "If" from different approaches and with the use of different methodological apparatus. Having analyzed the recent researches, we came to the conclusion that the subjects of investigation were different: stylistic devices and expressive means, which contribute to conveyance of the author's message (Grasso, 2009; Memon, Tunio & Awan, 2021); poet's world outlook (Sharma, 2019); correlation of values extolled in the poem with the religious and philosophic world picture (in particular with the Hindu Bhagavad Gita concept of *sthitapragna*, (Shastry, 2019)); poem's intertextuality (Kemp, 1998). It should be noted that the subject of research sometimes was quite unusual, like in (Graham, 2016), where a hypothetical supplement to Rudyard Kipling's poem "If", scripted by the judge during the Jacob Zuma rape trial in 2006, is analyzed. Particular attention is paid to theoretical and practical peculiarities in translation of "If" (Weissbrod, 2009; Veretelnyk, 2016). There are studies in which Kipling's "If" was not the subject of research by itself but was analyzed for formulating the basic principles of moral psychology of self-belief (Smith, 2006). The value of "If" in the writer's literary legacy is not overestimated, when we say that it became a 'landmark' of his philosophy and outlook. It is proved by the fact, that the name of this poem is included in the heading of a fundamental book "If: The Untold Story of Kipling's American Years"(Jasanoff, 2019), dedicated to the author's life and literary estate.

Considering abundant scope of the multifaced studies of Kipling's "If", we posit that at least one thing remains away from the focus of scientific inquisition: the reconstruction of the moral code, embedded in the poem within the framework of the cognitive paradigm.

The purpose of the given paper is to delve into the moral code of Kipling's ethical doctrine by means of cognitive interpretation of his renowned poem "If" and to unravel the conceptual domains that underlie his understanding of human values.

In order to achieve the aim of the study it is necessary to carry out the following objectives:

- to single out the traits of character, which are revealed in the stanzas of the poem;
- to relate them to the corresponding domains (moral concepts);
- to establish the antagonistic reference frames, against which the moral values are understood in the context of the poem;
- to reveal the binary character of values interconnection;
- to create field model of values, actualized in the verse.

The object of research is Kipling's landmark poem "If", while the subject of investigation is the moral code, actualized in its stanzas.

The realization of the research goal is achieved by means of field stratification methodology. It entails determination of the human qualities, embedded in the lines of the poem and their arrangement in the field model. Throughout the whole poem each element of ethical code is revealed in abstracts, consisting out of one or two lines, therefore these fragments will be considered as minimum pieces of textual analysis. Each minimum piece unravels the author's vision of a human moral trait, which is objectified within the space of the verse. From the prerequisites of cognitive approach each trait is actualized in mind in relation to a certain reference frame – domain. Therefore, the steps of cognitive analysis will be the following: distinguishing the actualized moral feature; relating it to the corresponding reference frame (domain); unravelling the antagonistic benchmark trait (which can be expressed in the verse explicitly and implicitly); interpretation of the interconnections among values; arranging the values in the field model according to the principle of nucleus / periphery stratification. We posit that employment of field stratification method is productive for cognitive interpretation of "If", since it enables to determine and stratify R. Kipling's moral code, revealed in the poem, into several layers: the most essential features form the nucleus, while the less essential ones constitute the periphery. The underlying principle of field stratification is based on the quantity of actualization cases of the particular concepts, which will be discussed further in details.

COGNITIVE INTERPRETATION OF KIPLING'S "IF"

Analysis of the minimum pieces presupposes highlighting the target character trait that is emphasized on. We call this trait 'trajector trait', as it occupies salient position in the conceptual space of the verse. The trajector trait on the cognitive level is understood against certain informational background (reference frame), which serves as a conceptual domain. Under the term domain we understand a concept, the knowledge of which is necessary to understand the target concept (idea) – moral trait, brought up by the author in the poem. As the analysis proved the domains for character features are moral values (concepts) that underlie them. Trajector traits and their domains are expressed either explicitly in the poetic space of the verse or on the level of implication and they are contrasted to their opposites – benchmarks. Within the framework of the given paper in sake of avoiding ambiguity we single out the character traits, which have adjectival lexicalization, while the names of conceptual domains have nominal character and are capitalized. To illustrate this thought, consider the following example. For instance, the trajector trait, which is expressed in a poem line can be "good-wishing". It is understood by the reader against the domain KINDNESS, as awareness of kindness is essential for understanding this feature. The benchmark in this example is EVIL as one cannot understand what is good without knowledge of what is bad.

Now we proceed to cognitive interpretation of the poem itself. The opening very first lines reveal the first traits of character, which build up R. Kipling's moral code:

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you.

"Keeping one's head" is defined as the ability to stay calm despite great difficulties. Therefore, the character traits, which are referred to in this case are "calm", "peaceful", "unruffled", "nerveless". The corresponding underlying conceptual domain is COMPOSURE. The benchmark characters, objectified by the antithesis are "nervous", "angry" and "irritable", which all belong to the domain ANGER.

If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too

In the following two lines "being confident", "convinced" and "faithful" is opposed to being "doubtful", "distrustful" and "suspicious". The positive features are understood against the domain FAITH, while the antagonistic domain is DOUBT. Moreover, in these line R. Kipling airs one more important idea that confidence in oneself should not be blind and unsusceptible to criticism from the others,

therefore the other moral characteristic, extolled in these lines is "being conceding", that is being able again and again put at question one's rightness for the sake of verification.

If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,

This line highlights PATIENCE as an integral part of moral code that is contrasted to ANXIETY, which is the benchmark for "being able to wait". It is immediately followed by:

Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,

Since inability to wait for the result often forces a person into achieving it in illegal ways, which in this line are generalized by the word *lie*, poet puts these two traits in the complementary position. In this piece R. Kipling points out to not only being honest in general, not subsiding to lies, but also to the necessity not to lie back if the person becomes lied about, that is not to take revenge. Therefore, the underlying conceptual domains are HONESTY and MERCY. The benchmark traits are "lying", "revengeful", while LIE and VENGEANCE are benchmark domains. The idea of being unrevengeful finds its continuation in the following piece:

Or being hated, don't give way to hating

Here the author asserts the greatest virtue of a person – "being kind" – the trait which is understood against the concept GOOD. But since R. Kipling in the abovementioned line appeals not to the general good, the conceptual domain may be narrowed to BENEVOLENCE. Importantly, this line, like the previous one, also underlines "being kind" and "not doing bad in return" even though the person is treated reversely. This is possible if one doesn't take grudge upon his offender. The benchmark for these traits is "spiteful" within the domain MALEVOLENCE.

And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise

The final line of the stanza summarizes the necessary condition for all abovementioned – "being modest and simple" in your ways. Without HUMILITY and SIMPLICITY all the aforementioned virtues would lose sense, since PRIDE and VANITY (the benchmarks) destroy all the spiritual gainings.

The next stanza makes a transition from speculative plane to the action plane. The opening lines are arranged in a way that a proposition is followed by a counter proposition (Sharma, 2019):

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim

They unravel the author's idea about not being passive and that mere contemplation is not enough, it should yield real actions. One should not be overwhelmed only with thoughts and stay in servitude of his dreams. The landmark character, preached in these lines is "efficient" and it is understood within the domain DEEDS, while the benchmark trait is "pensive" within the domain CONTEMPLATION. R. Kipling contrasts active life position to passive dreaming. It's worth saying that starting from the next piece there is no longer explicit opposition of landmark virtues with benchmark vices, expressed by antonymic lexical units. This, though, does not mean that the lines do not express such oppositions, but rather hints that the poet leaves their understanding to the background life experience of the readers.

If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same

The target feature articulated in this piece is "phlegmatic" in the positive sense of being not carried away by success, as well as not being frustrated by failures. The even deeper target feature might be "wise", which enables understanding that everything in life is transient. The domains EQUANIMITY and WISDOM do not have explicit benchmarks, like in the first stanza, but they are rather contrasted to the absence of such qualities. It should be noted here Kipling uses metaphorical personification of dreams (which are Masters), and Triumph with Disaster (which are impostors) that contributes to understanding of his message. Metaphorical comparisons operate like 'bridges' on the cognitive level joining two different concepts, which on the associative level have some common features. The poet implores that dream should not be one's master – that is one shouldn't be controlled by his dreams (as masters normally control and rule their servants). Triumph and Disaster are called impostors (on the basis of disguising themselves), as they 'lie' to a person by their inconstancy (Memon & Tunio, 2021). Neither triumph nor disaster can be permanent and absolute in philosophic understanding, but they rather interchange one another, so one shouldn't be carried away by any of them. Moreover, in the long run, triumph can appear to be a disaster and vice versa.

The landbark "being unruffled", expressed in the previous piece, further evolves in the next lines:

If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools

This message reaches its height in the next piece, which can be understood against the reference frame of STOICISM:

Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools,

Even when not only words of a person were corrupted but also all the results of his actions were demolished, a person needs to remain calm. To the landmark "being unruffled" Kipling adds features "endurable" and "persistent", which are deedful revelation of stoicism. The actualized ethical values that lie behind these features are domains COMPOSURE, FORTITUDE, STOICISM and PERSEVERANCE. Stoic spirit of the stanza is also maintained by employing metaphor 'worn-out tools' (Memon & Tunio, 2021), which are obviously not the building instruments but the spiritual forces of a person, which like real material tools can have certain durability and capability, therefore they can be worn-out or broken. High moral tension of the end of the second stanza finds it further rise and achieves its climax in the third stanza:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss.

Using the gambling metaphor (Grasso, 2009) R. Kipling asserts not blind reckless risk but rather the ability not to be too bound to one's achievements and not to be afraid to lose everything for the sake of the higher goal. Therefore, the target feature is "bold" rather than "adventurous", which is objectified against the conceptual domain DARING. Next line:

And lose, and start again at your beginnings

reiterates stoic spirit, ability to take the "second go" (Sharma, 2019), accentuating on the target features "persistent", "endurable" that are the result of FORTITUDE, which is emphasized by NON-COMPLAINING:

And never breathe a word about your loss.

The next piece expresses the climax of spiritual tension

If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

Fortitude is amplified by the will-power and author's idea is understood within the domain WILL, since it becomes the kernel of personality, exhorting him to action. Stoicism, which overwhelms the whole verse, emphasizes the ideas of Muscular Christianity, which according to (Shastry, 2019) had a very strong effect on him.

> *In many ways, Rudyard Kipling's concept of the Empire is similar to a popular concept in the Victorian Era, i.e. Muscular Christianity. In its purest form, Muscular Christianity emphasized upon humanitarian values, as opposed to a 'might-is-right' policy that some imperialists believed in* (ibid).

It's worth mentioning that Muscular Christianity conception is sustained by the stylistic device of personification, Will in particular. As stated in (Memon & Tunio, 2021) Will acts as an inner force of a person, embedded in his soul by God that governs and gives orders.

The final stanza changes its mood from overcoming deprivation and adversities to being able to stand up to seeming success in life, which sometimes appears to be even more difficult:

> If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,

The target feature here is "being tenacious" and "convinced in one's own beliefs", while the following line suggests "being modest and non-sophisticated":

> Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch

The domains HUMILITY and SIMLICITY, which entail character "being meek" form a certain lining of the poem, since these ideas were expressed in the first stanza, but in the final stanza they are emphasized even more vividly. The next line:

> If all men count with you, but none too much

preserves the implication that seeming success should not dazzle and one should not care about achieving respect and recognition among 'crowds' of people.

The following lines:

> *If you can fill the unforgiving minute*
> *With sixty seconds' worth of distance run*

reiterate the idea of deedful, not merely speculative life, because all the virtues are dead if they do not yield proper actions. And the final piece ultimately brings to the denouement of the diction:

Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And – which is more – you'll be a Man, my son.

In these lines, which the poet addresses both to his son and all humanity (Sharma, 2019) R. Kipling imparts that having all the above mentioned virtuous attributes, one can become the triumphant 'host' of the Earth, which is though not the ultimate goal. What really matters is that one will become a Human from the capital letter as an embodiment of humanity and morality, which is higher than all the worldly material pursuits and achievements. Therefore, the final lines infer the paramount target feature of the whole poem – "humane", which is projected upon the domain HUMANIZM that is understood as a repository of virtues, image and likeness of God. The generalized results of cognitive interpretation are given in the Table 1.

Table 1: Constituents of ethical code in Kipling's "If"

Poem lines	Trajector character	Domain (reference frame)
If you can keep your head when all about you *Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,*	calm unruffled	COMPOSURE
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you, *But make allowance for their doubting too*	convinced faithful open-minded	FAITH CONCEDING
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,	patient	PATIENCE
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,	honest unre- vengeful	HONESTY MERCY
Or being hated, don't give way to hating	kind unrevengeful	BENEVOLENCE MERCY
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise	modest unsophisticated	HUMILITY SIMPLICITY
If you can dream—and not make dreams your master; *If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim*	efficient	ACTING
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster *And treat those two impostors just the same*	phlegmatic wise	EQUANIMITY WISDOM
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken *Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools*	unruffled calm	STOICISM COMPOSURE
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken, *And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools*	unruffled endurable resilient	COMPOSURE FORTITUDE RESILIENCE
If you can make one heap of all your winnings *And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss*	bold	DARING
And lose, and start again at your beginnings	persistent	PERSEVERANCE
And never breathe a word about your loss	resilient	NON-COMPLAINING

Poem lines	Trajector character	Domain (reference frame)
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew *To serve your turn long after they are gone* *And so hold on when there is nothing in you* *Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'*	strong-willed endurable, persistent tenacious	WILLPOWER FORTITUDE PERSEVERANCE TENACITY
*If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtu*e	convinced	CONVICTION
*Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touc*h	humble unsophisticated	HUMILITY SIMPLICITY
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you	forgiving not vulnerable	MERCY FORTITUDE
*If all men count with you, but none too muc*h	humble	HUMILITY
If you can fill the unforgiving minute *With sixty seconds' worth of distance r*un	appreciating efficient	APPRECIATION ACTING
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it, *And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son*	mighty humane	MIGHT HUMANISM

Particular attention should be paid to poetic diction in general, in which we can highlight three peculiarities. Firstly, the diction itself is abstract, that is the reader does not have a particular image that underlies the poetic narration. It contributes to the fact that the ideas, expressed in the poem bear the most general character and refer not to anything concrete, but make up an edifice of moral conduct. Every reader, delving into it can find his own associations, projecting the tenets upon the reference frame of his life, which makes the poem universal.

Secondly, the diction in carried out not conventionally – in the Indicative Mood, like in most of prosaic and poetic works, but in the Subjunctive Mood, making it sound hypothetical, although attainable as R. Kipling uses Conditional I in anaphoric reiteration (*If…; If you can…*). Such type of diction helps the author to achieve the ultimate goal – convey the message that the moral code, encompassed within the lines is not something given to a person or taken for granted, but it is something that can be achieved only through ardent fight of human spirit.

Thirdly, the diction is symbolic. R. Kipling uses symbols to carry away his genuine message from the literal meaning of the words he uses. To such symbolic lexical units belong: "knaves" (symbolize all the enemies and ill-wishers of a person along with the bad circumstances, which might corrupt the real state of affairs), crowds (symbolize masses of average philistine people), kings (symbolize current authorities, who are in power), common touch (symbolizes unsophistication and simplicity).

FIELD MODEL OF KIPLING'S ETHICAL CODE

Creation of the field model of the ethical code, revealed in Kipling's "If", presupposes employment of field methodology, which is extensively used in cognitive studies. The principle of field model is based on the actualization quantity of a concept within a certain textual space. In our paper the model includes the conceptual domains (see Table 1 3[d] column), which are actualized in the stanzas of the poem, constituting the moral code. The field organization of ethical code consists of nucleus, which includes the most frequently actualized ethical concepts and periphery, to which belong concepts with lower rate of actualization.

The nucleus of moral code comprises ethical concepts, which are actualized most frequently in the poem and they include: COMPOSURE, MERCY, HUMILITY, FORTITUDE. All of them are actualized three times, which can be seen from the Table 1. We argue that affiliation of these particular concepts to the nucleus is not random, because these concepts are interconnected on the cognitive level. Composure presupposes being calm and unruffled. Calmness means that a person doesn't fly into anger, even if there is a reason for it, so that means that he is able to forgive, i.e. to express mercy. A forgiving person does not normally think high of himself, since he sees his own flaws, and this enables him to forgive faults of others. Therefore, in order to forgive one has to be humble. All the three above-mentioned characteristics are impossible for a weak person, since a weak person easily flies into temper, he is impatient and revengeful out of fear and at last for the same reason he is afraid to seem less important than he is. Therefore, fortitude is the integral feature of the moral code.

The periphery of moral code field comprises close periphery, which includes moral concepts, which are actualized twice – SIMPLICITY, ACTING, PERSEVERANCE and distant periphery, which contains moral concept, actualized only once – BENEVOLENCE, FAITH, CONCEDING, PATIENCE, HONESTY, EQUANIMITY, WISDOM, STOICISM, RESILIENCE, DARING, NON-COMPLAINING, WILLPOWER, TENACITY, CONVICTION, APPRECIATION, MIGHT. It should be mentioned, though, that peripheral status of moral concepts in the field stratification model does not indicate their general unimportance in the moral code but rather shows that for the author these values bear secondary character in his message. Moreover, if to look closer, all the peripheral concepts are directly connected with the nucleus ones. For example, RESILIENCE, STOICISM and WILLPOWER are closely related to FORTITUDE and PATIENCE, NON-COMPLAINING to COMPOSURE etc., therefore these values are located on the periphery, since they relate to the ones from the nucleus with the broader semantic scope.

BINARISM OF MORAL CODE IN KIPLING'S "IF"

Ethical code is a system, which is highly based on evaluation, which is polar by its nature. Therefore, ethical concepts, having positive or negative evaluative basis form binary oppositions. The essence of a binary opposition consists in the fact that its members serve as reference frames for each other. As it was stated above, the use of antithesis on the stylistic level triggers binarism on the conceptual level. This means that every trajector trait along with the corresponding trajector conceptual domain is a part of a binary opposition. The antagonistic member of opposition is also a character trait, which relates to the corresponding background (domain). The antagonistic traits and domains are called benchmark traits / domains as they serve as a certain standard or point of reference, against which the target traits / domains are compared. For instance, a person is bold when he compares himself to a coward, or a person can be called strong only in relation to a weak one. Thus "weak" is a benchmark for "strong", or "coward" is a benchmark for "bold".

Binarism of the moral code extolled in the poem "If" is revealed explicitly and implicitly. Explicit binarism is aired by R. Kipling himself by means of antithesis, which is observed throughout the first stanza and in the first two lines of the second one. In the rest of the poem the benchmark traits are implicit and the reader can understand them only based on his own moral experience. The results of the benchmark analysis are represented in Table 2. Explicit benchmarks are typed in bold.

Table 2: Benchmarks of the ethical code in Kipling's "If"

Target Domain (reference frame)	Benchmark trait	Benchmark domain
COMPOSURE	**Angry irritable**	**ANGER**
FAITH CONCEDING	**distrustful suspicious**	**DOUBT**
PATIENCE	**impatient**	**ANXIETY**
HONESTY MERCY	**lying revengeful**	**LIE VENGEANCE**
BENEVOLENCE MERCY	**spiteful**	**MALEVOLENCE**
HUMILITY SIMPLICITY	**sophisticated**	**SOPHISTICATION**
ACTING	**pensive**	**CONTEMPLATION**

Target Domain (reference frame)	Benchmark trait	Benchmark domain
EQUANIMITY WISDOM	exulted	EXULTATION
STOICISM COMPOSURE	Weak agitated	WEAKNESS DISTURBANCE
COMPOSURE FORTITUDE RESILIENCE	weak	APATHY
DARING	Faint-hearted	COWARDICE
PERSEVERANCE	idle	APATHY
NON-COMPLAINING	complaining	PITY
WILLPOWER FORTITUDE PERSEVERANCE TENACITY	Weak idle	WEAKNESS APATHY COWARDICE
CONVICTION	hesitating	DOUBT
HUMILITY SIMPLICITY	Vain arrogant	VANITY ARROGANCE
MERCY FORTITUDE	sensitive	VENGEANCE VULNERABILITY
HUMILITY	proud	PRIDE
APPRECIATION ACTING	Neglecting idle	NEGLECT APATHY
MIGHT HUMANISM	poverty inhumane	NEED INHUMANITY

CONCLUSIONS

In his everlasting poem "If" R. Kipling managed to create an edifice of moral mettle, which provides the tenets of virtue and worth irrespective of the epoch or geographical location, making it the legacy of the whole humanity. The peculiarities of poetic narration include abstract dictum, use of the subjunctive mood and symbolism. Sometimes R. Kipling also uses metonimical personifications (Triumph, Disaster, Will) and metaphors (like 'worn-out tools'). The latter operate like 'bridge' on the cognitive level, joining two different concepts that on the associative level have some common features. The interpretation through the prism of cognitive methodology enabled to distinguish trajector (target) human features, which constitute R. Kipling's moral code. From the cognitive perspective every character trait is understood against referential background – conceptual domain, for instance feature "forgiving" is understood against the reference frame (domain) MERCY etc. The use of field stratification methodology made it possible to distinguish concepts that form the nucleus of Kipling's moral

code, to which belong COMPOSURE, MERCY, HUMILITY and FORTITUDE. The peripheral values, revealed in the poem, are closely connected to the nucleus ones and their remoteness from the nucleus is explained by their lower frequency of actualization in the analyzed text. Such stratification in revealing of the moral code in "If" makes it an outstanding piece of poetry, compared with the other ones, attempting at unravelling ethical values. It should also be emphasized that moral values bear salient evaluative mark, therefore they form binary oppositions, for example: FAITH / DOUBT; STOICISM / WEAKNESS. The antagonistic member of the opposition – the benchmark serves as a conceptual verification for the target value with positive evaluative mark. For instance, 'doubting' is the benchmark for the trajector quality 'faithful'; benchmark vulnerable – for the trajector trait 'strong" etc. The benchmarks of the moral code in "If" are expressed both explicitly and implicitly, depending on the level of their relevance. Explicit benchmarks are expressed by means of antithesis, like *or being lied about – don't deal in lies; or being hated – don't give way to hating,* while implicit ones are not named by the author and are left for the reader's individual decoding, which is based on his background experience. The perspective of the further studies can be combination of cognitive approach with the deconstructive analysis.

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Osebni moralni kod: kognitivni pristop pri interpretaciji Kiplingove pesmi "If"

Članek odkriva moralni kod, ki ga slavi Kiplingova pesem "If" s pomočjo kognitivne interpretacije. Avtorjevo sporočilo, ki vsebuje njegov pogled na moralni kod, se pokaže v minimalnih smiselnih enotah pesmi (često enega ali dveh verzov), ki so natančno analizirani.

Ključne besede: R. Kipling, moralni kod, značajska podoba, etična vrednost

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The Genealogy of Civilization

Boštjan Marko Turk

Abstract

Civilization is a concept that ontologically defines the individual and the communities in which it develops. The most global civilization is the one that has emerged in the West. Civilization is not something static, but an organism that draws its roots from the distant past. In this sense, it is fundamental to answer the question of what are the constitutive elements that define Western civilization. This question only makes sense if it is asked in a historical perspective. In this direction the *Freemasonry, A Very Short Introduction* is a crucial one. It presents the analysis revealing how the history of freemasonry is related to the evolution of Western identity. It has to be read in the light of Niall Ferguson's monograph *The West and the Rest*. The present text does so. The book then brings to light the contribution of the brotherhood to the intellectual *habitus* of what is called the Judeo-Christian civilization, at the present time still predominant on the Planet.

The intellectual apparatus of the *Freemasonry, A Very Short Introduction* permits to elucidate the history of the masonic movement and its influence on events that seem unconnected and coincidental. Thus, this article tries to explain certain historical turning points in South-Eastern Europe, precisely in the light of the masonic alliances, in particular the case of the Illyrian Provinces and the first Slovenian poet, Valentin Vodnik, and secondly, what concerns the emergence of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which the author of the article defines as the result of the masonic strategy (the Grand Lodge of France and the Grand Orient of France).

Keywords: Andreas Önnerfors, freemasonry, Western Civilization, Southeast Europe, Illyrian Provinces, Valentin Vodnik, Charles Nodier, Napoleon, Kingdom of Yugoslavia

A key question that arises in postmodernity, and especially in the 21st century, is that of civilizations. This question implies the question of the genesis, identity and persistence of Western civilization. The last one appears as a cultural factor. This includes arts, sciences, the use of technology, ethics and morals. Throughout its history, the culture of the West has co-shaped the social and political entities on the planet, with few exceptions. Western civilization is thus, in historical terms, the most global civilization we know. The question of its genealogy is therefore of primary importance, since it answers the question of its ontology and its viability.

Trying to understand what has shaped our cultural milieu, we cannot ignore the influence of the various associations of masonic orientation. *Freemasonry: A Very Short Introduction* is a work that synthetises the question of masonic groups and the genealogy of Western civilization. Namely, there is a thread running through the entire book that would be perceived by an attentive reader as the focal message. This is the analysis, which reveals how profound the history of Freemasonry is related to the evolution of Western identity. The book brings to light by way of explanation the contribution of the "brotherhood" to the intellectual, moral and political *habitus* of what is called the Judeo-Christian civilization, at present predominant on the Planet.

In fact, during the High Middle Ages, the Freemasons, while building secular and sacred buildings, were noted for the use of architectural elements that are indicative of the Western civilization. The starting point is Gothic architecture, which was built according to the principles of stonework combined with some specific knowledge, which was relayed to future generations. The architectural inspiration goes hand in hand with the idea of its transcendental foundation.

The Temple of Solomon, based on the Word (1 Kings 7:1-5), is crystallized in the syntax of the "Word of the Master". It constitutes the spiritual basis of the thought that shapes the architecture of the buildings. The hand that chisels the stone is in harmony with both. There is also the narrator who transmits knowledge. In the absence of print, this skill is crucial. One of the roots of modern pedagogics was born with the buildings that pierced the sky for the first time since the time of the pharaohs.

> Another important feature of medieval craft guilds was that, in a time of widespread illiteracy and an absence of printed books, practical and applied know-how was orally transmitted and treated as privileged insider knowledge, constituting the secrets of a trade. Medieval society was organised into strict hierarchies and thus knowledge within the guilds was transferred vertically from master to journeyman to apprentice. The craft guild was a professional, social and religious fraternity, as well as representing a community of knowledge. (Önnerfors 38)

The two elements of civilization, the sense of the divine, transmitted through speech, and the dissemination of knowledge coincide in the focal intentions of the first brothers.

Implicitly the book *Freemasonry: A Very Short Introduction* is the revelation that the communities of the masonic guilds presupposed the necessary use of skills which, in later centuries, helped to articulate Western civilization in such a way that it became the dominant model of the world. In this sense, another source can be drawn upon. This is *Civilization, The West and the Rest.* (Ferguson 2011) It offers an interesting parallel:

> In 1500 the future imperial powers of Europe accounted for about 10 per cent of the world's land surface and at most 16 per cent of its population. By 1913, eleven Western empires controlled nearly three-fifths of all territory and population and more than three-quarters (a staggering 79 per cent) of global economic output. (Ferguson 5)

This phenomenon can be explained by the introduction of methodological elements that other civilizations did not know. The West in the morphological sense is not different from China, India, Turkey and other similar great empires. The difference is a matter of methodology: competitiveness, the scientific method, the ethics (of work), respect for the rule of law, medicine and consumerism are the six elements that Niall Ferguson calls the "*killerapps*", by analogy with software. We consider that only the first four are crucial: the other two are either embedded in them (consumerism) or came later and are derived from the first four, being created as a result.[1] If we take into account Niall Ferguson's analysis, we can see that the contribution of Freemasons, especially from the time when the industrial age began, is more than notable:

> The scientific image of freemasonry gave it a central place in the Enlightenment ideas of the period. Freemasonry is saturated with key Enlightenment concepts such as progress, perfectibility, and cosmopolitanism. On an individual level, freemasonry aims to promote a morality of autonomy, responsibility for the self, and moral example. These ideas are heavily influenced by classical stoicism: attaining a strong control of the passions and a mastery of the emotions while facing personal fate and any unforeseen challenges. (Önnerfors 46)

The excerpt bears noteworthy similarities with Fergusons's apprehension of large issues that assured the triumph of the West. The Knowledge and its transfer within the group are essential to increase competitiveness. In addition, a positive attitude

1 See the case of medicine.

towards science and its promotion is also of paramount importance. Freemasonry doesn't lack a spiritual platform that accompanies and gives meaning to the development of science. We have mentioned three of them. In addition to spirituality, we should indicate moral autonomy, which is the innate concept of the so-called rule of law in every human being. Besides: ethics is the *punctum saliens* of the fraternity. It is the irreducible common denominator of masonic orientation, defending and recommending the concepts of good behavior. It is not a philosophical belief, but a practice that exists only incarnated in action:

> There is no coherent ideology or doctrine of freemasonry. Rather, the fraternity is characterized by a considerable conceptual inclusiveness promoting an ethics of action; that is, an ethics of application rather than theory. (34)

Furthermore, Niall Ferguson identifies Isaac Newton as one of the key figures in the expansion of the West. But he was more than just a scholar. Aristotle, Pythagoras, René Descartes, Blaise Pascal (and others) were scientists who explored both the spiritual and material worlds and had a widely developed sense of the transcendent. It was not until the 19th century that science began to be separated from faith. In this sense, there are masonic temples dedicated to Newton; it cannot be said with certainty that he belonged to the masonic fraternity. But his views were **s**imilar to those of Freemasonry, which explains why so many ceremonial buildings have been dedicated to his name.

It is known, however, that Isaac Newton belonged to the Rosicrucian movement. It had a profound influence on his philosophical thinking. For this reason, he should have been close to Freemasonry, by logic:

> Under the surface of Protestantism, mystical currents of religiosity emerged, such as Rosicrucianism, which radically individualized the spiritual and personal encounter with the divine and charged it with strong symbolism. One of the master themes of the period was the search for secret and revealed analogies and correspondences between microcosm and macrocosm, heaven and earth, visible and invisible, divine and human. (Önnerfors 43)

Like thinkers and scientists, Newton was open to the immaterial dimension of the visible world. Just as he was aware of the general correlation between "*heaven and earth, visible and invisible, and divine and human*",[2] he was aware of the complexity of the universe in its true grandeur. Newton was a part of the era that saw the greatest expansion of science in the modern sense of the word. Freemasonry followed the same path:

2 Quotation *supra*.

> Modern freemasonry (which throughout this book will also be referred to as the 'brotherhood' or 'craft') became a global movement in the 18th century and its ideas have since created a considerable social, cultural, and political impact. Since its official inception in 1717, without any formal governing body, it spread throughout the world as a prominent feature of associational life. It became one of the largest non-governmental secular organizations. (8)

The architect of the universe is also the architect of the civilization. Science, religion and art are inseparable parts of the complex historical structure. The diachrony of creation is synchronously actualized. Their interaction constitutes the building blocks of civilization. As it reflects the meaning that transcends all experience, it can only be conceived on an a priori, transcendental text: consequently from one of the sacred books. *Freemasonry: A Very Short Introduction* cites the movement's essential bibliographical reference, its canonical *fundus*. More importantly, James Anderson's book is based on an older text, the *Gothic Constitutions*.[3] At the beginning of Anderson's *Constitutions* is the argument that man's creation as the image of God is related to the major skills the origin of which is contemporary with man's:

> Adam, our first Parent, created after the Image of God, the great Architect of the Universe, must have had the Liberal Sciences, particularly Geometry, written on his Heart; for even since the Fall, we find the Principles of it in the Hearts of his Offspring, and which, in process of time, have been drawn forth into a convenient Method of Propositions, by observing the Laws of Proportion taken Year of the World 1. 4003 before Christ from Mechanism: So that as the Mechanical Arts gave Occasion to the Learned to reduce the Elements of Geometry into Method, this noble Science thus reduced, is the Foundation of all those Arts, (particularly of Masonry and Architecture) and the Rule by which they are conducted and performed. (Anderson 7-8)

Canonical texts have the advantage of offering several levels of reading: in the case of the Bible, there are four levels of interpretation, which Augustine of Dacia describes as follows: "*Littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria, Moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia*."

Mutatis mutandis, the myth of Solomon's Temple is based on the Word and on the tradition. It is one of the most eminent buildings in the Bible whose symbolism can be grasped at several layers of interpretation. And again: on a literal level the temple was built, demolished and then rebuilt. The challenge is all the greater because from the point of view of symbolic meaning the building is constantly under construction. To build the Temple is to establish the civilization, **t**hrough

3 Cf: https://www.masoniclibrary.org.au/research/list-lectures/86-gothic-constitutions.html, retrieved May 10, 2021.

the knowledge entrusted to man at the moment of creation. In this context, the field of symbolic interpretation is as wide as possible, since its point of reference is at the limit of the ineffable, it is what is expressed by a structure typical of Hebrew: "*Sanctum Sanctorum*". (Önnerfors 72) Thus:

> The art of building, architecture, and geometry are all represented as exemplifying divine power and interference in human conditions exercised by the 'Great Architect of the Universe' (GAOTU). All important buildings mentioned in the Bible or known to the editor through classical literature and existent historical remains are linked to the science of masonry. Construction and re-construction are used as powerful metaphors, not as an abstract philosophy, but as an ethics of action in the service of humanity. Geometry and architecture occupy a civilizing function as expressions of divine order, providing a potential pattern 'for all nations' to follow and disseminate to distant cultures as far as Africa or India. (49-50)

In this sense, Freemasons present themselves as one of the builders of Western civilization. The history of the movement begins with the text of civilization, the Bible (the creation of Adam, Genesis 3). This is the transition from the transcendent to the rescendent order: it was realized once and for all. The mandate of the movement was born at this precious moment. *The Constitutions* of James Anderson provide the proof of this by placing the movement at the very heart of Judeo-Christian civilization.

But what is the civilization? We are aware of the arbitrary nature of the choice: however, the most academically noteworthy opinions in this regard were given by Paul Valéry (Valéry 1960) and André Malraux. (Malraux 1971) For the purpose of this discussion, we would rather quote Michel Onfray: his thought seems closer to the present moment: "Civilization is everything that crystallizes around a fiction that is itself rooted in a spiritual text. It is sacred, transcendent: it can be the Talmud, the Koran, the New Testament or the Bhagavat-Gita. There is no civilization without religion, which is its constitutive factor." [4]

The civilization cannot survive without the transmission of the genealogy, based on a sacred text: this task has been entrusted to the masonic movement *in primis*.

In Constitutions, genealogy is placed at the heart of the matter. It is the supreme *modus operandi* of the guild:

> Freemasonry claims to possess privileged secrets and to transmit them internally. According to the narrative of The Constitutions, knowledge (transcending that of the average person) has been handed down via an uninterrupted chain of initiates

4 Onfray, Michel - *LGL - Michel Onfray présente son nouveau livre : Décadence. Youtube. January 21, 2017.*

> from biblical times. These initiates have each then had to endure pressure both externally from others in their society and internally from their own human need to communicate with others and share these secrets. (Önnerfors 57)

Evoking the ancient masonic texts, the *Freemasonry: A Very Short Introduction* exploits the apparatus of analogy to open it up to the very sources of masonic tradition and identity, sources synonymous with the first paragraph of Anderson's work, cited above:

> Anderson's mythological account of freemasonry establishes a grandiose genealogy throughout the entire spectrum of intellectual history, encompassing the secular, Christian, and pagan. Thus, he constructs a narrative in which freemasonry is in possession of eternal ancient wisdom and uncorrupted knowledge of religion ('philosophia perennis' or 'prisca theologia'), handed down by generations of sage men united over the centuries and millennia in a privileged chain of initiates from almost every important religious and philosophical tradition. (51)

If this transmission is cut off, the civilization begins to collapse. Assuming that the genealogy is no longer in place; that the transmission of knowledge, skills and secret protocols is lacking, we enter the zone that represents the negation of the civilization as it has developed from the initial moment. Michel Onfray notes in this regard:

> As soon as we cease to have the memory of our ancestors, as soon as we no longer know how to recount our genealogy, as soon as we are lost as to what made us or constituted us, civilization sinks. We no longer care about the history we no longer care about the past. In this hatred of the past, in this impossible present and in the configuration of a future for which we don't know what it will lead to, we are in the situation of a civilization that is collapsing. [5]

This would lead to a logical conclusion which can be uttered as a syllogism. We shall formulate it in the form of a question. If Freemasons have been a constitutive element of the civilization since its beginning, will the end of civilization herald the end of freemasonry? The significance of *Freemasonry: A Very Short Introduction* lies in the fact that it indicates the genealogy of the movement and, in this way, implicitly warns of the dangers facing the movement if this genealogy is ever lost.

Freemasonry - A Very Short Introduction not only raises general issues, but also addresses more specific ones. The book provides a framework for understanding cultural-political developments in countries that were not part of the European

5 Onfray, Michel - *Interdit d'inerdire - Le Naufrage de notre civilisation. Youtube. March 3, 2021.*

alliance. The entry into modernity, through the Enlightenment, is an essential step, especially from the point of view of peoples who were still searching for their identity. *Le Compte-rendu de la Loge serbo-française Général Peigné*, written for the fiftieth anniversary of Yugoslav freemasonry, mentions the first Slovenian poet, Valentin Vodnik, among the Freemasons of this region. Thus, "*Among the Slovenes, let us revive the memory of B.*[6] *Valentin Vodnik, the great poet of the Illyrian period, so that the Slovenes understand the decisive role played by French freemasonry in the resurrection of their nation*." (Spalaikovitch 17)[7] Until now, Valentin Vodnik's membership in freemasonry has been questioned, if not denied.[8] His case is revealing in the sense of the coincidence of two characteristics that *Fremasonry: A Very Short Introduction* highlights as essential features of the movement. Firstly, Vodnik's poetry is oriented towards peaceful contentment with oneself and the universe. It expresses self-confidence, the joy of living and working without concern for major social, political or spiritual issues. Its values are Epicurean, happiness is within reach, man is intrinsically content with himself. In this sense, the title of his most important poem is *The Satisfied Carniolan*.[9] The poet's worldview can be explained by the following quotation:

> However, there is also an epicurean element, with the philosophical terms of 'felicity' and 'happiness' (derived from the Greek concept of 'Eudaimonia') occupying a prominent place in masonic ideology and symbolism, such as the omnipresent 'Temple of Felicity'. (Önnerfors 46)

To communicate his inner form to the whole nation, another moment was crucial for Vodnik: if the first moment was comparable, in terms of Roman mythology, to the goddess of happiness, *Felicitas*, the second moment bears the mark of a deity whose actions are unpredictable. Her name is *Fortuna*.* Valentin Vodnik was at his best during the time of the Illyrian provinces, established by Napoleon. They covered the territory of Slovenia, Istria, Kraina and Dalmatia. Again, Vodnik's engagement can be considered in accordance with the following:

> At the turn of the century, Napoleon revived freemasonry in France and aligned the brotherhood closely with the ruling establishment. Thus, he created the ideological basis forging an elite in service to the universalist (and expansive) project of the French Republic and later Empire. This patriotic enthusiasm,

6 The letter B stands for brother.

7 All translations from French to English have been made by the author of the following article.

8 Cf: Binder, Dieter *et al. The history and symbolism of the free masons*. Celje: MD, 2008 *and* Resman, Gregor. *Freemasonry and politics in Slovenia: a historical rewiev*. Ljubljana: FDV, 2021.

9 Cf: *https://sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zadovoljni_Kranjec*, retrieved May 10, 2021.

> where humanist values of the Enlightenment were married with ideas of national independence and self-assertion, spilled over into a number of typically mid- and late-19th-century national freemasonries (…). (17-18)

Valentin Vodnik's intellectual activity, *id est,* that which influenced the genesis of Slovenian cultural identity, could emerge in the context of the revitalization of the Freemasonic movement under Napoleon. The peak of the poet's work can be traced back to the years 1809-1812, when the Austrian monarchy no longer interfered with Slovenian territory. The French authorities made it possible to use Slovene in public: Vodnik's native language became the language of education. Primary and secondary schools were established. Valentin Vodnik thanked Napoleon with the ode *Illyria revived*.[10] Illyria is personified as a woman who wakes up and tells Napoleon her glorious but forgotten history. The poet gleefully notes that Napoleon has revived an old heritage and that Illyria will become the heart of Europe. In this context, one should not overlook the fact that Charles Nodier, who edited the newspaper *Le Télégraphe Officiel*, was active in Ljubljana during the same period. Nodier, one of the most influential Frenchmen in the region, belonged to the Grand Orient de France.[11] *Le Télégraphe Officiel* also published *Illyria revived*: "Nodier's note was printed next to the text, drawing attention to the merits of the poem itself, as well as to Vodník as an already renowned poet." (Kos 115)

After the restoration of the Austrian monarchy, Vodnik's situation deteriorated considerably. He was banned from public service. Until the second half of the 19th century, Slovene was removed from schools and offices and relegated to the status of an auxiliary language. The available sources do not yet allow us to classify Vodnik within the concrete masonic obedience. However, it is highly probable that he belonged to one of the French lodges established in Ljubljana during the Illyrian provinces. The extrait from the *Compte-rendu* shows that the Grand Lodge of France was well aware of Vodnik's activities: therefore, the most likely explanation is that Vodnik was a member of this Lodge or of one of its obediences.

The Apparatus of *Freemasonry: A Very Short History* can also be used to explain more important political changes that freemasonry triggered in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. We shall consider the following part:

> At the outset of the 20th century, freemasonry changed from its original and dynamic 18th-century global network to an integrated phenomenon of elite sociability confined within individual national states and empires. Masonic universalism of the earlier period had changed into diverging and mutually

10 Cf: https://sl.wikisource.org/wiki/Ilirija_o%C5%BEivljena, retrieved May 10, 2021.

11 Cf: https://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/bourgogne-franche-comte/doubs/besancon/liberte-conscience-250-ans-franc-maconnerie-besancon-633078.html, retrieved May 10, 2021.

> exclusive national definitions of what constituted universal civilization. The British, French, and German empires all competed for their specific versions of world culture. (Önnerfors 25)

The text allows to understand the development of events in the southwestern part of the Balkan Peninsula during and after the Great War. It permits furthermore to place them in relation to the general development of the masonic paradigm. The less known documents could be used to apply the thesis to concrete historical material. It is about the transfer of the culture, identity and political will of France to the territory of the rising Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of France, General Paul Peigné, played an essential role. When the Franco-Yugoslav *Atelier* bearing his name was founded in 1925, it was announced:

> Our ideal in founding this Atelier was to strengthen our relations with the Balkan nations in order to fortify the state of peace, by bringing the Balkan peoples a little closer each day to the intellectual and moral centre which France represents in their eyes. (Spalaikovitch 6)

But the French went further: they wanted to transmit French culture to the Yugoslav youth: they wanted to educate it in its own spirit, Freemasonry being one of the necessary elements of cultural and general identity. It is striking that the introduction to the world of French cultural identity and the introduction to freemasonry are almost synonymous:

> We propose to recruit from among the Yugoslav university youth in Paris, wise minds who would complete their university education with a masonic education. The young students who are with us, even those who are more active in their studies, do not satisfy them enjoying our restaurants, cafés and bistros. When they return to their country, they have admired our monuments, our gardens, our capital, but the essence seemed to be out of grasp for them. We want them to be able to enter freemasonry, to follow our work, to get to know our masonic spirit and even to create family relationships among our masonic brothers. (6-7)

The goal was to become French at the same time as a freemason.

Over the course of the decades, representatives of the Grand Lodge of France and the Grand Orient have convincingly succeeded in recruiting Yugoslav youth. The document in question gives an account of the history of the masonic movement in Serbia. In this regard, the First Master of the Serbian-French Lodge, Venerable Gabriel Scellier, provides an analysis of Serbian freemasonry. He reveals the extent to which Freemasons are involved in the upper echelons of Serbian politics, science, art and literature:

> Almost all your scientists, writers and statesmen have belonged or still belong to freemasonry. In every government, several ministers are freemasons. This is also the case in the present Cabinet, chaired by the great statesman Pašić. Affection for freemasonry is one of the strong guarantees that Yugoslavia will follow the path of progress and strive to establish justice and peace, as well as the general welfare of the people, wherever they may be in the world. (6-7)

Aa soon as in the second half of the 19th century, Paris had serious ambitions in the southwestern Balkans. The path to realization passed through the Grand Lodge of France, and more precisely through a chance meeting, as *Compte-rendu* testifies:

> In the tragic hours of the 1870-71 war Paul Peigné had under his direct orders a young officer, Prince Pierre Karađorđević, who had also graduated from Saint-Cyr. They have formed a lively friendship. This officer, thirty years later, was King of Serbia. (6-7)

When the royal house of Karađorđević came to power in Serbia (1904) and Peter became king, cooperation intensified. Peter Karađorđević turned Serbia away from Austria-Hungary and towards France. Freemasons played a key role in this, "orchestrating radical political changes." (Önnerfors 122) At the end of the First World War, the Grand Lodge of France and the Grand Orient supported the creation of a new state, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, with Peter Karađorđević becoming its monarch. This completely transformed political relations in South Eastern Europe.

Referring to the *Resolution* (Lebey 1917) passed by the Congress of Freemasons of the Allied Countries between 28th and 30th June 1917, based on Wilson's theses on the self-determination of peoples, the two Lodges prepared a special document for the Paris Peace Conference (1919), demanding that the Conference establishes a State of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. (Peigné 1919) They have also drawn borders on the map. The first proposal was respected, the second one, especially in the southwest of the new state, was not.

The state survived until the Second World War. It was during the reign of King Peter and his successor, Alexander, that the Kingdom of Yugoslavia made significant cultural and economic progress. It was a step towards civilization: Serbia, the backbone of the Kingdom, was irreversibly transformed. From a rural Eyalet integrated into the declining Ottoman Empire, it became a power that, as part of the *Entente*, successfully confronted the Austro-Hungarian monarchy in 1914-1918. All this would not have been possible if the French Republic had not invested Serbia (the Yugoslav Kingdom) with the civilizational achievements, synonymous with the cultural and economic infrastructure. As the historical documents reveal, the role of freemasonry, and in particular of the Grand Lodge of France and the

Grand Orient de France, was of fundamental importance.

Freemasonry – A Very Short Introduction is an effective tool for confronting the mortgage imposed to the movement, as it itself diagnoses it in the final chapter:

> From the margins of public debate, the issue of freemasonry has moved into mainstream media and governmental decision-making processes, where stereotyped images have been recycled, images that are likely to remain for the foreseeable future. (Önnerfors 123)

The book allows us to place the brotherhood in the precise historical contexts in which it has taken shape, in time, refuting the prejudices. Its main advantage is therefore providing a starting point for understanding the real nature of the movement and, above all, its contribution to the formation of civilization, in different historical contexts, however implausible they may seem.[12]

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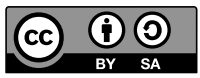

Genealogija civilizacije

Ključno vprašanje, ki se zastavlja v postmoderni, še posebej pa v 21. stoletju, je vprašanje soočenja civilizacij. To vprašanje nujno implicira vprašanje o genezi, identiteti ter obstojnosti zahodne civilizacije. Ta se identificira kot kulturni dejavnik, v najširšem pomenu besede. Kultura se namreč na splošno nanaša na oblike človeške dejavnosti in simbolične strukture, ki dajejo taki aktivnosti pomen. V najširšem pomenu označuje izraz kultura vse produkte posameznika, skupine ali družbe inteligentnih bitij. Sem spadajo umetnost, znanost, raba tehnologij ter etika in morala. V tem smislu je kultura zahoda skozi zgodovino sooblikovala družbene in politične entitete na planetu, z redkimi izjemami.

Zahodna civilizacija je tako v zgodovinskem smislu najbolj globalna civilizacija, kar jo poznamo. Vprašanje o njeni genealogiji je tako prvenstvenega pomena, saj odgovarja tudi na vprašanje o njeni ontologiji in o njenih sposobnostih preživetja.

Ključne besede: Andreas Önnerfors, prostozidarstvo, zahodna civilizacija, jugovzhodna Evropa, Ilirske province, Valentin Vodnik, Charles Nodier, Napoleon, Kraljevina Jugoslavija

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Le sage et son mystique.[1] Regard croisé dans la correspondance d'Henri Pourrat et Jan Čep

Jan Zatloukal

[V]vous êtes un vrai sage et un courageux. J'aurais dû le devenir, moi aussi […].[2]

On le sent vraiment poète […] A la fois très paysan, très lettré, très mystique.[3]

Abstract: The Sage and His Mystic. A Look at the Correspondence Between Henri Pourrat and Jan Čep

Henri Pourrat (1887-1959) is inextricably linked to his region of Auvergne and his work as well as his personality have left an indelible mark there. Although his influence gradually faded away after the Second World War, it can be measured by a veritable mass of letters exchanged with countless correspondents. He enjoyed a reputation as a writer, the success of which was confirmed by the award of the Grand Prix du Roman de l'Académie Française to the whole of *Gaspard des montagnes* in 1931 and by the award of the title of Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur in 1928.

1 Cette partie du titre est un clin d'œil au livre d'Henri Pourrat *Le Sage et son démon*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1950.

2 J. Čep à H. Pourrat, 19 décembre 1958.

3 H. Pourrat à L. Gachon, 27 octobre 1935.

Jan Čep (1902-1974) was the translator of his works into the Czech language. Pourrat had sympathy for him because of the poetic inspiration that Čep drew from the same sources as him-self, that is, from the rustic world of the countryside, from its myths and legends. Pourrat perceived Čep as mystical because his work emanates from the deep metaphysical dimension. Faith thus plays the role of a bridge between the two men. For both of them it is the moving force in their lives. This is a full literary and spiritual contact that this article highlights.

Keywords: Henri Pourrat, Jan Čep, *Gaspard des montagnes*, rustic inspiration, mysticism, metaphysics

Henri Pourrat (1887-1959) est indissociablement lié à sa région d'Auvergne et son œuvre de même que sa personnalité y ont laissé une trace indélébile[4]. Son influence dans la région fut telle qu'Alexandre Vialatte n'hésite pas à écrire après la mort de l'écrivain ambertois avec humour :

> La vraie Auvergne ne date guère de Pourrat. Avant lui, Vercingétorix avait eu une idée confuse de cette province, mais il n'avait eu que le temps de mourir pour elle. Pourrat lui a consacré sa vie. Pourrat c'est « le chef-lieu du Puy de Dôme » comme écrivait une écolière. (Vialatte – Pourrat, 2008, 31)

Quoique son influence s'éteigne progressivement dès la Seconde Guerre mondiale on peut la mesurer sur une véritable masse de lettres échangées avec d'innombrables correspondants[5]. De nos jours le Centre Henri Pourrat recense plus de 20 000 plis reçus de 1800 correspondants différents.

C'était Claude Dalet, ancien conservateur du Centre, qui tenta la classification des correspondances d'Henri Pourrat (Dalet, 2011, 9-19). Il en distingue plusieurs cercles : celui des amis d'Auvergne reliés par le même cadre régional (p. ex. Joseph Desaymard, Alexandre Vialatte, Lucien Gachon) ; celui autour des revues auxquelles Pourrat contribuait (p. ex. Jean Paulhan pour *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, frères Leblond pour *La Vie*, Luc Estang pour *La Croix*) ; celui formé des auteurs des collections « Champs » et « Campagne » dirigées par Pourrat ; celui autour du *Trésor des contes*. Le seul cercle « non français », mentionné dans cette classification, serait celui constitué de ses amitiés suisses avec Ramuz en tête. Il y a quelques

4 « La contribution a été créée avec le soutien du ministère de l'Éducation, de la Jeunesse et des Sports de la République tchèque accordé par UP à Olomouc (IGA_FF_2020_023). »

5 Christian Morzenowski parle d'un véritable « foyer » épistolaire et d'une sorte d'« épicentre » littéraire qui s'était cristallisé autour de la personne et de l'œuvre d'Henri Pourrat (Morzenowski, 2011, 25).

années, les correspondances dépassant les frontières de l'hexagone sont en train d'être enrichies par celle échangée avec Jan Čep (1902-1974), écrivain et premier traducteur tchèque de *Gaspard des montagnes*[6].

Rappelons qu'en 1932, au moment où s'ouvre leur correspondance, Jan Čep est un jeune écrivain de 30 ans ayant sur son compte plusieurs recueils de nouvelles, bien accueillies par la critique qui reconnaît en lui un rénovateur de la littérature rustique. On apprécie sa vision nouvelle de la campagne spiritualisée où l'homme, se débat entre l'attraction vers l'au-delà et l'attachement vers les choses d'ici-bas ; on loue surtout son art comme celui d'un observateur insolite et d'un écrivain d'une puissance poétique, ce qui le fera désigner par F. X. Šalda « poète du regard matinal » (Šalda, 1934/35).

Pourrat, quant à lui, a déjà dépassé la quarantaine et jouit d'un renom de l'écrivain, dont le succès fut confirmé par l'attribution du Grand Prix du Roman de l'Académie Française à l'ensemble de *Gaspard des montagnes* en 1931 et par la remise du titre de Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur en 1928. Il est, certes, connu surtout grâce au succès des quatre volumes de *Gaspard,* mais loin d'être l'écrivain d'un seul livre. A son compte des livres aussi divers que les *Montagnards*, long poème de la Grande Guerre qui lui valut le Prix Archon-Desperouses en 1919 ; *Les jardins sauvages* (1923) dédié à Jean Angéli, ami des plus proches tombé dans cette guerre ; de nombreux essais portant sur l'Auvergne et la paysannerie dont *Dans l'herbe des trois vallées* (1927), *Ceux d'Auvergne* et surtout *La Ligne verte* (1929). Il est aussi un contributeur assidu aux nombreuses revues dont *la Nouvelle Revue Française*, *Sept*, *La Vie intellectuelle*. Depuis son « université d'Ambert » (terme de Lucien Gachon), il anime la vie littéraire et intellectuelle de l'Auvergne et devient un mentor encourageant de jeunes écrivains régionaux dont il préface les œuvres. Sa maison du Petit Cheix est alors un véritable carrefour de rencontres non seulement pour ceux d'Auvergne mais aussi pour les visiteurs parisiens ou même ceux d'au-delà des frontières hexagonales dont sera aussi Jan Čep.

LE TCHÈQUE AUX YEUX ILLUMINÉS

Le 6 juillet 1932 depuis Saint-Saturnin, petit village près d'Angoulême, Jan Čep envoya sa première lettre à Henri Pourrat. Il lui écrit en humble traducteur de *Gaspard des montagnes* pour « quelques difficultés de texte, quelques expressions régionales et quelques faits locaux » (Pourrat – Čep, 2014, 28) et, avec une timidité qui lui est propre, sollicite auprès de l'auteur un rendez-vous. Ce sera le 5 septembre qui verra la première rencontre entre les deux écrivains.

6 *Correspondance Henri Pourrat – Jan Čep (1935-1958). Ce n'est qu'un mot pour l'amitié* (éd. Jan Zatloukal), Cahier Henri Pourrat 29, Société des Amis d'Henri Pourrat, Clermont-Ferrand, 2014.

Grâce aux cahiers journaliers dans lesquels Pourrat notait, ne serait-ce que très brièvement, les événements qui traversaient ses jours, nous avons son témoignage du moment de la rencontre. L'annotation du 5 septembre laisse entrevoir non seulement les activités de la journée, les sujets de leurs conversations, mais trahit aussi les premières impressions que Čep fit à son hôte : « Jean Čep. Bois de l'Enclos. Florian. La vie paysanne. Visage beau, clair, osseux. Yeux illuminés, graves. Parler difficile. »[7] Plus largement il s'épanche le jour même dans la lettre à Vialatte :

> Aujourd'hui, la visite d'un tchèque aux yeux assez illuminés qui hait l'Amérique et les voyages, traduit maintenant *Gaspard*, après avoir été paysan en sa jeunesse, et ensuite disciple d'une sorte d'apôtre catholique de la vie agreste, traducteur de Léon Bloy. (Vialatte – Pourrat, 2006, 255)

Hormis la physionomie remarquée par Pourrat (visage osseux, les yeux illuminés) et la difficulté de s'exprimer en français (parler difficile) c'est notamment l'origine paysanne qui intéresse Pourrat et la figure de Florian, cet « apôtre catholique de la vie agreste » que Pourrat s'identifiera avec son propre idéal de l'éducation basée sur le contact direct avec les « choses vertes » de la nature. Pour ce qui est de deux objets de répulsion – l'Amérique et les voyages – le premier semble valoriser la France représentant le sol de la vieille Europe chrétienne et solidaire contre l'individualisme et le libéralisme pragmatique et en découlant le relativisme noétique de l'Amérique. Le deuxième peut paraître paradoxal chez quelqu'un qui voyageait assez souvent et pour qui ces voyages et ses séjours à l'étranger donnaient l'occasion d'échapper aux occupations et aux ennuis de l'existence quotidienne et ainsi de produire son œuvre dans la relative tranquillité.

Il semble que l'amitié entre les deux hommes fut liée presque immédiatement comme le prouve non seulement le souvenir de Čep mais aussi la dédicace inscrite par Pourrat dans l'exemplaire de *Dans l'herbe des trois vallées* offert à Čep avant son départ : « à Jean Čep, le jour de notre rencontre, et tout heureux de me sentir en communion de goût et d'idées avec lui. » (Pourrat – Čep, 2014, 226)[8] Après son retour en Tchécoslovaquie, Čep remercie Pourrat pour « le don d'une sympathie immérité » (*Ibid.*, 31) et encore longtemps il éprouvera ce sentiment d'être peu digne de l'amitié si naturellement offerte par l'écrivain auvergnat.

La première visite ne reste pas sans écho dans la correspondance de Čep. A Josef Florian, disciple tchèque de Léon Bloy et infatigable propagateur de son œuvre, qui lui demande le portrait de l'écrivain auvergnat, Čep donne cette description :

7 Le manuscrit est déposé au Centre Henri Pourrat dans la Bibliothèque du Patrimoine du Clermont-Ferrand.

8 Toutes les dédicaces retrouvées d'Henri Pourrat à Jan Čep sont transcrites dans *Annexes* de l'édition mentionnée (Pourrat – Čep, 226-233).

> Il est de haute stature, il a la barbe noire (il laisse pousser sa barbe). Mais en réalité il ne paraît pas aussi robuste que sur ces portraits [des *Nouvelles littéraires*]. Il est pâle, amaigri, parle lentement et à voix basse – je dirais presque qu'il a de faibles poumons. Il m'a dit sans que je lui demande qu'il fût catholique (« pratiquant »), bien qu'il ait eu une période de scepticisme dans sa jeunesse. (Actuellement il a l'air d'avoir quarante ans). Il est marié, il a une femme bien jolie et très naturelle et une petite fille d'à peu près trois ans.[9]

LE SAGE ET LE MYSTIQUE

Nous voulons maintenant nous poser la question comment les deux amis se percevaient mutuellement, ce qu'ils représentaient l'un pour l'autre, et, pourquoi ils se sentaient si proche l'un de l'autre.

Pour Pourrat Čep est doté avant tout de la triple caractéristique inscrite dans la dédicace de *la Porte du verger* : il est poète, croyant, paysan. Les correspondances parallèles de Pourrat nuanceront cette triade fondamentale (« c'est un paysan […], et très poète, très mystique » ; « A la fois très paysan, très lettré, très mystique » (Pourrat – Gachon III, 1994, 14, 47))

On voit que plus qu'un simple croyant, Čep est présenté aux amis de Pourrat comme « mystique ». C'est d'abord l'aspect visuel, la physionomie austère de Čep, dominé par le regard grave et perspicace, qui montre certains attributs d'un mystique. Dès la première rencontre Pourrat se rend compte de son attitude anxieuse et rêveuse. Dans la scène de l'arrivée de l'abbé Jean, transposition littéraire de Čep dans le récit resté longtemps inédit et intitulé *l'Emigré*, on voit bien comment l'écrivain ambertois percevait son traducteur :

> Il ne me voit pas d'abord, il passe l'œil sur cette place de bourgade, d'un air de dépaysement ou plutôt d'absence, comme envoûté par une idée qui le retire de tout pour l'avoir à soi seule. On m'avait dit : « Il est très triste et abattu, il semble porter sur soi en plus de sa souffrance toute la souffrance de son pays. » Mais c'est autre chose que tristesse et souffrance. Ou même que l'insomnie aux yeux creux : une sorte de solitude où il est descendu comme une pierre à travers l'eau. Le sentiment d'être seul comme on est seul quand on rêve ; on le sent à une distance un peu plus grande que l'an dernier de toutes choses ; il faut un peu plus longtemps pour que les questions lui parviennent, pour que son œil de moine mystique reconnaisse les maisons, l'église, les tilleuls. Sa face dans son grain même tient davantage de la pierre et comme il est lent à sourire. (Pourrat – Čep, 2014, 236)

Pourrat porte particulièrement attention aux yeux, au regard de Čep. A la première entrevue il remarque la profondeur ou la perspicacité du regard de ce « Tchèque

9 J. Čep à J. Florian, 24 novembre 1932 ; archives d'auteur, traduction du tchèque J. Z.

aux yeux assez illuminés ». La scène citée souligne son côté mystique : solitude assurant l'éloignement du monde, assumant la souffrance des autres, gravité silencieuse. Son « œil de moine mystique » ne voit presque pas le monde extérieur, le mystique habitant un monde autre, un ailleurs d'où il a du mal à revenir. Il paraît d'ailleurs que la fascination pour les yeux de Čep ne soit pas uniquement le propre de Pourrat. Daniel Halévy fait une expérience semblable en confiant à Pourrat que c'était dans les yeux de Čep qu'il devina, qu'il a « touché » « l'imminent malheur » de son pays juste avant l'éclatement de la Seconde Guerre mondiale[10].

Mais il y a chez Čep aussi un autre regard que le regard physique, le regard au sens figuré. Čep est pour Pourrat celui qui voit et comprend plus que les autres, qui comprend à demi-mot, qui voit au-delà de ce qui est dit. Lorsque Pourrat publie en 1946 *La Bienheureuse Passion*, livre auquel il attribue plus d'importance qu'à ses livres précédents et qui, malgré tout, passe presque inaperçue en France, sans éveiller l'intérêt de la critique ou du public, le poète mystique tchèque est un des rares « [qui] ont vu tout de suite » (Pourrat – Gachon V, 1996, 195).

Cette perception de Čep comme un mystique est renforcé chez Pourrat par ce peu qu'il a pu lire de l'œuvre de son ami, l'œuvre qui émane intensément une certaine dimension métaphysique. En novembre 1933 Čep envoie à Pourrat sa nouvelle « Nuit de Noël » qui a paru dans *La Revue française de Prague* dans la traduction de Michel-Léon Hirsch tout en avertissant Pourrat qu'il peut la regarder comme une sorte de « programme », comme sa « manière de voir l'histoire et l'espèce humaine ». (Pourrat – Čep, 2014, 42) La nouvelle, dont la composition est fondée sur la base de la symphonie musicale, comme l'a brillamment démontrée Jan Wiendl (2013, 2014), beigne tout entière dans l'atmosphère onirique et mystérieuse où les vivants côtoient les fantômes des morts pour se diriger ensemble à travers les âges et par le paysage à la fois bien connu et transfiguré vers l'église paroissiale luisant dans les ténèbres de la nuit et attirant toute l'humanité pour participer au mystère de la nativité.

Si Čep est pour Pourrat un poète mystique, un ami un peu mystérieux couvert de silence et de tristesse mélancolique, Pourrat est pour Čep un sage dont la manière de vie paisible et confiante mérite d'être suivie. C'est dans une des dernières lettres à Pourrat où il l'exprime de pleine voix : « Vous êtes un vrai sage et

10 « Je prévoyais pourtant ce qui nous attendait. Vous aussi sans doute. Mais prévoir n'est rien. Tout près de vous, j'ai fait mieux que prévoir, j'ai touché notre imminent malheur. Vous l'ignorez sans doute. Je l'ai touché dans les yeux de votre ami tchécoslovaque. Je lui ai dit, en lui serrant la main, devant le petit château de Mme de la Tour. "je souhaite que vous ne trouviez pas chez vous demain une trop cruelle épreuve." Sans doute avais-je dit cela avec la tranquillité d'un homme qui croit jouir de quelque immunité, car votre ami m'a regardé bien en face, avec douleur et compassion, et m'a dit : "Je forme le même vœu pour vous." Il voulait dire : "Prenez garde que ce sera votre tour demain." Je ne crois pas que notre épreuve soit analogue. Mais elle sera grande – que sera-t-elle ? », D. Halévy à H. Pourrat, 3 octobre 1939.

un courageux. J'aurais dû le devenir, moi aussi […] » (Pourrat – Čep, 2014, 205). Čep admire chez son ami plus âgé le courage, la discipline, la confiance, ces qualités qui lui font souvent défaut, anxieux et vulnérable comme il est. Pourrat ancré dans son Auvergne se dresse devant Čep, « pèlerin sur la terre », comme la certitude, comme un point solide dans son existence agitée : « Il y a une force d'apaisement dans votre personnalité, de même que dans vos livres. » (*Ibid.*, 63) Il semble d'ailleurs que les deux hommes sont conscients de cette différence de caractère : l'un en proie à l'angoisse, l'autre pourvu d'une confiance rassurante[11]. Il est aussi quelqu'un qui sait se mettre à la place d'autrui, qui sait vraiment porter l'oreille aux soucis de l'exilé Čep, les prend au sérieux, s'applique constamment à le réconforter et à le secourir.

C'est là, en exil, que les lettres de Pourrat lui apportent la consolation dont il a tant besoin, lui remontent le moral, témoignent de la participation de Pourrat à sa vie « coupée comme par un couteau ». Dans son journal intime tenu en exil, Čep nota que chaque jour il souhaitait que le facteur lui apporte une lettre qui viendrait tout simplement lui donner un peu de joie. C'est Pourrat qui lui envoie de telles lettres. A leur lecture Čep ne s'abstient pas de réaction bien émotive :

> J'ai lu votre lettre les larmes aux yeux ; c'est peut-être la plus belle, la plus affectueuse que j'aie jamais reçue de personne. […] C'est une telle voix que j'avais besoin d'entendre juste à ce moment-là. (Pourrat – Čep, 2014, 163)

Le seul remède à l'hypersensibilité, selon Pourrat, serait le travail régulier, pas tellement le gagne-pain, mais le travail personnel « qui pousse du dedans » qui traduit le « besoin de changer la vie » et contribue ainsi à « l'avènement, à la venue du Règne » (*Ibid.*, 142). Il ne cesse pas de l'encourager en dépit des échecs répétitifs auprès les éditeurs :

> Même si vous ne lui donniez que quelques minutes par jour, avec lenteur, l'œuvre avancerait. Cela vous aiderait. Ne laissez pas l'ennui, la gêne mordre sur vous, cher Jean. Il me semble que c'est un péché. » (*Ibid.*, 159)

Pourrat est ainsi l'une des rares amitiés françaises qui redonne à Čep confiance en lui en tant qu'écrivain. Il l'encourage, malgré les échecs, à entreprendre d'autres projets littéraires tout en l'assurant que son français est « parfait » et que son rêve de devenir un écrivain d'expression française n'est pas inaccessible.

11 Dans une lettre à Suzanne Renaud Pourrat saisit bien cette différence : « […] j'ai eu le plaisir de voir, d'avoir ici en octobre quelques jours mon cher Jean Č. Comme toujours assez triste et anxieux. Je le comprends bien. Mais j'ai plus de confiance et d'espoir que lui. » (Renaud – Pourrat, 2001, 18). Aussi dans une lettre à Čep, il reconnaît que sa confiance relève d'une grâce : « La grâce m'est faite de ne pas trop m'inquiéter. » (Pourrat – Čep, 2014, 208).

L'AMITIÉ OÙ LA DISTANCE ET LE TRAVAIL DU TEMPS N'EST POUR RIEN

A la différence de la relation plus dramatique avec Bernanos, l'amitié entre Jan Čep et Henri Pourrat n'a pas connu de ruptures lors des vingt-six années de son existence. Sans doute aussi grâce à l'amitié au sens large qui pour l'écrivain auvergnat représentait une valeur suprême permettant de surmonter les différences de caractères, pardonnant avec indulgence les longs silences de son homologue[12].

Trois piliers fondamentaux portaient la voûte de leur amitié, l'amitié dans laquelle « la distance et le travail du temps n'est pour rien » (*Ibid.*, 55) : campagne, littérature et foi. Incarnant les trois composantes essentielles de l'existence des deux hommes, la valeur de paysannerie, le métier de l'écrivain et la philosophie de vie, ces trois mots assuraient qu'ils pouvaient se sentir dans une « étonnante intimité ».

Pour tous les deux, la campagne de leurs pays natal représente la majeure source d'inspiration, Pourrat donnant vie aux forêts et montagnes du Livradois, Čep peignant la plaine de Haná avec ses chemins entre les champs dorés de blé. Mais l'univers paysan, en voie de disparition, représente aussi un trésor qui vaut d'être sauvé pour l'avenir. Les « choses vertes » de la nature et la « sève », cette sagesse paysanne, sont pour Pourrat une vraie culture de vie dont le fruit serait des relations interhumaines de meilleure qualité, moins dégradées par les atteintes négatives de la civilisation urbaine. C'est pourquoi il souligne toujours à ses amis l'origine paysanne de Čep[13]. D'où aussi le rapport ambivalent des deux hommes envers la métropole française, ce Paris « redoutable et démoralisant » (Pourrat), « ce labyrinthe désespérant » (Čep). Refusant de participer à « cette énorme comédie sociale » où « il s'agit d'établir son importance, de marquer son rang […] » (cité par Lauras, 1996, 50), Pourrat décida déjà en 1931 de ne plus fréquenter la capitale, lui préférant la vie retirée d'Ambert. Quant à l'exilé Čep, fixé à Paris pour le reste de sa vie, il n'est devenu, selon ses propres mots, qu'un « mauvais Parisien ».

Le christianisme, leur foi chrétienne, joue le rôle de deuxième pont entre les deux hommes. Pour tous deux elle est une force mobile de leurs vies, auxquelles elle donne son plein sens. Tandis que pour Pourrat elle est un élément stabilisateur

12 C'est l'amitié qui a permis à Pourrat de sortir de la crise profonde dans laquelle l'a enfoncé sa maladie et le drame de la Première Guerre mondiale. Il partage sa découverte dans la lettre à Joseph Desaymard du 11 avril 1923 : « Il y longtemps, depuis la guerre, que je suis tenté de dire le monde mauvais et de juger tout, le monde, la vie et tout, de façon pessimiste. Progressivement j'accentue, – ce qui ne veut pas dire du tout que j'ai des idées noires. Et je ne vois qu'une manière de s'en tirer, de se sauver : par amitié. Je suis arrivé à ces conclusions de 4 ou 5 façons différentes, mais je le vois encore mieux à cette heure, c'est par amitiés, par l'amitié, sous toutes ses formes (la patrie, l'esprit religieux, chrétien) qu'on peut donner un sens et du prix à la vie… » (cité par Lauras, 1996, 32).

13 « C'est un paysan, fils du paysan, et dont le frère reste fermier. » ; « […] il est de famille paysanne, il a labouré, gardé les vaches. » (Pourrat – Gachon III, 1994, 14, 47).

qui se manifeste par les vertus de confiance et d'espérance, pour Čep elle révèle notamment le paradoxe pascalien de l'incommensurabilité entre l'imperfection et l'insuffisance de l'homme et l'humanité pleine et parfaite incarnée par Jésus Christ. La foi ouvre ainsi pour Čep un abîme entre l'idéal de sainteté et l'existence corrompue de l'homme pécheur. D'où son sentiment de culpabilité, ses scrupules extrêmes, ses autocritiques permanentes. Ces conséquences opposées de la façon individuelle de vivre la foi, n'empêchent pas pour autant d'avoir les mêmes convictions profondes, la même vision des choses essentielles de la vie et de la mort.

La troisième clé de voûte dans l'amitié entre les deux hommes fut leur métier d'écrivain, la création littéraire. Malgré les différences apparentes de projets artistiques – ouvrages bariolés et de grande envergure chez Pourrat (*Gaspard*, *Trésor des contes*) contre la forme brève de la nouvelle à thèmes répétitifs chez Čep – ; de méthode aussi – pour Pourrat l'écriture est l'affaire de volonté, il écrit péniblement en réécrivant et biffant abondamment, nécessitant de menu brouillons avant de donner la version définitive tandis que Čep semble avoir plus d'aisance d'écriture, si l'on en juge par l'observation de ses manuscrits d'où les ratures sont quasiment absentes – ; ils ont une conception similaire de la poésie, du rôle de la littérature et de l'écrivain. Leur œuvre à tous les deux n'est d'ailleurs pas concevable sans le fondement de leur foi chrétienne, elle en est nourrie et portée sans toutefois en ressortir comme un élément incongru. L'éloge prononcé par Čep à propos de *la Bienheureuse Passion* pourrait représenter le comble de l'art pour les deux écrivains :

> Vous avez su parler en poète, vous exprimer en langage très concret, très proche, très actuel. Vous avez fait sentir que le christianisme est une chose vivante et qui demande d'être vécue pour être comprise ; qu'il est infiniment plus qu'une philosophie : qu'il doit être la vie même, ou il n'est rien. (Pourrat – Čep, 2014, 113)

Grâce à ces trois piliers – campagne, foi, création littéraire – et en dépit de toutes leurs dissemblances, la relation entre Henri Pourrat et Jan Čep fait partie des plus belles amitiés littéraires qui aient pu se nouer dans l'histoire des échanges culturels franco-tchèques.

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Modrec in njegov mistik. Pogled na korespondenco med Henrijem Pourratom in Janom Čepom

Henri Pourrat (1887-1959) je neločljivo povezan s svojo pokrajino Auvergne, njegovo delo in osebnost sta tam pustila neizbrisen pečat. Čeprav je njegov vpliv po drugi svetovni vojni postopoma bledel, ga je mogoče meriti s pravo množico pisem, ki si jih je izmenjal z neštetimi dopisovalci. Kot pisatelj je užival ugled, katerega uspeh je bil potrjen s podelitvijo Velike nagrade za roman Francoske akademije za celotno delo *Gaspard des montagnes* leta 1931 in s podelitvijo naziva Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur leta 1928.

Jan Čep (1902-1974) je bil prevajalec njegovih del v češki jezik. Pourrat mu je bil naklonjen zaradi pesniškega navdiha, ki ga je Čep črpal iz istih virov kot on sam, tj. iz rustikalnega sveta podeželja, iz njegovih mitov in legend. Pourrat je Čepa dojemal kot mističnega, saj njegovo delo izvira iz globoke metafizične razsežnosti. Vera je tako med njima igrala vlogo mostu. Za oba je gonilna sila njunih življenj. Gre za polni literarni in duhovni stik, na katerega opozarja ta članek.

Ključne besede: Henri Pourrat, Jan Čep, *Gaspard des montagnes*, navdih kmetstva, mistika, metafizika

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La tension est-ouest comme ressort dramatique chez deux écrivains francophones d'origine chinoise

Florence Gacoin-Marks

Synopsis

Dans le présent article, nous nous proposons donc de définir en quels termes la relation « est-ouest » s'articule dans deux romans écrits par des écrivains francophones d'origine chinoise à la fin du XX^{e} : *Le Jeu de l'eau et du feu* de Ya Ding (1990) et *Le Dit de Tian-yi* de François Cheng (1998). Dans les deux cas, l'expérience de la rencontre entre les cultures française et chinoise est un ressort entre les cultures française et chinoise est un ressort dramatique essentiel et crée dans la littérature créée en France un espace littérature spécifique, une sorte « d'entre-deux » que l'on peut considérer comme un sous-genre littéraire à part entière.

Mots-clés : littératures francophones, imagologie, relations est-ouest, écrivains franco-chinois, Ya Ding, François Cheng, *Le Jeu de l'eau et du feu*, *Le Dit de Tianyi*

INTRODUCTION

En tant que terre d'accueil choisie par de nombreux exilés, la France a vu sa culture s'enrichir de nouveaux écrivains venus d'ailleurs mais écrivant en français à l'attention du lectorat francophone. Bien qu'étant dans une situation très différente, ces écrivains francophones ont en commun avec les autres, qui vivent hors de France, le fait d'introduire dans la littérature française un ailleurs, celui dont ils viennent, et d'approfondir la réflexion sur les relations entre cet ailleurs et la culture française.[1]

Le cas des écrivains chinois vivant en France et créant en français est particulièrement intéressant du fait que la distance entre les deux cultures impliquées, plus largement entre l'Orient et l'Occident, est suffisamment grande pour permettre une réflexion complète sur tous les aspects constituant une culture au sens large, depuis les plus quotidiens (les us et coutumes) aux plus abstraits (la conception de l'art, la philosophie de la vie). Mieux encore, dans leurs romans, la tension Est-Ouest remplit la fonction de ressort dramatique autour duquel s'organise l'intrigue dans son ensemble.

Dans le présent article, nous nous proposons donc de définir en quels termes la relation « est-ouest » s'articule dans deux romans écrits par des écrivains francophones d'origine chinoise à la fin du XX^{e} siècle : *Le Jeu de l'eau et du feu* de Ya Ding (1990) et *Le Dit de Tian-yi* de François Cheng (1998). Bien qu'elle soit thématisée et interprétée différemment, cette rencontre entre l'Orient et l'Occident au cœur de ces deux œuvres présente un certain nombre de similitudes sur lesquelles il conviendra de s'arrêter.

Mais tout d'abord revenons sur l'intrigue développée dans les deux œuvres étudiées. *Le Jeu de l'eau et du feu* se présente comme un roman initiatique relatant l'arrivée du héros chinois en France et ses premières années d'exil. Il s'organise autour de trois relations sentimentales, de trois femmes, qui sont autant d'étapes dans son expérience de la vie en Occident. L'expérience s'achève sur une séparation (la troisième femme lui échappe et part pour l'Inde) et une intégration ratée à la culture occidentale. Dans *Le Dit de Tian-yi*, le narrateur transmet au lecteur le journal d'une de ses connaissances, le peintre Tian-yi, qu'il a connu alors qu'il vivait lui-même « le dur apprentissage de l'exil » en France. Cet exil est relaté dans la partie centrale du livre. Après avoir opéré la synthèse des cultures orientale et occidentale dans ses propres œuvres picturales, le héros rentre en Chine à l'époque de la révolution culturelle.

Dans ces deux romans sur l'exil, la rencontre entre les cultures orientale et occidentale se déroule en trois étapes : la connaissance des stéréotypes chinois sur

1 La présente monographie est le fruit de recherches effectuées dans le cadre du programme de recherche n° P6-0265, cofinancé à l'aide des fonds publics gérés par l'Agence nationale pour la recherche de la République de Slovénie.

l'Occident, la rencontre avec la culture occidentale avant le départ pour la France et l'expérience immédiate de la rencontre directe entre l'Orient et l'Occident (expérience du voyage ou de l'exil). Cet axe croissant ou ascendant est également un ressort dramatique important dans les deux œuvres étudiées parlant de l'exil.

CLICHÉS CROISÉS EST-OUEST

La représentation d'une culture étrangère en littérature est ce que le comparatiste français Daniel-Henri Pageaux appelle une image littéraire, c'est-à-dire « un ensemble d'idées sur l'étranger prises dans un processus de littéralisation, mais aussi de socialisation » (Pageaux 1994, 60). Parmi ces images, il y en a une qui particulièrement forte, c'est celle du stéréotype, appelée aussi cliché.

Le stéréotype tient aussi son importance au fait qu'il s'agit la plupart du temps du premier contact avec l'étranger.

Or, comme l'explique Daniel-Henri Pageaux, le stéréotype repose sur quatre mécanismes :

- sur la transformation des signes culturels en signaux ne renvoyant qu'à une seule interprétation,
- sur la confusion entre l'accessoire (adjectif, attribut) et l'essentiel,
- sur « un abrégé emblématique d'une culture » (généralisation abusive),
- sur la confusion entre Nature et Culture, entre Être et Faire (Pageaux 1994, 62-63).

On retrouve ces quatre mécanismes dans les stéréotypes présentés dans les romans de François Cheng et Ya Ding.

Stéréotypes des Chinois sur l'Occident (et sur la France en particulier)

François Cheng et Ya Ding évoquent rapidement les stéréotypes chinois sur la France, mais c'est surtout pour dénoncer la fausse image qu'ils véhiculent.

Ainsi, malgré la Seconde guerre mondiale qui y fait rage, le monde occidental est idéalisé : « Appel de l'Occident. Ou plus exactement de l'Europe. Malgré l'atroce drame qui s'y passait, on ne pouvait s'empêcher de l'idéaliser, d'y voir un sol 'béni des dieux' » (Cheng 1998, 91). De même, Paris est représenté come une « ville lumière », ce qui déçoit le héros à son arrivée dans la capitale française : « Je fus frappé par la couleur terne des rues de Paris, contrastant avec l'image de cette ville lumière que mon imagination avait magnifié » (Cheng 1998, 211). Le charme de Paris est réel, mais il se trouve ailleurs (Cheng 1998, 211).

Liang, le héros de Ya Ding est nourri de stéréotypes quand il quitte la Chine : il « se souvient du texte que leur professeur leur avait fait apprendre par cœur pendant sa première année de français. *'Le béret sur la tête, la baguette de pain sous le bras, et si possible râleur, telle est l'image du Français moyen'* » (Ding 1990, 41). Or, il constate bien vite que « [p]ersonne ne porte de béret sur la tête, ni de baguette de pain sous le bras » (Ding 1990, 41).

L'inadéquation entre les stéréotypes et la réalité a pour effet de déstabiliser le héros qui croyait faire irruption dans un monde connu et se retrouve plongé dans l'inconnu : « – Paris, Paris… Machinalement, Liang se répète ce nom comme celui d'une personne à la fois chère, familière et inconnue » (Ding 1990, 42).

Cette nouvelle image lui donne le vertige, fait d'autant plus ressortir le poids de cet héritage culturel inconnu (Ding 1990, 43). Opaque, la population paraît hostile, perd de son humanité, est décrite comme des « regards froids », des « visages fermés » et des « pas pressés ». Cette impression d'être face à un « monde d'étrangers » lui fait prendre conscience de son propre statut d'étranger : « Mais non, c'est lui, Liang, l'étranger ». Liang ne sait plus non plus quelle est son identité dans ce monde où il ne sait plus qui sont les êtres humains autour de lui : « Comment est-il perçu par ces étrangers ? Un jeune Japonais ? Un Asiatique ? Ou tout simplement un garçon brun, un rien auquel on ne fait même pas attention ». Et ne sachant plus qui il est, il ne sait plus comment il doit se comporter : « Comment va-t-il réagir face à eux ? Marcher discrètement en rasant les murs ? Garder une allure humble et avenante ? Éviter leur regard ? Ou faut-il se comporter comme il aurait fait dans les rues de Pékin, en chantonnant, les mains dans les poches, en prenant l'air d'être le maître du monde ? » Il ne sait pas comment se positionner par rapport aux autres : « [Q]ue faut-il inspirer à ses interlocuteurs ? L'amour, la pitié, ou la force ? Quelle prise avoir sur cette foule inconnue ? » (Ding 1990, 41). Il est « [u] n étranger dans un monde d'étrangers. [Liang] se sent lointain et intrus parmi ces corps humains dont il parle à peine la langue et dont l'esprit secret lui est à jamais fermé » (Ding 1990, 53). Désavoués par la réalité, les stéréotypes des Chinois sur l'Occident sont donc moins une source de connaissance qu'une source de désemparement pour l'étranger en exil.

Stéréotypes des Français sur l'Asie (et sur la Chine en particulier)

Dans ce cas, il s'agit d'une image littéraire inversée et indirecte, puisque ce sont les écrivains chinois qui la rapportent dans leurs romans. Son importance n'est pas moindre du fait qu'elle renvoie à l'exilé chinois sa propre image déformée par l'incompréhension interculturelle et lui permet de mieux évaluer à la fois ce qui séparent les cultures française et chinoise et quelle est la place qui lui est assignée au départ dans le pays où il est amené à vivre.

> « D'autres fins esprits, se targuant d'être connaisseurs, décrétèrent devant moi ce qu'est la pensée chinoise, la poésie chinoise, l'art chinois. Après les avoir écoutés, j'ai fini par saisir ce qu'ils exigeaient d'un Chinois. Qu'il soit cet être à l'esprit planant, vierge de tourments et dénué d'interrogations, au visage lisse et plat, béatement souriant, fait d'une autre substance que la chair et le sang. Son langage doit être délié, naturel, sans efforts accumulés, sans formes construites, d'une simplicité un peu naïve et son propos doit se ramener à quelque aimable sagesse » (Cheng 1998, 214-215).

Tan-yi déduit de ces stéréotypes – qui ne correspondent pas du tout à sa propre personnalité – le comportement qu'il doit adopter : « je me répétais qu'il faudrait désormais que je m'applique à être chinois, à me conformer à l'idée qu'on se fait d'un Chinois » (Cheng 1998, 215).

Le stéréotype décrit par Ya Ding dans son roman est un peu différent. Un personnage français décrit la Chine en ces termes : « C'est un pays si vaste, si mystérieux, il est rempli de richesse et d'esprit. Les hommes de là-bas sont fins et sensuels ». Confronté à cette généralisation abusive, le héros comprend ce qui sépare l'Est de l'Ouest : « Je ne savais pas comment vous, les Occidentaux, vous nous voyiez ; nous sommes si lointains, si différents » (Ding 1990, 152). La généralisation abusive creuse les différences au lieu de les combler.

Fait intéressant : comme le remarque Muriel Détrie, la Chine décrite par les écrivains chinois vivant en France, une Chine rendue atemporelle par l'expérience de l'exil, « correspond plus ou moins à l'image idéale que les Français se font de la *Chine traditionnelle* sur la foi de certains romanciers français comme José Frèches qui puisent eux aussi leur inspiration dans la Chine historique ou légendaire » (2004, 65).

LA RENCONTRE AVEC LA CULTURE OCCIDENTALE : ÉMOI PHYSIQUE, TRANSGRESSION MORALE ET CHOC DES CONTRAIRES

La Chine pré-communiste de Tian-yi est en contact avec la culture occidentale dont elle apprécie les apports dans tous les domaines. François Cheng revient sur l'histoire de la traduction des littératures occidentales en chinois, rappelant la phrase de l'intellectuel et écrivain Lu Xun conseillant aux jeunes de lire « le moins possible de livres chinois et le plus possible de livres étrangers » (Cheng 1998, 87), précisément pour élargir son horizon.

La véritable première rencontre directe avec la culture occidentale a donc lieu en Chine même, lorsque les jeunes Chinois se familiarisent avec les produits et les œuvres de cette culture, depuis le fumet des viennoiseries jusqu'aux romans

de Balzac, en passant par les tableaux de Cézanne ou Van Gogh et les symphonies de Dvořák ou Beethoven. Cette culture se présente tout d'abord comme une culture touchant tous les sens, qui bouleverse le corps, comme une culture transgressive, voire interdite et enfin comme une culture bouleversant l'esprit par sa représentation de la réalité, très contrastée par rapport à celle proposée par la culture chinoise.

Une culture très « physique », mais transgressive, voire interdite

Tian-yi, le héros de François Cheng, découvre la culture occidentale dès son enfance. Celle-ci se présente à lui comme une culture très « physique », s'adressant à tous ses sens. Ainsi, il découvre les tableaux du Louvre grâce à des cartes postales rapportées par une tante :

> Parmi les choses qu'elle avait rapportées de France et qu'elle nous montra en vrac, mon regard s'arrêta sur des cartes reproduisant des œuvres du musée du Louvre […], peintures représentant des nus, notamment deux tableaux, ayant pour figure principale une femme nue vue de dos. […] Oui, ces femmes nues, au cœur superbe, les premières que je voyais de ma vie, si étrangères et qui pourtant avaient instantanément remué en moi le sang le plus intime, comment les oublierais-je désormais ? (Cheng 1998, 47-48).

Physique, la culture occidentale est également considérée comme licencieuse et transgressive dans ce monde évitant toute mise à nu du corps comme des sentiments. Ainsi, les cartes postales du Louvre sont « ramassées en hâte par les grandes personnes présentes, surprises, outrées » (Cheng 1998, 47), comme si ces tableaux étaient des images pornographiques. Et il ne fait aucun doute qu'une partie de leur charme vient de cette transgressivité. Dans tous les cas, elles restent gravées à jamais dans l'esprit du personnage, elles l'ont ému « au point de tracer des sillons dans mon imaginaire » (Cheng 1998, 48). Fait amusant : il est plus impressionné par les dos nus plus que par les seins, partie du corps qu'il a déjà vue à plusieurs reprises quand les femmes chinoises allaitaient leur enfant.

On retrouve cette idée de la transgressivité de la culture occidentale plus tard, au cinéma :

> Les scènes d'amour, avec des femmes montrant sans retenue leurs attraits, et les baisers prolongés transperçaient la carapace de pudeur des Chinois jusqu'à la douleur. Dans le noir, les spectateurs subissaient le choc d'abord avec gêne et stupeur, puis avec ravissement : ils sentaient le sang bouillir dans leurs veines et les fanges enfouies de leur imaginaire remonter à la surface (Cheng 1998, 116).

Là encore, l'image passe par le corps pour frapper l'imaginaire.

Plus prosaïquement, la culture étrangère parle tant à l'odorat qu'à la vue du jeune garçon quand il passe à côté d'une boulangerie française : « Moment de pur ravissement pour moi ! Enveloppé de la chaude odeur retrouvée, je n'étais plus qu'yeux face aux choses lumineuses exposées dans les vitrines » (Cheng 1998, 94). Cette impression est complétée par un autre sens, le goût, subjugué par une « saveur exotique » indéfinissable, mais « conforme à ce que j'avais intensément imaginé. » Il tire de cette première expérience un principe de vie qui ne le quittera plus : « En somme, la satisfaction de tout désir est dans le désir lui-même » (Cheng 1998, 96). Il retrouvera plus tard cette idée chez Gide, dont la lecture permet aux jeunes Chinois d'éprouver dans leur corps « l'expression favorite de l'écrivain 'la soif étanchée' », l'idée que « l'accomplissement de l'homme est dans le désir lui-même » (Cheng 1998, 132). Par ailleurs, il est désormais « préparé à accueillir tout ce qui venait de plus loin » (Cheng 1998, 96).

Plus tard, l'intrusion de la culture occidentale en plein cœur de la Chine pré-communiste touche un nouveau sens du jeune homme : l'ouïe. En découvrant *La Symphonie pastorale,* Tian-yi y perçoit des « accents si souverains et conquérants ». Tandis que la musique chinoise est « retenue et confidentielle, souvent plaintive », la musique occidentale « n'accompagne pas la nature ; il en déchire la peau, en transperce la chair pour ne devenir la pulsation même ». C'est donc dans son corps que le jeune homme ressent la culture occidentale : « Cette fois-ci, j'étais atteint au plus intime, au creux de mes entrailles » (Cheng 1998, 98)

La culture occidentale se définit donc avant tout par sa surabondance physique : elle est « matière » et « glorifie le visible », se différenciant ainsi de la culture extrême-orientale qui « par réductions successives, cherche à atteindre l'essence insipide où l'intime de soi rejoint l'intime de l'univers » (Cheng 1998, 96). Cette très grande différence a en partie pour origine le fonctionnement différent des langues chinoise et européennes. Comme l'explique François Cheng dans l'un de ses essais, « si les idéogrammes chinois suggèrent les choses qu'ils désignent par leurs graphies, les mots français, phonétiques, suggèrent les choses désignées par leur son. […] Chaque mot possède un rythme, une mélodie, capable de susciter en moi une image souvent très incarnée » (Cheng 2015, 29-30).

Après l'avènement du maoïsme intervient la première censure de la culture occidentale : « Pour ce qui concerne l'art occidental, on n'étudie plus que les peintres dont les thèmes paraissent 'sûrs', qui ont un contenu social : Le Nain, Millet, Delactroix pour avoir traité d'un rare sujet révolutionnaire, Courbet pour avoir participé à la Commune de Paris » (Cheng 1998, 314). La sélection se fait selon des critères purement politiques, et non esthétiques, ce qui met fin au pouvoir de l'influence occidentale sur la culture chinoise.

Une culture qui bouscule la représentation de la réalité humaine

Sur un plan plus spirituel, la culture occidentale bouscule la représentation de la réalité humaine à laquelle les Chinois ont été habitués par leur propre culture.

Dans le roman de François Cheng, le jeune peintre Tian-yi a le sentiment que la culture chinoise de son temps connaît une période de stagnation, qu'elle n'apporte plus rien de nouveau. Selon lui, « [p]our le moment, le salut vient d'ailleurs, de l'étranger. Et en premier lieu, de l'Occident. C'est là qu'ont été formulées les interrogations et accomplies des créations que nous n'avons pas faites et que nous ne pouvons pas contourner » (Cheng 1998, 103). Cependant, le héros avertit le lecteur qu'il ne s'agit pas de prêter allégeance aveuglément à un Occident dont les travers ont apporté tant de souffrances dans le monde, y compris en Asie, mais de se plonger dans les œuvres des « vrais créateurs, de ceux qui tentent justement de dévoiler le vrai. Leurs cris ou leurs chants, dans la liberté conquise, proprement inouïs pour nous, déchirent notre horizon. Oui, il faut bien cet extrême autre pour nous secouer, pour nous arracher à la partie dégénérée, pourrie, de nos racines » (Cheng 1998, 104).

Comme en Sibérie orientale, dans le roman *Au temps du fleuve Amour* (1994) de l'écrivain francophone d'origine russe Andreï Makine, c'est au cinéma que la culture occidentale apparaît dans toute sa différence, dans toute sa vitalité (Cheng 1998, 115). Le film américain des années trente, dans toute son exubérance, fascine les jeunes chinois. La culture chinoise semble statique, c'est donc la vitalité et le dynamisme de la culture occidentale au cours de l'histoire (Ding 1990, 74).

Changement constant, profusion des idées, c'est ce qui séduit le jeune Chinois, notamment chez Van Gogh : « je me sentais proche de Van Gogh, de cette représentation fragmentée des formes, de cette alchimie audacieuse des couleurs et de cette vision personnelle captée au cœur même du temps vécu ! Son œuvre résonnait en moi comme un appel fraternel. Ce bas monde, aussi provisoire soit-il, demande à être exprimé. Malgré mon dénuement, je le ferai par la peinture » (Cheng 1998, 105). Et c'est d'ailleurs ce qui va le pousser à intégrer cette culture par le biais de sa propre activité créatrice : « Avec toute la sympathie que je nourrissais pour Cézanne, pour Kandinsky, pour Klee, je devrais pouvoir sans trop de mal me glisser parmi mes contemporains, dans cet Occident en proie aux changements rapides, qui ne jurait que par la nouveauté » (Cheng 2015, 263).

Notons que, au départ, le jeune Tian-yi s'initie à la culture occidentale par l'intermédiaire de la culture la moins éloignée géographiquement : « La musique de Dvorak, originaire d'Europe centrale, avait pour effet de rendre moins lointain d'Occident extrême, en sorte que la terre russe paraissait presque proche » (Cheng 1998, 102).

Comme nous l'avons déjà vu, la littérature française, de Gide à Rimbaud, montre à Tian-yi que « l'accomplissement du désir de l'homme se trouve dans le

désir lui-même » (Cheng 1998, 132). Cette vision des choses va par la suite conditionner sa lecture critique de Proust : « Contrairement à Proust, j'aurais écrit : 'À la recherche du temps à venir '. La loi du temps, du moins ma loi à moi […] n'était pas dans l'accompli, dans l'achevé, mais dans le différé, l'inachevé » (Cheng 1998, 206). Cet enseignement livresque permet au héros de mieux comprendre et exprimer l'histoire vécue avec l'Amante, la femme qu'il désirera sans jamais la posséder, rappelle un thème récurrent chez Gide, celui de l'amour inassouvi, au centre de *La Porte étroite*, notamment.

La culture occidentale exerce donc une influence d'autant plus considérable qu'elle fait bouger les lignes, apporte une réponse aux interrogations des jeunes Chinois sur la vitalité et le désir propres à leur âge et dont la culture chinoise, sclérosée par les vicissitudes de l'histoire, ne parle pas. Cette culture vient donc combler un manque.

Confrontation des mentalités: différences concernant les relations sociales

Les deux romans étudiés abordent le thème de l'exil. Munis des connaissances sur la culture occidentale acquises avant le départ de Chine, le personnage nouvellement arrivé à Paris se trouve confronté aux différences culturelles. Dans le roman de Ya Ding, cette question occupe une place centrale, tandis qu'elle n'est pratiquement pas abordée par François Cheng dans *Le Dit de Tian-yi*.

Le récit du séjour de Liang à Paris est émaillé de constatation concernant les différences entre l'Orient et l'Occident en matière de relations sociales. Liang finit par en déduire qu' « il a bien des choses à apprendre et à avaler s'il veut vivre en France ! » (Ding 1990, 278). Les conventions sociales diffèrent beaucoup. En voici un exemple parmi tant d'autres :

> [E]n Occident, même entre amis, on ne se raconte pas tout, lui avait dit son professeur de français dès sa première année. C'est juste, d'ailleurs ; en Chine, tout est si public que chacun est pour l'autre comme une ampoule de mille kilowatts, et ne laisse aucune ombre sur sa vie privée (Ding 1990, 201).

Parfois, ces différences comportementales fascinent Liang par leur caractère sophistiqué : « Les Français ont l'habitude d'être en retard, pour se faire désirer, pour se montrer désintéressés, pour faire avancer les autres vers eux… Quel art des relations, quelle subtilité d'esprit ! » (Ding 1990, 277).

Mais, en d'autres occasions, la vision occidentale des choses déçoit le jeune chinois. Constatent que personne ne songe à le retenir de faire une bêtise, il dénonce l'hypocrisie consistant à faire mine de respecter la liberté de l'autre : « Alors

c'est ça, l'Occident. On lâche facilement un ami sur la mauvaise voie, avec la meilleure des bonnes consciences, puisqu'on respecte l'indépendance de l'autre » (Ding 1990, 269).

Dans tous les cas, ces différences entravent l'intercompréhension entre Liang et les Français qu'il est amené à côtoyer à Paris : « Il n'est vraiment pas dans son pays. Au moment où il croit avoir compris quelque chose, tout change » (Ding 1990, 201). Le jeune chinois ne sait comment interpréter l'attitude de certains de ses interlocuteurs. Par exemple, une femme française qui appelle régulièrement un garçon est-elle amoureuse (comme le serait une femme chinoise se conduisant de la même manière) ? De même, un jeune homme peut-il téléphoner souvent à une fille sans avoir l'air de l'importuner (ce qui est « très mal vu en Chine) ?

Les relations sociales sont également compliquées par les différences linguistiques. Ainsi, pour s'excuser de ne pas avoir assez pris en considération un éditeur parisien, le personnage se souvient de ce qu'il dirait en chinois, mais reste muet en français : « Mes yeux aveugles ne savent pas reconnaître la montagne Tai, disent toujours les Chinois pour s'excuser devant les grands personnages qu'ils ont négligés par ignorance. Mais comment traduire cela en français ? » (Ding 1990, 252-253). De même, face à l'utilisation généralisée du pronom possessif en français, le personnage finit par comprendre que cette catégorie de mots « n'a apparemment pas le même sens qu'en chinois » (Ding 1990, 267).

En réalité, la différence la principale différence entre les mentalités occidentale et chinoise semble d'ordre philosophique : le caractère entier des Occidentaux, où l'opposition entre le « oui » et le « non » est très nette, s'oppose catégoriquement à la recherche incessante de l'équilibre, du compromis, propre à la culture chinoise. Le personnage prend conscience de cette différence fondamentale en observant la forme du loquet d'une porte :

> [I]l a été trompé par la forme du loquet qui est d'une courbe verticale. C'est un signe qui réveille chez les Chinois leur instinct de prendre la contrepartie, et d'appuyer vers le bas pour rééquilibrer les choses. […] Cela veut dire que l'instinct des Français est de continuer ce qui a déjà ét[é] fait dans un premier mouvement. Ils ont la mentalité de pousser les choses vers l'extrême, tandis que chez nous, se dit Liang, on ramène plutôt les choses vers leur état primitif ; deux esprits différents, l'un allant vers l'extrême, et l'autre vers l'équilibre (Ding 1990, 53).

Plus tard, il en fait la triste expérience lorsqu'il vexe un éditeur parisien par son indécision, interprétée comme du désintérêt, et non comme une marque de sérieux et de modestie comme en Chine (Ding 1990, 253). La rencontre directe avec la culture occidentale est source de difficultés dans tous les domaines de l'existence.

DÉNOUEMENT DE LA RENCONTRE EST-OUEST : RECONCILIATION DES CONTRAIRES OU ILLUSIONS PERDUES ?

La rencontre est-ouest, ressort dramatique essentiel des deux œuvres romanesques étudiées, connaît deux dénouements très distincts.

L'échec de l'intégration: l'impossible cohabitation des contraire (Liang)

Les difficultés que connaît Liang, le personnage du Jeu de l'eau et du feu, sont telles que le jeune homme « ouvre sa bouche, il a envie de cracher, cracher hors de lui son sang ou son âme chinoise ! » (Ding 1990, 211).

Dans son cas, l'issu du processus est malheureuse. Le seul moment de bonheur total connu par le personnage se produit lors d'un séjour au ski, dans le téléphérique : « Dans cette ascension à ciel ouvert, Liang plonge dans un autre monde ; quittant la France, quittant cette terre, il retrouve la sienne, identique à lui, à son âme » (Ding 1990, 236). Un peu comme le héros d'*Illusions perdues* de Balzac, le héros n'a rien fait comme il le fallait pour réussir sur le plan professionnel et sentimental et se retrouve à la fin du roman dans le plus grand dénuement. Ayant échoué en tant qu'écrivain, il perd également la femme avec laquelle il pensait effectuer la synthèse entre l'Orient et l'Occident. Trop transformé par son expérience pour pouvoir réintégrer la société chinoise et trop peu transformé pour avoir réussi à s'intégrer à la société française, il n'a plus d'identité : « Il n'existe plus, ni pour la Chine, ni pour la France ! » (Ding 1990, 289), « [il] n'a plus de chez lui, il n'a plus de patrie » (Ding 1990, 339). Dans son désespoir, le personnage imagine les conséquences de son acculturation sur son père, le voyant en pensée « [r]avagé par les difficultés de la vie, confit dans sa faiblesse, il se reconnaît plus ce fils occidentalisé, traître à la sagesse, à la tradition millénaire, habitué au confort, au goût étranger, et aspirant à la passion. Un fils perdu ! » (Ding 1990, 339). La chaîne de la tradition – si importante dans la culture chinoise – se trouve brisée.

La réconciliation des cultures chinoise et occidentale grâce à l'art (Tian-yi)

Au départ, Tian-yi, le héros de François Cheng, connaît des difficultés analogues à celles rencontrées par Liang. Perdu dans Paris, il ne reprend espoir qu'après avoir retrouvé en plein cœur de la capitale française une nourriture familière (une soupe chinoise aux nouilles). Il s'écrit alors : « Oui, j'apprendrai à

aimer cette ville où je vais vivre un certain temps. J'apprendrai à aimer ce pays qui se trouve au cœur de l'Europe occidentale. Ce sera une longue initiation. En attendant, il faut passer – je le pressens, je le sais déjà – par le purgatoire, sinon par l'enfer » (Cheng 2015, 212).

C'est le cheminement artistique qui sauvera le jeune peintre du sort malheureux subi par Liang. Accaparé par l'idée de réconcilier tradition chinoise et peinture occidentale, il ne s'arrêtera pas aux difficultés liées à l'exil mais fera sur lui-même un travail de fond pour effectuer la synthèse entre les deux cultures en présence. Tout part des paroles du maître chinois qui enseigne ce qu'il maîtrise, la tradition picturale chinoise : « D'abord, donc, posséder ce que la tradition offre de meilleur » (Cheng 2015, 231). La connaissance de sa propre culture n'est pas « un carcan », « un enfermement sur soi », elle est la base sur laquelle fonder sa liberté et se préparer « à la vraie rencontre avec un autre, à l'affronter sans se perdre » (Cheng 2015, 176). Le jeune chinois ne s'éloignera pas de ce chemin : « M'étant déjà familiarisé avec la méthode chinoise des 'trois couches et cinq points', j'étudiais avec application aux Beaux-Arts la manière occidentale de dessiner les portraits. » (Cheng 2015, 231). Il en est de même quand il admire la peinture italienne lors d'un court séjour à Florence et à Rome : « C'était fort de ma propre tradition et de mon expérience à Dunhuang que je parvins finalement à affronter cette autre peinture ; faute de quoi je me serais senti écraser » (Cheng 2015, 243). C'est la culture étrangère qui permet au personnage de renouer avec ce qui fait l'essence de sa propre culture et d'apprécier à sa juste valeur – après l'avoir minoré - le rôle spécifique de cette dernière dans l'histoire (Cheng 2015, 250). C'est parce qu'il a réussi dans son esprit et ses propres œuvres la synthèse entre les cultures chinoise et occidentale que Tian-yi sort triomphant de son expérience d'exil interrompu par un retour en Chine pour raisons sentimentales.

Néanmoins, on peut se demander si cette expérience réussie ne causera pas indirectement sa perte en l'empêchant de s'adapter aux restrictions et à l'enfermement caractérisant l'ère de la Révolution culturelle. Comme l'écrit Muriel Détrie, « [n]ourris de références françaises ou marqués par leur séjour en France, les personnages revendiquent le droit à la liberté, à l'individualisme ou à l'amour, se coupant par là de leur pays d'origine où ces mêmes droits ne sont guère reconnus » (2004, 65). Lors du retour en Chine, Tian-yi doit faire face à cette saisissante régression.

CONCLUSION

Les Chinois de l'ère contemporaine ont en commun d'être en contact indirect ou direct avec la culture occidentale. Comme le rappelle Tian-yi : « [j]'étais ce

Chinois du XX^e siècle, depuis toujours ballotté, provoqué par la Chine, provoqué par l'Occident, provoqué par la vie » (Cheng 2015, 262-263). Bien que vécue différemment, l'expérience de la rencontre entre les cultures chinoise et française est un ressort dramatique important dans les romans écrits par les écrivains francophones d'origine chinoise. Comme le note Muriel Détrie, « l'écartèlement entre deux cultures, deux pays, deux systèmes de valeurs, est un thème récurrent » (2004, 65). Ces romans ont en commun avec les autres romans francophones le fait d'introduire un ailleurs dans la vie littéraire française et de créer, comme le montre Lena Besinger dans son ouvrage, un espace romanesque spécifique, un entre-deux, et donc un genre littéraire « nouveau », émergeant. Cependant, à l'ère de la mondialisation, les différences culturelles s'estompent et les contacts interculturels se multiplient. Nous pouvons donc nous demander si les œuvres étudiées ne sont pas, en quelque sorte, les derniers vestiges d'un monde en voie de disparition. Bien qu'on puisse se réjouir que la compréhension entre les peuples soit facilitée, on ne peut que déplorer l'appauvrissement et l'uniformisation culturels induits par cette nouvelle situation internationale.

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Napetost Vzhod-Zahod kot dramski vzgib za dva frankofonska pisatelja kitajskega izvora

V pričujočem članku razpravljam o značilnostih odnosom med Vzhodom in Zahodom v dveh romanih francoskih pisateljev kitajskega rodu, ki sta nastala ob koncu 20. stoletja: *Le Jeu de l'eau et du feu* [Igra vode in ognja] Ye Dinga (1990) in *Le Dit de Tian-yi* [Tianyin izrek] Françoisa Chenga (1998). V obeh primerih je soočenje francoske in kitajske kulture ključna dramska sprožilec. Poleg tega ustvarja v francoski književnosti, ki je nastala v Franciji, specifičen literarni prostor, ki ga lahko imamo celo za samostojno romaneskno podvrsto.

Ključne besede: frankofonske književnosti, imagologija, zahodno-vzhodni odnosi, francosko-kitajski pisatelji, Ya Ding, François Cheng, *Le Jeu de l'eau et du feu*, *Le Dit de Tian-yi*

ACTA NEOPHILOLOGICA
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Massimo Bontempelli (1878-1960) lettore di Stendhal e il pubblico della società di massa alle soglie della Terza epoca

Dana Božič

Astratto

Nella prefazione all'edizione italiana del *Rosso e il nero* di Stendhal (1913), Massimo Bontempelli (1878-1960), il traduttore del romanzo, presenta alcune sue opinioni relative al necessario rinnovamento culturale e letterario che costituirà poi il suo Novecentismo, difeso nella rivista letteraria "900" (1926-1927). Il presente articolo esplora come Bontempelli, attraverso le osservazioni sulla vita di Stendhal e la tragica esperienza di Julien Sorel, traccia un parallelo implicito con il proprio momento storico, considerando il ruolo dello spirito rivoluzionario delle avanguardie in tale rinnovamento. Tuttavia, implica anche che ciò debba essere controbilanciato dall'idea classica di arte e letteratura, dove la tradizione è vista come un'intima e profonda continuità tra manifestazioni di inaspettata novità. Anche se Bontempelli simpatizzerà in seguito con il Futurismo italiano, è proprio tale equilibrio che rende la sua proposta culturale e letteraria per la "Terza Epoca", il Novecentismo, unica nel panorama letterario italiano. Questo saggio considera i suoi scritti del 1913 nel contesto della società di massa emergente, e quindi gli aggiustamenti editoriali e linguistici che furono necessari per l'edizione, e li paragona contemporaneamente alle riflessioni bontempelliane fatte sul tema negli anni a seguire.

Parole chiave: prefazione, novecentismo, avanguardie, Stendhal, pubblico di massa

POSIZIONI SOCIO-LETTERARIE DI BONTEMPELLI ATTORNO AL 1913

Massimo Bontempelli, scrittore, giornalista, traduttore e collaboratore editoriale è conosciuto soprattutto per il suo impegno letterario negli anni Venti quando, attraverso la rivista «*900*» (1926-27), lanciò la proposta per il rinnovamento e la sprovincializzazione culturale chiamata "novecentismo". In realtà, non fu una teoria né una scuola e neanche un movimento (Bontempelli 1938: 38), bensì una *tendenza* che alle soglie della Terza epoca[1] auspicava delle trasformazioni sul piano estetico, socioculturale e filosofico (Farinelli, 2014 e 2016). Le tesi originali di Bontempelli traspaiono del resto già da interventi di critica letteraria scritti all'inizio della sua carriera ovvero dalle sue prime prefazioni a opere altrui e da alcuni dei suoi primi articoli critici,[2] le tesi che negli anni Venti costituiranno la base della sua proposta di rinnovamento, e che miravano non solo al superamento di schemi rigidi (ormai superati) connessi all'attività letteraria, ma anche e soprattutto al superamento di lasciti di poetiche ottocentesche, come ad esempio il naturalismo, che impedivano a suo giudizio la creatività nella scrittura. Inoltre il novecentismo auspicava il distanziamento dall'eccessivo soggettivismo che per tanto tempo aveva avvelenato le due dimensioni del Tempo e dello Spazio.[3] Contemporaneamente egli puntava il dito sulle avanguardie europee e in particolare sul futurismo italiano[4] che sul piano teorico aveva lanciato delle proposte estremamente rilevanti per il rinnovamento culturale dimostrando un atteggiamento dirompente verso la tradizione,[5]

1 Bontempelli divide la storia culturale occidentale in tre epoche principali: la prima si estende dalla nascita di Cristo fino all'avvento del cristianesimo e ad essa risale la creazione dei miti omerici e preomerici. Quell'epoca "manterrà sempre una simpatia accesa [in Bontempelli], per aver foggiato personaggi così semplificati e inconfondibili da diventare [...] dei veri e propri stereotipi metabolizzati e riutilizzati nel linguaggio comune" (Fabbri, 2008: 30). La seconda, chiamata *romantica*, inizia con il primo Settecento e si protrae nel primo Novecento; è vista infatti permanere nella cultura del decadentismo e finisce con la "rovente fiammata delle avanguardie primonovecentesche" (Fabbri, 2008: 31). La terza, all'insegna di un vero novecento, diventa l'obiettivo da difendere. Per Bontempelli movimenti come il cubismo e il futurismo rappresentano il periodo transitorio tra la seconda e la terza epoca (Bontempelli, 1938: 21).

2 Si pensi ad esempio all'articolo "Grande e piccola critica" (Bontempelli, 1908: 128-140) e all'Introduzione alla raccolta *Il Poliziano. Il Magnifico. Lirici del Quattrocento* (Bontempelli, 1910: I-V).

3 Cfr. Bontempelli, 1910: 2-3. In quell'articolo, dal titolo "Un nuovo e un antico" apparso sul *Marzocco* fiorentino, Bontempelli si oppone con tono polemico a un popolo di italiani pronti a imitare ogni nuova tendenza letteraria e ogni proposta di pensiero, specialmente se provenienti dal Nord, come quelle di Søren Kierkegaard, la cui opera viene vista (in modo del tutto parziale) come intrisa di un senso di malattia e di morbosità.

4 Sul Bontempelli futurista e sul suo allontanamento da tale movimento scrive Usher (2017); sul rapporto di Bontempelli verso il futurismo si veda anche Milanko (2018).

5 Si pensi, ad esempio, al discorso su padri e figli che accomuna Bontempelli a quello svolto da Marinelli nel primo manifesto futurista. Quell'atteggiamento di rottura non viene invece perseguito dal

ma che a livello estetico aveva deluso, così come avevano deluso altre avanguardie (Bontempelli 1938: 38). Bontempelli riconosceva l'impegno di tali movimenti nel processo di superamento di una cultura sentita come epigona, cosa che a un certo punto lo portò ad avvicinarsi al futurismo italiano, e però le avanguardie non *aprivano* a suo giudizio una nuova epoca, bensì semplicemente chiudevano quella che stava alle spalle (Bontempelli, 1938: 355).[6] Una delle principali ragioni era la loro incapacità di parlare al nuovo pubblico di massa e di conquistarlo. Curiosamente, il 'novecentismo', pur essendo una tendenza con tratti d'avanguardia (Farinelli, 2014: 85-86), poneva la comunicazione con l'emergente pubblico di massa al primo posto (Bontempelli, 1938: 75-76). Quel nuovo tipo di rapporto era stato reso possibile attraverso i nuovi mezzi di comunicazione, i *mass media,* come ad esempio il giornale, alla cui terza pagina (al *feuilleton*) andava in particolare affidato il compito di proporre testi orientati al rinnovamento letterario e culturale[7]. Il nuovo pubblico, a differenza da quello borghese ottocentesco la cui vita quotidiana era regolata "a ritmo funerario" (Bontempelli 1938: 148), voleva essere soprattutto divertito. L'abisso tra i due secoli e le due mentalità, abisso causato anche dalla crescita esponenziale dei nuovi mezzi di produzione e dall'espansione delle città, è avvertito dallo stesso autore nell'articolo "Quel che bolle in péntola":[8]

> Quando la sensibilità d'una generazione avverte decaduti [certi mezzi], ogni ostinazione nel tenerli in uso è inutile e delittuosa. Bisogna trovare, o meglio, «lasciar nascere», i nuovi mezzi per interessare e divertire (commuovere) i contemporanei. (Perché è inteso che si scrive per i contemporanei, quella dei posteri è una favola messa in giro dagli impotenti.[9]

movimento di Margherita Sarfatti con il suo *ritorno all'ordine* (Barilli, 2008: 8): "[...] la Sarfatti non fu altrettanto pronta ad ammettere e a proclamare [la assoluta rottura con le correnti passatiste, come ad esempio il naturalismo o l'impressionismo, tipici della Seconda epoca], risultando così esposta al rischio di reintrodurre nel suo Novecento molte scorie del vecchio sensibilismo ottocentesco [...]." Bontempelli, dall'altra parte, non "ammetteva concessioni" (Barilli, 2008: 8-9).

6 Cfr. anche Bontempelli, 1938: 277-278.

7 Cfr. Falqui, 1964. Non sorprende perciò che Bontempelli sceglie di pubblicare i romanzi *La vita intensa* (1920) e *La vita operosa* (1920) come romanzi a puntate: il primo sul supplemento «Ardita» della «Gazzetta del Popolo» nel 1919, e il secondo sulle pagine del settimanale «Industrie Italiane Illustrate» nel 1920.

8 L'articolo è privo di data e del nome del quotidiano; è reperibile presso il Fondo Falqui alla Biblioteca Nazionale di Roma e finora non è stato considerato dalla critica; la sua trattazione, qui, presenta una novità nel campo degli studi bontempelliani.

9 Curiosamente, solo un anno più tardi della stesura della prefazione che esamineremo, intitolata *Stendhal,* appare su «La Nazione» l'articolo "Per i poveri letterati" (Bontempelli, 1914), che prenderà successivamente, ne *L'Avventura novecentista* del 1938, il titolo "Prefazione scritta ventiquattro anni fa" (Bontempelli, 1938: 9-13) e avrà in quel contesto la funzione di articolo di apertura. Bontempelli vi lancia l'appello metaforico ai suoi contemporanei a "chiudere bottega" perché incapaci di adottare nuove strategie letterarie per affrontare il nuovo pubblico. I contemporanei sono da lui accusati di

La consapevolezza dell'importanza di un rapporto del mercato librario col pubblico e altre posizioni bontempelliane sulla letteratura che sarebbero poi confluite nel novecentismo avrebbero portato Bontempelli a un proficuo sodalizio con l'editore Umberto Notari, e proprio a partire da quel lavoro prefatorio.[10] L'imprenditore milanese non solo avrebbe rappresentato per lui una sicura fonte di guadagno, ma la nascente visione bontempelliana sul rinnovamento culturale si sarebbe sposata perfettamente con quella di Notari: i due condividevano infatti comuni prospettive nell'ambito editoriale e letterario.[11] Bontempelli si accorge presto del ruolo dell'editore, che è appunto una figura da tramite tra scrittore e lettore: il compito principale dell'editore e dei suoi collaboratori sarebbe stato creare lo spazio "nel quale avviene l'incontro tra i testi degli scrittori e le esperienze dei singoli lettori" (Cadioli, 2012: 32). Si presume che la prefazione fosse intesa appunto come un intervento di collegamento e che Bontempelli cercasse di promuovere, in quello spazio di incontro, non solo il capolavoro stendhaliano in una maniera popolare ma anche la propria visione sul rinnovamento letterario e culturale. Inoltre, in un articolo del 1929 intitolato "Per esagerare", Bontempelli noterà che "la libreria è la finestrella tonda dalla quale lo scrittore può spiare il suo pubblico" (Bontempelli, 1938: 74). Da questo pensiero poi traspare non solo la consapevolezza di quello spazio d'incontro, ma anche la percezione della realtà economica e cioè che il successo di uno scrittore è misurabile con il criterio delle vendite del suo *prodotto* ovvero con il grado di favore dei suoi lettori.[12]

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scrivere per la propria cerchia e non per il pubblico, di gettarsi "carponi a raccattar gli avanzi delle cene francesi o dei banchetti nordici" (Bontempelli, 1938: 10). ma soprattutto di negare al pubblico di lettori "il [...] sacrosanto diritto" (Bontempelli, 1938:10) a essere divertiti, interessati e scossi. Perciò non sorprende che questi continuino a rivolgersi alle "opere dei vecchi […]; vi trovava[no] più umanità e novità e modernità che nei vostri vient de paraître [...]" (Bontempelli, 1938: 10).

10 Bouchard (2005: 392) considera il periodo tra il 1913 e il 1917 la "fase più intensa" delle loro collaborazioni.

11 Durante la nostra indagine sono emersi degli articoli di Bontempelli degli anni Venti e Trenta dai quali traspare la sua stima per Notari non solo per le capacità di questo ultimo nel campo editoriale ma anche per le sue posizioni in ambito letterario: Bontempelli recensisce i suoi quattordici saggi come un'importante opera di orientamento novecentista che svolge funzione mitopoietica. L'articolo, dal titolo "Umberto Notari", apparso sulla «Gazzetta del Popolo», è reperibile presso la Biblioteca Nazionale di Roma ed è privo di data.

12 Ne scrive lo stesso Bontempelli nell'articolo "La crisi degli scrittori" (13 ottobre 1938, «Gazzetta del Popolo»), non ancora considerato dalla critica. Lo scrittore constatava in prima persona quanto fosse difficile vivere del proprio lavoro. La precarietà economica continuò ad affliggere lo scrittore comasco dagli anni dell'insegnamento ad Ancona fino a tutti gli anni Venti e si protrasse oltre la sua nomina ad Accademico d'Italia nel 1930. Ciò traspare dal carteggio Bontempelli-Della Pergola, conservato presso il Fondo Bontempelli-Della Pergola alla Biblioteca Comunale di Como, e dal carteggio Bontempelli-Arnoldo Mondadori, conservato presso la Fondazione Mondadori. È altrettanto rivelatorio della problematica anche il carteggio Bontempelli-Paola Masino reperibile presso il Getty Research Institute di Los Angeles (Cfr. Manetti, 2013). Si veda anche Cigliana (2005), Bouchard (2005) e Božič (2019).

Tutto ciò ci porta alla prefazione in questione che accompagnava la pubblicazione in versione italiana del romanzo stendhaliano *Il rosso e il nero*, del 1913, la quale nell'ottica orientata a un pubblico di massa aveva come attendibile un taglio "necessariamente divulgativo" (Bouchard, 2012). Entra in quella logica anche lo scarno titolo presceltovi: *Stendhal*. Nonostante la formula suggerisca solo un profilo biografico dello scrittore francese, Bontempelli "riesce a delinearvi *in nuce* molti elementi di una poetica che, oltre ad essere riferibile a Stendhal, anticipa quella da lui attuata sia nei romanzi della maturità (in special modo *Vita e morte di Adria e dei suoi figli*) sia nel progressivo processo di costruzione di un ciclo autobiografico coerente che, intorno a *Mia vita morte e miracoli,* trova la sua definitiva impostazione con il riassetto della propria opera nell'ambito della collana dei «Racconti di Massimo Bontempelli», da lui avviata presso Mondadori tra il 1938 e il 1943" (Bouchard, 2012). Nella nostra analisi andremo a cercare proprio quegli elementi, in particolare: la lungimiranza bontempelliana nel riconoscimento della ricezione di un'opera letteraria, il ruolo dell'immaginazione e della riflessione, e l'importanza dell'ispirazione nel processo della scrittura, per nominarne alcuni. E non solo: mostreremo che la posizione antiaccademica e anticanonica di Bontempelli e allo stesso tempo la consapevolezza del ruolo della società di massa nella ricezione delle opere letterarie lo avrebbero portato intenzionalmente a scegliere per i testi prefatori una scrittura anti-filologica, paragonabile a quella giornalistica - sintetica, coinvolgente e comprensibile, privilegiando la schiettezza e la naturalezza.[13] Per una tale scrittura è caratteristica una struttura sintattica basata sulla paratassi, vicina al parlato e orientata a esprimere immediatezza - tutto ciò a un unico scopo: non perdere l'attenzione e l'interesse di chi legge.[14]

Per la nostra analisi sarà necessario considerare gli studi svolti finora nel campo di tale poetica, come ad esempio quelli di Bouchard, Cigliana, Farinelli e di alcuni altri. Attingendo alla teoria di Genette, disegneremo alcune caratteristiche principali del peritesto in questione, mentre sarà essenziale aggiungere l'apporto di alcuni studiosi, come Spinazzola e Cadioli, esperti di questioni socio-letterarie, e in particolare di dinamiche editoriali di pubblico di massa.[15]

13 Piscopo (2001: 73) nota, che un tale stile emerge a partire dagli anni fiorentini (dal 1910 in poi): Bontempelli, lasciato il lavoro da supplente e immerso nella libertà intellettuale come giornalista e scrittore nel capoluogo toscano, sembra abbandonare la "sintagmaticità costruita su innervature e diramazioni di subordinate, a favore di una paratassi agile, svelta, prossima al parlato."

14 Le osservazioni sulle posizioni critiche e socio-letterarie di Bontempelli, e sulle avanguardie, il novecentismo sono servite non solo ad illuminare il contesto in cui nacque la prefazione *Stendhal*, oggetto della nostra analisi, ma anche a dimostrare alcune scoperte pertinenti all'argomento affrontato che abbiamo fatto nel corso della ricerca dottorale e che eventualmente apriranno delle nuove prospettive sull'attività bontempelliana sia letteraria che critica e pubblicistica.

15 L'argomento principale della ricerca dottorale in corso verte sul novecentismo bontempelliano e più specificamente sul rapporto di Bontempelli con il nuovo pubblico di massa, così come emerge

LA PREFAZIONE *STENDHAL* COME SPAZIO DI INCONTRO FRA CRITICO E LETTORE

L'edizione italiana de *Il rosso e il nero* (1913), tradotta e curata da Bontempelli, appartiene alla prima serie della collana «Gli immortali e altri massimi scrittori» diretta e curata da Luigi Luzzatti e Ferdinando Martini. Bontempelli per la prima volta non è solo il prefatore[16] ma anche il traduttore del romanzo.[17] Nonostante ciò, nella prefazione non vi sono incluse osservazioni sulla traduzione stessa,[18] perciò, se seguiamo la terminologia di Gérard Genette (1989: 260), si tratta di una prefazione allografa ulteriore. Si potrebbe dire che entra tra le prefazioni di media lunghezza (quasi sei pagine di testo) rispetto alle altre svolte da Bontempelli nell'arco della sua vita.[19] In termini di ricezione una tale lunghezza, assieme alla impostazione discorsiva e al registro espressivo prescelti avrebbero facilitato la comprensione del testo al lettore. Una prima lettura rivela una forte messa in rilievo, da parte di Bontempelli, del legame tra Henri Beyle - Stendhal e Julien Sorel, il protagonista del romanzo, il che sarebbe dovuto anche al fatto che *Il rosso e il nero*, come sostiene nella parte introduttiva Bontempelli, sia "una specie di autobiografia (Bontempelli, 1913: 11). Il titolo implicherebbe, metaforicamente, una serie di opposizioni che segnarono la vita di Stendhal, "entusiasmo e ipocrisia, l'eroico e il subdolo, Napoleone e i Gesuiti [...]" (Bontempelli, 1913: 11), e allo stesso tempo l'esperienza di una generazione, quella stendhaliana, tesa tra due momenti storici: il romanticismo e il classicismo. Con quelle osservazioni sul titolo, Bontempelli anticipa al lettore i nodi principali su cui si soffermerà, svelando la sua strategia di creare curiosità e facilitare al contempo la comprensione del discorso.

Dato l'ampio respiro dell'edizione, la parte principale delle pagine prefatorie presenta un ritratto biografico di Stendhal, ovvero Henri Beyle, come promesso

in articoli apparsi sui quotidiani, a partire dal 1908, e nelle prefazioni stilate da questo scrittore a partire dal 1910 per varie case editrici. Per alcuni dati si sono dimostrati preziosi anche i carteggi tra i soggetti coinvolti, ad esempio tra Bontempelli e sua moglie Meletta, oppure tra Bontempelli e Arnoldo Mondadori.

16 Bontempelli fino al 1913 aveva scritto la prefazione a *Il Poliziano. Il Magnifico. Lirici del Quattrocento* (Bontempelli, 1910: I-VI.) e la prefazione al dramma *Fiorenza mia! Dramma in Quattro atti* (Yambo, 1911: 5-6). Sono inoltre del 1913 le prefazioni ai *Canti carnascialeschi* (Bontempelli, 1913: 9-20) e alle *Prose di fede e di vita nel primo tempo dell'umanesimo* (Bontempelli: 1913: I-VIII.).

17 Del suo lavoro da traduttore si è finora occupato François Bouchard (2005 e 2012).

18 Come succede ad esempio nella prefazione di Felice Martini all'*Asino d'oro* (Apuleio, 1927: IX-XVI.), che confronteremo in altra sede con quella di Bontempelli, tale scritto accompagna un volume delle *Trasformazioni* apuleiane uscito un anno più tardi (Apuleio, 1928: 17-22).

19 Le più lunghe prefazioni bontempelliane hanno una lunghezza di circa venticinque pagine. La prima risale al 1910, mentre si presume che le ultime, a restare alla ricerca bibliografica finora svolta, sarebbero del 1947.

dal titolo del testo. La presentazione però, a parte offrire al lettore una cronologia essenziale della vita dello scrittore, tenta soprattutto di delineare il carattere di Henri, e a ciò che lo avrebbe motivato. La sua figura emerge da una dinamica familiare piuttosto complessa ed è quella di un uomo continuamente spinto ad allontanarsi dalla società in cui viveva, a differenza di un altro scrittore su cui si era soffermato da poco Bontempelli, vale a dire Lorenzo il Magnifico,[20] il cui carattere si fondeva invece perfettamente con quello dell'epoca in un continuo *Carpe diem* per la coscienza del *tempus fugit*, ragion per cui il Magnifico era "insieme una espressione e una causa del suo tempo" (Bontempelli, 1913: 14).[21]

Per dipingere il quadro familiare di Henri e per descrivere le figure della realtà stendhaliana egli si serve di alcune strategie sintattiche e lessicali. In realtà, si tratta di un tentativo di trasmettere allo stesso tempo anche lo stato d'animo di Stendhal: dopo la morte prematura della madre, il giovanotto rimane solo con il padre, "magistrato di provincia, subdolo, arido, chiuso […]" e con una zia materna, "ipocrita, dispotica, collerica" (Bontempelli, 1913: 11). Henri quindi sviluppa un disprezzo profondo per la famiglia e il prefatore ce lo dimostra con una costruzione della frase in cui vengono elencati molti aggettivi. Lo stesso procedimento giustappositivo vale per la rappresentazione della città natale, Grenoble: il presunto sentimento stendhaliano nei confronti di quell'ambiente è trasmesso attraverso un elenco asindetico di aggettivi che si incalzano a ritmo veloce: "quasi tutto il paese, erano quanto poteva esservi di provinciale, di borghese, di comune: bigotti, avari, retrogradi, senz'amore, senza simpatia" (Bontempelli, 1913: 11). Ne segue che il risentimento accumulato del giovane Henri si andrà calmando nell'inevitabile isolamento che per lui rappresenterà una condizione di tranquillità:

> [n]ell'isolamento aspro cui si trovava costretto, l'indole e la consuetudine del pensiero si svolsero solamente in intensità, ritraendosi dalle sensazioni del mondo esteriore sempre più esclusivamente verso l'interno, verso l'anima, verso i menomi movimenti del meccanismo dell'anima (Bontempelli, 1913: 12).

La descrizione bontempelliana insiste sulla concentrazione interiore trovata dallo scrittore nella serenità della solitudine; il passo si oppone al quadro dell'ambiente

20 La prefazione ai *Canti carnascialeschi* risale allo stesso anno; in essa Bontempelli presenta il signore fiorentino in perfetta fusione con la sua epoca, il Quattrocento fiorentino. (Bontempelli, 1913: 9-20).

21 Se nel caso del Magnifico la forza creatrice emerge proprio dall'immersione del signore fiorentino nelle dinamiche della sua epoca, dal contatto diretto con le feste popolaresche per le vie di Firenze, l'ispirazione stendhaliana proviene dal rifiuto della società, da una condizione di isolamento e dalla riflessione. Bontempelli vede in Stendhal un emarginato che respinge la rigidità e la prevedibilità del costume borghese, aspetti da lui presi di mira molto esplicitamente in articoli successivi degli anni Venti e Trenta (Bontempelli, 1938: 148).

soffocante da cui questi fuggiva, presentato poco sopra con altrettanta intensità. È significativo, nel passo citato, il dominante suono nasale "m" (MenoMi MoviMenti del MeccanisMo dell'aniMa) che sottolinea forse la componente intima raggiunta in una situazione di isolamento. Bontempelli qui interviene da narratore con una prosa incisiva e immagini vivaci, e fa dello scrittore di cui parla una sorta di personaggio calato nelle avventure della vita. Alcuni indizi di *fiction* sarebbero anche il discorso libero e i *verba sentiendi* come se l'autore cercasse di entrare nella testa del personaggio, narrativizzando la prefazione che tradizionalmente ha *in primis* funzione informativa. Presumiamo che siano delle scelte stilistiche orientate ad attrarre l'attenzione di lettori non specializzati e rispondenti allo stesso tempo anche a posizioni poetologiche. Ricordiamo che anni dopo, in un articolo del 1931 riportato ne *L'avventura novecentista*, Bontempelli avrebbe formulato chiaramente la sua posizione in favore di una letterarizzazione del biografico.

> È di moda parlare male delle biografie romanzate. Esse hanno questo di buono: che tendono a presentare l'uomo come «personaggio», cioè piuttosto nella sua leggenda che non nella sua biografia anagrafica. Sono l'ultima liquidazione della mania erudita che soffocava la nostra prima giovinezza; per la quale la funzione suprema degli studi storici era l'«accertamento delle date» (Bontempelli, 1938: 254).

Tornando alla prefazione in questione, nei paragrafi successivi, in cui Bontempelli esplora le motivazioni della fuga di Stendhal a Parigi[22] e le dinamiche sociali incontratevi, cominciano a trasparire più esplicitamente dei tratti della futura poetica novecentista, in particolare l'apprezzamento dell'avventura come generatore narrativo che emerge dai casi della vita. Non è la fuga nella metropoli che fa traboccare in Stendhal "il suo desiderio d'opera e d'entusiasmo" (Bontempelli, 1913: 12), bensì il fatto che un anno dopo segua Napoleone in Italia. I combattimenti che Henri vive profondamente ed eroicamente, suscitano il manifestarsi dell'uomo "d'azione ch'era in lui [...] d'un tratto" (Bontempelli, 1913: 12). Quella fase fu per lui "un periodo libero ed eroico: amò, viaggiò, combatté [...] Non pensava a scrivere. Amava la lotta e il pericolo: adorava le donne e Napoleone" (Bontempelli, 1913: 12). Si potrebbe parlare di un percorso liberatorio da un opprimente ambiente borghese ottocentesco verso un mondo mentalmente più aperto. Come nota Bouchard (2005: 397), questo periodo d'azione di Stendhal in Italia presenta alcune curiosità ed è significativo perché suggerisce delle somiglianze

22 Come osserva Zweig, nonostante Stendhal lasci la nativa Grenoble e suo padre "tenace calcolatore, freddo", quest'ultimo "resta in vita per altri cinquant'anni sotto la pelle di Arrigo Beyle e continua a vagargli come un fantasma nel sangue; per cinquant'anni gli avi delle sue due anime, i Beyle e i Gagnon, lo spirito pratico e quello romantico, si battono di continuo in lui senza che l'uno possa mai completamente aver ragione dell'altro." (Zweig, 2015: 42).

con il Massimo, protagonista de *La vita operosa*, del 1921, dedicandosi esclusivamente all'azione, ma allo stesso tempo il periodo risulta "sterile" (2005: 397). Analogamente il Massimo del futuro romanzo bontempelliano, dopo aver capito che nonostante una vita *operosa*, d'azione, nella Milano del primo Novecento, gli mancavano la riflessione, la scrittura e esercizio intellettuale, pensa a una carriera tranquilla da scrittore (Bouchard, 2005: 397).[23]

La vita operosa di Stendhal, gli anni italiani di "sfrenata socievolezza" (Bouchard, 2005: 397) possono essere sintetizzati, secondo Bontempelli, con l'asindeto "amò, viaggiò, combatté" (Bontempelli, 1913: 12), il quale è in realtà stendhaliano. Nel suo testamento Stendhal vorrà che sulla sua pietra tombale venga scolpito «Arrigo Beyle - milanese - visse, scrisse, amò», il che indicherebbe una particolare valutazione del verbo *vivere*, che appare collocato prima del verbo *scrivere*. Nonostante Stendhal sia conosciuto soprattutto come romanziere, egli rifiutava di passare in primo luogo per tale: "[...] mio Dio, quanto si sarebbe indignato dell'indipendenza a vedersi considerare come uno del clan dei poeti" (Zweig, 2005: 55).[24] Bontempelli a questo punto sembra voler rendere giustizia al desiderio dell'autore francese: nella prefazione viene adoperato il nome italianizzato di Henri, Arrigo, ma soprattutto *amò, viaggiò, combatté* implica che per Bontempelli Stendhal è *in primis* un uomo di azione e che la scrittura è di secondaria importanza.

Quel romanzo di Stendhal, come dice Bontempelli, "è un quadro di tempo" (Bontempelli, 1913: 12); narra di una costante tensione tra "la monarchia e l'aristocrazia, la borghesia e il clero, il popolo e i politicanti, la provincia e la campagna e la capitale di Francia" (Bontempelli, 1913: 12). Dal punto di vista sociologico e storico si tratta di un momento importante per una società come quella francese. Il sociologo Alvin Gouldner (1975: 328) osserva che nel periodo in cui era giovane Stendhal, i romantici vivevano in un mondo crepuscolare di transizione, tra un presente insoddisfacente e un passato impraticabile, tra la decadente tradizione feudale e l'emergente riforma borghese. Vivere in un mondo in cui le mappe sociali convenzionali avevano perso la loro efficacia, ma in cui non ne erano ancora state formulate di nuove accettabili, significava per gli intellettuali rivolgersi al sé individuale come indicatore di orientamenti piuttosto che alle regole tradizionali. Napoleone, come abbiamo osservato, per i giovani come Henri rappresenta la forza ispiratrice che avrebbe formato le basi per un nuovo inizio, un momento di transizione. Infatti, emerge che per Bontempelli il disorientamento vissuto dalla generazione di Stendhal era paragonabile a quello provato dagli intellettuali

23 Cfr. anche: Bontempelli, 1921: 192.

24 Questa ultima volontà di Stendhal prima della morte sarà però volutamente deformata dall'esecutore testamentario, come osserva Stefan Zweig, perché verrà fatto scolpire sulla tomba dello scrittore l'asindeto con gli stessi verbi, ma in un ordine diverso da quello voluto da Stendhal, privilegiando cioè il verbo *scrivere.* Sulla pietra verrà inciso: "«Scrisse, amò, visse»" (2005: 55)

d'inizio Novecento durante il periodo delle avanguardie. Entrambe quelle generazioni hanno un ruolo fondamentale, e cioè di rendere possibile l'inizio di una nuova epoca, ma non di parteciparvi sempre come protagonisti. Ciò trasparirà anche dagli articoli programmatici alla rivista "900" nel 1926: "La nostra generazione, […] ha il còmpito imponente di aprire le porte alla Terza Epoca dell'umanità occidentale [...]" (Bontempelli, 1938: 23). In questo senso, le avanguardie e le loro energie giovanili sono importanti affinché nella nuova epoca possano nascere e fiorire tendenze come il 'novecentismo'.

Uno strumento potente per compiere quell'operazione, ma anche per confrontarsi con il futuro, è l'immaginazione. Proprio grazie a una "sfrenata immaginazione" (Bontempelli, 1913: 14), il personaggio di Julien riuscirà a scoprirsi nel fondo più primitivo nel suo animo: benché la sua vita nel romanzo proceda in un modo ben calcolato, grazie alla componente "cerebrale" (Bontempelli, 1913: 14), nella sua anima c'è "la passione, c'è la tendenza all'impeto, all'illogico" (Bontempelli, 1913: 14), una sua parte d'"inconsapevole" che egli non è riuscito a eliminare (Bontempelli, 1913: 15).[25] Tutta quell'energia per Bontempelli rappresenta un pregio e una necessità, nonostante essa porti il giovane Julien all'omicidio. E anche se quest'ultimo atto è valutato come "luce d'eroismo" (Bontempelli, 1913: 15), ciò non significa che l'autore promuova l'atto violento; vuole sottolineare solo che esso segna la celebrazione del non-conformismo e lo scoppio delle energie giovanili e dello spirito primitivo. Nel caso di Julien, così come nel caso dei giovani sofferenti dell'ordine borghese all'inizio del Novecento, quelle energie che erano state soppresse per tanto tempo rappresentano ora la condizione necessaria per un rinnovamento.

La simpatia di Bontempelli per quel personaggio dallo spirito irrequieto è ben comprensibile per l'atteggiamento dirompente che egli stesso aveva verso codici letterari e culturali irrigiditi, cosa che lo avrebbe avvicinato ai futuristi e alle avanguardie. Allo stesso tempo però bisogna sottolineare che quella somiglianza con

25 A quel punto, la "complicatissima anima" (Bontempelli, 1913: 13) di Sorel, risultato delle tensioni del tempo, potrebbe essere paragonata alla figura di Leopardi, così come viene presentata nel saggio bontempelliano *Leopardi l'«uomo solo»* del 1938 (Bontempelli, 1943: 31-69). Entrambe sono spinte dall'immaginazione "sempre sveglia, che precede ogni menomo atto, e frattanto si complica con la minutissima analisi del sentimento che esso atto prepara: immaginazione pur di natura cerebrale" (Bontempelli, 1913: 13). Quello che però distingue fondamentalmente le due personalità è la solitudine e come essa viene vissuta. La solitudine di Leopardi è caratterizzata dal tentativo di comprendere lo stato dell'uomo nel cosmo che lo porta al superamento della misantropia (Bontempelli, 1943: 59). A quel punto la "delusione [...] non è cupa né irosa [...] È una delusione limpida. Qui la passione s'è fatta tristezza anzi dolcezza [...] qui la ragione [...] è diventata immateriale [...]" (Bontempelli, 1943: 59-60). Invece, la solitudine di Julien (e di Henri) è alimentata dall'odio e dalla delusione sia per il padre sia per la società che lo rappresenta. Bontempelli nota che "Giuliano è un condannato al perpetuo isolamento, è un *diverso*" (Bontempelli, 1913: 14) a causa dell'ambiente sociale in cui si trova e che gli si presenta come un'armata nemica per la quale sente fastidio.

le attitudini delle avanguardie è solo apparente: il nostro prefatore mostra in realtà un approccio bilanciato: non rifiuta la tradizione, ma la intende in termini originali come "continuità intima, profonda, tra manifestazioni di inaspettata novità" (Bontempelli, 1938: 34). In quel senso, i classici rappresentano allora "i valori del sovratemporale, sovraspaziale, sovraindividuale" (Farinelli, 2012: 24).

Julien Sorel è secondo Bontempelli è l'espressione perfetta della fusione di una intensità di spirito e di intelletto (Bontempelli, 1913: 14). Ha un'anima complicata che è:

> […] un miscuglio di sincerità e d'ipocrisia, di logica e di fantasia, di studio e d'abbandono; un meccanismo complesso, per cui non sentiamo simpatia quasi mai, ma che seguiamo con un interesse intenso e vigile del suo giuoco immancabile (Bontempelli, 1913: 14).

Il passo è rivelatorio del modo in cui Bontempelli cerca di coinvolgere i lettori attraverso l'uso di verbi nella prima persona plurale. La sua presentazione continua attraverso una struttura sintattica basata sulla paratassi: le frasi sono separate da due punti, dal punto e virgola, dal trattino o dalle congiunzioni (*e, ma*), in cui la congiunzione *ma* appare anche a inizio frase. Ciò sarebbe indicativo di un approccio più informale al linguaggio, orientato appunto verso un pubblico più ampio, come quello che legge i quotidiani. La paratassi emerge come modalità discorsiva che permette di velocizzare la narrazione, segnalando al lettore i fatti più importanti del personaggio principale. La narrazione guadagna un ritmo ancora più incalzante quando il discorso si avvicina a trattare dell'omicidio e dello stato d'animo in cui Julien poteva trovarsi in quell'istante. I periodi diventano sempre più brevi, le scelte lessicali sono pertinenti all'azione e sono paragonabili a quelle che troveremmo in un romanzo poliziesco (Bontempelli, 1913: 15). Inoltre appare di nuovo l'asindeto, "più assurdo, più inutile, più illogico" (Bontempelli, 1913: 15), strategia che trasmette l'intensità di quanto accaduto. Raggiunto il punto più alto di tensione, Bontempelli rallenta la narrazione con un discorso dal ritmo meno incalzante e una descrizione dallo sguardo più distanziato (Bontempelli, 1913: 15).

Nella parte conclusiva della prefazione, in cui Bontempelli brevemente menziona il romanzo *La certosa di Parma*, da lui considerato superiore a tutte le altre opere di Stendhal, egli implicitamente apre un'altra questione che gli stava a cuore e che ritornerà spesso nei suoi scritti in difesa del novecentismo, come osserveremo tra poco. Il romanzo di Stendhal, *Il rosso e il nero*, "al primo uscire (1831) passò quasi inosservato" (Bontempelli, 1913: 15), e solo cinquant'anni dopo guadagnò la stima e il riconoscimento sia dei lettori che dei critici. Il problema della ricezione di un'opera letteraria rappresenterà una costante nel pensiero bontempelliano: nella prefazione al primo dei dieci romanzi de *La Vita intensa* del 1919, l'io narrante

annuncerà di scrivere il romanzo "per i posteri" (Bontempelli, 2009: 7), il che implica che i lettori non siano capaci di capire l'arte del proprio tempo.[26]

Bontempelli segnalerà inoltre che l'artista stesso è spesso cattivo giudice del proprio lavoro. Così nel 1930, nell'articolo "Passaggio all'architettura", affermerà che "ogni artista (salvo casi rari, di chi sappia sdoppiar bene in sé l'artista dal critico) sarà cattivo giudice di valori dell'arte che è la sua, perché tenderà a stabilire una scala di valori partendo dal preconcetto e dal gusto invincibile del proprio mestiere" (Bontempelli, 1938: 93). Non è però questo il caso di Stendhal: lo scrittore francese appartiene infatti a quel gruppo di artisti che ebbero la consapevolezza di non poter venire apprezzati subito perché nel 1830 "ebbe a scrivere una lettera a Balzac [a proposito del trattato *Dell'amore*] in cui sosteneva: «Penso che non sarò letto avanti al 1880.» Profezia non riuscì mai più miracolosamente esatta di questa." (Bontempelli, 1913: 16). Anticipando così un'altra posizione del novecentismo, e cioè che un'opera riuscita supera il proprio tempo e che spesso non viene nemmeno compresa dai contemporanei, Bontempelli chiude così la prefazione al romanzo *Il rosso e il nero.*

LE LETTURE STENDHALIANE NEGLI ANNI VENTI, TRENTA E QUARANTA

Per appoggiare la pertinenza delle tesi difese in questo articolo, va notato come Bontempelli intervenne su Stendhal altre volte nel proprio percorso di critico e traduttore. Mentre l'edizione del 1917 dell'opera stendhaliana *Dell'amore*, tradotta da Bontempelli, è priva di una nota introduttiva,[27] sono invece rivelatori delle sue posizioni su Stendhal altri interventi. Se negli articoli raccolti ne *L'Avventura novecentista* (1938) egli appare come *uno* dei maestri della letteratura mondiale,[28] l'autore francese è poi più specificamente l'oggetto di tre testi di Bontempelli che merita presentare almeno brevemente perché non sono ancora mai stati considerati dalla critica: si tratta di due articoli e della prefazione al romanzo *Ricordi d'egotismo* (Stendhal, 1944): ne parleremo nell'ordine cronologico in cui apparvero.

All'occasione dei cento anni dalla prima edizione del romanzo *La certosa di Parma,* Bontempelli, nel primo articolo "Centenario d'un romanzo", del 1938, delinea un quadro storico-letterario delle circostanze pertinenti ai manoscritti stendhaliani i quali, dopo la morte di Stendhal, furono riuniti sotto il titolo *Chroniques italiennes*. E se l'articolo potrebbe a prima vista sembrare solo un resoconto di

26 Cfr. Bontempelli, 1938: 40.

27 Stendhal, 1917.

28 Cfr. "Lontananza della tradizione" del 1928 (Bontempelli, 1938: 53-54); la lettera a G.A. Borgese del 1930 ("Due lettere" in Bontempelli, 1938: 238); "Confronto" del 1935 (Bontempelli, 1938: 275).

quelle circostanze, in realtà è anche altro: vi traspaiono assieme alla lode del genio stendhaliano, anche alcune posizioni poetologiche di Bontempelli, in particolare, quelle pertinenti al processo di scrittura che deve essere basato sull'intuizione, vi introduce inoltre un ulteriore riferimento al fenomeno della ricezione tardiva dello scrittore francese ovvero del difficile rapporto fra pubblico e scrittori e critici. Si tratta di posizioni che egli cominciò a nutrire a partire dagli anni dell'insegnamento,[29] e di cui sono rivelatori i suoi primi articoli, come ad esempio "Grande e piccola critica" del 1908, nonché le prefazioni degli esordi.[30] A parte riportare alcune informazioni sulle edizioni passate del romanzo, Bontempelli si sofferma sulla fortuna dei romanzi stendhaliani, così come aveva fatto nella conclusione della prefazione a *Il rosso e il nero* del 1913, e paragona fra loro il rapporto tra Balzac e Stendhal con quello tra Dante e Cavalcanti e tra Boccaccio e Dante.

Il secondo testo in questione è la prefazione senza titolo al romanzo *Ricordi d'Egotismo* del 1944. Benché il testo confronti argomenti diversi (osservazioni biografiche su Stendhal e il suo soggiorno italiano, appunti sul titolo, sul manoscritto e sulle ristampe), Bontempelli vi intreccia alcuni nodi principali della sua poetica. Più di trentacinque anni dopo i primi articoli e quasi vent'anni dopo il lancio della rivista *"900"*, l'autore indubbiamente dimostra la continuità del suo pensiero.[31] Si pensi nuovamente al ruolo dell'intuizione e dell'immaginazione nel processo della scrittura, inteso come divertimento, e dell'inutilità del pianificare quell'attività. La prefazione include anche la lode dell'approccio anticanonico all'autobiografia di Stendhal per aver cominciato non dall'infanzia bensì da quando si era trasferito a Parigi. La lode vale anche per il filo cronologico della narrazione che in Stendhal si spezza continuamente, una tecnica narrativa adoperata dallo stesso Bontempelli, ad esempio nel romanzo *La vita intensa* nel 1920, nonché nella monografia *San Bernardino da Siena* del 1914 (Bontempelli, 1914), in cui il predicatore senese viene presentato prima per i successi che ebbe con i fedeli e per le sfide imposte dalle

29 Per un resoconto curioso delle esperienze scolastiche del professor Bontempelli, avverso alle "coazioni e [...] [alle] menzogne istituzionalizzate", si veda Piscopo 2001: 28-30.

30 Si pensi alle edizioni scolastiche curate da Bontempelli (la prefazione ai *Lirici* del 1910, e quella alle *Prose* del 1913), ma anche ai testi prefatori inseriti nelle edizioni dei «Classici italiani» presso la casa editrice notariana, Istituo Editoriale Italiano.

31 È la testi di Emilio Cecchi (1884-1966), scrittore e amico di Bontempelli, che nel 1925 scriverà: "[n]ell›arte, come in natura, non si fanno salti" (Cecchi, 1972: 837). A differenza di critici orientati a vedere un "primo", "secondo" e "terzo" Bontempelli, propugnava che questo intellettuale in realtà non avesse subito alcuna trasformazione nel corso della sua attività. Anzi, Cecchi parla di "comodi travestimenti" (1972: 838) e scrive: "crisi, [di] colpi di folgore, e [delle] esplosioni, [che] nello svolgimento degli artisti, quasi sempre sono espedienti descrittivi di critici i quali s'accorsero della musica che, da gran tempo, un artista veniva suonando, solo il giorno che, per toccare i loro orecchi, egli imboccò il trombone e lasciò il violino" (1972: 837). Dunque, tutti processi sensati e soprattutto necessari per lo sviluppo di un artista e della sua poetica.

autorità clericali, e solo alla fine attraverso osservazioni biografiche concludendo con la sua nascita.

Il secondo articolo, e quindi l'ultimo testo stendhaliano che presentiamo qui, è intitolato "Suggerimenti alla storia" e apparve su *L'Unità* nel 1948. Tale intervento è più collegato alla prefazione *Stendhal* del 1913, oggetto del nostro contributo, e ci dimostra un Bontempelli amareggiato che valuta i fallimenti delle sue speranze. Quel futuro brillante di rinnovamento culturale, che nella prefazione in questione, a partire dalla esperienza di Stendhal, egli auspicava per il proprio presente, non si è realizzato. L'articolo prende avvio da una riflessione sulla rivoluzione e su come i popoli, in particolare i francesi e gli italiani, ancora non abbiano imparato a vederne l'importanza nel processo del rinnovamento storico e culturale. Il ragionamento bontempelliano parte dalla Rivoluzione francese. Fa osservare come essa aprisse una finestra di opportunità attraverso le quali il popolo avrebbe potuto creare nuovi modelli sociali e culturali. Invece, "[c]aduto Napoleone, la gente non ha capito che quello che cadeva a buon diritto era il Napoleone diventato antirivoluzionario, e non l'originario" (Bontempelli, 1948). Quindi, al posto della *costruzione*, alla Francia successe la *restaurazione* che per Bontempelli significava "tornare indietro" (Bontempelli, 1948). Lo stesso accadde in Italia in tempi più recenti: la finestra di opportunità, ovvero "la nuova piazza pulita" (Bontempelli, 1948), fu un'occasione persa. Valutando il momento storico, nota che

> [c]oloro che hanno da tirare le somme di quei 32 anni, [dal 1914 al 1944,] devono essere tanto intelligenti da capire [...] che le due guerre [...] di reale e diretto non hanno creato niente altro che macerie. Noi non le abbiamo ancora spazzate via, noi abbiamo anzi lasciato [...] che si accumulassero in modo da individuarle bene. Fatto che avremo la 'piazza pulita che Stendhal a un secolo e mezzo di distanza ci raccomanda, dovremo metterci ad inventare tutto di nuovo. Inventare l'Europa (Bontempelli, 1948).

Trentacinque anni dopo la prefazione al romanzo *Il rosso e il nero,* Bontempelli valuta ciò che in quel suo testo (*Stendhal*) ottimisticamente auspicava e che sarebbe stato possibile grazie all'impegno rivoluzionario delle avanguardie e al dispiego di energie giovanili. In dubbio persino per la propria arte, amareggiato, fa capire che la strada verso il rinnovamento della cultura europea è ancora lunga. Ciò viene sottolineato soprattutto nell'ultimo paragrafo dell'articolo in cui viene esplicitata appunto la sua delusione per quanto accaduto e per la perduta occasione di rinnovamento che si sarebbe potuta attuare un trent'anni prima: il nazifascismo sarebbe dovuto essere eliminato appena nato come normalmente si fa con i "grumi di sudiciume [...] venuti a galla" (Bontempelli, 1948) dopo averli schiumati dal bicchiere.

CONCLUSIONI

Dunque, nella prefazione a *Il rosso e il nero* del 1913 Bontempelli dipana un ragionamento che si basa soprattutto su come Stendhal e allo stesso tempo Julien Sorel vivano la realtà in un momento storico di transizione tra classicismo e romanticismo. Bontempelli riesce ad intrecciare un profilo di Stendhal basato, a tratti, sull'analisi psicologica, al profilo di Julien Sorel, il personaggio che vive gli eventi del romanzo nella sua interiorità. Questa presentazione biografica sarebbe dovuta al taglio divulgativo che la casa editrice di Umberto Notari e Bontempelli stesso volevano dare al volume. A ciò corrisponde anche la lineare struttura dell'articolo, suddiviso in tre parti. Il linguaggio della prefazione è privo di ironia e di irriverenza, il che è forse indicativo del rispetto che Bontempelli nutriva per un capolavoro come *Il rosso e il nero* e anche del fatto che in quel contesto non aveva ragione di aprire polemiche letterarie con il pubblico di specialisti. Descrivendo la realtà stendhaliana, soprattutto quella familiare, adopera un linguaggio che esprime l'atteggiamento di Stendhal verso quella realtà. In un modo simile affronta la presentazione di Sorel; lo fa servendosi della paratassi e usando nella rievocazione delle vicende vissute dal personaggio anche forme del tempo presente. Cerca dunque una espressione chiara e allo stesso tempo coinvolgente. Il fatto che non dia spazio alle osservazioni formali sul testo e alle sue eventuali novità riguardo la traduzione conferma le nostre tesi, e cioè che la prefazione non era rivolta a un pubblico di specialisti. Inoltre dal testo traspaiono alcune delle posizioni novecentiste di Bontempelli, come ad esempio l'importanza dello spirito avventuroso e delle energie giovanili in un periodo di transizione come elementi necessari per il rinnovamento di una cultura, le potenzialità della scrittura dilettantistica, il ruolo dell'ispirazione e dell'intuizione nel processo creativo, l'importanza dell'immaginazione, nonché il problema del difficile rapporto tra scrittori e pubblico e la necessità quindi di una cultura che li sappia collegare meglio. Bontempelli avrebbe intenzionalmente sottolineato il problema generazionale vissuto da Stendhal per paragonarlo a quello che vivevano giovani scrittori e artisti della contemporaneità. Curiosamente, la necessità da parte di Bontempelli di un rinnovamento culturale europeo persiste anche negli anni Quaranta, quando, amareggiato, constata che l'Europa non si è ancora resa conto dell'importanza di opportunità, e quindi di far *piazza pulita* di quanto del passato è superato, che a una società si presenta dopo una rivoluzione, cosa che invece Stendhal intravide e capì già nel 1815.

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Massimo Bontempelli (1878–1960) kot bralec Stendhala v odnosu do množičnega bralstva na prehodu v Tretje obdobje

V predgovoru k italijanski izdaji Stendhalovega *Rdeče in črno* (1913) Massimo Bontempelli (1878–1960), prevajalec romana, predstavi svoja opažanja o nujni kulturni in literarni prenovi, na katerih je kasneje temeljil njegov *novecentismo*, ki je bil prvič uradno predstavljen v literarni reviji "900" (1926–1927). V članku raziskujem, kako Bontempelli z opazovanji o Stendhalovem življenju in tragični izkušnji Juliena Sorela zariše implicitno vzporednico z lastnim zgodovinskim trenutkom ter v svoje razmišljanje vplete ključno komponento - vlogo revolucionarnega duha avantgard v tej prenovi. Kot nujno pa med drugim navaja tudi klasično idejo o umetnosti in literaturi, pri čemer je zanj literarna tradicija intimna in globoka kontinuiteta manifestacij nepričakovanih novosti. Čeprav je Bontempelli kasneje simpatiziral z italijanskim futurizmom, je ravno ravnovesje med obema komponentama tisto, zaradi česar njegova kulturno-literarna pobuda za »tretje obdobje«, *novecentismo*, velja za edinstveno v italijanski literarni panorami. Predgovor iz leta 1913 v članku obravnavam v kontekstu nastajajoče množičnega bralstva, s tem pa tudi uredniške in jezikovne prilagoditve, ki so bile potrebne za izdajo. Prav tako njegovo razmišljanje primerjam z zapisi na temo literarne prenove, ki jih je ustvaril mnogo kasneje.

Ključne besede: predgovor, novecentizem, avantgarde, Stendhal, množično občinstvo