

ACTA NEOPHILOLOGICA

47. 1-2 (2014)

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IGOR MAVER

IN MEMORIAM: MIRKO JURAK (1935-2014)

SILVIA ALBERTAZZI

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L'ASCENDANT DU DOUTE HYPERBOLIQUE SUR LE PROTOPROLOGUE DES GRANDES TRAGÉDIES CORNELIENNES

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IN MEMORIAM: MIRKO JURAK (1935-2014)

Igor Maver



I.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Mirko Jurak graduated in English and Russian Literature from the University of Ljubljana's Faculty of Arts. In 1963 he departed for England to commence graduate studies at the University of Sussex, under the mentorship of the well-known literary historian David Daiches. In 1967 he received his doctorate for his work on English poetic political drama between 1930 and 1960. For the academic year 1970/71 he was a guest professor at Drake University in Iowa. He also held lectures at the University of Maribor.

Before his retirement in 2005, he was a full professor at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana, where he introduced courses in Shakespearean drama as well as in Australian and Canadian literature to the Department of English. Between 1979 and 1981 he was Associate Dean, and between 1981 and 1983 he was Dean of the Faculty of Arts. From 1984 to 1988 he headed the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, and from 1991 to 1993 he was Vice-Rector of the University of Ljubljana. He was co-founder and Vice President of the European Association for Australian Studies (EASA). Professor Jurak organized two high-profile international conferences in Bled: one on Australian Literature in 1982, and, in 1988, one on intercultural studies in the United States, Canada and Europe.

From 1990 to 1995 Professor Jurak was president of the Slovenian Emigrant Association, as well as the Vice President of the Republic of Slovenia's Office for Slovenians Abroad. For many years he was also a member of the boards for the "Drama" and "MGL" theatres in Ljubljana. Further, he was president of the Slovenian Association for Foreign Languages and Literatures and editor of their newsletter. He was involved in the journals on emigrant issues *Rodna gruda*, *Slovenija* and *Dve domovini*. In 2000 he became Editor-in-chief of the Faculty of Arts' journal *Acta neophilologica*. He received the Faculty of Arts' Award of Merit in 1989, and the University of Ljubljana's Award of Merit in 1990.

Professor Jurak's main research and teaching areas were: Elizabethan drama (with a particular emphasis on Shakespeare), 20th-century English and American drama, and Slovenian emigrant literature in English. His bibliography consists over 300 entries, including the monograph *Dileme parabolične umetnosti* (1975), which is a discussion

of the role and importance of sources for Shakespeare's plays. He also published the important first survey of Slovenian emigrant literature in Canada, as well as several forewords to Slovenian translations of English and American writers for the "100 novels" and "Nobel Laureates" series.

II.

Mirko was a long-time professor of English and American Literature and mentor to a great many Slovenian undergraduate and graduate students, but also to American, Australian, and Italian students, since he lectured abroad in addition to working at the University of Ljubljana. As a young man, he had wanted to become an actor, though for various reasons this was not to be. And so he dedicated his entire professional life to researching and teaching English and American drama, indeed to all English-language literature. His bibliography is extensive and wide-ranging, and he wrote a series of monographs and textbooks for students at the Universities of Ljubljana and Maribor.

In his illustrious academic career, he was Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Vice-Rector of the University of Ljubljana, as well as co-founder or executive member of such leading European associations for literature and culture as the European Association for Australian Studies and the European Association for American Studies. Mirko was also responsible for bringing leading thinkers to the Faculty of Arts, and to the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, among them, the Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye, the literary historian David Daiches, the British writer David Lodge, narratologist Karl Franz Stanzel, as well as many other literary critics – but also writers – from the English-speaking world. For me, however, Mirko was first and foremost my professor, my mentor for my Master's and PhD degrees, and a dear colleague at the department of literature.

We all learned a great deal from Mirko, and he was always trying to instil in students a love of English-language literature and for literature in general. Beyond Slovenia, he was very well-regarded as a scholar and, always and everywhere, he endeavoured to make known the fruits of Slovenian academia.

In 2000, after having been for many years executive editor of the Faculty of Arts' *Acta neophilologica* (founded by Professor Janez Stanonik), Mirko became the Editor-in-chief of the scholarly journal. The journal published a series of studies of Slovenian emigration (as manifested in emigrant media and literature) written by Slovenian and foreign literary historians, many of whom were of Slovenian descent and living abroad. This research was pioneering for the areas of Slovenian emigrant literature, especially in the United States, Canada and Australia, a trio of lands for which Mirko had a particular affinity. I especially remember participating in the seminal 1988 international conference in Bled which focussed on intercultural literary studies in the United States, Canada and Europe and which was organized in conjunction with the Slovenian, American and Canadian embassies. Many attendees noted at the conference reception that they had never before, on a single occasion, shaken the hands of two ambassadors of large countries, namely, of the United States and Canada. Because this occurred just a few years before Slovenia became independent, this coming-together was by no means a given, and the Bled conference was thus of great political significance for the country. In addition, the

conference was of pivotal importance for Slovenian intellectuals and professors of Slovenian descent who, for the most part from American and Canadian universities, lived in the diaspora and were previously mostly unpublished and little-known in Slovenian academia. The rest is history. Mirko clearly contributed significantly to knowledge and research of Slovenian emigrant literature, a field that has, increasingly, been included into the Slovenian literary canon.

Mirko was always innovative. In the 1980s he was the first to start teaching the postcolonial literatures of English-speaking countries, which in the European context was a novel undertaking; this tradition of thematic and critical decentralization and pluralisation of Anglo-American literary studies or literature in English continues at the Faculty of Arts' Department of English. For his efforts in propagating Australian literature and Australian studies in the European scholarly space, Mirko received an award from the Australian Government. As well, Mirko was the initiator of the interdisciplinary postgraduate (now doctoral) programme of American Studies at the Faculty of Arts. His decisive role in initiating and shaping the programme for English and German studies at the University of Maribor cannot be overlooked.

Mirko always looked at life from the sunny side and with optimism. Anyone who knew him knows that he was, in addition to being a conscientious and serious academic, also a *bon vivant* who loved company. This is the Mirko many of his colleagues from abroad knew – while appreciating his scholarly side, they also appreciated his purely human side. In addition to being a lover of the theatre, Mirko was a great lover of classical music, and for many years he was on the boards of Ljubljana's "Drama" and "MGL" theatres. As a theatre lover, he had very fond memories of his visits to London, and he wrote of London theatrical performances for Slovenian newspapers – in particular of his visit to Shakespeare's reconstructed Globe theatre. This roofless, semi-circular theatre, built as it was back in Shakespeare's time, seemed to Mirko to faithfully reflect the lively atmosphere and of the Elizabethan theatre of yore.

Right up until his last days Mirko continued to write about English drama, especially as it connected with and influenced Slovenian creativity for the stage. Over the past few years he published, in *Acta neophilologica* and in Slovenian newspapers, a number of extensive studies on Shakespeare and his influence on Slovenian playwrights – ranging from Anton Tomaž Linhart, Fran Levstik, Ivan Cankar, to Oton Župančič, Ivan Mrak, Bratko Kreft, and to contemporary Slovenian artists for the stage. With great dedication and as far as his health would allow it, he was also writing a book about these theatre links. The members of the editorial board of *Acta neophilologica* and generations of students of English will forever preserve beautiful and grateful memories of Mirko.

Let me conclude with a quote from Mirko's beloved Shakespeare and his play *Hamlet*, where Hamlet's friend Horatio accompanies Hamlet's demise with the following words:

Now cracks a noble heart. Good night sweet prince:
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!

(*Hamlet*, V.2)

III.

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SALMAN RUSHDIE'S "THE LOCATION OF BRAZIL". THE IMAGINARY HOMELANDS OF FANTASTIC LITERATURE

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Abstract

In 1985, under the title "The Location of Brazil" Salman Rushdie published a long review of Terry Gilliam's film *Brazil*, which today is to be found in his collection *Imaginary Homelands*. My essay shows how Rushdie's article can be considered a sort of manifesto of his poetics, pivoting on his idea of a political use of the fantastic and his concept of the migrant as a central figure of modernity. Rushdie's theories seem to anticipate on the one hand Deleuze and Guattari's ideas on minor literatures and, on the other, Arjun Appadurai's views on "modernity at large".

Key words: modernity, Salman Rushdie, migrants

In 1985, shortly after the worldwide success of 1981's Booker-Prize-winning *Midnight's Children*, and three years before the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, which would leave him on the run from a death sentence and under the protection of the British police, Salman Rushdie wrote a long review article on Terry Gilliam's film *Brazil*; this article, under the title "The Location of *Brazil*", would be included in the essay collection *Imaginary Homelands* at the beginning of the following decade. This apparently throwaway work in fact offers not only Rushdie criticism but also (above all) the student of the fantastic an irreplaceable expression of the author's poetics on the one hand and a vital critical tool on the other. The purpose of this essay is to offer a rereading of Rushdie's article aimed at highlighting the elements of theories of the fantastic that may be found in it.

Rushdie's goal in the 1985 article would appear from the title onwards to be to individuate where the fantastic is located. Asking himself where the "Brazil" the film refers to is to be found, Rushdie is really asking himself where products of the imagination are situated; if, in other words, it is possible to localize them in space and/or time: "where have we come to? What kind of place is Oz, or Wonderland? By what route, with or without a Ford Galaxy, may one arrive at Aplethville? Specifically – for the purposes of this essay – where is *Brazil*?" (1991, 118-119). Rushdie notes that Gilliam's film takes its title not from the South American country but from a popular song that supplies the soundtrack to the protagonist's dreams, and suggests that the fantastic is to

be sought in time as well as (or rather than) space. The chorus to the song does indeed run “Brazil, where hearts were entertained in June/ We stood beneath an amber moon/ And softly murmured: Someday soon”. It is precisely in this “*someday soon*”, in this near future, that Rushdie finds a possible temporal rather than spatial location for the whole fantastic affair.

However, representing tomorrow today, that is, in a moment when “tomorrow is not only a place that hasn’t arrived yet, but one that may never arrive at all” (Rushdie 1991, 120), turns out to be somewhat problematic. In the fantastic, the possibility of changing through mechanical means not only the future but also the past is often contemplated; in narratives – both literary and cinematographic – from the end of the millennium the future takes on connotations of a recent past, as per the postmodern nostalgia theorized by Jameson (1989) or, if preferred, our experiencing reality as a future past (Augé, 2000). Thus, in cinema, from Kasdan’s *Body Heat* (1981), quoted by Jameson, to Mendes’s *Road to Perdition* and Haynes’s *Far from Heaven* (2002), by way of the Cohen brothers’ *The Hudsucker Proxy* (1994) and *The Man Who Wasn’t There* (2001), there is a constant desire to conceal the present through a nostalgic return to simulacra of a stereotypical past, something that Jameson also finds in the novels of E.L. Doctorow. At first sight, *Brazil* too would appear as much another monument to the disappearance of the historic referent, with the future it shows wearing the garb of a not-too-distant past, as it does a dystopia seen from the prospective of a future past – situated, in other words, “in the future of the past”, to paraphrase Pessoa, and having a sense only from the perspective of its relationship with yesterday. If this were the case, then Gilliam’s cinematographic narrative, in terms of political purpose (or absence thereof) would not differ from the “realist” films of Kasdan, Mendes, Haynes and the Cohens. The importance of Rushdie’s essay, however, lies in the fact that it demonstrates how Gilliam’s film, following on from the model of the best of the fantastic, carries a certain subversive political charge completely lacking from the nostalgic productions of the postmodern. These claim to be artistic expressions of the much vaunted “end of history”; *Brazil*, although set in a “cancelled future” (Rushdie 1991, 120), reaffirms the triumph of the imagination, of dreams, over the anguish of the real.

“... it turns out that we are being told something very strange about the world of the imagination”, Rushdie writes regarding this, “that it is, in fact, *at war* with the ‘real’ world, the world in which things inevitably get worse and in which centres cannot hold” (1991, 122 – emphasis in the original). In Gilliam’s film, therefore, dreams, with their creative power, are set against a dark reality recreated through simulacra of a recent, dark, past. The film’s “moral” – which is also the base of any political interpretation of the fantastic – is that “the world of the imagination is a place into which the long arm of the law is unable to reach” (Rushdie 1991, 122). Rushdie goes on: “This idea – the opposition of imagination to reality, which is also of course the opposition of art to politics – is of great importance, because it reminds us that we are not helpless; that to dream is to have power” (loc. cit.), and ends affirming that “the true location of Brazil is the other great tradition in art, the one in which the techniques of comedy, metaphor, heightened imagery, fantasy and so on are used to break down our conventional, habit-dulled certainties about what the world is and has to be” (loc. cit.). It is obvious that here we have a concept diametrically opposed to that of an unchanging

situation in which historical events are situated. Instead, Rushdie's conclusion heralds the possibility of a new beginning for history, a new beginning in which history is born anew out of a destruction and reconstruction only available to the fantastic: "Unreality is the only weapon with which reality can be smashed, so that it may be subsequently be reconstructed." The author who deals with the fantastic, therefore, has to destroy the world to re-invent it, recreating its rules according to the logic of dreams, a logic which is greatly different from that of our waking hours, which controls realist discourse.

"Our sense of the modern world is as much the creation of Kafka, with his unexplained trials and unapproachable castles and giant bugs, as it is of Freud, Marx or Einstein", writes Rushdie in his essay on *Brazil* (1991, 123). In order to classify the fantastic politically, on the one hand we have the "Kafka method": black humour and a technique that uses the superficially absurd, in the awareness that Kafka, as Deleuze and Guattari have noted, "c'est un auteur qui rit, profondément joyeux, d'une joie de vivre [...] qu'il tend comme un piège ou comme un cirque" (1975, 75), as well as being more importantly "un auteur politique, devin du monde futur, parce qu'il a comme deux pôles qu'il va savoir unifier dans un agencement tout à fait nouveau: loin d'être écrivain retiré dans sa chambre, sa chambre lui sert à un double flux, celui d'un bureaucrate de grand avenir, branché sur les agencements réels en train de se faire; et celui d'un nomade en train de fuir à la façon la plus actuelle, qui se branche sur le socialisme, l'anarchisme, les mouvements sociaux" (loc. cit.). On the other hand, it is precisely in the flight from a world that tends to substitute fantasies held *en masse* for personal dreams that the other component Rushdie considers inherent in the fantastic as we know it today is manifested. This is what is produced by a migratory consciousness and by crossing borders, which is a *sine qua non*, in the Indo-English author's view, for seeing to the heart of things: "The migrant suspects reality: having experienced several ways of being, he understands their illusory nature" (Rushdie 1991, 125). We have here one of the key themes of Rushdie's poetics: the importance of the migrant in twentieth-century culture, which was proclaimed in his essays from the early 'eighties and repeated in the last piece of non-fiction in his second essay collection, *Step Across This Line* (2002), where we may once again read that "the migrant, the man without frontiers, is the archetypal figure of our age" (2002, 356). Recapitulating what he has written in other essays and in the authorial asides in his novel *Shame*, as well as bearing in mind the personal history of Gilliam, an immigrant from the United States to England, Rushdie affirms:

The effect of mass migrations has been the creation of radically new types of human beings: people who root themselves in ideas rather than places, in memories as much as in material things; people who have been obliged to define themselves – because they are so defined by others – by their otherness; people in whose deepest selves strange fusions occur, unprecedented unions between what they were and where they find themselves.' (1991, 124-125)

Rushdie here repeats the importance of the migrant, not just for contemporary culture, but also, most importantly, for the fantastic: because they have experienced more than one world and learnt not to trust reality: "Migrants must, of necessity, make a new imaginative relationship with the world, because of the loss of familiar habitats" (1991, 125).

The fantastic thus becomes placed in a supremely postcolonial dynamic: Edward Said affirms that “liberation as an intellectual mission, born in the resistance and opposition to the confinements and ravages of imperialism, has now shifted from the settled [...] dynamics of culture to its unhoused, decentered, and exilic energies [...] whose consciousness is that of the intellectual and artist in exile, the political figure between domains, between forms, between homes, and between languages” (1993, 332), and his words are echoed by Homi Bhabha who writes about “Marx’s reserve army of migrant labour who by speaking the foreignness of language split the patriotic voice of unisonance and become Nietzsche’s mobile army of metaphors, metonyms and antropomorphisms” (1990, 315). It is this attention paid by postcolonial theorists to migrant language that takes us back to Franz Kafka and his concept of “littératures mineures”, based first of all on the “déterritorialisation de la langue, le branchement de l’individuel sur l’immédiat-politique, l’agencement collectif d’énonciation” (Deleuze, Guattari 1975, 33): the fantastic-creating migrant is superimposed on the nomadic (and revolutionary) “minor” writer, who is “dans sa propre langue comme un étranger” and creates “une petite musique, une autre, mais toujours des sons déterritorilisés, un langage qui file toujours la tête la première en basculant” (op. cit., 48-49 – italics in the original).

But there is more to it than this. When Rushdie quotes Gilliam and reminds the reader that *Brazil* is a film built up around the simple fact that “America bombards you with dreams and deprives you of your own” (1991, 124) he is implicitly situating his critical speculations in the universe of cultural globalization hypothesized by Arjun Appadurai, but in doing so he is anticipating the Indian anthropologist by at least ten years. Although it may be true, as Rushdie himself has always underlined, that migrants have to carry with them their own capacity to imagine new ways of life, it should nonetheless be pointed out that for these individuals “both the politics of adaptation to new environments and the stimulus to move or return are deeply affected by a mass-mediated imaginary that frequently transcends national space” (Appadurai 1996, 6); this often results in mythographies quite alien to their original cultures. The mass media’s imaginary worlds thus become induced dreams, “large-scale, imagined life possibilities” (op. cit., 55) wielding enormous power over individual existential processes: “forms of mass advertising teach consumers to miss things they have never lost [...] creating experiences of losses that never took place [...] what might be called “imagined nostalgia”, nostalgia for things that never were” (op. cit., 77). It is the ridiculing of this “nostalgia without memory” that provides the motive force to Gilliam’s fantastic work, where the future is represented in the garb of the past, a past that “is now not a land to return to in a simple politics of memory. It has become a synchronic warehouse of cultural scenarios, a kind of temporal central casting” (op. cit., 30). The final goal of fantastic representation – whether literary or cinematographic – would appear to be to highlight “the inherent ephemerality of the present” (op. cit., 78), on the one hand, and on the other the fact that the future, thanks to the temporal acceleration characterizing what Marc Augé has theorized as our “supermodernity”, approaches the past to a point where it becomes part of history before it has been experienced.

For those who create the fantastic, therefore, it is no longer simply a question of opposing the powers that deprive an individual of his or her dreams. The watch-

words of French student protests in 1968 – “Forget everything you’ve learnt and start again from your dreams”, “Power to the imagination!” – become dangerous in a society where mass-produced fantasies are substituted for personal dreams and “the imagination [...] has now become a part of the quotidian mental work of ordinary people in many societies” (Appadurai 1996, 5), which is often expressed in the creation of “imagined worlds that are chimerical, aesthetic, even fantastic objects, particularly if assessed by the criteria of some other perspective, some other imagined world” (op. cit., 35). It is precisely this fight against a society that robs the individuals of their own dreams and obliges them to dream the dreams of others that underlies Tom Stoppard and Terry Gilliam’s screenplay, which not only succeeds in showing this world of fantasy on the screen but also manages to take it seriously, even though it is clearly separate from reality, something possible only for the greatest creators of the fantastic and children at play (cf. Augé 1997). In light of these observations, the opening question “Where is Gilliam’s Brazil?” may be answered, quite literally, “in a song”; just as it is in a song that there is to be found that world where “all fall down” in children’s games.

The two finales to Gilliam’s film – the darkly dystopic one envisioned for European audiences and the more fantastic one cooked up for the Americans – may thus be read as the natural consequence of these two attitudes (which are nevertheless expressions of a similar way of confronting reality). In the “Kafkaesque” European finale, in the final scene the protagonist’s torturers accept that he has died with the words “Look, he’s gone away”; in the American finale, however, the protagonist really does “go away”, breaking free from the torture chamber on a dream’s wings, flying above the clouds with the woman he loves like a disillusioned version of a Frank Capra angel. In both cases, however, imagination and fantasy allow him to escape the oppression by totalitarian powers of which he is a victim: metaphorically, in death, or literally, in a dream. As if this were not enough, a few scenes before the epilogue, the film’s most revolutionary character, the terrorist Harry Tuttle, vanishes in a whirlpool of paper, like the old nurse in Stevenson’s fable “The Song of the Morrow”, leaving the spectator only with the idea that, just like the “old crone” who vanishes in a whirl of dead leaves, he will sooner or later rematerialize: “Sam may be destroyed”, comments Rushdie, “but Tuttle swings on, like un urban Tarzan, from skyscraper to skyscraper [...] as a street-wise version of Sam’s dream of himself as an angel” (1991, 122).

Sam and Tuttle flee from the horror of Orwellian totalitarianism towards a Brazil that exists in a song, in a dream, in cinema itself, “because in the cinema the dream is the norm” (op. cit., 125); Brazil, or, Rushdie concludes, “a land of make-believe of which all of us who have, for whatever reason, lost a country and ended up elsewhere, are true citizens” (loc. cit.), all citizens of Brazil, always ready, like Alice, to change the rules of our New Found Land, to identify the corruption behind the charade of power, to denounce the fact that Wonderland (or Brazil) is only a bluff and, tearing away its mask, to find ourselves again in waking.

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**DAUGHTERS, DEATH AND DESIRE IN *FATAL ATTRACTION*,
THE PIANO AND *THE TALENTED MR RIPLEY***

Naomi Segal

Abstract

The oedipal principle characteristic of the nineteenth-century novel of adultery survives into twentieth-century narrative fiction too, as exemplified in two films of the late century, *Fatal Attraction* (1987) and *The Piano* (1993). In both, a marriage is disrupted by the desire of an outsider. This article begins with that comparison, and then it turns to a third example of triangulation, *The Talented Mr Ripley* (1999).

Key words: Oedipal principle, triangulation, adultery

In the 1990s, I published two books on the fiction of adultery: *The Adulteress's Child* and *Scarlet Letters*; in 1986 and 1988 I had published two others on a sub-genre of romantic fiction in a confessional mode, mainly in French, which I called the *récit*. In each of these two major genres of nineteenth-century prose writing, the focus is on male desire of an oedipal kind, and it is not surprising that the desire represented is triangular, infantile and tragic. This oedipal principle characteristic of the nineteenth-century novel of adultery, such as those of Flaubert, Stendhal, Fontane, Tolstoy and Hawthorne, survives into twentieth-century narrative fiction too, as exemplified in two films of the late century, *Fatal Attraction* (dir. Adrian Lyne, 1987) and *The Piano* (dir. Jane Campion, 1993). In both, a marriage is disrupted by the desire of an outsider. This article begins with that comparison, and then it turns to a third example of triangulation, *The Talented Mr Ripley* (dir. Anthony Minghella, 1999), in which disruptive desire works in a different way, implying entry not so much *inside the couple* as *inside the body* of the other.

Marriages are, of course, rarely simply configurations of two. I argued in *The Adulteress's Child* that the structure of adultery in the male-authored nineteenth-century novel depends not so much on the normative triangle of husband, wife and lover as on another, coexistent and I believe primary and more powerful one: that of lover, beloved and child. In almost all the texts I looked at, the lover is an unmarried young man, the beloved is older, married and a mother. The texts fall into two groups which I called those of the 'patrilinear mother' and those of the 'matrilinear mother'. For the purposes of the exploration of the daughter's role in my first two films, I shall briefly summarise the logic of the latter.

The mother of a daughter in the male-authored novel of adultery is presented as already implicitly outlawed by the birth of a child (whether legitimate or illegitimate), who does not offer her the iconic gratification of a Mary or a Jocasta but rather the vicious circle of 'only' being able/permitted to reproduce herself. The clearest example is Flaubert's Emma Bovary who, after giving birth, frustrated of the vicarious satisfaction of having a son, turns to the wall and faints. In *Madame Bovary*, *Anna Karenina*, *The Scarlet Letter* and *Effi Briest*, all texts focalised on the person of the desiring woman, the mother/daughter pair is represented as imprisoned – in a garden, village or cell – and the mother is unable to escape this enclosure into *jouissance*. Instead, the daughter alone eventually leaves the closed space and is reinserted, often through a version of fostering by the abandoned husband, whether her father or not, into the genealogy of legitimacy.

Fatal Attraction and *The Piano* are both fictions in which the adulterous triangle is complemented by a matrilinear maternal triangle: in the former this consists conventionally of the wife, her daughter and the female rival, in the latter of the wife, her daughter and the piano which reproduces them both in different ways. In examining the place of the daughter in the two films, we shall see how differently this figure (and her comic adjunct, the dog)¹ may distend the principle of triangular desire in a late twentieth century genre. In particular, we shall trace the differences between representations of, in turn, masculine and feminine desire.

Fatal Attraction was a massively popular film: in it, the brief banal adultery of a 'nice guy' (Michael Douglas) married to a pretty, domestic wife (Anne Archer) leads to the extreme uncanny of the hell-hath-no-fury vengeance of female jealousy. Alex (Glenn Close), the spurned mistress, represents the ingress of the excessive feminine – whose quasi-phallic power is marked by her ambiguous name – into the domestic space. In the closing climax (which refers fairly explicitly to the early climax of *Psycho*, where another uncanny feminine figure irrupts into the steamy space of a bathroom), it is finally the wife who kills the madwoman, after the latter has risen from the bath in which the husband had apparently drowned her. This film led to a spate of others in which two phenomena stand out: a final murder that proceeds via an uncanny resurrection, and a figure conventionally positioned at the subordinate margin of the domestic space who breaks out and breaks in. The two elements hang together: like the cancerous swarms or monsters of most horror movies, this irruption of the 'mistress (servant/policeman/ plumber/ nanny/ flatmate) from hell' blasts oedipal domesticity wide open, and is defeated only by a 'justified' violence on the part of the safe structure, which then closes again, doubly endorsed by its bloody happy ending. The movie ends on a happy clinch alongside a close-up of a photograph of husband, wife and daughter in a smiling embrace.

Small quantities of gender/sexual uncertainty – just enough to show us why nice men have flings – are already there in the home space. The husband Dan is feeble, the couple never seem to have time to make love because the dog must be walked or the child cuddled, the child herself (like the mistress) is both not quite feminine in looks and extremely feminine – 'cute', always clutching a pet or a toy – in function; Beth the

¹ The tangential-essential dogs in these two films, and in a number of other texts, will be the subject of a monograph currently in progress: *Six Strays: Fictional dogs from 1845 to 1992*.

wife alone is rock solid in her gender definition, the perfect female partner whether in tears or shiny smiles. Alex, by contrast, smiles increasingly uncannily as her 'madness' grows. Michael Douglas is always fazed by her, his strong-jawed pose representing panic rather than strength. Parallels between the panting that follows 'excessive' sex and that after he has tried to strangle her suggest (as in all *femme fatale* fictions, in which male violence is attributed to the uncanny power of its victim) that his malevolence as well as his desire originates in her, even or especially when it is directed against her.

An ironic use of white in Alex's costumes and decor echoes the white in the costumes and decors of the family; darkness along with threatening long chords, or jagged camera-angles and rapid cuts conventionally suggest menace, *montage* is used to build up suspense in the scenes of the boiled rabbit and roller coaster/car accident. In all these familiar ways, the genre effects are predictable enough, as are the various uses of domestic objects in audial or visual close focus: the car, the bath-tap, the saucepan, or (repeatedly and sometimes ambiguously) the telephone. What is more interesting is the occasional variety of angles of entry into the family scene. Shots framed by window or doorway for instance, or sections of house as approached or entered by the camera, suggesting the viewpoint from the angle of the aggressor/interloper – as classically in the first *Jaws* (dir. Steven Spielberg, 1975) – create an ambiguity of predation. I will return to this in a moment.

The central *adulterous* triangle here is that of husband, wife, mistress (in that order) with the husband as dominant (though not exclusive) focaliser, both in a practical and an unconscious sense. The *domestic* triangle consists of husband, wife, daughter and their extensions in inanimate and animate objects: homes, domestic accessories, a male dog (unwilling abettor of adultery and slurper-up of the evidence) and a female rabbit (traumatically steamed – in a rehearsal for the wife?). Further, there is what I have called the *maternal* triangle of wife, daughter, mistress, with the latter borrowing the child and returning her after this 'robbery' has wounded the mother and enraged the father.

The child's role as simultaneously interloper and completion of the oedipal couple is shown in various predictable ways: they beam together at her antics, she answers the phone after he has left and communicates for him with Mommy, she is blinkingly sweet in the marital bed when he has just psyched up for sex. (As Mandy Merck notes, the only scene that does not seem to rouse and implicate her is the surely very noisy murder scene, in which she is obviously inessential: see Merck 1993: 210–11). Alex's relation to Beth's daughter seems oddly benign, as if we are to guess she really is pregnant and would possibly make a devoted mother.²

We are never entirely sure if Alex really is pregnant, but her repeated claim on Dan is not just on her individual behalf but on that of the mother/child couple she now forms: he has entered her *and stayed*, having left behind that 'part' of himself that she continues to contain. In precise reciprocation she lays claim on his bodily territory, extended into all those feminine units by which he is surrounded. Thus her successive attacks – on him (the ravenous sex), his car (destroyed and implanted with a tape), his office (by phone, censored by the well-schooled secretary) and flat (comically entered

² In the DVD of 2002, Sherry Lansing recalls that the development of the movie from a short by James Deardon began when she suggested 'what if she's pregnant?'

as a potential buyer, setting up a brief alliance with Beth), the rabbit, the daughter and finally, the Gothic-cosy country house and its angel the wife – are so many ripostes for a derisory entry which never quite got out. I mentioned a moment ago the ambivalence of predation. Alex's own space is repeatedly shown as empty and pitiable; but, for all her grotesque excess, she is sometimes offered as the rightful viewpoint – not least on both occasions when he almost murders her – against a phallic pleasure that is always intrusive.³

The focalisation on the man is doubtless the source of the film's unpleasant power: masculine terrors arise directly out of the desire to 'have it all', to be the object of the ravenous woman as well as that of the bruised, devoted wife, to be (as Alex puts it) gutless, hopeless, sexless even, and still passionately desired. Finally, however, he can neither kill nor save, both these acts being the prerogative of the wronged wife and the only kind of revenge she is permitted – for whose sake exactly is not made clear. Yet, while the film is sometimes ambivalently focalised on Alex too, we are, I think, never (even at the end) invited to share in the viewpoint of the wife. If this is a mixed masculine fantasy, and the arousal and chastisement of all those 'bad modern women' who have too much greed and too much hunger to survive their little bit on someone else's side, where the audience is never put in the space of the mother/daughter pair of healthy surviving females who just possibly feed off everybody else.

The Piano is, on the contrary, entirely a film of and about female desire. In this sense it is unconventional and anti-oedipal, and the mother/daughter unit functions to reshape the conventional couple by holding it open rather than sealing its closure. The daughter (Anna Paquin) is a much more central figure: she is, in turn, the mediator and the disruptor of desire, and she successively forms three couples – with her mother (Holly Hunter), with the husband (Sam Neill) and with the lover (Harvey Keitel) – until, after a number of crises, she ends up completing a secure domestic triangle in the city with Ada and Baines. With a couple of exceptions, I have encountered only women who were powerfully moved by the film and men who were not. Clearly this has something to do with the power of Ada, the focalised but silent protagonist, and the process whereby the projections of her body are gradually liberated (rather than intruded upon) by her lover.

The film is heavily stylised, with a visual and audial beauty that many viewers call 'haunting'. That it is also sometimes comical – often in sections that are quite threatening for women – is a curious extension. The lighting is relentlessly natural, with only occasional uses of the shades of red, and dominated by a blue shading that anticipates the resurrection by water of the woman when she abandons the piano – a teasing reference to the resurrection of Alex from the bath? – by making the landscape the same encompassing pre-natal medium from which passion has to emerge. Close-ups are rare, and then on faces which are always thin-lipped (except the daughter's) and dark-eyed (except the husband's). There are a large number of visual parallels: the costumes, hair and hats of mother and daughter; the use of hands to speak, play or caress; the analogy of fingers, keys, territorial markers, etc. Interestingly, none of these formal doublings,

³ Indeed, in the original ending, Alex commits suicide in the manner of Madame Butterfly leaving Dan to take the blame; this ending was strongly preferred by Glenn Close who played Alex as abused rather than abusing (*Fatal Attraction* DVD); see Segal 2015.

however 'haunting' or enigmatic, seem to make the film uncanny. A certain element of the sinister, of horror is lacking. Is this because, despite moments of cruelty and wildness, none of the characters is actually malevolent? In particular, I am struck by the ambivalence of the lover's predation: he bargains Ada into sex by offering to give her back the piano key by key but his inroads into her body and 'heart' are made with timidity, patience and respect, allowing her desire to emerge without the violence that characterises her silence.

In the opening shot we are peeped at through redly lit fingers wearing a wedding ring, and hear a few introductory lines in a childish voice. Then – again led in by the view of flailing hands caught – we see the first, maternal triangle, the complete circle of Ada's world: mother, daughter and piano, landed on a foreign beach. The adequation and exploitation of the child as a substitute for voice is shown when she pronounces Ada's aggressive message to the sailor and only escapes his fist by hiding in her mother's skirts. Their first night is spent inside the tent of the mother's crinoline, again a complete enclosure, in which the couple are united in a familiar retelling of a bedtime story without words. Both men (as well as the curious Maoris) will later try to get under this crinoline, with varying success.

The contrast between the two men is shown in Stewart's disappointed 'You're small' – he has, after all, presumably bought her – and Baines's 'She looks tired'. Two-thirds only of the original triangle is taken to the marital home, the piano remaining behind on the beach. The entire question of the first half of the film will be: how is Ada to reenter into possession of her piano? The question of the latter half is: how is she to release herself and her passion from its dependence on the piano?

In this film, unlike *Fatal Attraction*, triangles are systems of mediation rather than the normalised adulteration of couples. At first, the child is, along with the piano, the *instrument* of the woman's physicality. Baines succeeds in 'winning' Ada where Stewart fails surely because he understands the significance of the piano not so much as a commodity extension of the woman and her body, but as a means to reach her. He begins by taking her to it, standing as audience to the enclosed triad of mother/child/instrument on the beach; then uses it to bring her to him, listening silently as she reappropriates it by playing. At this point, the child as mediator becomes redundant to the newly formed triangle of woman, piano and man. It is of course essential that Baines cannot read, so that the instrument is the only mediatory means between them. Gradually, through the simultaneously comic, threatening and reassuring eroticism of Baines's clumsy 'bargain', the woman's body reenters the communicative circuit, replacing both piano and child. (This is the phase where the dog appears, imitating wistfully outdoors the sexual lapping of Baines within the hut.)

The daughter is also shut out of the system as the two lovers enter a dyadic phase of passion. This is not only involuntary: as she takes her place in the social circuit of the Scottish bourgeoisie in the extended community of the bush colony, and begins to call Stewart 'Papa', she detaches her loyalty from the mother whom hitherto she both protected and enjoyed. In a realistically justified pique, now the object rather than the mouthpiece of her mother's 'will', she makes the first of two transfers of loyalty, betraying the adultery to the husband at precisely the moment when Baines has decided to let go, wanting Ada's 'heart' rather than her body and giving back the piano now that he

no longer has a use for it.

It is essential that, after the interlude of Ada's imprisonment, the *dénouement* proceeds without the piano: the daughter acts the part of vengeful angel (the Hebrew *mal'ach*, translated as 'angel', means messenger), carrying first the key and then the severed finger to the two men in turn. It is she whom Stewart finds in bed with Baines when he comes to kill him and leaves having 'given' him Ada instead.

The ending has annoyed many viewers, perhaps because it is probably unique in fictions of adultery in permitting the survival of passion into happiness, perhaps because of the abandonment of the piano, in which many people identify the film's source of libido. But Ada, whose narrating voice reappears as she rises up through the water, and continues – with what appears an almost unseemly perkiness – to the end of the frame, recognises a choice of the will to live in the detachment from that instrument of communication. At the point where the piano is discarded, the daughter, it seems, is also released from her mediatory functions. Uniquely in the matrilinear fictions of adultery (and I dare say that this is because it is a female-authored one), the mother, the lover and the daughter survive together into a normalised illegitimacy in the end.

Minghella's *The Talented Mr Ripley* offers a quite different version of triangular desire. It is not a fiction of adultery, and death, for its ruthless protagonist, is not an option but a necessity. How Tom Ripley (Matt Damon) will use and destroy others, chiefly his object of aspiration Dickie Greenleaf (Jude Law), in order to be someone he has not had the opportunity to be, is triangulated in a number of ways: through a series of splits in the self – stripes across Damon's face in the opening and closing sequences, repeated flashes of body fragments in Italy's ancient sculptures – and also through a repetition of perfect moments disrupted: there is always a knock at the door, a twist, or a meeting that has to be conducted in front of a third party. Indeed, the main adaptations Minghella has made to Patricia Highsmith's novel of 1955 are elements of mediation added in to what is intrinsically an individual, secret, anti-dyadic desire.

Desire for Tom Ripley is not the wish for an encounter, whether between bodies or minds, but for a reverse incorporation of the other, not engulfment but entry into the other's self, mode or space. This wish enacts neither of the 'normal' versions of person-to-person predation: penetration or caress. Instead it is the wish to be where, who and what the object is. This might seem to be the most extreme opposite of mediation, but it turns out, instead, to be a struggle to the death with the impossibility of avoiding mediation.

Like his girlfriend Marge (Gwyneth Paltrow), Dickie represents a class born to fine objects and limitless cash changed at American Express offices under the eyes of obliging functionaries. He is beguiled by Tom's artful borrowing of his own passions: jazz, Italy. But when he tires of him, as Marge has warned he will – 'The thing with Dickie: it's like the sun shines on you, and it's glorious; and then he forgets you and it's very very cold; when you have his attention, you feel like you're the only person in the world, that's why everybody loves him so much' (cited *Ripley* DVD: n. p.) – Tom murders him, moves to Rome, takes on that luxurious world – until upper-class Freddie (Philip Seymour Hoffman) finds him out, and he must be murdered too. Thereafter the talents are turned to the art of evasion: Tom and Dickie by turns, depending whom he is with, brilliantly covering the tracks of both, he finally faces Marge, who understands

everything but is ignored; Dickie's father, who has decided his son is the culprit and is best buried; and Peter Smith-Kingsley (Jack Davenport), with whom he might have been happy but whom he is forced in the end to kill as well.

I want to argue that the rising series of murders characterise not simply Tom's choices of worlds in which to disappear but a particular kind of self-loss. Both Highsmith's novel and René Clément's 1960 film *Plein Soleil* are, in different ways, studies of a gifted and unlikeable go-getter, a petty criminal who supplements his many lucky breaks with a talent to amuse and an opportunistic ruthlessness (see Williams 2004). In both cases the idea of killing and impersonating Dickie – Philippe (Alain Delon) in *Plein Soleil* – precedes the moment of murder and the motive is predominantly practical. Minghella's Ripley is written in a tragic mode, more psychologised, and even though Highsmith's third-person narrative does not prevent us from entering him sympathetically, Minghella requires us to experience through his viewpoint the trajectory that takes him from the basement to the sunlight and back again, ending with the terror of having murdered his true love-object and remaining in darkness for ever.

If in Highsmith the motive of murdering Dickie is tied up with the enigma of Tom's sexual repression, and in Clément with a simple case of financial and heterosexual rivalry, in Minghella it is something else again, based in but not limited to a broader class fetishism: Tom wants what Dickie both is and has. Dickie is clothed in the ease and charm of those born to wealth: his skills (playing the saxophone, swimming, skiing) never seem to have to be rehearsed, whereas we watch Tom practising the identification of Chet Baker or Charlie Parker just as he practises Italian; and he has to pretend to like jazz – his own taste is for classical music – until the joy of singing with Dickie in a jazz club seduces him to share its pleasure. Once he has killed Dickie, he uses his money to enter that world, and the world is the body: we see him smooth and assured in his new suits, having cast off his glasses like the proverbial Hollywood heroine, using Dickie's voice and wearing his rings.

By the use of a number of additions or developments of characters (Silvana, Meredith Logue, Peter Smith-Kingsley), Minghella opens up the path of desire to mediation and complication. Another way that it is amplified is by the indirection of its aim. In *The Talented Mr Ripley*, there is only one object of desire, Dickie; and the others (Marge, Silvana, Meredith, Freddie) vie in creating ways of coming closer to him. They all fail: Tom alone goes far enough in taking on the object as his skin and disguise. And yet, I want to argue, even when doing this Tom cannot reach the goal he seeks: by entering Dickie's 'self' he would like to put on a kind of *immediacy*, a non-triangulated state that, actually, the very means and manner of his desire make impossible.

If Tom does not simply want Dickie himself what does he want that only 'being Dickie' can allow? We have already seen that he wants what Dickie has – what he takes on are Dickie's clothes, name and things. These objects have an air of fetishism not only because they are another mediation, representing the wealth that makes them possible, but also they can – must, by the interloper – be appropriated caressively. They are surfaces of desire – fine leather, velvet, cashmere. When briefly, on a train, Tom lays his cheek on the surface of Dickie, it is his lapel he reaches for, not his skin (as, later, just before strangling him, he lays his cheek on Peter's sweated back). But this is not, I think, a way of reaching Dickie, it is something more like 'learning' his surface. Dickie's clothes *are* his skin, they contain his solar glow as their extension, exactly as

Princess Diana's fabled outfits contained hers. The metaphor of sunshine, used both in the screenplay and in the director's commentary, is not a positive one: Dickie as played by Jude Law is 'so sunny, such a sun-god', but his skin is a reflective rather than radiant surface: his surface has a 'metallic, cruel' quality. By contrast, Minghella refers to Tom having to return to a dull texture, 'the corduroy jacket' (AM commentary) when he gives up the Dickie persona to hide from the police.⁴ What Tom wants is to slough off the corduroy and metamorphose into something whose surface radiates.

Like a foetus, Dickie scarcely knows desire, so quickly are his wants met by the world he glides through. Tom wants to stop desiring. In Dickie he might be able to take a break from it; Dickie does not need to long for anything, it is at once his. He magnetises the wishes of others, and this is what radiates from him, what he laughs off. Tellingly, when this momentarily fails, at the point of Silvana's suicide, he strikes out because he has no strategy for frustration. Tom, let us say, wants Dickie's ability not to waste time on desire, but to exist instead on the gleaming surface of things, himself *being* the surface of the things others look at. Unlike in *Plein Soleil*, this is not the triangulation of jealousy or envy; but a wish to be a still point that is the indifferent site of other people's passions.

'The main thing about impersonation, Tom thought, was to maintain the mood and temperament of the person one was impersonating, and to assume the facial expressions that went with them. The rest fell into place' (Highsmith 1999: 114). This must be what is meant by 'talent'. Tom barely needs to imagine what it is to be as unimaginative as Dickie, already he can play it. But he can only *'be'* Dickie when the latter is dead. And similarly he cannot play Peter because the latter is there, offering to supplement Tom as his accepting other. Tom Ripley does not want – or, he thinks, he must not want – any other. And yet what he discovers is that this is impossible. In *The Talented Mr Ripley*, the only way to desire is through death. The murder of the beloved other is the only means to 'having' them. What remains, after the death of the other, is the impossibility of either immediacy (Dickie) or intimacy (Peter): a fraught, riven, isolated self. I think this is what the ending is meant to convey: if Tom's inner space exists at all, it is as a place where 'self' can no longer be shifted out into a gestural, careless surface, but is established as an inescapably hidden, 'locked', secret, nasty, endlessly mediated and unreflecting thing.

What, then, do these three versions tell us about triangular desire? In the first, we have the most traditional mode of oedipal mediation: the family a gently expansive unit threatened by its own permeability, closing ranks in a retrenchment cemented by the outsider's blood. In the second, mediation is not a threat, it is a lifeline – but it too has to be disciplined by the closure that is dyadic love: Ada must lose her piano if she is not to lose her one chance at normality. In the third we have a story that by-passes dyadic love altogether: no one in this bleak world is safe with a desire that is cannibalistic by its very nature but which, finally, collapses both two and three into a self-triangulating one.

⁴ Actually in Highsmith, it is Dickie who wears a corduroy jacket (*Talented Mr Ripley*, 114) – significantly on the day Tom murders him. Can this be connected to the fact that while Tom's gaucheness is typified by strikingly 50s-looking clothes (woollen trunks, hideous glasses), Dickie's beachwear and elegant suits seem much less dated?

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POSTFEMINIST CONSTRUCTION OF WOMEN'S SEXUALITY IN *THE VILLAGE BIKE* BY PENELOPE SKINNER

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Abstract

Penelope Skinner's drama *The Village Bike* deals with issues ranging from pregnancy to sexuality, pornography and sexual exploration. In this article I focus on the way these issues are presented and explain why pornography and sexual exploration belong to the postfeminist ideology. Namely, the author uncritically deals with these issues, objectifies a woman's body and favours gender constructs. Contemporary British drama by women playwrights is not marked by its engagement with feminism even though it might declare itself as pro-feminist or feminist. Penelope Skinner is one of the contemporary playwrights. I try to present that even though her drama seems to appear provocative at first sight this is not really the case. The provocation does not offer a critical insight and distance. I argue that this drama is postfeminist because it mainstreams pornography and presents a peculiar view on the part of sexual liberation, which is very limited.

Key words: *The Village Bike*, Penelope Skinner, postfeminism, pornographication, objectification of women, gender mainstreaming

INTRODUCTION

British drama written by women playwrights has witnessed a change since its rather provocative and experimental period of the 1970s. Here belong playwrights that have brought forward the questions of gender construction and social norms, sexual objectification and exploitation of women as well as oppression of women and people of minorities. Most notable of these playwrights are Caryl Churchill, Pam Gems, April de Angelis, Shelagh Stephenson. Since the 1980s British drama written by women playwrights has changed direction from its rather transformative politics of questioning the accepted norms and gender constructs to becoming more mainstream-oriented and consumer-based. In other words, British women playwrights' drama moved away from its previous agenda. Today, drama written by women playwrights no longer challenges the status quo but rather embraces it and reaffirms it. Contemporary drama has moved away from feminism to postfeminism.

An insight into the last decade's British drama by women playwrights presents us with the negated possibility of transformative questioning of the social and sexual norms. Women playwrights of the last decade that I have focused on are the ones that have recently begun writing drama for theatre, have been promoted as most prominent playwrights and received rather substantial media attention. This is a younger generation of women playwrights that belongs to the post-second-wave-feminism's strand and defines feminism as outdated and unnecessary. I claim that this generation is postfeminist because it promotes gender mainstreaming, accepts the dominant gender constructs and norms, mainstreams pornography, supports status quo and claims feminism to be outdated while simultaneously using the benefits of feminist achievement and taking them for granted. And it does so by appropriating feminist discourse to postfeminist aims for which postfeminists claim to be empowering when in fact they are not. This is why postfeminism is usually reasonably noted as antifeminist and is largely criticised as such.¹

This article focuses on a drama by Penelope Skinner titled *The Village Bike*. The drama was written in 2011 for the Royal Court Theatre where it premiered. This drama is an example of recent British dramas written for theatre by British women playwrights. In this article I present my thesis that *The Village Bike*, a typical representative of the last decade's British women playwrights' work, follows the postfeminist idea and thus mainstreams pornography as well as supports commodification of sexual desire. I shall present how this tendency is uncritically pushed forward in British drama with an explanation that it is all about exploring sexual freedom. Paradoxically, the sexual freedom expressed in the drama is very limiting and not liberating. After a brief summary of the drama I shall first present the drama's (re)presentation of pornography with its inherent objectification of women. I shall follow this with the drama's call for sexual liberation² that is not.

The Village Bike depicts a ((non-)sexual) relationship between a husband and a pregnant wife. Becky and John are a married couple on their vacation in the countryside. They have moved from the city into their village cottage for the summer. Becky is pregnant and now that she is pregnant John refuses to have sex with her because he finds it wrong: "I don't want to kill the baby! . . . What if it's a girl? What if it's a boy?!" (Skinner 53). However, before the pregnancy Becky says that he "[c]ouldn't get enough of me [=Becky] before could you[=John]? When you wanted to conceive your child. And now it's like you've had your dick chopped off" (Skinner 52). He is overtly absorbed by parenting and especially pregnancy books and blames Becky's every wish or desire onto hormones. He is extremely concerned with the baby's development hence he limits his wife's everyday activities, outdoor activities and food choices. John is also environmentally conscious, despises industrial food and food chain stores because he supports the local business. Becky, on the other hand, does not want things to change now that she is pregnant. She

¹ For analysis and critique of postfeminism see also Genz, and Brabon; Faludi; Bordo; Reed, and Saukko; Gill, and Scharff; Brown.

² In the interview for *TheatreVOICE* the author of the drama says she brought forward a call for sexual liberation. The interview is recorded orally. Any transcripts from here on are mine and based on the recordings. The interview is retrieved from: Dominic Cavendish, Alex Sierz. "Playwright Penelope Skinner on *The Village Bike*". *TheatreVOICE*. The Department of Theatre & Performance at the V&A, 20 Jul. 2011. Web. 20 Dec. 2013. < http://www.theatrevoice.com/5539/playwright-penelope-skinner-on-the-village-bike/#.UzIL_YU9WYM > I shall frequently mention this interview.

does not want people to treat her differently. She likes to shop at Tesco and desires to have sex with her husband. John has sexual needs as well but is unwilling to please them other than by watching pornographic films. Becky says that “[w]hen he does think about sex he just sticks a porn on” (Skinner 67). We learn from the story that John was always very interested in pornographic films. Becky says that she “didn’t want it [watching pornographic films] on every time we had sex. . . . Nearly every time you [=John] did [watch pornographic films]. Yes you did” (Skinner 20).

In order to move around freely, Becky decides to buy a bike from a village man named Oliver. The bike makes Becky feel free. Her husband on the other hand does not approve of the bike. Becky, dissatisfied with limitations and her husband’s rejecting of her sexually, indulges in an affair with Oliver, a married village man with whom she plays out his sexual fantasies. She has a one-night stand with another village resident Mike, a widower. Mike is a plumber who does the plumbing at John and Becky’s cottage. Namely, the cottage pipes make noise, groan, shudder, leak and sweat. The pipes make it impossible for Becky and John to live in the cottage. John does not seem to know how to mend them and does not show much interest in mending the pipes. However, when the pipes stop making noise for a while, he says: “They haven’t made the noise. Doesn’t mean it’s fixed. If something makes a noise and then stops making a noise that’s when you should be really worried” (Skinner 72). The peculiar thing is that the pipes seem to make noise and leak at exactly the same time as Becky feels the sexual urge. When she seems to be sexually satisfied, during the affair with Oliver, who she later falls in love with, the pipes do not make a sound. When the affair between Becky and Oliver ends, the pipes almost flood the house. The pipes seem to serve as a (quasi-)commentator for Becky’s sexual organs and urge. In the end of the drama, Becky never wants to have sex again, she is repulsed by the mere idea of having sex. Becky falls off the bike, her lover brutally rejects her and her husband doesn’t realise she had an affair. He blames the bike for Becky’s condition and thus he scorns it, calls it names and leaves it rotting by the side of the road. In the village there also live Jenny, Alice and Monika. Jenny is an overenthusiastic mother with a PhD, but seems to be frustrated by the fact that she is merely a housewife whose husband is never at home. Alice is Oliver’s wife. Monika, who we only hear about, is an au-pair from Poland.

POSTFEMINISM

Following the drama’s short summary I shall focus on the postfeminist aspect of the drama. Postfeminism rejects and systematically disvalues feminism therefore, I shall first begin by pointing out feminism’s aims and achievements. Feminism is politically committed and sees through the functioning of the dominant system. It fights against the hegemonic patriarchy and binarisms that grant social power to certain people while not to others, establish hierarchy and cause injustice. Feminists are against women’s subjection and oppression of women, they disapprove of objectification of a woman’s body and fight against beauty ideals, which they find sexist. They are engaged in disabling sexism, they oppose gender constructs precisely because they are social constructs that support the dominant system. A feminist thus questions gender roles and does not support the hegemonic patriarchal system’s normative impositions, hence

he/she rejects working through or in support with this system which is why a feminist rejects media's attention and working with the help of advertising and through media support. This last thing, which is fundamentally important for proper functioning of feminism, is the reason why feminism is largely made a dirty word by the consumer-oriented and capitalist mass media, which distinguishes itself by working within and supporting the hegemonic system that feminists reject.

Since feminism does not operate on the consumer level it is overrun by postfeminism which not only works with the media but also supports the hegemonic system of capitalism precisely by its media cooperation, economic profitability focus and consumer oriented stanza.³ Postfeminism is not in opposition to the hegemonic system which is why it is not an apolitical movement, as some suggest,⁴ since it supports the dominant politics. Postfeminism works within the patriarchal hegemony and hence promotes gender mainstreaming, accepts gender constructs and supports the status quo. Masculinity and femininity are gender constructs that are invented and artificial and have no ground in nature however, postfeminism presents these constructs as 'natural' rather than fictional and what is more, postfeminism promotes gender constructs via practice called gender mainstreaming. It denies the actual women's subjection and searches for strong women role models, which are typically conditioned by the consumer ability. Namely, a woman constructed according to postfeminist ideology accepts the ascribed gender roles for women and thus forcefully engages in striving to achieve the desired social role and beauty ideals, among others, which involve economic expenditure. Postfeminist subject presumes itself to be free if it possesses money and embraces consumerism.⁵ Postfeminism replaces the aspect of a woman victim with promoting self-engagement, which is *again* tied to the ability to purchase. According to postfeminism, looks, life-style, personal engagement are very important.

As opposed to group action which feminism stresses as important to bring the dominant system down, postfeminism stresses the importance of self-concern or individuality. In postfeminist times, it is all about you and your failure has everything to do with your weak determination and nothing to do with the system's systematic discrimination of certain groups of people, most notably women, racial and ethnic minorities. Postfeminism propagates the freedom to choose and speaks of a pool of choices however, it promotes and normalises only certain 'choices'. Precisely because postfeminism refuses the possibility of women being the victims or the suppressed ones in our society it cannot and is unable to question the current oppressive system – nor is that in its will to do. Postfeminism is largely followed because it works through media⁶ and uses feminist discourse that it accommodates and appropriates for its own purpose, which is far from empowering – this is the empty talk of empowerment.⁷

³ See Genz and Brabone; Bordo; Faludi; Gill and Scharf (2-11); Reed and Saukko (19-39).

⁴ See Genz and Brabon page 118.

⁵ "In today's consumer culture, the notion of freedom is often directly tied to the ability to purchase, with people's agency premised upon and enabled by the consumption of products and services" (Genz and Brabon 8).

⁶ "A particular point of contention has been postfeminism's commercial appeal and its consumerist implications, which are viewed by many as a 'selling out' of feminist principles and their co-option as a marketing device" (Ibid 5).

⁷ "this leads to a perception of postfeminism as a retrogressive, anti-feminist backlash that retracts and invalidates the gains and social transformations brought on by or through the feminist movement" (Ibid 5).

Under the pretence of empowering women, postfeminism actually entraps women into the subjected position within the patriarchal society. The pressure is now no longer executed entirely by the patriarchal politics but is being taken over by women themselves; women now execute pressure upon themselves in order to be the postfeminist's advertised role model 'subject'. By accepting the postfeminist vision of empowerment, women are sufficiently subordinated. Postfeminist ideology with its support of the dominant construction of social power mainstreams pornography because through it, power positions and disempowered positions are best put forward under the essentialist explanation of 'natural' gender positions. Again, women are being subjected and told that this is the route to empowerment – they should be up for it and enjoy their victimisation.⁸

PORNOGRAPHICATION

Postfeminism is a broad term which is why I shall focus on its aspect of pornographication or in other words, presentation of pornography and/as sexual liberation. Pornographication is a state of presenting or pushing pornographic elements into everyday routine. Pornography is different from erotica which involves sensuality and emotions. Erotica should depict mutuality and thus, respect of a person. However, it could also be argued that no erotic content is really harmless or depicts mutuality since it is usually produced by patriarchy. Besides, nowadays a lot of pornographic content is labelled as erotic in order to diminish its harmful effect on society. Pornography shows no emotions. It constructs and presents patriarchal constructs of femininity and masculinity within the heterosexual normativity. Pornography lays out the distribution of social power according to gender and promotes heterosexuality and division into gendered sexual roles of passivity for women and activity or subject position for men. The same paradigm is put forward even in the depiction of homosexual intercourse. Pornography does not support emotions and sensuality, nor subversive sexuality or other non-heterosexual or mutual sexual practices. Pornography works within and is fuelled by patriarchal system thus, it (re)affirms patriarchal paradigm. At its core lies the naturalisation of gender constructs, establishment and reaffirmation of binarisms of dominance and submission according to gender, where women are typically subjected and men are in power.⁹ In pornography a (woman's) body is objectified, open for everyone's inspection, violated and degraded.¹⁰ Pornography includes violence, not only physical but also psychical. It has nothing to do with sexuality and is mostly concerned with overpowering, degrading and punishing a (woman's) body

⁸ "anti-postfeminist critics define postfeminism as a sexist, politically conservative and media-inspired ploy that guts the underlying principles of the feminist movement . . . the advent of postfeminism has engendered not the eradication of sexism but its transformation into a more indirect and insidious form. Postfeminism is depicted as 'a hegemonic negotiation of second wave ideals', 'working with "patriarchal" theory' and employing feminist notions of equality and agency for non-feminist goals" (Dow and de Toro quoted in Genz and Brabon 15).

⁹ See Griffin.

¹⁰ Ibid.

without a cause. Pornography makes women appear as willing and enjoying victims.¹¹ Postfeminism mainstreams pornography. This practice is called pornographication, which is a process of making pornography a usual everyday affair because it aims at imposing gendered (dis)empowered positions. Postfeminism's agenda neatly coincides with the pornography's gender ideology and in line with this, postfeminism supports and promotes pornography. The reason for this is usually explained as postfeminism's fight for sexual liberation and female empowerment.¹²

PORNOGRAPHICATION IN *THE VILLAGE BIKE*

Pornographication is thus mainstreaming of commoditisation of sexual desire and sexuality. It is also a way of objectifying a woman's body and sexuality. The latter is typically presented as one to serve a man's sexual urge¹³ and, quite paradoxically, heralded as women's sexual empowerment¹⁴. Pornography claims to be a representation of 'natural' sexuality and thus aims to create such perception. Concerning this, Wolf says: "The sexual urge is shaped by society. . . . It is learning rather than instinct" (132). Jackson and Scott tell us that pornography "effectively tells us what we should be doing" (329). Drama that uncritically presents pornography in fact supports it and perpetuates it.¹⁵ The popular opinion that these theatre dramas merely point towards the pornography as one of the nowadays' problems does not hold since by merely showing without offering an alternative, such drama simply (re)creates, builds and in fact, quite paradoxically, supports the aspects it actually claims to find problematic.¹⁶ In line with this, Becky finds John's watching of pornography problematic however, she

¹¹ "Representations . . . have the power not to create desire from nothing, but to shape it in particular ways. . . . Pornography is, obviously, a form of representation . . . it [pornography] may be criticised for its role in shaping certain forms of desire (and not others)" (Jackson, and Scott 328).

¹² See Genz, and Brabon, chapter 4. In one of postfeminist sections namely, *Do-Me Feminism and Raunch Culture* as they title it, they say that the two strands of postfeminism "blend the sometimes conflicting ideologies of women's liberation and the sexual revolution by heralding sexually provocative appearance and behaviour (including exhibitionist stripping) as acts of female empowerment" (91).

¹³ "That the prototypical stories told in pornographic fictions are narratives of (male) transcendence and mastery is obvious enough from content analyses which are available. But it has also been argued that the form of the pornographic representation carries this meaning too. The reader or looker in pornography becomes the Subject of the representation, while the person(s) represented is/are objectified . . . it is the Self and its pleasures which become the central focus" (Jackson, and Scott 330).

¹⁴ For further detail read also Genz, and Brabon (chapter 4). They cite Helford: "The notion of sexual/feminine empowerment is criticised as a 'new arrangement of an old song' that mobilises women's sexuality and femininity in service of patriarchal agenda and status quo" (Helford quoted in Genz, and Brabon 97).

¹⁵ "[T]hey [=pornographic ideas] pervade our everyday, unremarkable sexual encounters as they do the grotesque acts" (Jackson, and Scott 331).

¹⁶ "[T]he various conventions which announce that 'this is only a play' allows [sic] strict lines to be drawn between performance and life" (Butler quoted in Loxely 142). Loxley discusses this: "An important implication of Butler's argument here is that if this ontology of gender goes, the parallel ontology of theatrical performance goes with it. If our identities offstage are the product of the various acts through which we become who and what we are, then the notion of an essential person underlying those acts turns out to be merely a socially dominant dissimulation of that process of performative constitution. In which case, the ontological criterion for distinguishing between onstage and offstage, the invocation of this kind of fundamental difference between role-playing and just being ourselves, cannot be upheld" (142-143).

knows no other way than enacting pornographic roles herself. She willingly subjugates herself in hope of the promised empowerment and enjoyment however, she is in the end repulsed by sex and never wants to have sex again. The reason for this is probably her non-enjoyment in subjugation. However, the author does not understand this. To further illustrate this point, Skinner said for *TheatreVOICE* that she did not want to problematise the pornography – the dynamics of which she uses in her drama.

In the interview for *TheatreVOICE* Alex Sierz asked the author whether she was trying to show a contrast between a fantasy and everyday reality through the use of metaphors, word puns and double meanings. Skinner answered that “our lifetime choices come from our fantasy”.¹⁷ Interestingly, she *herself* defined where pornographic ideas come from – they come from fantasy that is created by authors of fantasies, who write them and plant them into people’s realities. This is the dynamics of pornography. First there is a fantasy which is typically gender biased and in support of patriarchy. By incorporating it into our everyday realities it is perpetuated. And by perpetuating it, the real life activities are no longer a *choice*, as is frequently propagated, but they become a must, they become prescribed, they become the only ones we know and even worse, they become interpreted as *normal*. The use of word puns and metaphors, which are meant to be a funny and ironic comments of the situation are in fact only an excuse for nonchalant way of dealing with serious issues.¹⁸

OBJECTIFICATION AND PORNOGRAPHICATION IN *THE VILLAGE BIKE*

In the drama there are many cases of objectification of a woman’s body. Drama offers woman’s sexual objectification in two ways. There is a literal objectification. Namely, the objectification on the linguistic level. That is to say that object names stand for a woman character and her sexual organs. For example, Becky’s sexual organs are represented/described through the imagery and semantics of pipes. Pipes are in colloquial pornographic speech often referred to in the context of sex or female sexual organs. Plumbers are often colloquially referred to as the ones who fix woman’s pipes. There exist numerous examples of this kind of usage of the words “pipes” and “plumber” in pornographic films.¹⁹ Needless to say, the author plays with these words and their imagery. Mike, a village plumber tries to fix the pipes in John and Becky’s cottage and not before the end of the drama he has sex with Becky. His work as a plumber is not successful since the pipes in the house remain groaning and shudder with a flood almost ruining the house. The subtext of this implies that Mike is also unsuccessful as Becky’s lover because she still desires Oliver, another village man.²⁰ Thus, the pipes of the house groan, leak and flood the house at exactly the same time as she goes to beg Oliver to stay with her and confesses to him that she desires and loves him.

¹⁷ Skinner for *TheatreVOICE*.

¹⁸ “The ironic pornographic discourses . . . present women as knowingly and willingly engaging in their own sexualisation. Potentially, sexist depictions of women can thus be played down as an ironic ‘joke’ shared by women and men alike” (Genz, and Brabon 102). For more read Genz, and Brabon 101-102.

¹⁹ One of such offers the drama itself namely, *Get Me Wet Mr Plumber!* (Skinner 20).

²⁰ Becky says to Oliver: “I love you . . . We’ve got a connection” (Ibid 91).

The author also equates Becky, a real living-being woman character, with a bike, an object. To the author the two are one and the same.²¹ Equating a living being or a human character of the drama with a thing or object gives the message of the two having the same characteristics, same usage, same application, same purpose.²² The characteristics of an object are typically to serve a purpose, to be of particular use, to be used. Equating the two means that the living being, in this case a woman, is reduced to a thing that has no will, no soul, no thoughts and no intelligence. She *is* the bike. And the bike is her; a thing that has no will of its own, no soul, no intelligence, no feelings is a representative of a living being. Equating a woman with a bike is a degradation of a person.²³ This act of degradation holds within the tendency towards a commodification of women. Author uses the objectifying language and in such fashion mainstreams and perpetuates the pornographic imagery. Objectification goes hand in hand with pornographication. In the interview the author gave to Alex Sierz for *TheatreVOICE*, she states that bike stands for Becky and is meant to give impression of someone who goes around or “for a woman who sleeps around”.²⁴ Hence, Becky is not only reduced to a thing, she’s also considered to be loose. Griffin says that “in the pornographic mind, all along, the virgin *is* a whore” (23). To elaborate, on the one hand Becky is considered to be an image of a gloving innocent pregnant woman but on the other hand, Skinner also pornographically presents her character as a ‘liberated’ porn star, which she condemns at the same time as she demands her being more liberal about sex. This, as we shall see later on, is in contradiction to the author’s statement that this drama cries out for sexual liberation. Were sexual liberation really the author’s prime concern, she probably would not firstly, support pornography and secondly, scorn her woman character for being sexually explorative. Probably she would have to give her woman character autonomy over her sexuality. However, the sexual exploration in the drama is uncritically based on pornographic representation of sexual ‘exploration’ as the only kind known. This is not done for the sake of pointing out the wrongs in order to disturb, intervene, end and correct them in the end.

To further illustrate, the drama’s text in itself lays out pornographic dynamics. Becky is reduced to an object and her sexual organs inevitably connected with her intelligibility, psyche and emotions are presented as isolated from all these aspects. In other words, Becky is reduced to a sex organ that is meant to be exploited, used and inspected. Her being, her intelligibility, her soul is non-existent; the text does not support her human aspect. Even the drama’s front page supports the pornographic imagery. Namely, the drama’s front page (Skinner, 2011) depicts a woman made entirely of object particles or object constituent parts such as handlebars (wide apart

²¹ Skinner in the interview for *TheatreVOICE* states that bike stands for Becky.

²² “We know that a *being* exists only in order to exist. For a woman or a man exists for no *particular* material purpose. But a thing, an object, must have a reason for being. And where the pornographic “woman” is concerned, that function is to please a man” (Griffin 37-38).

²³ “To be made an object is in itself a humiliation. To be made a thing is to become a being without a will. But it is not the nature of a living being to have no will. Objectification of another is in itself a sadistic act, for to be made an object is to experience a pain of loss of a part of the self: the soul. But to this degradation, the reduction of a whole being with a soul to a mere matter, we must add the knowledge that matter itself is despised, and hated in its very essence” (Ibid 47).

²⁴ The author says so in the interview for *TheatreVOICE*.

from each other) instead of legs, a locknut for a belly button, two nuts representing breasts and a sprocket instead of a head. The woman made of object particles is lying flat on her back, has her thighs wide apart and has no hands to fight off, to lift herself up etc. She is immobilised. This illustration is further pornographicised by a wrench representing a hand reaching between her thighs. This instrumental and coarse hand is almost grabbing her vagina. The fact that a wrench is used to fix things, screw things together or unscrew things apart is very telling information. From the illustration, one can predict the drama's content: a woman made of object particles shall be "fixed", taken apart by intervention, her constituent object parts will be inspected and screwed together in certain fashion. This instrumental metallic hand will do the job. (This woman has no mind of her own and serves a purpose since the constituent parts usually serve a certain purpose.) The text that follows tells the exact story that the illustration presents. The text and the illustration both rely on the same approaches as pornography. In line with that, Becky is a part needed for a man's sexual fantasy and as a baby oven. The text denies her every right to have a desire, wish or opinion. The text ties her down to the situation she is put into and does not allow her to fight against it. She is immobilised, passive and exploited.

As stated above, one way of objectifying a person is by equating one with objects or describing one with object names. Another objectification that takes place in the drama is the objectification of a woman's body and being through the character's 'actions' that the author dictates or more accurately, through the character's proscribed inactivity. A woman is presented as a commodity, as an object on market, as an item that is for everyone to reach and view.²⁵ The act of objectifying a woman, in this case the author's objectification of Becky, is presented as a woman's supposedly willing self-objectification and self-subjection. That is not done through language alone but through the imagery that the drama offers. To her husband, Becky is reduced to merely "an [baby] oven"²⁶ with more rights ascribed to the foetus than to her. She serves the purpose of bringing a child to the world. During this process of pregnancy all her needs and desires are essentially ignored. She is denied every wish and opinion. Her desires to have sex with her husband, her craving for industrial food, her wish to move around freely, exercise and do what she likes are all declined to her by her husband. Griffin says about this status of a woman as typical for the postfeminist culture that this is "a culture which has allowed the female presence to exist in its mind only as a creation of its imagination" (44). She is not allowed a step forward into being herself, a person.

She appears as a gadget for Oliver's sexual urge. She is needed for Oliver's fantasy. Her sexual preferences are in fact not represented. Hence, she is reduced to merely a body and that body is not meant to be in her possession. For her husband, she has to have a child and repress her sexual needs. For her lover, although Becky's affair is presented by the author as seeking *her* own sexual freedom, she must play out *his* sexual fantasies and not hers.²⁷ In postfeminist times, this is often presented as positive, explorative and empowering when in fact it only promotes self-subjugation for women

²⁵ "She is the one to be known. To be wanted. To be used . . . the pornographer's idea of his object's pleasure is to please him. She exists for no other purpose" (Griffin 38).

²⁶ "He [=John] just thinks of me as a machine to make babies. An oven . . . I'm an oven" (Skinner 67).

²⁷ "I like being *your* fantasy" (Skinner 70). The emphasis is mine.

and supports the patriarchal construction of heteronormativity with its encompassing gender constructs. There is nothing explorative, liberating or empowering about this.²⁸

Objectification most obviously takes place in pornographic discourse and imagery. In the drama, the scenes of sexual intercourse are taken directly from pornographic films. Each pornographic film that Becky watches or mentions during the drama gets to be enacted with Oliver or Mike.²⁹ This is again in contradiction with the claim the author gave for *TheatreVOICE* that her intention in this drama was not to present how pornography influences our behaviour and sexual performance.³⁰ However, the drama directly shows exactly that. Namely, each pornographic role playing from the pornographic films that are watched or discussed in the drama is then carried out. Becky presents her sexuality as constructed in pornographic films. She is being directly influenced by these films and consequently knows no other way of sexual performance than such as she has seen in the pornographic films. If the author is really unaware of this influence that she has actually, apparently unconsciously, illustrated then this clearly demonstrates that pornography does in fact influence our understanding of sexuality and sexual performance.³¹ Unfortunately, the author has no critical attitude towards this learned pornographic sexual behaviour and what is more, she presents it as natural and uncritical. She does this because this is in line with the postfeminism's aim to teach people to internalise gender constructions with the underlying power inscription or distribution. She presents male characters as naturally aggressive and violent and female characters as passive. This is a social invention and not a biological fact. It is in this manner that power relations are established and perpetuated. Moreover, she presents pornographic sexual behaviour as a kind of empowerment. According to this, a woman should find her sexual freedom in pornographic performance. However, there is no freedom here because "[t]he external cues of beauty pornography and sadomasochism reshape female sexuality into a more manageable form than it would take if truly released" (Wolf 132). A woman's sexuality is manageable when it is not expressed and owned by a woman agent but when she is passive, immobilised, inscribed-upon and torn apart to constituent parts that no longer pose a threat of wholeness. Her sexuality is under control when she is demanded to obey the proscribed and imposed way of expressing her sexuality, which typically serves the purpose of granting superiority to the agent, while she must remain an object and selflessly deny herself any autonomy.

The character of Becky is portrayed as always responding to male sexuality under the pretence that that will please her. Male sexuality in this drama is presented as the one in real full control. The author makes the character of Becky say: "I love being your fantasy" (Skinner 78). But Becky never says what *her* fantasy might be. In one fantasy,

²⁸ Becky says that at certain times having sex with her husband was not something she really wanted: "I've done it [=fellatio] loads of times when I didn't really want to . . . It's shit" and to John's amazement "Not with me!", she replies "What? Yes with you. Course with you. That's what I'm saying . . . It's horrible. It makes you feel like shit" (Skinner 54). In the end of the drama, when her sexual 'exploration' ends, Becky says: "I don't want to again [have sex]. Not ever. It[sex]'s disgusting. It disgusts me" (Ibid 98).

²⁹ Namely, "*Get Me Wet Mr Plumber! . . . The Intruder . . . Threesome Addicted Euro Sluts . . . Cheating Housewives Three . . . Wenches*" (Ibid 20).

³⁰ Skinner's statement for *TheatreVOICE*.

³¹ For further detail see Jackson, and Scott 231.

she is a teenager, in another a victim of a rapist that is played by Oliver in balaclava, in yet another she is a third party of a threesome, another one of Oliver's fantasies. She is being commanded and ordered around by Oliver: "Come here . . . Sit here . . . (*He pulls her hair.*) . . . Wouldn't expect a teacher to be such a dirty little bitch" (Skinner 60-61), and

Now sit on the chair. I want to fuck you again before you go . . . I'm not asking. Sit down . . . Do as you're told. Sit down. Sit down! . . . SIT DOWN! . . . Open your legs . . . (*He grabs her face.*) Open your legs bitch or I'll cut your throat! (Ibid 71)

Her needs and her words are being ignored by Oliver in the same manner as by her husband. She is not being listened to: "The less you say the better" (Ibid 79), says Oliver to Becky. This directly demonstrates that in the drama, Becky is Oliver's sexual commodity, merely an object to satisfy his sexual needs, which have more in common with the will to overpower the other. His sexuality is presented as naturally in the domain of testosterone aggression and hence, as naturally violent when in fact, it is only constructed as such. Overall, the drama denies that women have needs, sexual preferences and opinions since women are not even allowed to talk and are never listened to. Moreover, it does not present a woman's autonomy in understanding and showing her own sexuality. The text does not overcome this issue by any alternative; a way out of misuse or a debacle of the dominant imposition of sexuality, which is why the overall message is not critical of the situation it depicts, but is in fact reaffirmative. The drama *does* portray a very important issue but only to perpetuate it further on. As readers we are not offered a way out of the misuse of women. Instead, what we get is a feeling that a woman's body exists to serve. In this context of forced, controlled and constructed sexuality in the media, where drama certainly belongs to, Wolf says:

we are asked to believe that our culture promotes the display of female sexuality. It actually shows almost none. It censors representations of women's bodies, so that only the official versions are visible. Rather than seeing images *of* female desire or that cater *to* female desire, we see mock-ups . . . that reveal little about female sexuality. (136)

That this drama portrays censored and controlled female sexuality rather than free sexuality, which it claims to promote, is further affirmed by portrayal of other women characters of the drama. They too are presented as commodities. Namely, Monika, a Polish girl, is paid by Oliver to be one party of a threesome, Oliver's fantasy. Becky speculates that Monika is under-aged. Becky feels guilty for having had threesome with Monika. That is not the case with Oliver who appears to have no remorse. Moreover, he believes that having sex for money is inherent to Monika: "I know she needs the money. And look at her . . . She's filth" (Skinner 77). Becky also feels that Monika did not enjoy being the party of a threesome. But Oliver assures her that "[p]eople don't do things if they don't want to" (Ibid 77). However, Oliver comes to contradict himself when stating that the reason Monika had sex with them is because "she needs the money" (Ibid 77). In this way, he merely used her lower social and economic status to dominate her. Her subordination provided him with an image of his superiority – this is a power play.

The author is not critical of pornography as she says in the interview she gave to Alex Sierz for *TheatreVOICE*.³² She claims that she is interested in and passionate about pornography and exploitation of women and wants to express this. However, she says that her intention was not to be critical or negative of pornography. Rather, she says that “*The Village Bike* is a kind of backdrop of pornography and sexual exploitation underneath it”.³³ When asked whether her intention was to present how pornography, available almost everywhere, affects people’s behaviour and speculate whether pornography is the reason why people, “certainly women”³⁴, feel the need they have to perform in this way, she answered that she did not have any such intention. She makes it clear that she had no interest in the influence of pornography on our everyday lives but rather how one feels about women who participate in pornography and where does pornography come from, because, she says, “once the film is made it is there forever”.³⁵ She reassures us that Becky is lucky because in the end it is the bike that gets punished by being mangled and abandoned by the side of the road, while Becky is not and has a safe existence, even though she has made some choices.³⁶ But we must not forget that the bike stands for Becky and that Becky appears to be left mangled or damaged as well. The author comes to contradict herself. Namely, she claims to promote liberty and hence multiple choices but at the same time she scorns her main character for making certain choices. This implies that Becky has after all chosen the wrong choices out of a pool of all-alright choices. This is contradictory, since liberty should not be about censoring and limiting one’s choices. Hence, one can ask oneself, whether the author’s intention was sexual liberation which was the question Alex Sierz asked Skinner. Her answer was affirmative. However, she does not separate sexual liberation from limitations of one-sided pornographic presentation of mostly exclusively heteronormative sexuality. Skinner says that “negative feelings about pornography are uncool”³⁷ and make one a prude or a feminist.³⁸ Pornography, in her words, is very “mainstream”.³⁹ In her opinion Becky searches for sexual liberation, “she’s liberal about it . . . she embraces it”.⁴⁰ With this said, Skinner *herself* offers us an insight into the postfeminist ideology and a definition of postfeminism itself. She also confirms the thesis of this article namely, the ever more increasing tendency to mainstream pornography in today’s postfeminist times. Postfeminism sees feminism as redundant and unnecessary, which is exactly what Skinner claims in an interview for *TheatreVOICE*.⁴¹

³² Skinner for *TheatreVOICE*.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Alex Sierz in the interview with Skinner for *TheatreVOICE*.

³⁵ Penelope Skinner for *Theatre VOICE*.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, this drama represents the postfeminist agenda, which claims to be all about women emancipation and empowerment both of which should, according to postfeminism, be most obviously demonstrated in sexual freedom. However, sexual liberation that postfeminism offers is very much antifeminist which means that it has nothing to do with women emancipation or empowerment. From a postfeminist point of view Becky is typically seen as a woman who is empowered and determined to take her sexual life in control. However, she is not the one possessing control or autonomy over her sex life. Postfeminist ideology of this drama presents her as strong, sexy, up for anything and not afraid to take action. However, a closer inspection shows that Becky is not an agent. She merely imitates pornographic films. Her sexual performance reflects the learned poses and role playing of pornographic films. Whatever Becky does, she ends up further subjugating herself, which is intact with postfeminist promotion of women's willing self-subjugation, decoratively wrapped in exclamatory phrases that praise a woman's right to choose, be empowered and in full control. However, there is no promised power, no control and no freedom or joy in letting oneself be exploited by others and refusing one's own autonomy. The postfeminist so-called 'empowerment' acts out as an obligatory and normative choice, or more accurately imposition, since all the other choices are negatively proclaimed as prudish, outdated, old-fashioned etc. Her body is exploited, put into roles and positions that are not even a part of her fantasies. She is being used as a sex object and she is not being listened to nor are her needs catered to. These negative consequences of her postfeminist sexual 'exploration' are of course silenced by postfeminist quasi-empowerment advertisement. Actually, what we have witnessed from the drama tells us that postfeminism only puts women back in time, before sexual revolution to be precise, and before feminism. Postfeminism actually disempowers women, which is carefully masked under the propaganda or pretence of quasi-empowerment. To put it in other words: "This is a postfeminist moment, in which activities which might in an earlier era have been explicitly presented in terms of 'pleasing your man' are discursively repackaged as all about 'pleasing yourself'" (Gill, and Scharff 61).

The author brings forward several important issues however, she does not do this in order to point out their wrong-being but merely to present them *again* and reaffirm them. By not offering an alternative to the culturally imposed sexual constructs the author supports and perpetuates them further on. The author in this view resembles the pornographer. Because, by merely presenting something without surpassing it, one does not do else but reinstates it. The author does this under the label of empowerment, which is taken from past feminist discourse and put into nowadays' nothing-to-do-with-feminism postfeminist view. In other words, "it is merely a postfeminist repackaging of feminist ideas in a way that renders them depoliticized and passes them into the service of patriarchal consumer capitalism" (Ibid 54). Women's sexuality and sexual needs are not represented in this drama. In fact, we do not even get any insight into what they might be like, despite the author's claim that her drama is about sexual liberty. Sexual liberty here is understood quite uniquely; this drama defends the kind of sexual 'liberty' as is offered in pornography. Of course this kind of 'liberty' is censored and

even though postfeminism wants to lead people on to believing that it offers multiple choices, it actually offers only one which is women's subjection and this one must be obligatorily followed.

Contemporary British drama, as presented here by Penelope Skinner, points out the problems but then simply accepts them as a natural state of affairs. And what is more, by not offering an alternative it simply supports and perpetuates the status quo.

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THE ANTI-ROMANTIC REACTION IN MODERN(IST) LITERARY CRITICISM

Abdulla Al-Dabbagh

Abstract

While the antagonism of modernism to realism has often been commented upon, its equally vehement rejection of romanticism has not been as widely discussed. Yet, if modernism compromised at times with realism or, at least, with a "naturalistic" version of realism, its total antipathy to the fundamentals of romanticism has been absolute. This was a modernist trend that covered both literature and criticism and a modernist characteristic that extended from German philosophers, French poets to British and American professors of literature. Names as diverse as Paul Valery, Charles Maurras and F.R. Leavis shared a common anti-romantic outlook. Many of the important modernist literary trends like the Anglo-American imagism, French surrealism, German expressionism and Italian futurism have been antagonistic not only to ordinary realism as a relic of the 19th century, but also, and fundamentally, to that century's romanticism. In nihilistically breaking with everything from the past, or at least the immediate past, they were by definition anti-romantics. Even writers like Bernard Shaw or Bertolt Brecht and critics like Raymond Williams or George Lukacs, who would generally be regarded as in the pro-realist camp, have, at times, exhibited, to the extent that they were afflicted with the modernist ethos, strong anti-romantic tendencies.

Key words: Romanticism, anti-romanticism, modernism, New Criticism, classicism, conservatism

INTRODUCTION

In the second half of the nineteenth century and after the two major literary movements in European Literature, romanticism and realism, had reached their peak, a new wave of literary trends appeared which were, in the main, *opposed* to those two great movements.

If by realism we mean, in general terms, the faithful reproduction of reality as colored naturally by the writer's personal viewpoint and outlook, and if we regard romanticism as, fundamentally, a great intuition of change in nature and society and a great striving for the creation of a new world where those contradictory dualities in nature and society are resolved, thus giving rise to a new view of poetry as a union of

opposites, then we must regard the main literary trends of the late 19th century, naturalism and symbolism, as a retreat from the positions and the achievements of both realism and romanticism.

Similarly, just as the new realism of the twentieth century is often defined as the combination of romanticism and realism, elevated on the basis of a new world outlook to depict the new historical conditions, so can the various modernist trends of the 20th century be seen to be, in the main, a reaction against both realism *and* romanticism and a retreat intellectually from the ideological standpoint of both movements. And just as, in strictly formal terms, romanticism and realism are the ancestors of 20th century realism, so are naturalism and symbolism the progenitors of the various trends of 20th century modernism.

While the antagonism of modernism to realism has often been commented upon, its equally vehement rejection of romanticism has not been as widely discussed. Yet, if modernism compromised at times with realism or, at least, with a "naturalistic" version of realism, its total antipathy to the fundamentals of romanticism has been absolute. This was a modernist trend that covered both literature and criticism and a modernist characteristic that extended from German philosophers to French poets to British and American professors of literature. Names as diverse as Paul Valéry, Charles Maurras and F.R. Leavis shared a common anti-romantic outlook. Many of the important modernist literary trends, like the Anglo- American imagism, French surrealism, German expressionism and Italian futurism, have been antagonistic not only to ordinary realism as a relic of the 19th century, but also, and fundamentally, to that century's romanticism. In nihilistically breaking with everything from the past, or at least the immediate past, they were by definition anti-romantics. Even writers like Bernard Shaw or Bertolt Brecht and critics like Raymond Williams or George Lukacs, who would generally be regarded as in the pro-realist camp, have, at times, exhibited, to the extent that they were afflicted with the modernist ethos, strong anti-romantic tendencies. It may suffice here to mention, as an example, that de-heroification, which has been a common characteristic of nearly all the various types of modernist literature, is an obvious undercutting of an important aspect of the romantic outlook of the nineteenth century.

Anti-romanticism, then, has been a strong tendency in modernist literature and literary criticism. Modern Anglo-American criticism, to which this essay limits itself, has played an important role in establishing and strengthening this tendency. Prominent poets like T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, renowned critics like F.R. Leavis and Cleanth Brooks, and reputable scholars like Irving Babbitt and Arthur Lovejoy have been its advocates. As a result, romanticism suffered a great setback and romantic writers, particularly Shelley, were dislodged. Even when, decades later the tide was reversed and romanticism reinstated, this tendency still remains, almost preventing the progress of objective literary and historical investigations in the field. To this day, essays and studies are produced that bear the marks of the early, modernist anti-romantic bias. The aim of this essay is to show, through tracing the rise and development of anti-romanticism in modern Anglo-American criticism, that any progress in this area can only come about by discarding the old assumptions and the old prejudices, by looking at the whole field with fresh eyes, and by continuing the work of genuine, objective scholarship.

THE FIRST SHOTS: IRVING BABBITT AND T.E. HULME

The beginning of the attack on romanticism in modern Anglo-American literary criticism can be traced back to Irving Babbitt.

Through his immediate and easily identifiable impact on T. E. Hulme and T.S. Eliot, Babbitt must be regarded as initiator of this widely-influential critical trend. Although, as Albert Gérard points out (265), Babbitt's own sources are ultimately French, indebted as he is to Pierre Lasserre's vigorous and copious indictment, *Le romantisme français*, published in 1907, Babbitt remains the pioneer in the Anglo-Saxon world.

In his books, *The New Laokoon* (1910) and, particularly, *Rousseau and Romanticism* (1919), Babbitt launched an all-out offensive against romanticism accusing it of confused thinking, sham spirituality and, most damagingly, of being the sign of the juvenile and immature mind. "The person who is as much taken by Shelley at forty as he was at twenty", he wrote, "has, one may surmise, failed to grow up" (290).

Reducing romanticism simplistically to a primitive endeavor to oppose imagination to sense and reason, Babbitt made the rejection of that antithesis the excuse for the rejection of romanticism itself, thus all too hastily throwing away the baby with the bath-water. Yet, Babbitt's own prejudices are very much on the classical side with its emphasis on order, limitation and depersonalization. And while he was initiating, quite unawares, a uniquely modernist anti-romantic trend, his project was still largely expressed in the terms of the old classic-romantic opposition.

The identification of the modern outlook with a new kind of classicism or even with classicism *tout court* is sharply, and often epigrammatically, expressed in the works of the influential figure of T.E. Hulme. The very opening sentence of his essay entitled "Romanticism and Classicism" published in his *Speculations* of 1924, resoundingly states, "I want to maintain that after a hundred years of romanticism, we are in for a classical revival, and that the particular weapon of this new classical spirit, when it works in verse, will be fancy" (113).

As it turns out, the rather time-worn distinction between fancy and imagination is not at all the main focus of Hulme's essay. His critique of romanticism is on a much wider philosophic, social and, indeed explicitly political, front. Only after he has emptied all his arsenal on these various tasks does he come out toward the end with his call for dry, hard, classical verse to replace the sloppiness and sentimentalism of decadent 'romantic' poetry of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Clearly, then, for Hulme, the deeper philosophic and political disagreements with romanticism lie behind the technical objections. Here, it is very much the case of content preceding form. Like Babbitt, Hulme also focuses on Rousseau. He turns Rousseau's famous thesis that man is by nature good, but is debased by unsatisfying social conditions, upside down, and argues that, on the contrary, man is 'extraordinarily limited' and that only by tradition and social organization that 'anything decent can be got out of him'. Hulme here is very consciously adopting a conservative standpoint and is, indeed, reviving the old Christian doctrine of Original Sin. He has no objections at all to real religion; what he does not like is what he calls the 'spilt religion' of romanticism, a poor substitute that in the name of 'liberty and individualism, according to Hulme, threatens to upset the social order. Similarly, Hulme is very well aware that

this position goes directly against the general scientific outlook, as well as the current scientific theory, exemplified in this case by the Darwinian evolutionary framework. He simply gets out of it by taking refuge in what he calls 'the contrary hypothesis' of De Vries' mutation theory.

Thus having recruited both science *and* religion to his classical cause, Hulme does not hesitate to underline the political nature of his anti-romanticism. He begins to generalize what is a peculiarly French characteristic into a wider European phenomenon. The association of historical romanticism with the French Revolution becomes for him a principle that links all romanticism with revolution generally. He likes the state that he sees in France, where "they hate the revolution, so they hate romanticism", dominate everywhere. This anti-democratic and counter-revolutionary bias of Hulme's anti-romanticism will become, as we shall see later, the deep undertone of the whole Anglo-Saxon critique of romanticism from Eliot to the American New Critics, just as it had its prelude in the general elitist outlook of the neo-humanist critics like Babbitt.

THE FULL OFFENSIVE: T.S. ELIOT AND MODERNIST CRITICS

The most important figure to take up the anti-romantic offensive initiated by Babbitt and Hulme is, undoubtedly, T.S.Eliot. With an attitude, and a style very reminiscent of Hulme's, Eliot declares in his very first collection of critical essays that:

Romanticism is a short cut to the strangeness without the reality, and it leads its disciples only back upon themselves ... there may be a good deal to be said for romanticism in life, there is no place for it in letters. (1920, 32)

There are two main points that clearly link Eliot and Hulme in their attack on romanticism. The first is the rather empty, epigrammatic style that really says far less than it at first promises. The declarations of both men have the air of belonging to a partisan and momentary manifesto rather than to a rational and fully-argued analysis. The second point is the one-sided view of poetry as consisting exclusively of sharp images—"the dry, hard, classical verse" of Hulme—that was later to give rise to a whole poetic movement with the derivative name of Imagism. It is one of the criteria that lie behind Eliot's championing of the metaphysical poets against the romantics and of Dante against Milton. Whatever uses it may have had for the new, practicing generation of poets, the doctrine of imagism rests, philosophically, on a false epistemology that can only have, if, taken literally, the most damaging effect on poetry. It relies ultimately on two devitalizing and trivializing reductionisms: The reduction of all poetry to images (i.e. to the exclusion of ideas, emotions, etc.) and the reduction of all images to visual images.

On one point that was to be enormously important for subsequent Anglo-American literary criticism, however, Eliot sharply departs from Hulme. While Hulme lifts the banner of a new classicism against what it regards as a moribund romantic tradition, Eliot considers both romanticism *and* classicism as debased after-effects of what he calls a 'dissociation of sensibility' that is supposed to have occurred sometime

in the seventeenth century. (Thus Eliot, even though he at times describes himself as a classicist, hardly ever talks about any classicist or rather neoclassicist English poet or critic in the same way that, for example, he talks about the Metaphysicals or about Matthew Arnold). Prior to that time there was a unified sensibility which could encompass different states of mind simultaneously and could even hold together contraries like thought and emotion, thus providing the necessary creative source for much Metaphysical and Elizabethan poetry. For several reasons, according to Eliot, this sensibility was split or “dissociated”, and thought and emotion were disunited thus creating the condition for the decline of English poetry ever since. Milton was the major figure who first exhibited this phenomenon, both in his sensibility and in his poetry, and the romantics, particularly, Shelley, were the other major generation of poets who were plagued by it.

Now this doctrine of such a cataclysmic split of sensibility has long been rejected in literary scholarship, nor is there any likelihood that it was ever literally accepted even by those who, like the American New Critics, paid great lip-service to it and even applied it as a matrix for the re-writing of English literary history. There was always the suspicion that the statement belonged to the category of the temporary, passionate declarations of a practicing poet or generation of poets to serve their primary aim of writing new poetry and hence was very much subject to subsequent changes of taste and fashion rather than to the category of deeply thought-out argument.

For these reasons, it is a great pity that this “doctrine” of the dissociated sensibility has had such an enormous influence on Anglo-American criticism in the first half of the 20th century and, more relevantly to our theme, has been used as such a ready stick with which to beat the Romantics.

Even I.A. Richards, one of the chief founders of modern Anglo-American criticism, who apparently is least swayed by passion or ideological bias and most prone to rational, “scientific” argument, lends support, albeit in different terminology, to that same “doctrine”. Parallel to Eliot’s united versus dissociated sensibility, Richards uses the terms “synthetic” and “exclusive”, together with a manner of presentation borrowed oddly enough from the German romantic poets and philosophers, by way of Coleridge, to condemn implicitly the English Romantics, particularly Shelley, and to reinforce the case and the “arguments” put forward by Eliot. The insistence on the unity of thought and feeling, on the ability to combine contrary moods and disparate states of mind and to express them simultaneously; in other words, the arguments for complexity and heterogeneity used by Eliot as criteria for the new poetry, as well as for elevating the Metaphysicals and dislodging the Romantics, are all subsumed in Richards’s principles of synthesis and irony. Thus, in words very reminiscent of Eliot’s earlier essays on the Metaphysicals and Marvell, Richards defines irony as “the brining in of the opposite, the complementary impulses” and continues to declare, “that is why poetry which is not exposed to it is not of the highest order, and irony itself is so constantly a characteristic of poetry which is” (197). Here, perhaps unintentionally, Richards helps to launch the new cult of complexity and obscurity in modern poetry coupled with irony and even a certain amount of world-weary sarcasm that became the catchwords of modern criticism. Anything that did not fit those criteria was condemned as sentimental, vague, cloudy and dissociated—all epithets later to be used over and over again against the Romantic poets.

One of the most glaring faults of the “doctrine” of the dissociation of sensibility is that those who subscribe to it fail to agree on when it actually occurred and who was responsible for it. According to Eliot himself, this split occurred in the seventeenth century and was “aggravated by the influence of the two most powerful poets of the century, Milton and Dryden” (1976, 288). Thus rationalism, which dominated in the 18th century, and emotionalism, which dominated in the 19th, were both symptoms of this split from which the poetry of both centuries suffered, and which it was the task of the poetry of the modern epoch to seek to put right. However, according to Cleanth Brooks, one of the leading American New Critics, the split was due mainly to Hobbes and to the rise of scientific thought. Romanticism was not a symptom but an attempt at a remedy, however unsuccessful. L.C. Knights, an important modern English critic, on the other hand, sets the date back earlier putting the blame mainly on Francis Bacon. While the influential modern critic, F.R. Leavis, exonerates nearly everyone else by bringing it forward till much later so that it is foisted only upon the poor romantics. “What they (the English romantic poets) have in common”, Leavis declares, “is that they belong to the same age; and in belonging to the same age they have in common something negative: the absence of anything to replace the very positive tradition (literary, and more than literary—hence its strength) that had prevailed towards the end of the eighteenth century” (185). What this ‘positive tradition’ means is characteristically never explicitly stated. But for anyone at all acquainted with modern Anglo-American critical parlance, it stands for notions like unified sensibility and organic community that all, presumably, held sway sometime in the pre-industrial, pre-democratic, pre-mass society epoch, and are to be used constantly against any contemporary values and phenomena to which the modern critic feels averse.

The vagueness and the inability to withstand rational scrutiny of the criteria established by Eliot and the modern critics in order to attack romanticism did not prevent the attempt to use those criteria, particularly by the more academic New Critics in America and the *Scrutiny* group in England, for a total re-writing of English literary history. This was strongly implicit in such important works as *Revaluation*, *The common Pursuit*, and *New Bearings in English Poetry* by F.R. Leavis and in *Modern Poetry and Tradition* by Cleanth Brooks. In the case of Brooks, the aim, in fact, was perhaps too shallowly on the surface. “In our revised interpretation of English literature”, he declares, “the romantic movement obviously is to be classed as an antiscientific revulsion. It retreated, as we know, from the rationalistic, the ordered and the classified. But it did not have the capacity to undo the damage done by Hobbes ... It substituted romantic subjectivism for neoclassic objectivism instead of fusing the two as they were fused in a great dramatic period such as the Elizabethan. ... If, as Eliot has pointed out, wit is a quality that is lacking in the romantic poets, one can point to a concomitant lack of the dramatic, etc.” (8). Here we clearly see the cluster of anti-romantic ideas initiated by Babbitt and Hulme, and further advanced by Eliot, clearly hardening into the rigid system, and later the new orthodoxy, that ruled over the Anglo-American departments of English for over two decades.

THE SIDE ATTACKS: MARIO PRAZ, F.L. LUCAS AND ARTHUR O. LOVEJOY

Parallel with this main attack on romanticism, which through Eliot and the Anglo-American critics following him took an increasingly literary and formalist character, even though it was based on very clear, but not fully articulated, philosophic and political assumptions, there was another line of attack on romanticism on psychological grounds. One of the main exponents of this line is Mario Praz who takes as his starting point Goethe's definition of Classic art as healthy and Romantic art as sick. He regards as one of the major characteristics of romanticism what he calls 'the erotic sensibility', which he finds to be common also to the kindred decadent movement of the end of the 19th century. In fact, in their general psychological tendency, based as it is on the mysterious bond between pleasure and suffering, romanticism and decadence are virtually indistinguishable according to Praz¹.

Although attacks on romanticism on psychological grounds have not been uncommon, the one by F.L. Lucas² is perhaps the most extreme. Lucas too refers to Goethe's depiction of romanticism as disease and calls it a form of dream and intoxication. Lucas rightly recognized the characteristic ability of romanticism to tap the unconscious levels of the mind, but he sees a danger in surrendering 'too much to the unconscious', 'in becoming too much of a child once more' and 'in falling victim to neurotic maladies'. Lucas goes just a little bit too far when he blames romanticism for Napoleon and, in the 20th century, for Hitler, whom he calls, rather unbelievably, 'a perverted romantic'.

The primary, and perhaps most obvious, objection to the psychological critique of romanticism is that it regards romanticism not as a specific literary movement bound to a definite historical epoch, but as a recurring psychological tendency and a permanent state of mind and mode of behavior. It is, in fact, on this very point, i.e. whether and to what extent one can speak of romanticism as one unified literary concept and a movement with clear-out historical boundaries, that the most fruitful debates on romanticism in modern literary criticism have taken place. It has also provided the setting for the third line of attack on romanticism, the critique on philosophic ground, initiated by Arthur O. Lovejoy and ably answered by René Wellek.

In an important essay³, published in the same year as T.E. Hulme's attack in romanticism to which we have already referred, Lovejoy argues, as a historian of ideas, for the abandonment of the whole concept of a unified romanticism because having come 'to mean so many things, by itself, it means nothing'. He seems to think that the variety of the previous definitions of the term is sufficient reason for declaring the concept useless and invalid, preferring to forget that the most controversial, and very often most fruitful, concepts in history have exhibited this very characteristic. Still, Lovejoy's essay was well-argued and original enough in that it by-passed the purely literary critical controversy, which he rightly regarded as irredeemably plagued by moral and philosophic prejudices, and opened the way for a more objective, historical examination of the facts and issues involved.

¹ Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1933).

² F. L. Lucas, *The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936).

³ Arthur O. Lovejoy, "On the Discrimination of Romanticisms", *PMLA*, 39 (1924), 229-53.

Lovejoy's controversial conclusion is that for romanticism to be of any use at all it must be spoken of in the plural and not in the singular—different romanticisms, presumably of different writers and different countries, and not one unified concept of romanticism. Thus, under the cover of bringing more scientific and historic rigor into discussion, Lovejoy's essay is actually another form of the modern attack on romanticism, a new and subtle form that reaches out for a quick and easy victory by simply pretending *that the enemy does not exist*. For, in fact, it is not very difficult to see that romanticism differing inevitably from country to country, poet to poet and *even* epoch to epoch, could not be spoken of as romanticism unless it retained certain common characteristics. Even if we go outside Europe, where a unified European romantic movement, as René Wellek⁴ has shown, is easily demonstrable, we can still speak of romanticism as a meaningful concept and an international literary movement in spite of the vast distances in time and space. The call for plurality, in the manner presented by Lovejoy, will only be an immediate step to the call for negation.

The essay, however, has done its work. Lovejoy's argument reigned and perhaps still reigns in one way or another in academic literature circles. It is as if academia were waiting for the one scholarly attack on romanticism to make the variety of the previous anti-romanticisms more respectable and more easily absorbable into the prevailing ethos. The fact that René Wellek's able and far more erudite refutation of Lovejoy's arguments was largely ignored reveals that academia, too, was acting on prejudice in this case and that it was simply being swept by the wider passions of the anti-romantic tide of modernist literature.

For, in fact, Lovejoy's essay when looked at carefully is not at all that original in its main impulse. It follows very closely from the anti-romantic tirade already well advanced and performed, first, by the French academic Pierre Lasserre (in his *Le romantisme français* of 1919) and earlier Ernest Seillière (in his revealingly entitled *La mal romantique* of 1908), and later by the American so-called neo-humanist critics like Paul Elmer More and Irving Babbitt and by the early essays of T.E. Hulme and T.S. Eliot that were coming out in the nineteen-twenties, all of which Lovejoy had carefully read and absorbed. The service that Lovejoy rendered for the cause of anti-romanticism was to provide a scholarly "argument" that was more easily acceptable than the earlier attacks which were so obviously marred by the imprint of social and political prejudice.

In fact, it can be demonstrated that the transformation of romanticism from a well-defined historical movement with its own general philosophy and outlook on life into an abstract tendency, a shift (usually morbid or regressive) of sensibility or a vague psychological impulse has characterized the modernist attacks on romanticism with roots that go back perhaps even earlier to estheticism and symbolism. Thus Pater argued, back in 1889⁵, that romanticism 'although it has its epochs' was essentially a spirit which showed itself at all times and among all kinds of artists. So, there were 'the born romanticists and the born classicists'. And Herbert Grierson⁶ had already, the year

⁴ René Wellek, "The concept of Romanticism in Literary History" (1949) reprinted in *Concepts of Criticism*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963), 128-98.

⁵ Walter Pater, "On Classical and Romantic" in *Appreciations* (New York: Macmillan, 1889), 241-61.

⁶ H.J.C. Grierson, *Classical and Romantic: A Point of View* (The Leslie Stephen Lectures, London: Chatto and Windus, 1923).

before Lovejoy's essay was published, made *his* scholarly attempt to extend romanticism into a recurrent tendency in literature and thought with not just one but three major movements extending all the way from Euripides to modern times. Thus, the road was paved for modern critics like, for example, Mario Praz, Herbert Read and F.L. Lucas to identify romanticism with 'erotic sensibility' (Praz), 'the creative impulse' (Read), and 'intoxicated dreaming and surrender to the unconscious' (Lucas)⁷.

THE DEFENSE: RENÉ WELLEK AND THE CONTEMPORARY CRITICS

Similarly, it can be argued that the return to the study of romanticism in a clear socio-historical setting is the first sign of a more balanced view of romanticism, leading to what one might even call a post-modernist *defense* of romanticism as can be seen particularly in the works of René Wellek already referred to⁸ and later in works by Northrop Frye⁹, M.H. Abrams¹⁰ and Albert Gérard¹¹. Frye, for example, unhesitatingly declares in the very opening page of an article on 'the revolutionary element romanticism' that: "Romanticism has a historical center of gravity, which falls somewhere around 1790-1830 period. This gets us at once out of the fallacy of timeless characterization" (1). While Abrams concentrates his attention on the long-neglected social and political views of the English romantics, Albert Gérard develops the proper perspective from which to regard the modernist attack on romanticism as, a passing phase that should lead the way to a more 'balanced view, coming up with an admirable definition of romanticism as "fundamentally the intuition of a cosmic unity: The intuition that the universe is not an intelligible chaos, not a well-regulated mechanism, but a living organism, imbued throughout with an idea which endows it with its unity, its life and its harmony" (265).

With the single and important exception of René Wellek, however the fall-out from Lovejoy's essay left its traces in post-modernist criticism. Wellek's argument was overwhelming and irrefutable. He had met Lovejoy's challenge declaring himself on the side of those who "still consider the terms (romantic and romanticism) useful and will continue to speak of a unified European movement" (1963, 128). He then proceeded, with a great deal of erudition to show that "the major romantic movements form a unity of theories, philosophies and style, and that these, in turn, form a coherent group of ideas each of which implicates the other" (129).

⁷ For Praz and Lucas see notes (1) and (2) above and for Read see his introduction to André Breton, *Surrealism* (London: Faber and Faber, 1936).

⁸ See also the essay "Romanticism Re-examined" in *Concepts of Criticism* as well as his (together with Austin Warren) *Theory of Literature* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1949) and his *History of Modern Criticism*, Volume 2: The Romantic Age (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955).

⁹ See particularly, "The Drunken Boat: The Revolutionary Element in Romanticism Reconsidered" in *Selected Papers from the English Institute*. Ed. N. Frye (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 1-25.

¹⁰ See, in addition to his widely known books on romanticism, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953) followed by *Natural Supernaturalism* (New York: Norton, 1971), his essay entitled, "English Romanticism: The Spirit of the Age" in *Romanticism Reconsidered*, 26-72.

¹¹ See, in addition to his essay referred to earlier, his book *English Romantic Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).

One of the conclusions that Wellek reaches after some brilliant hopping among most of the major European literatures is that “all the great romantic poets are mythopoeic, are symbolists whose practice must be understood in terms of their attempt to give a total mythic interpretation of the world to which the poet holds the key” (188). Later on, through the painstaking research of his four-volume history of modern criticism, of which the second was devoted to romantic criticism, Wellek wrote brilliant historical and analytic essays on all the major romantic critics coming up with this admirable definition of the romantic view of literature:

Thus one can speak of a romantic movement in criticism in two very different senses: in a wider sense it was a revolt against neoclassicism, which meant a rejection of the Latin tradition and the adoption of a view of poetry centered on the expression and communication of emotion. It arose in the 18th century and forms a wide stream flooding all countries of the West.

In a more narrow sense we can speak of romantic criticism as the establishment of a dialectical and symbolistic view of poetry. It grows out of the organic analogy, developed by Herder and Goethe, but proceeds beyond it to a view of poetry as a union of opposites, a system of symbols. (1981, 3)

As far as European romanticism is concerned, Wellek's statements have a well-deserved air of definitiveness. Yet, of course they can by no means be the end of the line. There are still largely unexplored areas in the field of romanticism as an international movement, particularly in the countries outside Europe where romanticism appeared at a much later date, and in different social and political conditions. Even in Europe, there is still much to be said about romanticism outside the literature of the major three countries of that epoch—England, France and Germany. In addition to all this there are areas, such as the oriental dimension of European romanticism, which are untouched by Wellek. Within these limits, however, Wellek's work remains the most powerful argument for romanticism as a concrete historical movement with ‘a closely coherent body of thought and feeling’.

Wellek's pioneering essays, followed by full-length works from such renowned critics as Northrop Frye, M.H. Abrams and Harold Bloom did a great deal to rehabilitate romanticism and the romantic poets. Since then, studies of romanticism have so multiplied as to make the area one of the most widely researched in English literary history and to persuade one that the modernist anti-romantic arguments have become totally obsolete. Yet, those old arguments too had done their work, and the effects of the damage done still linger on even in quite recent work on romanticism.

The main tendency of the anti-romantic position still lies in the reluctance to accept romanticism as a coherent literary and intellectual movement and to study it within a clear socio-historical perspective, all of which is a sad testimony to the lingering after-effects of Lovejoy's article. Thus, an important collection of essays,¹² for example, in which many of the leading pro-romantic critics like Harold Bloom, Geoffrey Hartmann, W.K. Wimsatt, Frederick Pottle and others participated, fails to take up the

¹² David Thorburn and Geoffrey Hartman, eds. *Romanticism: Vistas, Instances, Continuities* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973).

argument from where René Wellek had left it and, in fact, might even be regarded as taking up some positions that are more Lovejoyan in allegiance.

Thus while the editors of the collection begin with the salutary statement that, “it is time to acknowledge that Babbitt’s “Rousseau” is as defunct as Eliot’s “Shelley” or Yvor Winters’s “Emerson” “(7) they take a number of steps back when they imply that it is not possible or even desirable to reach an agreement concerning the nature of romanticism. And they end up in a position that, regrettably, goes even beyond Lovejoy in its dilution, one might even say debasement, of romanticism and the romantic period when they declare that their essays constitute collectively “a rejection of older, more restrictive views, in which Romantic writers could be decisively distinguished from (say) Victorian or modern ones, or in which a relatively contained span of years during the earlier nineteenth century could be confidently designated as the Romantic period”(9). And so we are back to square one where romanticism could almost be anything and could be discovered in different writers in almost any epoch.

Examples of a similar watering-down of romanticism can be found in even more recent studies. Marilyn Butler, for instance, in a well-known work declares on the very first page that: “We have come to think of most of the great writers who flourished around 1800 as the Romantics, but the term is anachronistic and the poets concerned would not have used it themselves”¹³ picking out a rather old chestnut. She goes on to state in the body of her work that: “Romanticism is inchoate because it is not a single intellectual movement but a complex of responses to certain conditions which Western society has experienced and *continues* to experience since the middle of the eighteenth century” (my italics, 184), and we are back again with the notion of romanticism as the permanent impulse and the recurring tendency that could not be restricted to any historical moment or even to any coherent description. Yet another recent collection of essays¹⁴ explicitly declares (also on its very first page) and at this *late date* that “there is, in fact, remarkably little agreement on what constitutes “Romanticism”. And continues, after having deprecatingly put the term between inverted commas, to endorse the familiar anti-romantic positions of critics like Lovejoy, F.L. Lucas *and even* T.E. Hulme (1-14). Other better-known critics like Ian Jack¹⁵ Lilian Furst¹⁶ and Earl Wasserman¹⁷ have also taken up similar positions.

CONCLUSION

One of the first things that we may conclude from this survey is that romanticism, more than two hundred years now after its first appearance in western literature, is still very much a hot issue. The changing pattern of its fortune in the 20th century, the revival of scholarly and critical interest in it in its last decades and even the excessive vehemence of the attack on it in its first decades all testify to the enduring inter-

¹³ Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

¹⁴ Stephen Prickett (ed.) *The Romantics* (London: Methuen, 1981).

¹⁵ See his *Oxford History of English Literature*: Vol. 10 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963).

¹⁶ In her two books, *Romanticism* (Methuen: London, 1969), and *Romanticism in Perspective* (London: Macmillan, 1969).

¹⁷ In his “The English Romantics: The Grounds of Knowledge” *Studies in Romanticism*, 4 (1964), 17-34.

est of romanticism for the literary mind. Like realism, it has proved that it cannot be suppressed. Still, the response of western literature and criticism in the 20 century to romanticism has been overwhelmingly negative. It must be recognized that modernism can in no way be regarded as a continuation of romanticism. Raising openly the banner of anti-realism, modernism, in fact, has been equally anti-romantic. The scholarly defense of romanticism even when performed most capably and most influentially by someone like René Wellek is *still* only the beginning. As a world-wide literary trend that spans many different epochs, romanticism covers a much wider area than can be measured by the delineation only of a specific west European literary movement of specific historical limits however crucial that movement may have been. Therefore, the task of a comprehensive defense of romanticism still lies ahead.

We should, however, point out here that an important part of this defense seems to depend on two points. The first is that romanticism is not an antithesis to, but a preparation for, realism, which, particularly in the works of its greatest practitioners, never negates the achievements of romanticism but, on the contrary, it absorbs them and lifts them to a whole new stage. The imaginative outlook consolidated by the romantics did not fade away in the works of the great realists. It simply took a new form through the use of the literary imagination for the creation of the various social types. These literary figures, we must remember, are always idealized and “futuristic” in that they help to create new social types *as well as* reflecting actually existing ones. This, I think, is what Gorky meant when he said that in the works of the great novelists realism and romanticism were always mixed. Thus while realism is responsible for the depiction of actual conditions, romanticism is the necessary element that enables us to envision how those conditions change.

In fact, the recognition of this deep and intimate relationship between realism and romanticism brings us to the second point in the defense of romanticism which is that these two literary movements once fully understood in their dialectical connection with each other cannot but be regarded as permanent features of the literary process. They are, in other words, *literary* tendencies, styles and outlooks that can be found in the oldest mythic literature as well as the most advanced works of contemporary literature. This, of course, is not to be confused with the anti-romantic attack that reduced it to an abstract psychological impulse or to a recurring, usually morbid, state of mind, in the manner of the psychological critics we have discussed earlier. Nor is it opposed to the scholarly endeavor to describe accurately a specific romantic movement and to delineate its historical and social setting. It is simply an awareness of the enormous importance of romanticism, and of realism, as literary *techniques* for the whole of world literature and, consequently, their enduring usefulness in the fields of comparative literature and literary theory.

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SLOVENIAN DIASPORIC LITERATURE IN CANADA AND TED KRAMOLC

Igor Maver

Abstract

The article analyzes the work and especially the novels by the Canadian writer of Slovenian descent, Ted Kramolc. It places him within the context of other diasporic literary authors in Canada as well as the Slovenian cultural space and discusses the critical response to his work, particularly in the period after Slovenian independence.

Key words: Slovenian diasporic Literature, Canadian literature, Ted Kramolc

In Memory of Ted Kramolc (1922-2013) and Mirko Jurak (1935-2014)

The most comprehensive study of Slovenian literary creativity in Canada was carried out by Mirko Jurak (1935-2014), published in the first ever multi-volume monumental study of all Slovenian emigrant literature, in the book on North America, *Slovenska izseljenska književnost: Severna Amerika* (Jurak 1999; 2005). Jurak was, a professor of literatures in English at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana, who knew Ted Kramolc (1922-2013) and many other Canadian authors of Slovenian descent very well, who regularly corresponded with them and also helped them publish in Slovenia.

Much has already been written about Slovenian migration to Canada, the social, religious and cultural activities of the Slovenian diaspora and their descendants in Canada and their press. Since 1996 especially *The Slovenian: Glasilo Magazine* (edited by Cvetka Kocijančič) “has provided news, literature and commentary for and about Canadians of Slovenian heritage” (www.theslovenian.com). Sketches (a typical Slovenian short fiction form), short stories and novels are the most frequently used literary forms by Slovenian diasporic authors in Canada. Ted Kramolc, Ivan Dolenc, Cvetka Kocijančič, Irma Ožbalt and Ludve A. Potokar (Jurak 1999: 339) are aesthetically the most prominent ones, although there have been scores of other prose writers who have published their usually shorter pieces in newspapers, journals and books: Janez Kopač, Franc Sodja, Tone Zrnec, Tone Zagorc, Rudolf Čuješ, Miro Rak, Franc Grmek, Lojzka Saje, Marija Koprivšek, Nataša Kolman, Dore Sluga, Franc Skumavc, Anthony Am-

brozic, Stanislav Pleško, Danica Dolenc etc. Many of these writings are based on the sad and terrible experiences of the authors/fictional characters during and immediately after the Second World War, when they had to flee their Slovenian homeland as political refugees through Austria to finally settle and find peace and freedom in Canada. Miro Rak and Franc Grmek, on the other hand, in the short stories and sketches described their adventurous experiences in hunting and fishing in Canadian wilderness in several collections of stories written in Slovenian. John Krizanc, who does not however consider himself part of the Slovenian diaspora in Canada despite his partly Slovenian roots (his father was born in Trst/Trieste), is a successful dramatist writing in English and certainly part of the mainstream (cf. Jurak 1999; 2005). He co-founded the Necessary Angel Theatre Company and received the Governor General's Award for his play *Prague*.

Božidar Ted Kramolc (1922-2013) went to Austria in 1945 as a refugee after the end of the Second World War from the changed political system in Slovenia as a constitutive part of the newly formed socialist state of Yugoslavia. Displaced in Austria for three years, he came to Canada in 1948. Schooled as a painter and an architect he has lived a great part of his life in Toronto where he still continues to teach painting, painting in his own right and writing, of course: his numerous works are on display in the National Art Gallery in Ottawa, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Art Gallery of Hamilton etc. Kramolc, a well established painter-writer, which shines through in his style of writing, sees himself and for that matter all people very much defined by the spaces which we inhabit. He describes Canada and Slovenia in these terms: "Slovenia is a nice, enclosed, controlled space: neat houses, charming hills and mountains carefully distributed among lakes, rivers and meadows. But Canada demands a different perspective: wild untamed forests, grand expanses of never ending prairie, savage peaks of solid rock. Nature in Canada is writ large: immense, enormous, and uncaring. Yet breathtakingly beautiful" (qtd. in Urbančič 2008). He enthusiastically welcomed the formation of the independent state of Slovenia in 1991 and in 1992 a selection of short stories came out under the title *Podobe iz arhivov* (Images from the Archives; Kramolc 1992). They are linked together by the main protagonist who is also the narrator and the people appearing in them are displaced persons, D.P.'s from the refugee camps all over Austria after World War Two that Kramolc himself knew during his own refugee years in Austria. The stories are largely autobiographical as they end with the protagonist's arrival in Canada and establishing himself as an architect specializing in interior decoration. Kramolc wrote many sketches and short stories in English, although his novels are written in Slovenian. The important thing about his work is that it is not just about the emigrant experience but about the meaning of Man's existence as such; also it is largely devoid of political ideology and very independent and original, which is why "the Slovenian 'political emigration' more than once reproached him for having estranged from it and for having avoided it (not merely in art but also personally)" (Jurak 1999: 352). He wrote poems and short stories (in English and Slovenian), which were published in Slovenian presses especially after 1991, before that also in Slovenian migrant press and anthologies in Argentina and the USA.

He wrote three novels, all of which were written in Slovenian and were published by major Slovenian publishing houses: for one of them he was shortlisted for the prestigious Kresnik Prize for the contemporary Slovenian novel. The novel *Potica*

za navadni dan (A Cake for an Ordinary Day; Kramolc 1997) is set in Canada during 1986 and 1996 with four Slovenian married couples in the first part and the focus on one of the women protagonists, Sonja Zavrtanik, and the retired Canadian colonel Tyrone Harrington in the second. The Slovenians in the first part of the book constantly reflect on the Second World War and their role in it, their flight from the newly emerged socialist one-party political system in the former Yugoslavia, the lost years in refugee camps in Austria and finally their emigration to Canada, they are labelled by Kramolc as “professional Slovenians”, whose main preoccupation is politics, and consequently there is no place among them for people who think very independently and critically about this situation (e. g. Gorazd Prunk). “Potica”, the typical Slovenian walnut cake, which is traditionally made and eaten for holidays and special occasions does not taste the same to them in Canada: it is more sour because the Slovenians brought with them too much hatred. In the second part Sonja and Tyrone, who dies a meaningless death in a bank robbery, are as a loving couple despite their kindred souls shown as ‘betraying’ each other in their minds by thinking about their former partners (Jurak 1999: 356). The constant shifts of narrative and the downright postmodern technique of this novel do not lead to a happy ending and a vision of a happy coexistence of the two cultures, Slovenian and Canadian. Slovenians in Canada often think very highly of themselves, although they are shown here to be really torn by envy and hypocrisy.

Tango v svilenih coklah (Tango in Silk Clogs; Kramolc 2002) is the author’s second novel which was in 2003 nominated for the prestigious Slovenian literary Kresnik Prize. It is a story about a *femme fatale* model and a painter-migrant which definitely transcends the typical emigrant subject-matter. According to Kramolc himself “clogs in the novel are symbolically coated with silk, which is to cover the filth, stench and decadence of contemporary society” (Kramolc 2003). In his most recent novel set in Canada, *Sol v grlu* (Salt in Throat; Kramolc 2008) Ted Kramolc revisits the past in a graduated dramatic style, the atrocities of the Second World war and especially the Austrian political refugee camp after it that the protagonist Karl experienced. Canada, the promised land which provided him with shelter, too, is very different from what the emigrant Karl had envisaged, he encounters corruption and immorality in human relations (Kocjančič 2009). After three love relationships that do not work he still cannot find peace and happiness, deceitful love on either side is at the heart of the book and Karl is at the end almost driven into madness: the protagonist’s lost youth and the after-effects of war intermingle with the theme of involuntary migration.

The recent demise of Ted Kramolc, the best known and very prolific literary author of the Slovenian diaspora in Canada, and that of Mirko Jurak, the first and foremost literary critic of this diasporic body of writing both in English and Slovenian alike, represents a big gap in diasporic literature and is yet to be filled by new voices and scholars.

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**EIFERSUCHT UND FRAUENLIST. BOCCACCIO'S *DECAMERON* UND
SEINE REZEPTION IN DER FRÜHEN NEUZEIT AM BEISPIEL VON HANS
SACHSENS FASTNACHTSPIEL *DER GROSS EYFERER, DER SEIN WEIB
BEICHT HÖRET***

Marija Javor Briški

Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375)
zum 700. Geburtstag

Abstract

Auf der Grundlage des sog. Zainer- (um 1476) und des Cammerlander-Druckes (1535) wird die produktive Rezeption der fünften Novelle des siebten Tages von Boccaccios *Decameron* in Hans Sachsens Fastnachtspiel *Der gross Eiferer, der sein Weib Beicht höret* untersucht. Im Fokus des kontrastiven Vergleichs zwischen der Novelle und dem Fastnachtspiel stehen der Affekt der Eifersucht und das Motiv der List. Die Gründe für die Transformationen im Dramentext von Hans Sachs sind u. a. die Dekontextualisierung der Novelle und ihre Instrumentalisierung als pragmatische Unterweisung der frühbürgerlichen protestantischen Gesellschaft im Bereich der ehelichen Ordnung.

Key words: Eifersucht, List, Boccaccio, *Decameron*, Hans Sachs, Fastnachtspiel, Ehe

Giovanni Boccaccios *Decameron*, das zwischen 1351 und 1353 geschrieben und im Jahre 1470 zum ersten Mal gedruckt wurde (Frenz 2009, 690), ist gewiss eines der bekanntesten Werke der italienischen Renaissance-Literatur. Es ist eine Sammlung von Erzählungen über die Liebe und andere Themen, die das Leben der Menschen im Spätmittelalter an der Schwelle zur Neuzeit bewegten: „Probleme zwischenmenschlicher Kommunikation, Fragen der Erkenntnis und die Notwendigkeit angemessenen Verhaltens“ (Kocher 2005, 30f.). Wie man der Vorrede (Boccaccio 2008, 9ff.) entnehmen kann, intendiert der Autor mit seinen Geschichten, an Liebeskummer leidende Damen zu trösten und zu erheitern und dadurch ihre Schwermut zu vertreiben. Dies tue er aus Mitleid mit den Betrübten und als Zeichen des Dankes, weil auch er selbst durch die heiteren Erzählungen eines Freundes Trost und Erleichterung gefunden habe. Auch mögen die Damen aus den Geschichten Rat und Belehrung schöpfen. Das *Decameron* – ein Trost- und Lehrbuch für Frauen? Diese Kategorisierung erweist sich bei genauerer Betrachtung des Textes allerdings als voreilig. Wenn man nämlich noch

die „dem Buch vorangestellte Stoffanzeige“ (Theisen 1996, 119) – in einer modernen Übersetzung lautet sie: *Hier beginnt das Buch, genannt Dekameron, beigenannt Fürst Galeotto* (Boccaccio 2008, 7) – mit berücksichtigt, wird die in der Vorrede explizierte Autorintention revidiert. Hinter dieser Namensgebung verbirgt sich eine Anspielung auf Dantes *Göttliche Komödie*, die die literaturerfahrene LeserIn oder HörerIn erkannt haben musste. Galeotto bzw. Galehaut, in der literarischen Tradition des Mittelalters ein Ritter von Artus' Tafelrunde, war im *Lancelot*-Roman derjenige, der Ginevra veranlasste, Lancelot zu küssen. Aus dieser Nennung ergibt sich die zu Unrecht negativ konnotierte Interpretation¹ in manchen Übersetzungen, in denen ‚Galeotto‘ mit ‚Erzkuppler‘ wiedergegeben wird. (Theisen 1996, 119f.) Nach dieser Auslegung wäre das Buch als Anleitung zu unzuchtiger oder freier Liebe zu verstehen. Die dialogisierenden Aussagen schon zu Beginn des Buches können als Signal verstanden werden, das den aufmerksamen Rezipienten zu einem Denkprozess animiert, um den Sinn- oder vielmehr die Sinngehalte des Buches selbstständig zu ergründen.

Charakteristisch ist die Struktur des Werkes, bestehend aus einer Rahmen- und 100 Binnenerzählungen. Der Rahmenerzählung zufolge beschließen sieben Damen und drei junge Männer, die der Schicht der Patrizier angehören, zur Zeit der großen Pestepidemie in Florenz, gemeinsam die Stadt zu verlassen und in idyllischer Abgeschiedenheit fern der ihnen drohenden Gefahr, sich durch das Erzählen von Geschichten zu ergötzen. Sie wollen also die Sorgen um ihre Existenz in heiterer Geselligkeit ‚vergessen machen‘, was das ahd. Kausativum *irgetzan* als Ableitung von *irgezzan* ursprünglich auch bedeutet,² und sich erfreuen. Die Vielzahl der komischen Erzählungen hat die Intention, Lachen hervorzurufen, das in schweren Zeiten, seinem diätetischen Zweck entsprechend, u. a. als Remedium für Körper und Geist (Jakobs 2006, 176ff.; Arend 2004, 108 ff.) fungieren soll, wenn auch der didaktische Aspekt des Komischen (vgl. Suchomski 1975) nicht vernachlässigt werden sollte. Jedoch kann der Rezipient diesen Geschichten keine eindeutig formulierte Lehre entnehmen. Er muss sie vielmehr durch eigenständige Reflexion aus der jeweiligen Erzählung im Zusammenspiel mit der Gesamtheit der sie betreffenden Kommentare des extradiegetischen oder der intradiegetischen Erzähler oder deren Reaktionen selbst erschließen, wobei aber die Aussagen, die ihm eine Orientierung bieten, einander widersprechen können und sich dadurch dekonstruieren. (Vgl. Kocher 2005, 31, 153ff.)

Dass Boccaccio mit seinem *Decameron* die ‚Novelle‘ als neue Erzählgattung mit spezifischen Strukturmerkmalen geschaffen habe, gilt in der Forschung jetzt allgemein als obsolet, da sich seine Geschichten von anderen traditionellen kürzeren Erzählformen, wie Fabeln, Mären, Anekdoten und Schwänken, nicht wesentlich unterscheiden (vgl. Bolsinger 1998, 15ff.; Kocher 2005, 35), hat es doch damals normierte Gattungsbezeichnungen im heutigen Sinne nicht gegeben. Gattungsbestimmend sind nach Hans-Robert Jauß (1977, 34ff.) indes die verschiedenen Aspekte der kommunikativen Situation, das Verhältnis zur Tradition und der ‚Sitz im Leben‘. Eines der entscheidenden, im Nachhinein auch für die frühe ‚Novellistik‘ geltenden Konstitutionsmerkmale besteht nach Wehle darin, „daß ihre einzelnen

¹ Morf spricht von „ritterlich feine[m] Liebesbote[n]“, zit. n. Theisen 1996, 119.

² Vgl. *Duden. Etymologie* 1963, 142: „woraus sich seit dem 15. Jh. der Sinn ‚sich erholen, [sich] erfreuen‘ entwickelte.“

Geschichten ebenso wie ihre Sammlungen, die sie vereinigen, mit Beharrlichkeit das Erzähltwerden als eine ihrer Grundvoraussetzungen demonstrieren“ (zit. n. Bolsinger 1998, 17). Konstitutiv für die Gattung der Novelle ist demnach die Erzählsituation, aus der die Selbstreferentialität der Texte resultiert – und darin liege die Modernität von Boccaccios Novellensammlung. (Bolsinger 1998, 16f.)

Das *Decameron*, das aufgrund „seiner literarischen Qualität“ (Theisen 1996, 116) heute zur Weltliteratur zählt, stieß in Deutschland zunächst auf geringe Resonanz. Anfänglich waren wohl nur die lateinischen Versionen einzelner Novellen in Humanistenkreisen bekannt (Dallapiazza 1987; Bertelsmeier-Kierst 1998; Münkler 2004, 85f.). Einen breiteren Zugang zum vollständigen Text erlangten die literarisch Interessierten dagegen erst durch die erste deutsche Gesamtübersetzung eines gewissen Arigo, dessen Identität bis heute nicht gänzlich geklärt ist.³ Zum ersten Mal erschien sie um 1476 bei Zainer in Ulm, der zweite Druck von 1490 bei Anton Sorg wurde mit Holzschnitten versehen, und 1535 erschien in Straßburg der sog. Cammerlander-Druck, mit dem eine breitere Wirkung im deutschen Sprachraum einsetzte. Daneben kursierten die in den Jahren 1509 und 1519 gedruckten gekürzten Ausgaben, die moralisierende, rezeptionslenkende Vierzeiler enthielten. (Dallapiazza 1991, 181; ders. 2012, 87) Bei der Übertragung ins Deutsche verzichtete Arigo zwar weitgehend auf kulturelle ‚Eindeutschungen‘ (vgl. Theisen 1996, 116), passte aber den Text an die im 15. Jahrhundert vorherrschende Erzählerwartung der urbanen Gesellschaft in Deutschland an, indem er im Sinne einer Tugend- und Morallehre die Mehrdeutigkeit der Diskurse reduzierte. Dies hatte einen Verlust der poetologischen Komplexität zur Folge (vgl. Bolsinger 1998, S. 153 u. Münkler 2004, 89f.).⁴ Im Vergleich zur ersten Ausgabe von 1476 nahm in den folgenden deutschen Ausgaben die Moralisierung sogar noch zu, da in einigen Ausgaben, wie oben erwähnt, am Ende der Novellen ein Epimythion hinzugefügt wurde. In der Ausgabe von Cammerlander aus dem Jahre 1535 kam es zu weiteren Veränderungen. Der Text wurde sprachlich überarbeitet (vgl. u. a. Meid 2006, 94) und wie Claudia Bolsinger (1998, 155, 20) feststellt, wurden „die schwankhaften Elemente herausgefiltert“, „Schluß, Einleitung und Rahmenhandlung weiter gekürzt“. Auf diese entstellte und purgierte Ausgabe griffen nun die meisten Autoren zurück, die Boccaccios *Decameron* als Vorlage für ihre produktive Rezeption benutzten (Dallapiazza 1991, 181).

Einer der zahlreichen Bearbeiter von Boccaccios Novellen war der Nürnberger ‚Schusterdichter‘ Hans Sachs. Er war der produktivste und einer der vielseitigsten Autoren des 16. Jahrhunderts (Hahn 1993, 409). Nach Angabe von Dallapiazza (2012, 92) konnten bislang 128 von Sachsens Spruchgedichten bzw. Dramen und 79 Meisterlieder ermittelt werden, die auf Boccaccios *Decameron* zurückgehen.⁵ Sein literarisches Schaffen ist eng verbunden mit der streng hierarchisch gegliederten freien Reichstadt Nürnberg, die zur Zeit von Hans Sachs ein prosperierendes und geistig-kulturelles Zentrum war (Brunner 1976, 1ff.). Als Handwerksmeister gehörte er der

³ Ausführlicher dazu Theisen 1996, 1ff., vgl., auch Kocher 2005, 22.

⁴ Zur detaillierten komparatistischen Analyse siehe Theisen 1996.

⁵ Hartmann (1911, 22) ging noch von 51 Meistergesängen, 31 Spruchgedichten, 13 Fastnachtsspielen, 6 Komödien und 2 Tragödien aus, die Sachs nach der Vorlage der deutschen *Decameron*-Übersetzung verfasste. Hartmanns Ermittlungen zufolge dienten Hans Sachs als Quelle für seine literarische Produktion 62 Novellen und die Rahmenerzählung der vierten Tagreise. Isenring (1962, 53) erhöhte die Zahl der Spruchgedichte auf 33.

Mittelschicht an, gelangte zu materiellem Wohlstand, so dass er sich schließlich allein seiner literarischen Produktion widmen konnte. Er hatte aber kein politisches Mitspracherecht (Könneker 1991, 99). Zum Adressatenkreis seiner Literatur gehörten die städtischen Mittel- und Unterschichten, an deren Erwartungshorizont und Kommunikationsbedingungen er die Inhalte und Funktionen seiner dichterischen Praxis orientierte. Ein wesentliches Merkmal der damaligen literarischen Kommunikation war die gemeinschaftliche Rezeption von Literatur, die neben ihrem unterhaltenden Aspekt bekanntlich die Funktion hatte, Wissen und an den Normen orientierte praktische Handlungsanweisungen zu vermitteln. Hans Sachs war ein großer Verfechter Luthers und der Reformation und propagierte in seinen Werken eine dem Gemeinwohl nutzende bürgerlich-protestantische Sittenlehre. (Hahn 1993, 410ff.; Kugler 2004, 412) Dies brachte Sachs den in der Forschung dominierenden Vorwurf ein, dass er „an sämtl. Stoffe den Maßstab einer vergleichsweise eng gefaßten bürgerlich-protestantischen Moral anlegte, die im Epilog – wie meist auch in der Schlußsentenz seiner übrigen Texte [d. h. nicht nur dramatischen Texte, Anm. MJB] – auf eine einprägsame Formel gebracht wird.“ (Könneker 1991, 101f.)

Auf der Grundlage eines intertextuellen Vergleichs von Boccaccios fünfter Novelle des siebten Tages in der deutschen Arigo-Übersetzung und des Fastnachtspiels *Der groß Eyferer, der sein Weib Beicht höret*⁶, das Hans Sachs (1883, 89–101) im Jahre 1563 verfasste, soll im Folgenden untersucht werden, inwiefern beim produktiven Rezeptionsakt die Ausgangstexte modifiziert wurden und worin die Gründe für die Transformationen bei den ästhetischen und kulturellen Grenzüberschreitungen zu suchen sind. Als Vergleichsgrundlage soll in erster Linie der Cammerlander-Druck von 1535 dienen, auf den Hans Sachs wohl zurückgegriffen hat (vgl. Dallapiazza 2012, 87). Ergänzend dazu wird die Druckfassung von 1476 herangezogen, die im Vergleich zur späteren Ausgabe durch die vollständigere Rahmenerzählung und eine größere inhaltliche Nähe zu Boccaccios *Decameron* die ursprüngliche Kontextualisierung der Novelle eher aufzeigt und dadurch eine Ausgangsbasis für die Interpretation des Textes im Erzählzusammenhang der Novellensammlung bietet.

Das siebte Kapitel der Novellensammlung ist Erzählungen gewidmet, die von der Listigkeit der Frauen handeln. Überschrift und Rahmenerzählung sind im Cammerlander-Druck zu folgendem sachlich-knappen Text verschmolzen:

Die Siebent Tagreyß.

*DArinn wirt die erber gesellschaft sagen von den frawen / die vmb liebe
vnd beschutzing ihrer ehr / ir männer züchtiglichen betrogen haben /
dann sie eynes solchen nit wargenommen. Da nu der tag anbrach / gebot
die [!] künig Emilie / der vorgesagten materie eyn anfang zu geben
(Camerlander, cxxxviii)⁷*

⁶ In der Überschrift und in den folgenden Zitaten werden die Grapheme für Umlaute der modernen Schreibweise angepasst. Das sog. „Schaft-s“ wird durch rundes *s* ersetzt. – Zur produktiven Rezeption der Novelle VII, 5 bei Hans Sachs in den verschiedenen Gattungen vgl. Dallapiazza 2011, 473f. u. ders. 2012, 100f.

⁷ Bei der Transkription der Zitate werden die Grapheme der modernen Schreibweise angepasst und die Abkürzungen aufgelöst.

Diese nüchtern konstatierende, eher wertneutrale Äußerung unterscheidet sich erheblich vom suggestiven Wortlaut des Zainer-Drucks, der die Deutung der folgenden Erzählungen erheblich beeinflusst und in eine positive Richtung lenkt:

GOT VNS DIE SIBENDEN ZUO GUOTEM END WEND.

Vnder dem gewalte vnd regiment des künigs Dioneo dise wirdig geselschaft sagen wirt von den frawen die vmb liebe vnd beschüczung irer eren willen ire mann betrogen haben, vnnd die solicher betrügung nit war genomen noch die erkannt haben, vmb des willen die frawen bei iren eren beliben sein. (Zainer, 409)

Dieses heikle, moralisch eher fragwürdige Thema wird in der Erzählgemeinschaft nicht diskussionslos hingenommen. Es ruft Einwände von Seiten der *züchtigen frawen* (Zainer, 407) hervor, die es nicht schicklich finden, diesen Gegenstand zu behandeln und die Dioneo, den gewählten König des Tages, bitten, er möge doch ein anderes Thema wählen. Dioneo beruft sich aber dezidiert auf die uneingeschränkte Redefreiheit in einer Zeit der existentiellen Bedrohung, in der alle weltlichen und geistlichen Gesetze aufgehoben sind und in der jeder nach seinem Gefallen handeln solle, nur um sein Leben zu schützen. Die etwas unsittlichen Erzählungen allein seien, solange man sie nicht in Werke umsetze, nicht schädlich. Ihr Zweck sei es, Freude zu spenden, ohne eine Bestrafung zu fürchten. Dann fährt er ferner fort, dass sich eine der jungen Damen eher kompromittieren würde, sollte sie sich weigern, über ein solches Thema zu sprechen, weil sie gerade dadurch in den Verdacht geriete, selbst mit solchen Sünden beladen zu sein. (Zainer, 407f.) Das Rahmenthema und die kontroverse Debatte über Wahrung des Dekorums und die Lizenzierung des Anzüglichen bilden also den Kontext, in den die Novellen des siebten Tages zunächst eingebettet sind, und müssen als Interpretationsfolie Berücksichtigung finden.

Die besagte Novelle (Camerlander cxliiii^r-cxlvi^v, Zainer 427–434) handelt von einem Mann, der auf seine Frau grundlos eifersüchtig ist. Er bewacht sie ohne Unterlass und verbietet ihr jeglichen gesellschaftlichen Kontakt außerhalb des Hauses. Selbst an Sonn- und Feiertagen darf sie nicht in Gesellschaft verkehren und Freude daran haben. Der unbegründeten Verdächtigungen und Terrorisierungen durch den Ehemann überdrüssig, beschließt die Frau, seine Beschuldigungen mit ihren Taten zu rechtfertigen und sich einen Liebhaber zu suchen. Da sie von der Außenwelt abgeschirmt ist, hat sie keine große Auswahl. In ihrer Not erinnert sie sich an den jungen Mann, der im Nachbarhaus wohnt. Mit ihm nimmt sie Kontakt auf, indem sie ein Loch in die Wand seines anliegenden Zimmers gräbt, so dass sie sich näherkommen. Als sie zu Weihnachten ihren Gatten um Erlaubnis bittet, zur Beichte zu gehen, schöpft er noch mehr Verdacht und ist begierig, ihre Sünden zu erfahren. Weil sie sich weigert, ihm ihre Sünden zu offenbaren, da er ja kein Priester sei, beschließt er, sich als Kaplan zu verkleiden und ihr in der Rolle eines Geistlichen die Beichte abzunehmen. Trotz der Maskerade erkennt die Frau ihren Mann und entschließt sich im Nu, mit Worten seinen Verdacht zu bestätigen. In der Beichte gibt sie vor, einen Pfaffen zu lieben, der jede Nacht bei ihr schlafe. Nur aus Begierde, mehr darüber zu erfahren, zügelt der *Eyferer*

seine Erregung und fragt die Frau, wie der Pfaffe denn bei ihr liegen könne, wenn doch der Ehemann im Hause sei. Sie spielt auf ihr unbekannte Künste an, mit deren Hilfe der Pfaffe die Türen öffne und den Ehemann in den Schlaf wiege. Der ‚Beichtvater‘ weist sie auf die Unrechtmäßigkeit ihres Handelns hin und fordert sie auf, die Beziehung abzubrechen. Doch die Frau weigert sich, weil sie, wie sie sagt, den Pfaffen zu sehr liebe. Unter diesen Umständen könne der Pfaffe ihr zwar keine Absolution erteilen, er wolle aber ihr zuliebe für sie beten und einen Kleriker zu ihr schicken, damit er ihm mitteilen könne, ob seine Gebete geholfen hätten. Nach einer solchen unerhörten ‚Entdeckung‘ kann der Mann zu Hause seine Aufgebrachtheit nicht verbergen. Er setzt seinen Plan, die Beziehung zwischen seiner Frau und dem unbekannten Pfaffen zu unterbinden, in die Tat um. Er gibt vor, die nächste Nacht – allerdings ohne Angabe des Grundes – woanders verbringen zu müssen, und erteilt seiner Frau Anweisungen, dass sie während seiner Abwesenheit alle Türen zu versperren habe. Nachdem der Mann weggegangen ist, eilt sie zu dem Loch in der Wand, um ihrem Liebsten ein Zeichen zu geben, dass er zu ihr kommen könne. Während die beiden eine erfüllte Liebesnacht miteinander verbringen, liegt der Mann in voller Ausrüstung in einer Kammer auf der Lauer, begierig, den Pfaffen zu erhaschen und zu züchtigen. Doch der Eifersüchtige hat, hungrig und frierend, vergebens gewartet und legt sich schlafen. An diesem Tag schickt er einen Schüler zu seiner Frau, der sie, wie vereinbart, nach dem Pfaffen fragen solle, ob er denn noch käme. Die Frau, welche die Bosheit des Mannes erkennt, sagt, er sei vergangene Nacht nicht gekommen. Wenn er fernbliebe, könnte sie ihn noch vergessen, doch das wolle sie ganz und gar nicht. Der Mann steht noch viele Nächte Wache, während sich seine Frau mit dem Geliebten vergnügt. Des vergeblichen Wachens schließlich müde, fragt der Mann die Frau, was sie dem Pfaffen damals gebeichtet habe und warum der Kleriker so oft zu ihr komme. Die Frau weigert sich zu antworten, er – in Rage – beschimpft sie *du zunichtes böses weib!* (Cammerlander, cxlvi^r) und gibt ihr schließlich zu erkennen, dass er davon unterrichtet sei. Sie solle ihm die Identität des Pfaffen preisgeben, wenn nicht, droht er sie zu töten. Die Frau klärt ihn nach etlichen Verzögerungen in allen Details über den Sachverhalt auf, dass sie keinen Pfaffen liebe, sondern ihn bei der Beichte erkannt habe, und fährt fort mit den Worten:

*Nun was zunichten mannes magstu nur sein / das du dich die falschen
vntugent des eiffern hast vberwinden vnd so schentlich blenden lassen /
(Cammerlander, cxlvi^v)*

Er solle Einfalt und Eifersucht ablegen, zu einem Mann werden, damit er nicht zum Gespött der Leute werde, die seine Torheit bemerken.⁸ Sie schwört ihm bei Gott und den Heiligen, wenn es ihr in den Sinn käme, ihm Hörner aufzusetzen, wäre sie fähig – auch wenn er hundert Augen hätte – ihn zu blenden und ihn ohne sein Wissen zu betrügen. Der Mann schämt sich wegen seines Verhaltens, sieht die Sinnlosigkeit seiner Eifersucht ein und hält – welch Paradox – von da an seine Frau in Ehren, obwohl er jetzt, da sie tatsächlich einen Geliebten hat, Grund zur Eifersucht hätte.

⁸ *Ich sag dir das du ab von deiner einfeltigkeit lasset / vnd würd zu einem man* [Hervorhebung von der Verf., MJB] */ las dein eiffern vnd böß gedencken / damit du nit jedermanns gespött seiest / die dein thorheyt vernemen.* (Cammerlander, cxlvi^v)

Das Hauptmotiv der Novelle ist also die Eifersucht. Wohin dieser Affekt, der – da er den Mann der Vernunft beraubt – als ‚weibisch‘ markiert wird, führen kann, wird anschaulich demonstriert und im einleitenden Erzählerdiskurs des Zainer-Drucks (428) angekündigt: zu Übel und Verderben des Eifersüchtigen, zumal die Eifersucht nicht gerechtfertigt ist. Die Frau hat sich nichts zu Schulden kommen lassen, allein seine übermäßige Liebe und die Bereitschaft seiner Frau, ihm stets zu Willen zu sein, sind Anlass zu seiner übertriebenen Angst vor Liebesrivalen. Fehlendes Maß und Ausschaltung seiner Vernunft führen u. a. zum Verlust der Fähigkeit, die Realität richtig einzuschätzen. Der Eifersüchtige ist in seiner Erkenntnis begrenzt. Geblendet durch den Affekt, weiß er die Antworten der Frau im Beichtstuhl nicht richtig zu deuten und glaubt sogar an das Irrationale, als sie ihm von gewissen Künsten des Pfaffen berichtet, mit denen dieser sich bei ihr Einlass verschaffe und ihn, den Gatten, in Schlaf versenke.

Nicht nur sein Geist ist getrübt, die Eifersucht schadet auch seinem physischen Wohlbefinden und der aus seinem Affekt resultierende Zorn steigert sein Gewaltpotential gegenüber dem Nebenbuhler und seiner Frau:

*Der eifferer in seinem vnglück geschwollen auffstund / des pfaffen
gewandt gieng außzuziehen / vnd sich heym zuhauß fügt. Vnnd bedencken
ward wie er den pfaffen bei dem weib begreifen möcht / damitt er einem
vnd andern böß spiel zurichten möcht. (Cammerlander, cxlv)*

Der Ehemann terrorisiert seine Frau, die sehr unter seinem Regiment leidet. Er befolgt weder die weltlichen noch die göttlichen Gesetze, wenn er ihr nicht einmal am siebten Tag der Woche Freude und Ruhe vergönnt – zur Ehre des Schöpfers und zu ihrer eigenen Regeneration. Das Ausmaß ihres Leidens wird hinlänglich geschildert.

Hätte sich der Mann von der Vernunft leiten lassen, so hätte er seine rational nicht nachvollziehbare Eifersucht gezügelt. Die daraus schließende Notwendigkeit, die Affekte zu bändigen, ist ein Reflex auf die vom Stoizismus beeinflusste Renaissance-Philosophie, deren Vertreter Petrarca (Meuer 2008) mit Boccaccio auch eine enge Freundschaft verband (Kocher 2006). Doch scheint sich die Verbindung von der Beherrschung der Eifersucht mit der daraus resultierenden Erkenntnis der Welt im Schluss der Erzählung, als die Frau ihn tatsächlich betrügt, er ihr aber vollstes Vertrauen entgegenbringt, aufzuheben.

Ein zweites Motiv ist die listige Frau. Dank ihrer Schlaueit gelingt es ihr, durch ihre Handlungsweise den Mann eines Besseren zu belehren. Sie führt ihn hinters Licht, indem sie, ohne dass er es durchschaut, bei seiner Inszenierung der Beichte die ihr zugewiesene Rolle spielt und ihn, um sich zu rächen, noch provoziert. Schließlich dient ihr die Wahrheit als probates Mittel, ihren nun geläuterten Ehemann zu blenden, um die Freuden der außerehelichen Liebe nach Lust und Laune zu genießen:

*Ich sprich vnd schwer dir des zu got vnd allen heiligen / kem es in meinen
sinn dir dy hörner zu machen vnd auffsetzten vnd hettestu hundert augen /
als du zwei hast / ich solte dich bei in allen blenden / vnnd meinem willen
eyn genügen thun on dein wissen. (Cammerlander, cxlvi)*

Ihr Vorgehen, ihren Mann zu überlisten und sich aus Genugtuung einen Liebhaber zu nehmen, erscheint durch den einleitenden Erzählerkommentar im Zainer-Druck und die Schilderung der Ausmaße ihres Leidens gerechtfertigt. Ihr Verhalten wird als Notwehr ‚ent-schuldigt‘.

vnd [...] gedencke mir was üfels sölichen eyferern zustet, sunder wenn sy on vrsache in söliche eyfern fallen in wol an ste vnd in keynen weg zu klagen seyen, vnd das die meister der gesece alle gesece halten sölten so spreche ich wol das sie den frawen kein ander pen sölten geben haben, dann das sie den geben haben die wider die gesece thon sich selbes zu beschüezen, Dann die eyferer der iungen frawen leben zerstörer sein vnd fleißig sucher ires todes (Zainer, 428)

Doch wird das auf der Ebene des Erzähldiskurses legitim erscheinende weibliche Handeln durch die kontroverse Debatte am Ende der sechsten Tagreise (Zainer, 407f.)⁹ relativiert, in der ausdrücklich zwischen Erzählen und das Erzählte in die Tat umsetzen differenziert wird. Die fünfte Novelle des siebten Tages in diesem Erzählkontext bedingungslos als Anleitung für die Auflehnung der Frauen auszulegen, die aufgrund der unbegründeten Eifersucht ihrer Männer leiden, ist demnach nicht möglich. Die Fiktion bietet also – im Unterschied zur ‚realen‘ Welt – einen Freiraum, moralische Schranken zu überschreiten und Handlungen, die den ethischen Normen widersprechen, ohne Konsequenzen ‚auszuprobieren‘ und sich von den Zwängen der gesellschaftlichen Ordnung zumindest während des Erzählens bzw. der Rezeption der Erzählung zu befreien. Im Cammerlander-Druck ist diese Diskussion über die Zulässigkeit des vorgeschlagenen, am siebten Tag zu behandelnden Themas nicht vorhanden. Die Erzählungen der siebten *Tagreiß* schließen sich nahezu kommentarlos der letzten Novelle des sechsten Tages an, dennoch findet sich in beiden Versionen zu Beginn der folgenden sechsten Novelle ein zustimmender Kommentar des Rahmenerzählers. Im Cammerlander-Druck (cxlvi^v) begrüßt er die Bestrafung des eifersüchtigen Ehemannes und setzt die LeserIn vom bejahenden Lachen der weiblichen Zuhörerschaft in Kenntnis, in der Zainer-Ausgabe (435) erfährt man, dass die Geschichte sowohl bei den Männern als auch den Frauen Gefallen findet und dass sie das Vorgehen der Frau gutheißen.

Die Novelle vom eifersüchtigen Ehemann beginnt im Zainer-Druck (428) mit der Reflexion der Erzählerin über die Problematik der Eifersucht. Diese Überlegungen haben eine wertende und voraus weisende Funktion. Dagegen sind im Cammerlander-Druck, wie schon erwähnt, die Kommentare stark eingeschränkt, wodurch der wenn bisweilen auch ambivalente Kontext, der eine gewisse Orientierungsfunktion bei der Deutung der Novellen durch die LeserIn ausübt, erheblich reduziert ist. In beiden Fassungen schildert die auktoriale Erzählerin auf der Ebene des Erzähldiskurses den Handlungsverlauf in einem chronologisch-kausalen Zusammenhang, so dass dieser

⁹ [...] ob ir in eüern reden ein kleyn mynder dann czüchtig seit schat nicht, nun solichem in wercken nicht nachkomet, dann wir das thun vns freüß czegeben, darumb kan ich ye nicht vernämen mit was widerrede oder argument ir von yemand mügt gestraft werden über daz was bis auf disen heutigen tag ist gesaget worden [...]Ich nichte vernämen mage, das wir darumb in keinerlei czestrafen sein, noch das hinfür mit der hilf gotes geschehen sol. (Zainer, 408)

im Wesentlichen linear fortschreitet. Die Retardierung des Handlungsverlaufs an einigen Stellen¹⁰ bewirkt eine gewisse Steigerung der Spannung. Die Beweggründe und Empfindungen der handelnden Personen werden zum Teil aus der Außenperspektive durch die Erzählerin oder aus der Innenperspektive der Personen in Dialogen vermittelt.

Hans Sachsens Fastnachtspiel *Der groß Eyferer, der sein Weib Beicht höret* mit vier Personen und einem Akt, der in 19 implizite Szenen unterteilt ist, hält sich zwar in Umrissen an die Vorlage, bringt aber einige sinnträchtige inhaltliche und formale Unterschiede ein. Eine wichtige Differenz besteht zunächst darin, dass Sachs die Handlung aus dem vorgegebenen Rahmen isoliert (vgl. u. a. Dallapiazza 2012, 99). Dadurch ist die auf der Kontextualisierung basierende Mehrdeutigkeit der Novellen aufgehoben. Der Interpretationsprozess erfolgte beim Fastnachtspiel ursprünglich auf der Grundlage der Inszenierung in einer normorientierten städtischen Zuschauergemeinschaft.

Das Motiv der unbegründeten Eifersucht ist hier anders akzentuiert. Es geht nicht so sehr um die Zurschaustellung der Erkenntnishemmung infolge des Affektes, denn der Ehemann ist sich dessen durchaus bewusst, dass er eigentlich keinen Grund zur Eifersucht hat (HS, vv. 67f.). Im Zentrum des Fastnachtspiels steht vielmehr die Demonstration des aus dem Affekt resultierenden Zornes, einer der sieben Hauptsünden (*ira*) (Hedwig 2002), die den Menschen zu unüberlegten Gewaltaktionen in Worten und Werken gegenüber seinen Nächsten veranlasst. Belege für die Gewaltbereitschaft des Mannes gibt es mehrere, in einem Monolog äußert er sich beispielsweise folgendermaßen:

*Nun wil ich nab, sammer botz jammer!
Am Thennen stehn in die Holtzkammer
Vnd auff den Pfaffn haben mein spür.
Sperrt er auff, schleicht rein durch die thür,
Ich wil jn schlagen auff sein Platten.
Solt ich verschlagn hundert Ducaten
Vnd kommen gleich in schweren Bann,
Doch ich jms nit vertragen kan;
Ob ich den Schelm gleich zu todt schlag,
Ich in vor tags ins Wasser trag
Vnd laß jn schwimmen den Ehrndieb
Wenn er nur heint nit aussen blieb! (HS vv. 212–223)*

Ein solches Handeln hat, aus religiöser Perspektive betrachtet, verhängnisvolle Folgen für das Heil des Mannes, bedroht aber auch seine bürgerliche Existenz. Als Gewalttäter hat der Eifersüchtige mit Strafverfolgung und Ausschluss aus der Gemeinschaft zu rechnen. Allein die Verschwendung des Geldes, wovon im obigen Zitat auch die Rede ist, wirkt sich für die Existenz eines Bürgers nachteilig aus, hat doch nach damaligen bürgerlich-protestantischen Vorstellungen der Mann u. a. für das materielle Wohlergehen seines Hausstandes Sorge zu tragen. (Luther 1828, 179ff.) Darüber hinaus steht schon

¹⁰ Z. B. rhetorische Frage als handlungsverzögerndes und spannungssteigerndes Moment (Zainer, 433; Cammerlander, cxlci²).

in der Bibel, dass der Mann nicht zu eifersüchtig über seine Frau wachen dürfe, weil er sie sonst provoziere, ihm Böses anzutun (Sirach 9,1). In Sachsens Fastnachtspiel macht sich die Frau allerdings keines Vergehens schuldig, sie bedient sich lediglich einer List, um ihren Gatten auf den Pfad der Tugend zu führen.

Dass die Frau die List bei der Beichte mit gutem Grund anwendet, kann man u. a. ihren Monologen entnehmen, wo sie über die Ausmaße ihres Leidens spricht (z. B. HS, vv. 1–19), das ihr der keineswegs makellose Ehemann zufügt, der sie nicht nur grundlos der Untreue bezichtigt, sondern der sie bisweilen selbst betrügt, als unzüchtiges Weib beschimpft, rauft und schlägt¹¹. Mit der List beabsichtigt sie ihren Mann um der Besserung willen in der Öffentlichkeit bloßzustellen. *Er muß ziehen im Eselskarren* (HS 265), sagt sie an einer Stelle und spielt wohl auf einen Rügebrauch¹² an. Im Unterschied zur Frau der obigen Novelle bleibt sie ihrer Erziehung treu und besteht bis zum Ende darauf, sich nicht zu kompromittieren und in ihrer Ehre standhaft zu bleiben, obwohl sie immer wieder von ihrer Magd animiert wird, sich einen Liebhaber ‚anzulachen‘. So verkörpert sie eine vorbildliche Ehefrau, die ihren Partner in die Schranken weist, um die eheliche Harmonie wieder herzustellen, da für sie im Sinne von Hans Sachs, dessen vom Protestantismus beeinflusste Überzeugung es war, „daß die Ehe trotz ihrer offenkundigen Mängel als soziale [...] Institution eine von Gott gebotene Lebensform ist, der sich ungestraft niemand entziehen kann“ (Könneker 1976, 228), eine Scheidung nicht in Frage kommt. Das Fastnachtspiel endet mit dem Auftritt des Mannes, der seine Frau um Vergebung bittet, weil er ihre Ehrenhaftigkeit erkannt hat, und ihr in Zukunft sein Vertrauen schenken will (HS 333–337).

Hervorzuheben ist, dass sich Hans Sachs einer expliziten ‚Moral‘ enthält (vgl. Dallapiazza 2012, 101). Diese ist hier auch nicht notwendig, denn durch die Inszenierung der Problematik, den positiven Wandel des Mannes und der Integrität der Frau können die Zuschauer selbst nachvollziehen, wie sich die Menschen verhalten sollen und Konflikte zu lösen sind, damit die gesellschaftliche Ordnung wieder hergestellt und die Gemeinschaft funktionsfähig ist. In dieser Hinsicht ist das Fastnachtspiel eindeutig, aber eine Lehre wird den Rezipienten nicht aufoktroiert. Sie können sie vielmehr selbst durch eigene Interpretationsleistung formulieren.

Aufgrund des Gattungswechsels kommt es u. a. zu Unterschieden in der Struktur der Handlung. Sie verläuft nicht mehr linear, sondern wird durch Rückblicke und Vorausdeutungen unterbrochen. Die Außenperspektive des auktorialen Erzählers weicht hier einer Innenperspektive der handelnden Personen, die ihre Lage, Beweggründe und Erklärungen in Dialogen und Monologen kundtun. Gattungsbedingt ist auch die größere Rolle der Magd, die als Gesprächspartnerin, zum Teil die Funktion der Erzählerin in der Novelle übernimmt, die den Rezipienten über die Zusammenhänge aufklärt und die Handlung kommentiert. Dem Fastnachtspiel entsprechend wählt der Autor oft eine volkstümlichere Sprache, als sie in der Vorlage zu finden ist. Kennzeichnend dafür sind die zum Teil spöttisch-grobianische Ausdrucksweise (z. B. HS, vv. 105f., 212ff.,). Formale Merkmale der Dichtung sind ferner Knittelvers und Paarreim.

¹¹ HS, v. 288: *Mich huret, säcket, raufft vnd schlug*. – Das Verb *säcken* kann interpretiert werden als *einen sack schelten* (vgl. DWB Bd. 8, 1893, Sp. 1622), wobei *sack* u. a. ein Schimpfwort „für faule und besonders für unzüchtige weiber“ ist (DWB Bd. 8, 1893, Sp. 1616).

¹² Vgl. dazu die Erklärung zu *Karrenziehen* als Ehrenstrafe in DWB Bd. 5, 1873, Sp. 229. Zu den Rügebräuchen vgl. u. a. Röcke 2005, 63.

Die vergleichende Analyse hat ergeben, dass sich die inhaltlichen und formalen Unterschiede zum einen aus der Anbindung des Stoffes in den Gebrauchszusammenhang der Fastnachtspiele und deren Funktion in der städtischen, protestantisch geprägten Gemeinschaft der Frühen Neuzeit und zum anderen durch den Gattungswechsel vom erzählenden zum dramatischen Text ergeben. Die ambivalente Bedeutung von Boccaccios Novelle in den frühneuhochdeutschen Fassungen, die auf der Kontextualisierung des Textes in einem größeren Erzählzusammenhang gründet, wird in Hans Sachsens Fastnachtspiel zugunsten einer unmissverständlichen Belehrung aufgegeben, auch wenn diese nicht explizit formuliert ist. Während in der Novelle VII, 5 die Eifersucht des Mannes vornehmlich mit mangelnder Erkenntnisfähigkeit in Verbindung gesetzt wird, wird dieser Affekt bei Sachs durch die pointierte Bezugsetzung zum Zorn als Sünde auf die religiöse Ebene transponiert. Die List dient im Fastnachtspiel aufgrund der moralischen Integrität der Frau ausschließlich dazu, den Mann von der Eifersucht zu kurieren und die von Gott gegebene eheliche Ordnung zu restituieren, während sie in der Novelle der Frau die Möglichkeit bietet, ihren Mann in der Tat zu betrügen. Wie ihr Handeln zu werten ist, bleibt letztendlich der LeserIn überlassen.

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**ZWISCHEN ABWEICHUNG UND STEREOTYP: DIE GROSSMUTTERFIGUR
IN DEN ZEITGENÖSSISCHEN DEUTSCHSPRACHIGEN ROMANEN *LADY
BERTA* VON ANNETTE HUG UND *DIE SCHÄRFSTEN GERICHTE DER
TATARISCHEN KÜCHE* VON ALINA BRONSKY**

Barbara Jesenovec

Abstract

The goal of the following contribution is to analyse the image of the grandmother in two modern German-language novels *Lady Berta* by Annette Hug and *Die schärfsten Gerichte der tatarischen Küche* by Alina Bronsky. The paper starts with presenting the historical and cultural development of the grandparent concept with special emphasis on the changing of traditional social role of the grandmother. This historical and sociological background functions as a basis for the following literary analyses of the grandmother's image and representation in the two contemporary novels of Hug and Bronsky. The comparison detects, as suggested by the title, that in spite of the deviations of the grandmother figures the traditional and stereotyped image prevails in the expectations of the granddaughters as well as the readers.

Key words: grandmother, traditional image of grandmother, modern German novels

EINFÜHRUNG

Wer kennt sie nicht? Die Oma mit den weißen Kräusellocken und dem selbst gebackenen Kuchen. Zärtlich, süß nach Lavendel duftend, ihr Gesicht zwar runzlig, aber mit rosigen, weichen Wangen, ein Inbegriff der Liebe und der Fürsorglichkeit, die mit ihren zittrigen Händen häkelt, dabei in ihrem Schaukelstuhl sitzt und ihren Enkeln Märchen erzählt. (Haubold-Stolle 2009: 7)

So beginnt Juliane Haubold-Stolle ihre kulturgeschichtliche Übersicht über die soziale Rolle der Großmutter. Sie greift auf das traditionelle und in den Vorstellungen vieler Menschen gegenwärtige Bild der Großmutter zurück. Sie macht u. a. darauf aufmerksam, dass diese in der heutigen Gesellschaft fast ausnahmslos akzeptierte mentale Vorstellung nicht (mehr) der Realität entspricht und weist auf die notwen-

dige Berücksichtigung des sozial-historischen Hintergrunds sowie des Entwicklungsprozesses der Großmutterfigur bzw. des Großmutterseins hin. Einen genaueren Einblick in die Thematik verschaffte Erhard Chvojka in seiner Monographie *Geschichte der Großelternrollen vom 16. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*. Seine Studie setzt sich mit der „Entstehung einer neuen, die Generationsverhältnisse betreffenden familiären Beziehungskonstellation und deren Internalisierung durch die Ausbildung neuer Rollenbilder“ (Chvojka 2003: 11) auseinander, wie im Vorwort zu seinem Buch nachgelesen werden kann. Seine These, die er im Buch nachzuweisen versucht, lautet: „Die heutzutage zu beobachtende, spezifische Beziehung zwischen Großeltern und Enkelkindern ist keine anthropologische Konstante, sondern das Resultat ihrer kulturellen und sozialen Konstituierung im Lauf der letzten etwa zweieinhalb Jahrhunderte.“ (Ebda. 349) Obwohl in der heutigen Gesellschaft aufgrund persönlicher Erfahrungen die allgemeine Überzeugung herrscht, dass es seit jeher Großmütter gegeben hat und dass heute ein Konsens über die Charakteristika des Großmutterseins zu herrschen scheint (ebda. 15), muss man auf die Tatsache hinweisen, dass es sich dabei um eine relativ neue soziale Rolle handelt. Untersuchungen haben gezeigt, dass die Entstehung bzw. das Konstruieren der Großmutterrolle stark mit dem Aufstieg des Bürgertums im 18. Jahrhundert zusammenhängt, deren Etablierung aber erst gegen das Ende des 19. bzw. am Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts erfolgte. Zum Entstehungsprozess der Großmütterlichkeit, einige Autoren sprechen sogar von der „Erfindung der Großmutter“ (Göckenjan 2000), deren Anfänge etwa seit dem 16. Jahrhundert zu beobachten sind, haben mehrere Faktoren beigetragen, u. a. die zunehmend längere Lebenserwartung, die Entstehung der Alterslebensphase, nacherlerliche Gefährtsenschaft (die Zeit, wenn Eltern nach Ausscheiden der Kinder aus dem Haus, wieder alleine leben, vgl. Mitterauer 1980, 66), niedriges Heiratsalter, die Entstehung der Kindheit im pädagogisch-aufklärerischen Sinne, Emotionalisierung, Intimisierung sowie Privatisierung der Familie.

Das Bild der Großmutter, wie es im kollektiven Gedächtnis verankert ist und bis heute nachwirkt, hat sich also allmählich, bis Ende des 19. bzw. am Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts, entfaltet und verbreitet und mit ihm auch die dazu passenden sozialen Funktionen. Zwar hat sich einiges seit Beginn verändert, dennoch sind viele traditionelle Elemente bzw. Charaktereigenschaften des „Oma“-Bildes kontinuierlich vorhanden. Großmuttersein ist auch in unserer Zeit kein „Auslaufmodell“. Dies bestätigt die Tatsache, „daß die Leitbilder der Großelternschaft [somit auch der Großmutterschaft] am Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts zu den besonders profilierten und allgemein stark verinnerlichten familialen Rollennormen gehören“ (Chvojka 2003: 15). Dass das Bild bzw. die Vorstellung von der Großmutter tief verwurzelt ist, deshalb aber in den meisten Fällen nicht (mehr) realitätsabbildende Assoziationen weckt, wird nicht angezweifelt. (Vgl. Herrmann 1992, Höpflinger 2006) In allen historischen Epochen gab es unterschiedliche Formen des Großmutterseins, was u. a. stark mit der Zugehörigkeit zu einzelnen gesellschaftlichen Schichten zusammenhängt. (Chvojka 2003) Darüber hinaus sind immer wieder einzelne Großmütter zu finden, die den Normen bzw. dem Ideal nicht entsprechen.

Als die prägendste Zeit für die Konstruktion des Omabildes gilt das 18. und vor allem das 19. Jahrhundert (Haubold-Stolle 2009: 33), die Zeit, als sich die bürgerliche Familienideologie durchgesetzt hat und sie allmählich auch in die anderen Schichten

übergegangen ist. (Chvojka 2003: 32) Damit wurde es zum allgemein verbreiteten und akzeptierten Bild, das jedoch in erster Linie ein Ideal ist. (Vgl. Göckenjan 2000: 202)

Das Ziel dieses Beitrages ist es, die Großmutterfigur zu untersuchen, so wie es (aus Platzgründen lediglich) in zwei modernen deutschsprachigen Romanen konstruiert und literarisch gestaltet wird. Die Aufmerksamkeit wird besonders der eventuellen Diskrepanz zwischen dem in den ausgewählten Texten dargestellten Großmutterbild und dem traditionellen/erwarteten Bild gewidmet.

In den letzten Jahren ist (im deutschsprachigen Raum) der Trend zur Thematisierung der Großmutterfigur (oft im Kontext der Großmutter-Enkelin-Beziehung) zu beobachten (vgl. Bagley 2006), obwohl die Großmütterlichkeit schon im 19. Jahrhundert eine literarische Hochkonjunktur erlebt hat. (Chvojka 2003: 346) Einer genaueren Analyse, die sich auf die Darstellungsweise der Großmutterfigur konzentriert, werden in diesem Beitrag zwei ausgewählte Texte unterzogen, und zwar Annette Hugs Roman *Lady Berta* (2008) sowie Alina Bronskys Roman *Die schärfsten Gerichte der tatarischen Küche* (2010). Da es sich um zwei zeitgenössische Romane von jüngeren Autorinnen handelt¹, wäre anzunehmen, dass in den beiden Büchern ein anderes (moderneres) Großmutterbild entworfen wird, zugleich aber beide Romane einige gemeinsame traditionelle Elemente enthalten. Dass die literarischen Auseinandersetzungen mit der Großmutterfigur eine Vielfalt an Modellen und Abweichungen von den klassischen Vorstellungen anbieten, lässt u. a. die Feststellung von Andrea Willis vermuten. Sie konstatiert, dass „während der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts [...] literarische Darstellungen [in diesem Fall] von Großeltern schließlich immer seltener traditionelle Stereotype und Klischeebilder bezüglich des großelterlichen Aussehens und Verhaltens“ (zit. nach Chvojka 2003: 346) enthalten haben. Im vorliegenden Artikel wird daher ebenso auf die Frage eingegangen, inwieweit diese Aussage für die zeitgenössische Literatur zutreffend ist. Bevor zu den konkreten Textanalysen übergegangen wird, wird die Darstellung des typischen Großmutterbildes widergegeben, das mittels literarischer Geschichten und anderer Diskurse seit Jahrzehnten konstruiert sowie etabliert wird.

DAS BILD DER GROSSMUTTER

Seit dem 16. Jahrhundert ist es in der Wahrnehmung der Großmutter zu einem großen Wandel gekommen. In der Frühen Neuzeit wurden die alten Frauen nämlich primär nicht als Großmütter definiert, obwohl sie diese Position besetzt haben, die aber damals lediglich genealogisch und nicht sozial verstanden wurde. Gleichzeitig konnte man bei älteren Frauen auch „keinerlei Formen eines subjektiven, spezifisch [großmütterlichen] Bewußtseins“ (Chvojka 2003: 71) wahrnehmen. Zwei oder drei Jahrhunderte später kann man bei der Großmutterrolle schon von einer stark profilierten sozialen Rolle sprechen, die sowohl seitens der Großmütter selbst als auch von allen anderen Menschen verinnerlicht worden ist und deren Eigenschaften heute als (Positiv-)Stereotyp gelten. (Vgl. Göckenjan 2000: 199)

¹ Annette Hug wurde 1970 in der Nähe von Zürich geboren, Alina Bronsky acht Jahre später in der ehemaligen Sowjetunion, sie lebt aber seit ihrer Jugend in Deutschland. Beide werden heute zur bedeutenden deutschsprachigen Autorinnen gezählt.

Die traditionelle idealtypische Oma ist im Gegensatz zu anderen Bildern älterer Frauen als einzige positiv konnotiert (Vgl. Höpflinger et al. 2006: 99) und häufig als Gegenbild der Hexe bzw. der bösen Alten dargestellt, die ebenso eine alte, aber oft kinderlose Frau ist. (Göckenjan 2000) Wenn von dem traditionellen bzw. klassischen Bild der Großmutter die Rede ist, handelt es sich in erster Linie um das Ideal bzw. eine Vorstellung, die hauptsächlich im Kontext des Bürgertums entstanden ist und demnach von dessen Ideen und Ideologie geprägt ist. Es muss darüber hinaus betont werden, dass es sich (auch im Rahmen dieser bürgerlichen Repräsentation) um kein ausschließlich einheitliches, aber vor allem um das meist verbreitete und akzeptierte Bild der Großmutter handelt bzw. um das Konzept, das das Bild der Großmutter am meisten und äußerst nachhaltig geprägt hat. In allen Zeiten hat es Ausnahmen und Abweichungen gegeben, dennoch hat sich die klassische (bürgerliche) Repräsentation am stärksten durchgesetzt, obgleich sie mit der Modernisierung neue Merkmale bekam, worauf später eingegangen wird.

Die Großmutter wird nach der traditionellen Vorstellung als Hüterin der Tugenden, Lehrerin der Jungen, Vermittlerin an die nächste Generation sowie Repräsentantin von Kontinuität wahrgenommen. (ebda. 183, 187) (Vgl. Chvojka 2003) Sie erzählt ihren Enkelkindern Geschichten und Märchen, verwöhnt und beschenkt sie. Sie ist altmodisch, fromm, liebevoll, hilfsbereit, fürsorglich, passiv, naturverbunden, opferbereit und weise. (Vgl. Herrmann 1992, Chvojka 2003, Haubold-Stolle 2009) Großmuttersein ist in den traditionellen Vorstellungen fast ausnahmslos mit dem Altsein verbunden. Die (körperlichen) Alterserscheinungen und Altersstereotype bilden einen großen Teil der Großmutterrepräsentation. In diesem Kontext geht es vor allem um die Schilderungen und Wahrnehmungen der Großmutter als Figur mit beispielweise weißem Haar, Falten, langsamem Gang sowie in gebückter Haltung, schließlich aber auch mit dem Kranksein und dem Tod. (Vgl. Höpflinger et al. 2006: 100)

Aufgrund der politischen, wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Situation im Laufe des 20. Jahrhunderts ist es zu Veränderungen bzw. Abweichungen vom traditionellen Großmutter-Bild in der Realität gekommen. Immer häufiger treten Großmütter in der Rolle der Enkelkinderbetreuerin oder sogar Ersatzmutter auf, leisten ihren (Enkel)Kindern finanzielle Hilfe. Auf den nicht materiellen Ebenen stellen sie oft „die symbolische Brücke in die Welt der Vorkriegszeit“ (Haubold-Stolle 2009: 66), „emotionale[] Zuwendung, Stabilität und Orientierung (ebda. 82) dar. „Die Norm, dass sich Großeltern liebevoll um ihre Enkelkinder kümmern [...] wurde [ebenso erst] zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts verankert.“ (Höpflinger et al. 2006: 99) Einige der modernen und besonders typischen großmütterlichen Attribute, wie etwa die Großmutter als Enkelkinderbetreuerin, erweisen sich nämlich als relativ neu. (Vgl. Chvojka 2003: 70f.) Darüber hinaus werden Großmütter immer moderner, aktiver, nehmen am politischen und öffentlichen Leben teil, widmen ihre Freizeit nicht ausschließlich ihren Enkelkindern. So lässt sich im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert zunehmend die Entwicklung neuer „Rollenmodelle und Vorstellungen von der Oma“ (Haubold-Stolle 2009: 55) beobachten, obwohl immer wieder bestätigt wird, dass „[d]ie Bilder zur Großelternschaft [...] [weiterhin] relativ traditionell“ (Höpflinger et al. 2006: 104) bleiben. Inwieweit das Bild in ausgewählten literarischen Texten als traditionell oder modern beschrieben werden kann, wird die nachstehende Analyse zeigen.

GROSSMUTTERFIGUR IN ZWEI ZEITGENÖSSISCHEN DEUTSCHSPRACHIGEN LITERARISCHEN TEXTEN

Im Roman *Lady Berta* der schweizerischen Autorin Annette Hug aus dem Jahr 2008 kommen schon im ersten Kapitel alle jene Züge bzw. Andeutungen vor, die sich als die wichtigsten sowohl für die Geschichte als auch für das Bild der Großmutter erweisen. Die Geschichte, in der im Mittelpunkt das Leben bzw. vor allem die jüngeren Jahre der Protagonistin Berta stehen, wird vorwiegend von ihrer Enkelin erzählt. Die Enkelin hat die Geschichte ihrer Großmutter nicht miterlebt und versucht, sie teilweise mit Hilfe der Erzählungen ihrer Großmutter zu rekonstruieren. Dabei stößt sie oft auf Schwierigkeiten: „Aber für jeden Satz, den sie sagt, muss ich mir zehn weitere ausdenken, um zu einer Geschichte zu kommen.“ (Hug 2008: 9) Dies verweist darauf, dass es sich hier sowohl um ein Rekonstruieren der Lebensgeschichte der Großmutter als auch um die Konstruktion eines Großmutterbildes durch die Enkelin und damit um eine subjektive Sicht handelt.

Die Geschichte thematisiert in erster Linie das Leben der jungen Frau Berta, die in Zürich als Hausangestellte arbeitet, bis sie ungewollt schwanger wird. Danach schlägt sie sich mittels Gelegenheitsarbeiten durch, bringt die uneheliche Tochter Louise zur Welt und zieht einige Jahre nach der Geburt ohne ihre Tochter aus Arbeitsgründen nach England. Ihre Tochter Louise verzeiht ihr das nie, weswegen die beiden bis zu Louises Tod eine sehr schlechte Beziehung führen. Die Mutter versucht sich zu entschuldigen, die Tochter hat aber kein Interesse daran. Anhand der kurz skizzierten Geschichte sieht man, dass Berta vor allem als (schlechte) Mutter dargestellt wird. In der Rolle der Großmutter kommt sie selten vor, wenngleich die Enkelin erzählt. Dies überrascht eigentlich nicht, weil es für die „Großeltern-Literatur“ charakteristisch ist, „daß die Alten in der Regel Rahmen- und Randfiguren sind.“ (Göckenjan 2000: 217) Berta ist in diesem Roman zwar keine Randfigur, in der Rolle der Großmutter agiert sie aber selten. Demzufolge werden keine direkten ausführlichen Beschreibungen von Bertas Großmuttersein erwartet. Anhand einzelner fragmentarischer Erwähnungen kann aus der Geschichte trotzdem ein Entwurf des Großmutterbildes herausgearbeitet werden, das den Erwartungshorizont bezüglich der Großmütterlichkeit auf den ersten Blick im Wesentlichen bestätigt, doch lässt eine genauere Lektüre zahlreiche Risse im vollkommenen traditionellen Bild der Großmutter entdecken.

Die Geschichte besteht aus mehreren Erzählsträngen, die in verschiedene Zeitebenen angesiedelt und miteinander verflochten sind. Den Rahmen, welchem lediglich ein geringerer Teil der Geschichte gewidmet ist, stellen vorwiegend die Beschreibungen von Berta im höheren Alter dar, als sie schon im Altersheim lebt und vorwiegend von ihrer Enkelin besucht wird. Vor allem in diesem Erzählstrang kann Berta als Großmutter betrachtet werden. In erster Linie wird sie als eine alte Frau wahrgenommen und dargestellt. Nicht nur die häufig vorkommenden unmittelbaren Bezeichnungen der Erzählerin über das Alter und Altersbeschwerden der Großmutter, wie „Touristen strömen an der alten Frau vorbei“ (Hug 2008: 5) oder „Wenn Berta das Zimmer betrat, war die Kranke [ihre Tochter] immer schon eingeschlafen. Die alte Frau [Berta] wusste nicht wohin mit den Worten, die sie noch sagen wollte.“ (ebda. 7), sondern auch die Notwendigkeit, das Krankheitsbild sowie Alterserscheinungen der Großmutter zu erwäh-

nen, um den Eindruck zu erwecken, sie möglichst authentisch beschrieben zu haben, machen einen größeren Teil der Konstruktion des Großmutterbildes aus: „Das Gelenk sei ihr zu schwer, ob sie das Metall im Viertel herumtragen solle, fragt sie [Berta] rhetorisch.“ (ebda. 32) sowie „Am nächsten Morgen hat sie [wegen der Demenz] vergessen, dass sie angerufen hat, und freut sich, endlich wieder einmal meine Stimme zu hören.“ (ebda. 144)

Im Roman lassen sich weitere, sozusagen typisch traditionelle großmütterliche Elemente finden. Als ihre Tochter im Krankenhaus liegt und Berta erfährt, dass ihre Tochter „den Geschmack des Spitaltees nicht mehr“ (ebda. 7) erträgt, bereitet sie ihr „Holundersirup mit einem Schuss Pfefferminze, Eistee auf der Basis einer südafrikanischen Gewürzmischung, [und] frischgepressten Erdbeersaft“ (ebda. 8) zu. Naturverbundenheit, Kochen bzw. Zubereiten von Speisen und Getränken, selbstgemachte Arzneimittel u. Ä. gehören zum Klischeebild einer Großmutter, ebenso wie dem Enkelkind mit Ratschlägen zu helfen und ihm beizustehen. Im Buch erwähnt die Enkelin, wie ihre Großmutter sie übers Kochen beraten hat: „Man könne nicht kochen lernen, wenn man das warme Essen nicht kosten dürfe, hat mir Großmutter versichert. Ich lerne einige Rezepte von ihr [...]. Der Geschmack der allermeisten Zutaten entfalte sich mit der Wärme, dozierte Großmutter am Herd.“ (ebda. 17) Dass die Großmutter ihre Enkelin gerade im Bereich der traditionellen Frauenarbeit belehrt, trägt ein weiteres Stück zum großmütterlichen Klischeebild bei. (Vgl. Chvojka 2003: 143, 240) Es ist nämlich bekannt, dass Großmütter (hauptsächlich seit dem 19. Jahrhundert) an der (kulturellen) Erziehung in erster Linie von Enkelinnen teilnehmen. „Junge Mädchen wurden häufiger für einige Zeit zur Großmutter geschickt, um dort zu lernen, wie man arbeitet“ (Haubold-Stolle 2009: 29) Ein weiteres Element, das ebenso auf eine längere Tradition hinweist, ist das Verbringen der Ferien bei den Großeltern bzw. der Großmutter. „Es kann sein, dass ich [die Erzählerin] Margret einmal gesehen habe, als ich etwa zehn Jahre alt war. Mein Bruder war schwer krank, und die Eltern hatten mich zu Großmutter in die Ferien gegeben.“ (ebda. 61) Die Anfänge lassen sich in der bürgerlichen Kultur im 18. Jahrhundert finden, im Lauf des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts entwickelte sich schließlich vor allem der Zeitraum der Schulferien bzw. Familienfeste in zunehmendem Maße zu einem bevorzugten Anlass für einen Besuch oder auch einen längeren Aufenthalt bei den Großeltern. (Chvojka 2003: 353, Höpflinger 2006: 199)

Die Großmutter verbinden mit der Enkelin auch andere gemeinsame Aktivitäten, die auf ein liebevolles oder sogar vertrautes Verhältnis schließen lassen, beispielsweise als Berta ihrer Enkelin das Bild ihrer großen Liebe Karl (er ist der Großvater der Enkelin) zeigt oder als sich die beiden das Fotoalbum anschauen. Diese kleinen Gesten können als Ersatz für andere typische großmütterliche Aktivitäten wie Geschichtenerzählen bzw. Märchenvorlesen, die im Buch nicht vorkommen, betrachtet werden.

Ein Element, das im großmütterlichen Klischeebild zwar nicht enthalten ist, aber vor allem in (modernerem) literarischen Texten oft vorkommt² und deshalb als ein neues traditionelles Element betrachtet werden könnte, ist der Zusammenhang zwischen der Großmutter und einer verschwiegenen Geschichte aus ihrer Vergangenheit, mit einem Geheimnis, welches hauptsächlich von dem Erzähler/der Erzählerin, meistens von

² Z. B. Tanja Dückers: *Himmelskörper* (2003), Verena Rabe: *Thereses Geheimnis* (2004), Alexandra Senfft: *Schweigen tut weh* (2007), Dilek Güngör: *Das Geheimnis meiner türkischen Großmutter* (2007).

dem Enkelkind, aufgespürt und entdeckt wird. (Vgl. Bagley 2006, Neuschäfer 2010) In Hugs Roman hat Berta ihr Geheimnis in sich getragen, was auch die Enkelin merkte: „Dass sie eine Vergangenheit hatte, sagte sie niemandem.“ (Hug 2008: 104)

Die nächste Eigenschaft steht sozusagen an der Grenze zwischen den typischen und untypischen traditionellen Merkmalen der großmütterlichen Sozialrolle. Neben den leicht erkannten traditionellen Klischeebildern gibt es im Roman weitere Elemente, die das traditionelle Bild stellenweise hinterfragen oder dementieren und zugleich ein neues Bild konstruieren. Die traditionelle Vorstellung der Großmutter als einer liebevollen, fürsorglichen und hilfsbereiten Frau wird mit der Beschreibung von Berta als schlechter Mutter in Frage gestellt. Bertas Tochter Louise konnte ihrer Mutter nie vergeben, dass sie sie verlassen und sogar ihren Verwandten zur Adoption freigegeben hat. Vor allem aus diesen Gründen warnt Louise ihre Tochter vor ihrer (Groß) Mutter „Meine Mutter [...] tobte und warnte mich vor dieser alten Frau, die nach ihrem Tod in mein Leben einfallen und sich darin ausbreiten werde.“ (Hug 2008: 8) Berta als Mutter, die ihre Tochter verlassen hat, um ins Ausland auszuwandern, hinterlässt im Bild der liebevollen zärtlichen Großmutter dunkle Spuren, obwohl soziologische Untersuchungen gezeigt haben, dass wegen der kleineren Verantwortung gegenüber den Enkelkindern im Vergleich zu eigenen Kindern sowie des stressfreieren Umgangs eine bessere Beziehung zwischen Großeltern und Enkelkindern als zwischen Eltern und Kindern aufgebaut werden kann. (Klosinski 2008: 42)

Ein letztes Merkmal, das hier hervorgehoben wird, ist die Neigung der älteren Menschen, und damit auch der Großmütter, zum Erinnern der Vergangenheit. Obwohl Berta über die Vergangenheit nicht gerne spricht, sie war „[f]ür Nostalgie nie zu haben gewesen“ (ebda. 32), wird diese Eigenschaft von der Erzählerin mehrmals erwähnt, als ob sie der Meinung wäre, dass das Zurückkehren in das Vergangene ein Bestandteil des großmütterlichen Verhaltens sein sollte und auf jeden Fall erwähnt werden müsse, auch im Fall, dass diese Eigenschaft nicht vorhanden sei.

Das Erwähnen von traditionellen Eigenschaften der Großmutterfigur, denen die jeweilige Großmutter nicht entspricht, erweist sich als ein Bestandteil der Darstellung der Großmutter. Das spricht für die Wirkung des „allgemeine[n] Maßstab[es] der Wahrnehmung alter Menschen.“ (Chvojka 203: 306) Ein Beispiel dafür ist etwa in Thomas Manns Lebenserinnerungen im Kapitel *Little Grandma* zu finden. Er schildert die Großmutter seiner Frau Katja Pringsheim, Hedwig Dohm.

Die Beschreibung Dohms durch Mann zeugt ganz allgemein von der Verunsicherung, aber auch der Empörung eines bürgerlichen Mannes anlässlich der Begegnung mit einer alten Frau, die seinen Vorstellungen entsprechend eigentlich eine typische „Großmutter“ zu sein hätte, diesem Rollenleitbild jedoch in der Realität in keiner Weise entsprach. [...] Hinsichtlich der äußeren Erscheinung der damals etwa 75-jährigen Hedwig Dohm erwähnt Mann, daß diese nicht etwa „großmütterlich“, sondern stattdessen „von aller Mode emanzipiert“ gekleidet gewesen wäre. (ebda. 306f.)

Die Wirkung der traditionellen Vorstellung vom Omasein auf das Verhalten und die (mangelnde) Identifikation der Frau in der Position der Großmutter spielt eine große

Rolle in Alina Bronskys Roman *Die schärfsten Gerichte der tatarischen Küche* aus dem Jahr 2010. Dieser Roman ist ein gutes Beispiel dafür, wie stark die traditionelle Vorstellung vom Großmuttersein im (Unter-)Bewusstsein der Menschen verankert ist, vor allem, wenn es als häufige Thematisierung der festgestellten Abweichungen vom herkömmlichen Bild der Großmutterschaft in Erscheinung tritt.

In den meisten literarischen Texten, die die Großmutter thematisieren, wird die Geschichte aus der Perspektive von Enkelkindern erzählt. Die Großmutter als Erzählerin stellt eher eine Ausnahme oder Abweichung von der Regel dar. Dass die Großmutter in Bronskys Roman die Rolle der Ich-Erzählerin einnimmt, könnte man als eines von vielen Elementen interpretieren, die auf die von der Norm abweichende literarische Darstellung der großmütterlichen Sozialrolle hinweisen. In diesem Fall wird das Großmutterbild von der Großmutterfigur selbst entworfen und konstruiert. Beim Lesen darf auf keinen Fall außer Acht gelassen werden, dass die Geschichte von einer unzuverlässigen Erzählerin erzählt wird und dass alles, auch ihre Versuche über die Selbstdarstellung vom Großmuttersein, mit Distanz wahrgenommen und unbedingt hinterfragt werden müssen. Die Ich-Erzählerin Rosalinda ist verheiratet und hat eine Tochter Sonja, die sie Sulfia nennt. Diese Tochter wird unerwartet schwanger und bekommt ein Mädchen, das die Großmutter Aminat benannt hat, obwohl Sulfia dagegen war und sie es Anna nennt. Die Großmutter will am Anfang nichts mit ihrer Enkelin zu tun haben, später aber nimmt sie das Kind ihrer Mutter Sulfia ohne ihre Erlaubnis weg und sorgt allein um sie, u. z. mit der Begründung, dass Sulfia unfähig sei, ihre Tochter allein zu versorgen. Sie begründet ihre Entscheidung mit vielen Beispielen, die Sulfias Unfähigkeit, gute Mutter zu sein, beweisen sollen. So zum Beispiel, als Aminat bei ihrer Mutter ist, während Rosalinda die beiden auf der Straße heimlich beobachtet, stellt diese fest:

Ich sah sofort, dass Aminat nicht gut angezogen war. Sie hatte keinen Schal, und die verrutschte Mütze setzte ihre Ohren der beißenden Kälte aus. Die schwarzen Strähnen hingen ihr ins Gesicht. Die Nase war rot. Das Kind war garantiert erkältet, kein Wunder bei dieser Mutter.“ (Bronsky 2010: 48)

Solche und viele andere Beispiele können der Großmutter auf den ersten Blick Recht geben, ihre Enkelin anstelle der Kindes-Mutter Sulfia zu versorgen. Sie liebt ihre Enkelin und auch Aminat hat sie zu Beginn ebenso sehr gern. In ihrer Überheblichkeit, dass nur sie alles richtig machen kann, „opfert“ sie sich für ihre Enkelin trotz des Widerstands seitens ihrer Tochter und macht alles, um Aminat zu unterstützen und ihr den vermeintlich richtigen Weg zu zeigen. Sie fühlt sich verpflichtet, für ihre Enkelin und ihre unfähige Tochter Sulfia zu sorgen. Im Laufe der Geschichte weisen aber immer mehr Hinweise deutlich darauf hin, dass eine andere Sicht auf die (unerwünschte und schädliche) großmütterliche Hilfe nötig ist. Nicht nur die Bitte der Tochter, dass sich die Mutter in ihr Leben nicht so intensiv einmischen soll („*Liebe Mama, lieber Papa, ich ziehe aus und nehme Anna mit. Lasst mich einfach in Frieden. Küsse, eure Sonja*“, ebda. 23), sondern auch die Drohung der kleinen Enkelin „Wenn du meiner Mama noch mal weh tust, hab ich dich nicht mehr lieb!“ (ebda. 67), die sie folgendermaßen begründet: „Weil ich keine böse Oma haben will!“ (ebda.), zeigen, dass die von Rosalinda einseitig dargestellte Situation auch eine Kehrseite hat.

In der Entscheidung, ihre Enkelin zu betreuen, kann in diesem Fall schwer das klassische großmütterliche Verhalten gesehen werden. Sie macht das zwar aus großmütterlicher Liebe und dem Wunsch, das Beste für das Kind zu tun, doch spielt dabei eine große Rolle auch die Überzeugung der Großmutter, dass sie besser ist als alle anderen und dass sie unbedingt das Leben der Anderen ausschließlich nach ihren eigenen Vorstellungen lenken und keinen Widerstand tolerieren will. Ein weiterer Hinweis dafür ist ihre Art und Weise der Erziehung, die ihrer Enkelin am Ende mehr Schaden antut als Vorteile bringt, worauf später noch genauer eingegangen wird. Eigentlich findet sich die Großmutter zu jung, aktiv und gesund, um Großmutter zu sein. Ihre Aussage: „Ich sah überhaupt nicht als Oma aus. Ich sah gut aus. Ich war eine schöne Frau und noch nicht alt. Man sah mir an, dass ich Kraft hatte und intelligent war“ (Bronsky 2010: 68), deutet auf den unausweichlichen Vergleich mit dem traditionellen Großmutterbild hin und enthält implizit die kulturelle Vereinbarung über das großmütterliche Klischee, das durch solche Behauptungen immer wieder aufs Neue zugleich in Frage gestellt sowie reproduziert wird. An dieser Stelle muss trotzdem erwähnt werden, dass Rosalinda vergleichsweise jung Großmutter geworden ist, und zwar Ende Vierzig, was wohl zu ihrer problematischen Identifizierung mit dem Omasein beigetragen hat.

Im ganzen Roman findet man viele Beispiele, wo das traditionelle Bild hinterfragt wird. Diese Großmutter ist sehr jugendlich, denkt, dass sie sehr schön ist, viel Energie hat und voller Tatendrang ist, sie lernt in ihrem Alter das Fahrradfahren sowie Skifahren, sie erwirbt den Führerschein usw. Sie fühlt sich nicht als Großmutter, wobei sie das gesellschaftliche Klischee des Omaseins als Maßstab für ihre Einschätzung nimmt. Sie konstruiert eigentlich ein Gegenbild der Großmutterfigur, wie sie allgemein erwartet wird.

Stellenweise kommt es zu Annäherungen an die traditionelle großmütterliche Vorstellung, die aber immer subversive Elemente enthalten. Es folgen einige Beispiele: In ihrem Wunsch, die Enkelin überzeugen zu wollen, Medizin zu studieren, verbirgt sich die traditionelle Verbindung zwischen Omasein und Kranksein, die aber auf sie nicht trifft, was sie ausdrücklich betont. „[E]ine richtige Ärztin im Haus war wichtig, wenn man älter wurde. [...] [A]ußer mir wurden alle ständig krank“ Bronsky (2010: 34). Oder wenn die Großmutter über ihre Haushalts- bzw. Kochfähigkeiten spricht (die zum Großmutterbild gehören), vergisst sie nicht, sie sofort zu relativieren, wie am folgenden Satz zu sehen ist: „Ich habe ein gutes Händchen für den Blätterteig, wie für alles andere auch.“ (Bronsky 2010: 33)³ Mit der Relativierung der erwarteten Eigenschaften wird das herkömmliche Bild als einzig Richtiges unterlaufen. Eine weitere, auf den ersten Blick typische Eigenschaft ist die Vermittlung von Wissen an die Enkelin. Sie lehrt sie, sich richtig zu benehmen, sich zu kleiden, sorgfältig und verantwortlich zu sein. Doch findet man in ihrer Art nichts, was in der traditionellen Vorstellung mit einer liebevollen großmütterlichen Erziehung und großmütterlichen Ratschlägen in Verbindung gesetzt werden könnte. Sie zwingt ihre Enkelin geradezu, sich nach ihren Kriterien richtig zu benehmen, indem sie sie z. B. bedroht, besticht oder manchmal sogar schlägt.

Wenn Rosalinda sich nach Sulfias Protesten immer wieder für eine kurze Zeit zusammenreißt und versucht, sich angemessen zu benehmen, kann man das erwartete und ideale großmütterliche Verhalten beobachten, das aber eher ein Ausnahmezustand ist.

³ Dieser Satz muss im Kontext der „allgemeinen“ Selbstwahrnehmung der Protagonistin verstanden werden und nicht unbedingt nur im Kontext des Omabildes.

Ich holte Aminat oft vom Kindergarten ab, um den jungen Leuten zu helfen, die beide viel arbeiten mussten. [...] Wir spielten, ich las ihr vor, wir malten zusammen, ich erzählte ihr lehrreiche Geschichten aus meinem Leben und dem Leben anderer Menschen. (ebda. 65f.)

Im Buch kommen weitere Elemente vor, die eine typische Großmutter ausmachen, wie die ausgeprägte Religiosität oder Garten- sowie Handarbeit. Letztere können in diesem Kontext nicht unbedingt nur als typische großmütterliche Merkmale wahrgenommen werden, sondern als Fähigkeiten der meisten Frauen, ihre Familie in schweren Zeiten und in einem armen kommunistischen Land, wo auch Rosalindas Familie lebt, zu ernähren und ihr Überleben zu sichern, welches oft vom selbst angebauten Gemüse, selbst gekochter Marmelade oder selbst genähtem Kleid abhängig war.

Ähnlich wie Berta im Roman von Annette Hug wird die Großmutter auch hier in erster Linie als schlechte und nicht liebevolle Mutter dargestellt, weil sie (in diesem Fall) verächtlich, possessiv, beleidigend und selbstgefällig ist. Sie sorgt für alles, aber nur deshalb, weil sie alles unter Kontrolle haben möchte und weil sie die anderen für unfähig hält. Durch ihr Verhalten zerstört sie ihre Familie, bleibt am Ende allein ohne ihre Tochter, die stirbt (Aminat gibt ihrer Großmutter die Schuld am Tod ihrer Mutter), sowie ohne ihre Enkelin Aminat, die vor ihr flüchtet, mit Schuldgefühlen zurück. Wie bereits erwähnt, scheitert die Ich-Erzählerin nicht nur als Mutter, sondern am Ende auch als Großmutter, weil sie keine liebevolle, fürsorgliche Beziehung zu anderen Menschen aufbauen kann.

Die Großmutter tritt hier als (selbst erzwungene) Ersatzmutter auf, womit sie eine negative Darstellung ihrer Rolle vertritt, die im großmütterlichen Diskurs eher eine Ausnahme darstellt. Zugleich könnte ihre Funktion als Ersatzmutter als Grund für das nicht-großmütterliche Verhalten betrachtet werden. Obwohl die Begründung ihres Verhaltens eigentlich nachvollziehbar ist – sie benimmt sich nämlich so, weil sie ein besseres Leben für sich und ihre Familie will – ist ihre Art und Weise des Handelns respektlos und egoistisch. Am Ende bereut sie ihr Verhalten. Es wird ihr bewusst, dass sie viele Fehler gemacht hat. „Aminat war achtzehn, und sie war von zu Hause fortgelaufen: Es war eine Schande, denn einer guten Großmutter liefen die Enkelinnen nicht weg“. (Bronsky 2010: 285) Zum Schluss gibt sie zu, dass ihre Handlungsweise nicht nur dem Mutter- sondern auch dem Großmuttersein nicht angemessen war. Dadurch kehrt sie zum traditionellen Bild zurück und bereut es, keine bessere Großmutter gewesen zu sein.

Die im Buch dargestellte Vorstellung der großmütterlichen Sozialrolle, die für die Geschichte zentral ist, bietet ein völlig anderes Modell des Großmutterseins an. Es gibt mindestens zwei Punkte, die hier hervorgehoben werden müssen. Erstens kann man im Roman eine Großmutter betrachten, die dem Klischee nicht entspricht bzw. sie versucht es zu unterlaufen, indem sie sich als jung, erfolgreich, schön sowie aktiv präsentiert und damit ein neues modernes Modell des Omaseins darstellt. Der zweite Punkt ist mit dem ersten in einem bestimmten Maße verbunden, kann aber auch als ein selbstständiges Element angesehen werden. Es geht um die gescheiterte Großmutterschaft, um eine Art negatives Bild der Großmutter. Vielleicht könnte die mangelnde Identifizierung mit der klassischen Vorstellung des großmütterlichen Verhaltens ein

Grund dafür sein, dass sie sich nicht als Großmutter benimmt. Man darf aber keineswegs nur dieses Moment als gescheitertes Großmuttersein interpretieren, weil sich Rosalinda nicht nur ihrer Enkelin, sondern allen Menschen gegenüber, obwohl in ihrem Wunsch zu helfen, doch letztendlich verachtend und beleidigend benimmt. Die Geschichte bietet dessen ungeachtet ein „traditionelles“ Ende an. Weil die Hauptfigur dem großmütterlichen Ideal nicht entspricht, kann sie am Ende nicht gewinnen, sie wird bestraft, sie verliert ihre Enkelin und muss mit ihrem Scheitern fertig werden. Von einer aktiven, zielbewussten, selbstverliebten Frau wird sie zu einer einsamen, traurigen, passiven Person. Obwohl die Geschichte auf den ersten Blick subversive Elemente in der Großmutterrolle aufweist, wird am Ende immer noch nur das gute, liebevolle, nicht zu engagierte und in das Leben der Enkelkinder einzumischende Großmuttermodell als das richtige und erfolgreiche Modell des großmütterlichen Verhaltens akzeptiert.

FAZIT

Da im vorliegenden Artikel nur zwei von vielen zeitgenössischen deutschsprachigen Texten⁴, in denen die Großmutterfigur thematisiert wird, einer näheren Analyse unterzogen worden sind, muss man bei allzu schnellen Schlussfolgerungen vorsichtig sein. Trotzdem kann man anhand der erfolgten Analyse der untersuchten Romane feststellen, dass die dargestellten Großmutterfiguren immer noch von dem traditionellen Klischeebild, das im jahrhundertlangen Prozess entstanden ist, geprägt sind, was am besten an der Thematisierung der eventuellen Abweichungen von erwarteten großmütterlichen Eigenschaften und deren Verhalten erkennbar ist. Darüber hinaus aber weisen sie individuell gestaltete und neue Modelle einer traditionellen Figur auf. Höpflinger und Mitarbeiter haben bei den soziologischen Untersuchungen der Großeltern-Enkelkinder-Beziehungen in der Schweiz aus dem letzten Jahrzehnt Folgendes herausgefunden:

Die Bilder zur Grosselternschaft sind und bleiben relativ traditionell, aber das idealisierte Bild von Grosselternschaft erlaubt heute überraschend viele Freiräume in der konkreten Gestaltung der Beziehung zu Enkelkindern, und dieser Gestaltungsspielraum wird von modernen Grossvätern und Grossmüttern immer häufiger gezielt und aktiv gestaltet. (Höpflinger et al. 2006: 104)

Ähnliches kann man für die literarische Verarbeitung der Großmutterfigur behaupten. Obwohl bei einer literarischen Großmutter immer noch traditionelle Vorstellungen erwartet werden, gibt es in den modernen literarischen Texten zugleich viele individuelle Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten dieser literarischen Figur.

⁴ Z. B. Horst Hensel: Esthers zweite Reise nach Schanghai (1999), Gabriele Droste: In einer Nacht (2005), Christina von Braun: Stille Post (2007), Katharina Hagen: Der Geschmack von Apfelkernen (2008), Renate Welsh: Großmutter Schuhe (2008), Elisabeth Reichert: Die Voest-Kinder (2011).

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**TRA POLEMICA E RISEMANTIZZAZIONE:
LA POSIZIONE DI G. BRUNO RISPETTO A PETRARCHA, PETRARCHISTI,
ANTIPETRARCHISTI**

Patrizia Farinelli

Abstract:

The gnoseological reflection of Giordano Bruno in *De gli eroici furori* (1585) is widely shaped by the use of expressive structures and images of the poetry which leads back to Petrarch and to the current referring to him. According to this hypothesis, the elements which explain this choice chiefly consist in structural analogies between the phenomenology of love as outlined in Petrarchan poetry and Bruno's conception of the relationship that connects a knowing subject and a known object (the infinite One). Even though Bruno in the end – against his intentions – highlighted exactly a certain philosophical value in Petrarch's lyrical poetry, he was not willing to recognize himself in any bond with that tradition. His radical rejection of Petrarch and those imitating and parodying him – on which prefatory pages are centered – particularly shows a necessity to differentiate between the actual object of inquiry and the most widespread profane lyrical poetry of his century (as well as the *tout court* lyrical poetry). Even leaving aside author's polemical position in order to rather comprehend what is evident from the text itself, the possibility to consider Bruno as much Petrarchist as Antipetrarchist nevertheless continues to elude. The reason for this is that adaptation and philosophical resemantization of that lyrical code are in Bruno's case set in a singular way compared to the then widespread relation between *imitatio*, *inventio*, *emulatio*; more generally, they are set outside of literary communication: that code primarily enters his work in cognitive function.

Key words: Giordano Bruno, Petrarchists, resemantization

IN DIFESA DEL VALORE COGNITIVO DELLE IMMAGINI

La scelta di affrontare una riflessione filosofica attraverso un discorso per immagini e dunque in una forma più letteraria che accademica è molto frequente nell'*opus* bruniano. Anche il suo scritto di argomento gnoseologico *De gli eroici furori*,¹ stilato come raccolta autocommentata di poesie (in prevalenza di sonetti), testimonia una simile prassi. Al discorso lirico e narrativo dei componimenti in versi, gli annessi commenti dialogati affiancano uno logico-argomentativo ben permeato a sua volta di

¹ Riprendo qui, puntalizzandole, delle tesi esposte in un precedente e più ampio lavoro (Farinelli 2000).

Nel seguito si citerà quest'opera dalla seconda ristampa della 3. edizione Sansoni dei Dialoghi italiani (Bruno 1985) e la si citerà sotto la sigla D.I.

figuralità. Il bagaglio delle immagini è attinto alle più svariate fonti, sia sacre, che profane, ma centrale resta la semiotica improntante la lirica amorosa di Petrarca e dei petrarchisti.²

Composta e pubblicata nel periodo del soggiorno inglese del filosofo alla corte elisabettiana,³ l'opera tratta le modalità di ricerca e comprensione dell'Uno infinito o Causa prima che, come più alto oggetto di conoscenza e senza connotazioni sacre, appare anche sotto il termine di "divino". L'autore v'illustra più specificamente lo stato, non privo di dubbi e cedimenti, in cui verrebbe a trovarsi chi s'inoltra in una simile ricerca tra l'anelito a cogliere l'infinito e la consapevolezza dei limiti umani d'ostacolo alla sua comprensione. In preda a sentimenti contrastanti, ma interiormente vincolato al suo fine, il soggetto di tale impresa, che il nolano recuperando e attualizzando la teoria platonica dei furori vuole come "eroico furioso",⁴ può solo tornare sui risultati parziali raggiunti nella ricerca e mantenerli aperti attraverso un processo destinato a non trovare fine, proprio nel senso della conoscenza che attraverserà la modernità.⁵

Rispetto alla struttura testuale, uno dei fenomeni più vistosi del lavoro è costituito dalla presenza di successive variazioni nell'organizzazione delle rime. Mentre la sezione iniziale, rappresentata dai primi quattro dialoghi, si presenta come un canzoniere commentato, quelle che seguono, senza che sia mai abbandonata la strategia del commento, assumono rispettivamente la forma di un libro d'imprese, di un contrasto allegorico, di una raccolta di sonetti a corona e infine di un racconto mitologico: queste sezioni svolgono la funzione di ripetere, specificare e amplificare quanto esposto nei dialoghi iniziali. La presenza dominante della variazione, visibile del resto in più aspetti formali e non solo sul piano architettonico, non stupisce.⁶ Concorda anzi sia col valore assegnato dal filosofo alla facoltà dell'*inventio*, sia con la sua posizione poetologica fondamentalmente antinormativa. Non è tuttavia sulla complessa struttura testuale, già considerata in altra occasione, che ci si vuole soffermare qui.⁷ L'intenzione è invece di focalizzare come si profili il rapporto dell'autore verso Petrarca e la corrente che vi fa capo. Si considereranno dapprima, dunque, quali ragioni potessero indurre Bruno a scrivere dei trattati filosofici adottando in ampia misura un linguaggio figurale per indagare poi i motivi che lo spinsero a puntare (per quella specifica tematica) proprio sul codice espressivo e concettuale della poesia amorosa e in particolare su quella di tradizione petrarchesca.

Non escludendo che ci fossero anche delle ragioni socioculturali a suggerire al nolano d'illustrare il processo di conoscenza dell'infinito nelle forme e immagini proprie

² Tra le opere profane del suo secolo, l'autore tiene presente la tragicommedia *Cecaria* (1525) di Marc'Antonio Epicuro.

³ L'opera fu pubblicata a Londra nel 1585, ma per motivi verosimilmente cautelari sotto falsa indicazione di luogo (Parigi). È dedicata al poeta Philip Sidney. È divisa in due parti di cinque dialoghi ciascuno. Su 72 componimenti in versi di Bruno, in essa presenti, 67 sono sonetti. Compresi in forma di citazione sono anche 4 sonetti di Tansillo.

⁴ Bruno si riferisce a un furore non innato, bensì raggiunto attivamente attraverso un processo razionale e una volontà di conoscenza. *Cfr. D. I.*: 987.

⁵ Sul problema della conoscenza in Bruno cfr. Spruit 1988.

⁶ Tra le variazioni di superficie anche quella metrica. Quasi a siglare con una cifra individuale i propri versi, Bruno introduce nelle terzine due settenari. Per le caratteristiche relative a metro e rima nelle poesie di quest'opera cfr. Sabbatino 1993.

⁷ Farinelli 2005.

di un codice letterario assai diffuso nelle cerchie laiche in cui operava in quegli anni,⁸ è plausibile che vi svolgessero un ruolo determinante delle motivazioni intrinseche al suo sistema di pensiero. Occorre ricordare al proposito l'atteggiamento di rifiuto mostrato da Bruno nei confronti dell'aristotelismo anche in ambito gnoseologico⁹ e la difesa, invece, della tesi di platonica memoria, rivisitata anche dal Cusano, circa l'umbratilità del conoscere che veniva ribadita con energia in *De gli eroici furori* (1585)¹⁰ dopo essere stata sostenuta in *De umbris idearum* (1582) e nel *Sigillus sigillorum* (1583). Nella gnoseologia bruniana il più alto oggetto di conoscenza, l'Uno o Causa prima, resta un principio trascendente ("S'io chiamo, non risponde;/ E quant'io cerco più, più mi s'asconde"¹¹) e si rende manifesto solo in forma mediata come quell'altro di sé che è l'infinito nella Natura, cioè nel processo della vicissitudine, non nella sua assolutezza. A valorizzare la funzione non solo euristica, ma anche cognitiva e mnemonica del discorso figurale si aggiungevano delle considerazioni sulle facoltà cognitive umane. Bruno, condividendo posizioni diffuse in ambito tardo rinascimentale come rilevano, fra altri, gli studi di Frances Yates e Lina Bolzoni, osservava che il nostro intelletto non è in grado di cogliere le cose nella loro semplicità e unità, ma solo nella combinazione. Nell'epistola dedicatoria del *De imaginum, signorum et idearum compositione*, un testo del 1591 che riprende nei concetti e nel metodo alcuni suoi precedenti scritti sull'arte mnemonica, specificava inoltre che l'intelletto umano non può comprendere se non in "specie, simulacro, imagine, figura, signo".¹²

COL CODICE DELLA POESIA D'AMORE

Se tali considerazioni si lasciano estendere anche ad altri scritti di Bruno, il fatto che questi nel caso specifico assuma proprio un codice espressivo e concettuale amoroso per trattare di gnoseologia si spiega – così ipotizziamo – col ruolo stesso che l'amore possiede nel suo sistema di pensiero quale forza basilare del processo conoscitivo. Entro tale orizzonte è esclusa la possibilità di cogliere l'infinito con le sole potenzialità della facoltà intellettuale se quest'ultima non è sostenuta da quella appetitiva. Spetta allora all'amore quale "furore eroico", quale fervore che si svilupperebbe durante il processo, mantenerne aperta la ricerca attivando sempre di nuovo l'uso della facoltà razionale.¹³ Bruno raccoglie certamente anche alcune esperienze rinascimentali di trattazioni filosofiche affrontate nei termini di un discorso d'amore (si pensi all'opera di Ficino *De amore* o ai *Dialoghi d'amore* di Leone Ebreo, usciti nel 1535 postumi), tende tuttavia a evitare l'uso d'immagini di discesa e ascesa diffuse nel neoplatonismo

⁸ Sul peso del colto ambiente londinese nelle scelte di Bruno in fatto di lingua, genere e registro discorsivo richiamavano l'attenzione Aquilecchia (1953: 165-189) e Blum (1981: 685-692).

⁹ A simili conclusioni conducono, in particolare, considerazioni presenti nel penultimo dialogo della raccolta. "Chi ha buon senso e non vede del profitto che fe' Aristotele [...] volendo con il suo raziocinio logico porre definizioni, nozioni, certe quinte entitadi ed altre parti ed aborsi di fantastica cogitazione per principii e sustanza di cose [...]?" *D. I.*: 1114-1115.

¹⁰ Cfr. *ivi*: 1158-1159.

¹¹ *Ivi.*, p. 973.

¹² Bruno 1889: 91.

¹³ All'interazione di facoltà intellettuale e appetitiva (occhi e cuore) è dedicato il quarto dialogo della prima parte.

fiorentino, rappresentanti il rapporto tra finito e infinito in termini di successiva derivazione. In Ficino le fasi di approfondimento della conoscenza corrispondevano ad altrettanti gradi dell'essere, ma questi gradi spariscono nel sistema metafisico bruniano in cui tutto è invece pensato sussistere della stessa sostanza. Ogni possibile analogia fra stadi del conoscere e ordine gerarchico dell'essere, un ordine basato sulla maggiore o minore vicinanza a Dio, unità indifferenziata, viene così necessariamente a cadere spianando la strada a un nuovo paradigma di pensiero.¹⁴ Bruno mantiene il concetto di gradualità del conoscere solo nel senso che tale processo prevede svariati tentativi e un rapporto di assiduità, ma lo svincola radicalmente da una concezione gerarchica dell'essere. Quanto ribadisce, e in forma svariate, è che non si conosce per stadi ma istantaneamente. La conoscenza dell'infinito, seppur abbia luogo nella sua ottica solo quando si siano create le condizioni per il suo possibile accadere, è pretesa infatti come qualcosa di folgorante,¹⁵ d'indipendente dalla sola volizione¹⁶ e tale da innescare una trasformazione nel soggetto coinvolto. Non da ultimo è concepita come un'esperienza che segue una misura individuale.¹⁷ Risulta comprensibile, su simili presupposti, che la dinamica amorosa sottesa alla lirica di Petrarca, col relativo bagaglio di concetti e d'immagini, potessero entrare bene in gioco nel sistema di pensiero bruniano per configurare il processo conoscitivo. Tale dinamica riceve però un adattamento in alcuni suoi aspetti¹⁸, in piccola parte viene anche contaminata con altre tradizioni¹⁹, ma prima di tutto subisce una radicale risemantizzazione, a qual fine è basilare il commento autorale. Nell'operazione selettiva sono tralasciati i motivi del rammarico e del pentimento (centrali invece nella poesia di Petrarca) poiché incongruenti con il senso della ricerca del divino; in ragione della portata sovra-individuale del discorso appaiono inoltre rari o spostati nel peritesto (ad esempio nel sonetto giustificativo) dei richiami storico-temporali. Analogamente è assente nei sonetti, e sporadico nelle parti in prosa, il motivo del ricordo. Aspetto tutt'altro trascurabile è poi il fatto che tanto i versi quanto i relativi commenti restino privi di riferimenti metapoetici.

Ciò che è decisivo della lirica di Petrarca, per un confronto con le rime bruniane sul furore eroico, non è solo il fatto che essa dia voce a un amore per un oggetto irraggiungibile, vissuto – così si pretende – con sentimenti antitetici da parte dell'amante e come un rapporto vincolante, quasi ossessivo. È ancor più decisivo il fatto che tale lirica canti un oggetto del desiderio che resta inaccessibile e fondamentalmente assente o meglio si renda presente all'io lirico solo in forma mediata: nei *RVF* l'amata trova infatti una forma di presenza in ciò che resta legato per vicinanza fonetica al suo nome, al suo ricordo, al sogno che la evoca o ancora ritorna alla mente dell'io lirico

¹⁴ Cfr. Blumenberg 19892.

¹⁵ *D. I.*: 1157.

¹⁶ Il processo prevede un apprendere e un essere preso; in termini figurati si legge: "Cacciatrice di me, la mia Diana". *Ivi*: 1112.

¹⁷ Sulla misura individuale di ogni singola esperienza di conoscenza cfr. *D. I.*: 1029.

¹⁸ Anche alcune scelte lessicali trovano ragione in funzione di un discorso d'amore non profano. L'oggetto cui tende l'eroico furioso è indicato da espressioni indeterminate, tali da evitare rimandi a un essere terreno (fra queste ricorrono: "beltà sola", "alta bellezza", "mio bene", "mia diva", "mia dea") o da sottolineare la natura figurale della sola forma comprensibile del divino ("immagine", "effigie").

¹⁹ Sono presenti richiami biblici, riferimenti al concetto di unione mistica, al motivo cabalistico della morte del bacio nonché a miti classici (riprese dai salmi e dalla mitologia classica fanno parte del resto di una prassi anche petrarchesca).

in modo associativo attraverso oggetti, luoghi, miti che la sostituiscono. Petrarca canta dunque la donna fondamentalmente in figura, attraverso i suoi simulacri. Le tematiche dell'assenza dell'oggetto desiderato, dell'anelito a qualcosa che resta lontano per ritornare alla mente dell'io lirico in forma mediata fino ad entrare in un rapporto di sostituzione con la parola che ne parla, sono centrali nel sistema lirico petrarchesco. Su quest'aspetto ha scritto delle pagine assai acute Adelia Noferi che insisteva appunto sul circolo che viene a crearsi nei *RVF* tra parola del desiderio e desiderio della parola.²⁰

CONTRO LA POESIA PROFANA

Tanto nel processo conoscitivo concepito da Bruno, quanto nel rapporto d'amore cantato da Petrarca, l'inaccessibilità dell'oggetto ne rafforza il desiderio comportando nella sua ripetuta ricerca anche il rischio di una perdita di sé da parte del soggetto coinvolto. Si tratta di due processi appartenenti a contesti fenomenologici diversi, che configurano però in modo analogo la ricerca dell'Altro (ivi compreso, come appena osservato, il modo traslato dell'Altro di evidenziarsi). Nella riflessione dell'io petrarchesco ciò che diviene presenza è essenzialmente la parola; mentre nella ricerca dell'eroico furioso a poter essere intellettualmente raggiunto è 'l'altro di sé' dell'Uno infinito ovvero l'infinito nel tempo che il soggetto conoscente scopre nella Natura e in se stesso quale essere appartenente a tale dimensione. Riprendendo l'esempio proposto dal più noto sonetto dell'opera, l'Atteone cacciatore si riconosce preda.²¹

Ciò che si viene attuando nell'opera lirica di Petrarca – lo schiudersi della parola poetica nella tensione verso qualcosa d'irraggiungibile – non è così lontano, nella dinamica processuale, dai risultati cui sfocia la ricerca dell'infinito nel sistema filosofico bruniano. In entrambi i casi ne va di un oggetto che si rende presente come altro da sé – un processo epifanico non conseguito come atto volontaristico del soggetto, sebbene imprescindibile dal suo cercare. Nell'attingere alle strutture di quella poesia d'amore, una poesia a cui in ogni caso, come sottolineava Contini, è centrale la dimensione dello scorrere del tempo, il nolano finiva contro le sue intenzioni per metterne in luce una valenza metafisica, ma dai suoi presupposti, dal suo diverso rapporto verso la parola poetica era escluso che riconoscesse tale componente. Anzi, nell'Argomento proemiale tesse una feroce invettiva contro il poeta di Laura, accusandolo di essersi abbassato a inseguire un amore terreno, così come attacca, con le stesse motivazioni, petrarchisti e antipetrarchisti al punto da azzerare allo stesso tempo anche la diversità di singole poetiche, singoli intenti e risultati.²² A muovere quella polemica, dove anche la lirica di Petrarca è ridotta a gioco d'ingegno attuato "con esplicar gli affetti d'un ostinato amor volgare, animale e bestiale [...]", è la necessità di difendere la peculiarità del suo discorso rispetto a quello della poesia profana in generale cui rimprovera la mancanza di un oggetto degno di speculazione. Bruno giudica dunque moralmente il valore della poesia in base all'altezza del suo oggetto. Riserva infatti maggior rispetto alla

²⁰ Noferi 1979: 69-209.

²¹ Per una lettura filosofica del mito di Atteone nei Furori cfr. Beierwaltes 1979. Per un confronto fra l'elaborazione di quel mito in G. Bruno in G. B. Marino cfr. Farinelli 2012.

²² Esiste ora una stampa del solo *L'Argomento* cui è annesso un dettagliato commento (Canone 2012).

poesia spirituale, cui fa brevemente riferimento menzionando il *Cantico dei cantici*, ma non manca di differenziare la propria anche da quella, sottolineando il suo intento specificamente filosofico.

A DISTANZA DA PETRARCA, PETRARCHISTI E ANTIPETRARCHISTI

Bruno era lontano da esigenze di carattere estetico nello stendere le sue rime sul furore. Nei suoi sonetti, di cui riassumiamo qui le caratteristiche principali, la parola non è promossa a creare né emozione né stupore, né interrogazione, ma semmai a esemplificare. Raramente viene a crearsi una densità di rapporti fra gli elementi che le compongono, tale da rendere possibili sensi plurimi. La stessa presenza del commento autorale tende del resto a congelarne altre possibili interpretazioni. Al confronto le liriche del conterraneo Luigi Tansillo, cui Bruno fa talvolta riferimento diretto nel suo discorso, presentano una ben maggiore carica speculativa.²³

I sonetti del nolano mostrano per lo più strutture logico-sintattiche ripetitive, i cosiddetti versi rapportati;²⁴ in qualche altro caso seguono invece quell'ordine oppositivo che trova un modello nel sonetto petrarchesco "Pace non trovo": ne sono degli esempi l'ottavo sonetto del II dialogo come pure le terzine di un sonetto del III dialogo, uno dei meglio riusciti della raccolta sia per l'agilità con cui si sviluppa il discorso sia per la stretta corrispondenza tra registro semantico (leggero, pesante; alto, basso) e registro sintattico:

Altr'amo, odio me stesso;
Ma s'io m'impiumo, altri si cangia in sasso;
Possi'altr'al cielo, s'io mi ripogno al basso;
Sempr'altri fugge, s'io seguir non cesso;
E s'io chiamo, non risponde;
E quant'io cerco più, più mi s'asconde.²⁵

La figura retorica dominante, come attendibile, è l'antitesi, che appare spesso nella forma di ossimoro e in formule diffuse ("dolce languire", "sordi affanni", "amaro diletto e dolce pena"; "odioso bene", "dolce danno", "dolce nemico"). Quanto alle immagini adottate, Bruno ricorre spesso a quella topica del fuoco ("fiamme", "face", "vampo", "ardore") per parlare vuoi dell'amore e dell'oggetto stesso, vuoi della condizione del soggetto che si cimenta in quella ricerca; rende inoltre il legame che l'amante prova verso l'amata (rispettivamente il soggetto conoscente e l'Uno infinito) con espressioni radicate nella poesia petrarchesca come "lacci", "catene", "giogo". Quanto all'oggetto d'amore, lo indica non di rado attraverso l'immagine degli occhi (anche nelle varianti "luci" e "lumi"). Altre immagini ricorrenti sono quelle della guerra e della cecità, assunte in funzione di rendere rispettivamente le modalità della ricerca e lo stato di strutturale inadeguatezza di

²³ Tansillo si profila come poeta raffinato con uno stile personale. Cfr. Afribo 1994. Tansillo entra in *Degli eroici furori* anche come figura di dialogante. Sulla presenza dell'opera di Tansillo in Bruno cfr. Rowland 2003.

²⁴ Cfr. D. I.: 964 (son 4. nel dial. I/1, vv. 1-6). Ha richiamato l'attenzione su questa peculiarità dei sonetti bruniani Mönch 1955: 76-78.

²⁵ D. I.: 973 (son. 1 nel dial. I/2, vv. 9-14).

chi la compie.²⁶ Anche le immagini del viaggio e del volo rappresentano la ricerca dell'alto oggetto mentre quelle legate al cibo, nella fattispecie l'impossibilità di saziarsi, definiscono l'inesauribilità della sua ricerca. La ruota indica il movimento che regola la natura. Fra le poche immagini di luoghi, appare quella del bosco impraticabile (gli "erti sentieri") che non rappresenta tuttavia un *locus terribilis*, bensì lo stato di positivo isolamento dell'eroico furioso quale presupposto alla ricerca. Raramente vi emergono effetti fonetici di qualche intensità ad eccezione forse di certe paronomasie ("m'appaga"/"impiaga"). Più interessanti e più personali risultano invece le scelte lessicali. Al proposito va rilevato l'uso di termini del linguaggio parlato e di vocaboli esprimenti concretezza per descrivere uno stato interiore. Si pensi a espressioni come "liquefaccio intero" o "sto a continue botte" o ancora "chi la mente m'ingombra è un sol viso".²⁷

L'esigenza di confrontarsi specificamente sul piano letterario con Petrarca è in Bruno assente. Anche preoccupazioni stilistiche cadevano evidentemente in secondo piano nella stesura di quelle rime rispetto all'intento di performare con chiarezza la propria concezione della ricerca del divino, una concezione che partiva dal superamento della metafisica neoplatonica, ancora fissata al concetto di derivazione dell'essere per gradi progressivi di allontanamento dalla perfezione divina, e poneva le basi di una metafisica in cui non si distingue più tra materia finita e materia infinita, ma solo tra diverse forme dell'essere.

Per dar voce al suo pensiero il filosofo attivò delle strategie che continuano a stupefarci e su di esse merita indagare restando quanto possibile liberi da un tentativo di classificare l'operazione da lui compiuta. Una considerazione di carattere storico-letterario porta però inevitabilmente a chiedersi se il Bruno dei *Furori*, assumendo elementi della poesia che faceva riferimento a Petrarca per adattarli e risemantizzarli alle proprie esigenze filosofiche, entri a far parte del sistema letterario del petrarchismo, caratterizzato dalle dinamiche (non necessariamente sempre unite) di *imitatio*, *inventio et emulatio*, o vi resti estraneo. La questione non è lineare perché anche in lui ci fu e ci fu rinnovamento, ma un rinnovamento consistente in trasposizione su un altro piano semantico, mentre l'emulazione e altrettanto la parodia furono del tutto assenti. Considerare Bruno come un rappresentante di quel sistema è problematico nonostante il petrarchismo fosse un fenomeno plurimo e il rifarsi a Petrarca dopo la metà del Cinquecento significasse accogliere in maniera sempre maggiore la variazione. Quondam ricordava le trasformazioni visibili nella produzione lirica napoletana a quell'altezza temporale, in cui era visibile un allontanamento dal modello all'interno del modello stesso attraverso un esautoramento delle possibilità che questo offriva senza rappresentarne ancora un definitivo superamento.²⁸ *De gli eroici furori* resta però un lavoro difficilmente integrabile in quel tipo d'interventi

²⁶ Il concetto di cecità è nel testo plurisignificante; nell'ultimo dialogo, con riferimenti alla Cecaria, indica anche l'inizio della vita intellettuale e trova allora corrispondenze con quel concetto di morte come raggiungimento di un nuovo stato conoscitivo, illustrato sia dall'episodio mitologico della fine di Atteone, sia dall'immagine di tradizione cabalistica della morte del bacio.

²⁷ Rispettivamente *D. I.*: 1080 (son. 3 nel dial. II/1, v. 14); 1064 (son. 13 nel dial. I/5, v. 8); 963 (son. 3 nel dial. I/1, v. 10).

²⁸ Cfr. Quondam (1975: 63-186) osserva che le opere composte in quei decenni si distinguono soprattutto per fenomeni di accumulo e di amplificazione a livello retorico e per la scelta di nuovi criteri organizzativi per le raccolte di poesie.

poiché non si realizza affatto come un'attività e una riflessione di carattere letterario. Altrettanto poco convincente è considerarla opera di un antipetrarchista. Bruno fu sì antiaccademico e insofferente verso qualsiasi modello, però l'intervento effettuato non ha nulla di quello degli antipetrarchisti. Anche lui difendeva lo strappo dalla norma, il gesto poetologicamente trasgressivo come l'uso di registri espressivi diversi e non di rado bassi, la sovrapposizione di generi, l'accostamento di fonti disparate nello stesso contesto. Gli antipetrarchisti restavano tuttavia in un rapporto comunicativo, seppur polemico e/o ludico, con Petrarca e con i petrarchisti (che furono un loro obiettivo di attacco più di quanto lo fosse Petrarca stesso), mentre Bruno muoveva da ben altre intenzioni. Non fu tale, però, da proporre un nuovo paradigma di poesia.

Che il rapporto del filosofo verso Petrarca non fosse precisamente quello dei petrarchisti è anche la tesi sostenuta da Florian Mehlretter in un articolo in cui presenta l'operazione compiuta dal nolano come una trasformazione della struttura profonda della poesia di Petrarca che comporta ai suoi occhi, come fenomeno centrale, l'instaurarsi di un diverso rapporto fra soggetto-oggetto: mentre nei *RVF* è solo il soggetto esposto a una condizione di scissione interiore, in *De gli eroici furori* tale condizione non è unicamente del soggetto ma anche dell'oggetto.²⁹ Si potrebbe osservare al proposito che non è del tutto corretto parlare in termini di scissione e tantomeno di contraddizione nel caso dell'oggetto verso cui tende il furioso. In gioco è un rapporto di unità nel doppio; Bruno insiste appunto a delineare l'infinito fuori dal tempo e l'infinito nel tempo due modalità del medesimo. Particolarmente istruttiva nell'argomentazione di Mehlretter è piuttosto l'osservazione secondo cui la questione di comprendere come Bruno si situò rispetto alla lirica petrarchesca andrebbe posta considerando quale definizione di petrarchismo, fra quelle proposte in ambito storico-letterario, spieghi meglio l'operazione effettuata in *De gli eroici furori*. Alle definizioni di petrarchismo rispettivamente come relazione contraddistinta dall'assunzione di singole forme del modello, come dialogo col caposcuola o ancora come un sistema comportante un'attualizzazione del modello, preferisce una quarta, secondo la quale il petrarchismo si caratterizzerebbe allo stesso tempo come un dialogo metapoetico con il caposcuola (una relazione di vicinanza) e come innovazione (una relazione di distanza).³⁰ Da parte sua Bruno dunque attualizzerebbe da un lato la lirica di Petrarca, dall'altro non entrerebbe per nulla in dialogo con costui – da qui l'assenza di riferimenti metatestuali; in questo senso egli entrerebbe nello stesso gioco cui prendono parte anche i petrarchisti, ma per condurlo in altro modo.³¹

La singolare posizione tenuta da Bruno rispetto a Petrarca, petrarchisti e antipetrarchisti evidenzia dal punto di vista metodologico che il tentativo di contestualizzare opere innovatrici con categorie rigide d'inclusione o esclusione da un sistema di riferimento diventa una forzatura. Considerata in rapporto all'*opus* del filosofo, questa posizione permette di cogliere, più in generale, il suo libero modo di lavorare sulle fonti, un modo che sembra mettere in pratica una tesi formulata proprio in *De gli eroici furori* secondo cui ogni processo conoscitivo ha necessariamente la propria misura.

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²⁹ Mehlretter 2004: 168.

³⁰ *Ivi*: 174. Mehlretter rimanda al proposito alle tesi di A. Kablitz.

³¹ Mehlretter 2004: 177.

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L'ASCENDANT DU DOUTE HYPERBOLIQUE SUR LE PROTOPROLOGUE DES GRANDES TRAGÉDIES CORNELIENNES

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Synopsis

L'étude présente se propose comme objectif de mettre en relief la fonction du proprotologue qui, en présence de son aspect d'archétype, prend le sens du bloc de construction architecturalement principal dans les drames majeurs de cet auteur. On trouve l'élément du proprotologue dans l'exposition des unités les plus importantes de l'opus de Corneille : Il détermine de façon essentielle l'entière pulsation de ce genre de théâtre, qui, par un chaos apparent, s'équilibre en une perspective rationnelle et cartésienne, typique du rationalisme du 17^{ème} et des siècles suivants. Son facteur déterminant essentiel est le doute hyperbolique, qui ne se suffit pas à lui-même, mais devient l'outil méthodologique de la rationalisation des passions dévastatrices humaines, le tout se déroulant dans le domaine dans lequel la physiologie, au seuil de la nouvelle ère, vient à peine d'entrer, de toucher la frontière ou le contact entre le spirituel et l'organique.

Mots-clefs: Pierre Corneille, René Descartes, Rome, folie, rationalisme, proprotologue, passion, tragédie, physiologie, volonté, mort.

Les œuvres cardinales de Pierre Corneille ont toujours été reconnues par la critique comme la voix rationnelle de l'héritage romain, pour lequel l'approche analytique du monde, prévue pour le maîtriser, constitue l'élément sans lequel il n'y a pas de réelle percée dans aucun de ses moments dramatiques. La passion qui tourne à la folie est d'ailleurs fréquemment l'élément du tragique surtout dans la période du classicisme mature de Corneille. Mais l'auteur évite cet élément dès le début, dans le proprotologue¹ qui, en présence de son aspect d'archétype, prend le sens du bloc de construction architecturalement principal dans ses drames majeurs. On trouve l'élément du proprotologue dans l'exposition des unités les plus importantes de l'opus de Corneille : Il détermine de façon essentielle l'entière pulsation de ce genre de théâtre, qui, par un chaos apparent (et une folie), s'équilibre en une perspective rationnelle et cartésienne,

¹L'expression »proprotologue« vient de la théorie dramatique d'Aristote. Il suit le théâtre depuis ses débuts et en ce sens il en est lui-même son »protoélément«. Comparez : »*The first scene of all, which preceded the entrance of the chorus, was called the proprotologue and its invention is ascribed to Thespis*« (Haigh, A.E. *The Tragic Drama of the Greeks*. New York: Dover, 1968: 350).

typique du rationalisme du 17^{ème} et des siècles suivants. Son facteur déterminant essentiel est le doute hyperbolique, qui ne se suffit pas à lui-même, mais devient l'outil méthodologique de la rationalisation des passions dévastatrices humaines, le tout se déroulant dans le domaine dans lequel la physiologie, au seuil de la nouvelle ère, vient à peine d'entrer, de toucher la frontière ou le contact entre le spirituel et l'organique, c'est à dire la matière physique. De façon inductive, l'*Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*², qui n'est autre que l'analyse des aberrations humaines en Occident, nous apprend déjà les applications externes de ce genre de conduite. Michel Foucault y donna l'affirmation que la folie, en tant que telle, est en fait, une invention de notre époque contemporaine, et avant tout du cartésianisme, qui, en tant que passion reléguée au dernier rang, l'a éliminée de tout type de discours socialo-constitutif. Foucault a d'ailleurs reconnu qu'avec le rationalisme du 17^{ème} siècle français, le pays a commencé à mettre en place des systèmes d'hôpitaux, dans lesquels on isolait les déséquilibrés, comme les autres institutions de sous-cultures les connaissaient jusque là : des bordels aux bandes de mendiants en passant par les hospices pour indigents. En même temps, il enleva à la folie son sens généralisant : Il est vrai que le pays ne s'en est rendu compte qu'au seuil de l'ère moderne et l'a ainsi sanctionnée en tant que telle : mais comme chaque époque lui ajoute son interprétation et son sens il en est de même pour elle que pour le doute cartésien : ce n'est que lorsque l'objet du doute deviendra l'objet de mes pensées³ que je penserai seulement de la folie qu'elle n'existe pas ou autrement : tant que je douterai d'elle, elle existera, et avec elle je serai moi même normal et non-fou.

La critique moderne dirait que ce n'est qu'avec Foucault qu'il a été possible de penser la folie comme partie intégrante de l'exil social : »*Désormais la folie est exilée*«,⁴ et c'est aussi la différence, que l'exégèse contemporaine (ainsi que sa raison) établit à travers Descartes entre Sophocle et Corneille. La raison pour laquelle les héros du poète classique maîtrisent aussi bien leurs passions et, à la différence des tragédies grecques, ne cèdent jamais à leur résultante extrême, la folie, est l'époque moderne et plus précisément le cartésianisme. Ce dernier a percé même plus profondément que les stoïques, qui étaient trop rigides aussi bien pour leur époque qu'aujourd'hui. Suréna, le héros éponyme de la tragédie du même nom,⁵ bien que parfait, a une perfection intentionnelle et non empirique : elle est comme un fait ontologique : on peut y croire, on peut s'efforcer de se persuader soi-même et les autres de son existence potentielle, on ne peut pas la sentir, elle échappe à notre expérience et à nos représentations que l'on se fait d'elle. La passion stoïque est un matériel radioactif doré que Descartes transformera par la suite en une matière maîtrisable, qui prouvera la suprématie de l'Homme sur la nature et surtout sur le monde vivant. Mais on ne peut pas se défaire de l'impression qu'il y a déjà beaucoup de „philosophie“ cartésienne dans le chef parthe. On doit cependant à Erich Auerbach, qui se consacra aux analyses de ce sentiment, également en relation avec la folie, dans son œuvre *Le Culte des passions*, une des meilleures analyses de la passion

² Foucault, Michel: *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*. Paris: Gallimard, 1961. Comparer aussi: Derrida, Jacques. »Cogito et histoire de la folie«. In *L'écriture et la différence*. Paris: Seuil, 1967.

³ Dans cet exemple la tautologie n'est pas possible : douter du doute est une constitution de prédicat incorrecte par le sens.

⁴ Foucault, Michel. *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*: 82.

⁵ Corneille, Pierre. *Théâtre*, III. Paris: Gallimard, 1960: 413.

⁶. Il constatait ainsi que le sage stoïque ne permettra jamais que le monde le domine : c'est que tout contact avec le monde provoquera une contamination : la passion n'est pas seulement contagieuse, mais elle est aussi dangereuse dans son impureté à tous ceux qui se respectent : *passio* deviendra ainsi le contraire de *ratio*. »C'est ainsi que passe à l'arrière plan l'opposition initiale entre *passio* et *actio*, et que *passio* devient l'opposé de *ratio*: aux passions mouvementées s'oppose la quiétude de la raison: mais le mouvement implique une sorte d'activité. Ici, pour la première fois, le mot peut être rendu par notre passion moderne, en partie à cause du mouvement, en partie à cause de l'emporment qu'il suppose toujours pour les stoïciens: ici se constitue l'image des orages et des remous passionnels, et *passio* est souvent remplacé par le terme clairement péjoratif de *perturbatio*».⁷

Le sentiment difficilement contrôlable opposé à la raison et celui-ci opposé à la folie, dont la passerelle de liaison est justement le dernier concept de la citation d'Auerbach («*perturbatio*»), que l'on traduit en „choc, trouble“ est le domaine *Des Passions de l'âme*⁸ de Descartes. Ce débat s'est maintenu dans l'attention également des lecteurs d'aujourd'hui, justement à cause de Corneille, même si ses hypothèses physiologiques et ses théories furent emportées par le temps. On peut lire dans cette œuvre, que la matière cérébrale est liée aux organes sensoriels (les sens), puis aux muscles et au cœur à travers le système nerveux. Celui-ci, le philosophe le comprend comme un ensemble de fins tubules dans lesquels circulent sans cesse des »esprits animaux«,⁹ comme il nomme l'ensemble débridé des souffles, échappements et substances impures qui coulent dans le corps. Notre corps est une machine : son mécanisme de base est la circulation d'une substance jaune, que le cœur chauffe et surtout sa pression est augmentée par les impulsions déclenchées par les sens. Une alerte dans l'environnement extérieur se traduira immédiatement dans tout le corps comme un choc ou une perturbation qui demandera à tout prix une réaction en réponse. Les muscles s'activeront, les articulations se reconnecteront, les membres bougeront, qui seront de ce fait le dernier moteur de l'accomplissement du réflexe de la passion dans le corps. Et enfin, l'être dont la vie et le comportement sont déterminés par les besoins corporels et les instincts, s'enfuira du danger ou bondira hors d'une menace imminente.

Si cette dialectique est entièrement valable pour les animaux, il en est différent pour l'Homme. Celui-ci possède une âme qui est une entité supérieure, liée au corps par une trouvaille sur laquelle on ne peut s'appuyer aujourd'hui. Il s'agit d'une glande particulière *glans pinealis* («glande pinéale»),¹⁰ ou épiphyse aujourd'hui, liée à la sécrétion de la mélatonine, une hormone du sommeil. Intuitivement, Descartes pressentait que la glande pourrait remplir une fonction importante dans l'apaisement (endormissement) de la passion. Le rôle physiologique de cet organe, placé au centre même du cerveau, serait de détecter chaque vapeur de nature animale et de la sublimer.

La glande équipe ensuite l'âme d'une image précise du monde extérieur. La volonté, qui est le mécanisme essentiel des perceptions du classicisme, régle alors

⁶ Auerbach, Erich. *Le Culte des passions*. Paris: Macula, 1998.

⁷ Auerbach, Erich. *Le Culte des passions*, p. 56.

⁸ Descartes, René. *Les Passions de l'âme*. Paris: Flammarion, 1996.

⁹ Descartes, René. *Les Passions de l'âme*: 105.

¹⁰ On peut trouver une représentation graphique de la glande ici : http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glande_pin%C3%A9ale.

les „esprits animaux“ dans le sens qu’ils ne représentent plus de danger à la sensation intégrale de dignité du sujet ainsi conçu.

La passion est active et l’Homme est en relation de subordination à elle jusqu’au moment où ses composantes principales atteignent la glande par l’aqueduc de Sylvius,¹¹ comme le nomma le philosophe. C’est pourquoi, leur nature est étymologiquement active, *patior*, l’Homme est le seul être qui, justement, grâce à cet organe, est capable de maîtriser la nature active (et incontrôlable) de la passion. En comparaison avec le personnage stoïque de Suréna, chef parthe et prototype de la tragédie héroïque de Corneille, la passion cartésienne est non seulement isolée et neutralisée, mais elle est en plus mise en rapport avec la raison. Ce n’est que dans cette relation qu’elle devient une des formes de base de la passion, bonne ou mauvaise.

La palette irisée de la passion est soumise à la raison par le fonctionnement de la glande pinéale. Cependant, on peut voir chez les Hommes différents niveaux de réponse à l’action de la passion : certains sont capables de cela avec une force qui fait envie, tandis que pour d’autres cet art reste inconnu, à la fin se retrouvent ceux qui sont entièrement sous le pouvoir de la passion: des personnes maniaques pour lesquelles une réclusion ou un exil dans un établissement psychiatrique est de mise, comme l’enseignait Foucault et comme l’expliqua Descartes, le premier enfant de l’ère moderne tournée vers la maîtrise de la face obscure de l’être humain. L’asile n’est pas tout à fait un concept cartésien, mais c’est une invention entièrement de notre temps. A l’opposé, il y a »l’homme généreux«, un homme généreux ou noble que *Les Passions de l’âme* définissent de cette manière: »Ainsi je crois que la vraie générosité qui fait qu’un homme s’estime au plus haut point qu’il se peut légitimement estimer, consiste seulement, parti en ce qu’il connaît qu’il n’y a rien qui véritablement lui appartienne que cette libre disposition de ses volontés, ni pourquoi il doive être loué ou blâmé sinon qu’il n’en use bien ou mal, et partie en ce qu’il sent en soi-même une ferme et constante résolution d’en bien user, c’est à dire de ne manquer jamais de volonté pour entreprendre et exécuter toutes les choses qu’il jugera être les meilleures, ce qui est suivre parfaitement la vertu«. ¹²

La générosité fait partie des „grandes âmes“ et sert de remède à tout les types d’aberrations que les passions font naître. Ses supports, les nobles généreux, sont déjà par nature (par la structure physiologique de l’épiphyse et par ses implications dans les zones de rangs inférieurs de la matière cérébrale et d’autres composantes du corps) enclins aux grandes choses. Celles-ci détermine le critère : l’essentiel est que l’Homme conserve une relation correcte de la raison envers la passion, de façon à ce qu’elle lui permette toujours d’avoir la »partie gagnante«. Disposer librement de la volonté qui étouffe même la plus bouillonnante des émotions, fait d’eux les géants de leur génération. Rien ne peut les atteindre.

»Je suis maître de moi comme de l’univers;
Je le suis: je veux l’être. O siècles, o mémoire,
Conservez à jamais ma dernière victoire!
Je triomphe aujourd’hui du plus juste courroux
De qui le souvenir puisse aller jusqu’à vous«. ¹³

¹¹ C’est le canal dorsomédial au dessus du tronc cérébral

¹² Descartes, René. *Les Passions de l’âme*: 129.

¹³ Corneille, Pierre. *Théâtre*. Paris: Gallimard, 1965: 957.

Ainsi le grand Auguste, une des preuves les plus fortes de la force de la raison et de la volonté sur la passion, décrit la différence entre lui et les conspirateurs, qui menacent sa vie dans un brouillard de passion non libre, sans savoir qu'ils pèchent contre eux-mêmes : à la fin, quand ils se convertissent, ils le reconnaissent

L'Homme de Corneille est grand : sa vocation est la noblesse généreuse, et celle-ci est issue des conséquences pratiques d'une physiologie théorique, qui n'est d'ailleurs utilisable aujourd'hui que comme matériel d'archives. La grandeur des personnages de Corneille, malgré du concept scientifique qui a fait son temps, provient de la maîtrise : Ceci donne une double résultante, la maîtrise de l'Homme en lui-même et comme le dit Auguste, „*Je suis le maître du monde et je règne sur moi-même*“ le monde aussi. C'est seulement grâce à ce mécanisme que l'on peut expliquer pourquoi le fatal protoprologue s'établit toujours de manière à ce que la stature intégrale du héros n'est jamais remise en question. Au contraire, on a plusieurs fois l'impression qu'elle est même renforcée parfois malgré la mort. Dans ce sens on peut suivre un intéressant *gradatio in maius* qui suit la ligne Auguste – Pompée – Suréna.

Mais les leviers physiologiques seuls ne seraient pas suffisants pour aligner complètement les géants avec la ligne idéale de la générosité noble. Une lecture approfondie nous dévoile donc que la thèse de l'influence de l'épiphyse sur le fonctionnement de l'Homme n'est qu'une formulation plus maladroite des autres idées cartésiennes, qui se sont toutes transférées dans les drames cornéliens et surtout dans la mentalité de l'ère moderne.

Au cœur du rapport entre les sources animales et spirituelles, qui se régule par l'intermédiaire de la fameuse glande, se trouve une connaissance du dualisme, de la dualité. La dualité est établie selon le principe de proportionnalité et ne permet pas d'apaisement. Cette phrase pourrait servir également de synopsis pour expliquer l'essentiel de la matière de l'opus de Corneille. On peut comprendre l'essence du système méthodologique de Descartes comme une exclusion de tous les facteurs qui ne sont pas reliés à la raison et de ce fait invérifiables de la façon gnoséologique la plus exclusive, c'est à dire le doute. C'est justement le doute cartésien qui est la base du *cogito*, or celui-ci n'est possible qu'à partir du moment où le sujet pensant rejette toutes les impulsions cognitives comme éventuellement inspirées d'un esprit malin : au terme d'une réduction aussi complète, il lui reste le moi pensant, support de l'opération et son produit : le doute. »*Il n'y a donc point de doute que je suis, s'il me trompe; et qu'il me trompe tant qu'il voudra, il ne saurait jamais faire que je ne sois rien, tant que je penserai être quelque chose. De sorte qu'après y avoir bien pensé, et avoir soigneusement examiné toutes choses, enfin il faut conclure, et tenir pour constant que cette proposition: Je suis, j'existe, est nécessairement vraie, toutes les fois que je la prononce ou que je la conçois en mon esprit*«. ¹⁴ Le sujet pensant est alors devenu, avec l'action de penser (le doute étant l'opération de l'esprit), la dernière base de la réalité, la première autorité de la connaissance au delà de laquelle il n'y a plus rien.

¹⁴ Descartes, René. *Méditations métaphysiques*. Paris: Flammarion, 2011: 73. Descartes à écrit à ce sujet plusieurs fois : au coeur de la guerre de trente ans, le 10. novembre 1619, auprès d'un poêle chaud quelque part au centre de l'Allemagne, à moitié assoupi, un tentateur lui apparaît et le persuade que tout ce qu'il vit est une illusion : c'est là que naquit sa méthode qui ventilerait le système de pensée occidental.

C'est pour ainsi dire l'homonyme du drame auquel l'analyse présente se consacre. L'Homme n'est pas seulement grand parce que des glandes le protègent d'un dérapage dans la bestialité : sa grandeur est le produit d'un soupèsément, mais avant tout du doute hyperbolique de solutions potentielles et de la situation donnée. Il est caractéristique pour celle-ci qu'elle soit tout sauf simple et facile. Au contraire, elle est tellement détournée que les critiques ont plusieurs fois reproché au poète l'invéraisemblance ou l'improbabilité de sa matière fabulative, de sorte qu'il a dû finalement se réfugier dans la légende pour répondre à ce problème aux critiques et surtout au postulateur de l'art classique »*Le vrai peut quelques fois n'être pas vraisemblable*«. ¹⁵ Les protagonistes de ses tragédies se retrouvent en règle générale dans des situations où ils doivent repousser le doute existentiel au point de rester seul, dans leur pensée : *cogito* signifiera alors aussi un levier d'Archimède avec lequel ils tourneront, dans la suite, le protoprologue à leur avantage. Le héros cornélien est le sujet pensant du doute expansif en tout à part en lui-même. Il s'établit entièrement justement dans la différence qui s'aligne sur celle que Descartes utilisait pour justifier la pensée de la nouvelle ère et de son support.

Plus la situation est impossible, plus fort *dubito* résonnera dans les termes des protagonistes ; il formera le *cogito* de l'histoire dramatique dans sa synthèse philosophique aussi inhabituelle également pour notre époque. Don Rodrigue vengera la gifle que son futur beau père infligea à son père. Il battra celui-ci lors d'un duel pour ensuite plonger dans la question clé de ce qui est le plus important entre l'honneur ou l'amour. Il émettra un doute si puissant envers tout (de même que son élue), que leurs êtres (sociologique, érotique et aussi métaphysique) s'effaceront face à tout, sauf devant le fait que Rodrigue (et Chimène) effectuent une opération de l'esprit avec laquelle ils recentrent l'intégralité de la réalité physique et conceptuelle vers un seul dilemme du sujet pensant concrètement pour ce cas, de même qu'en général : L'honneur passe devant l'amour et avant lui il y a le devoir, le code, *lex*. Pour les protagonistes de la tragicomédie éponyme *Le Cid*, il existera le doute de tout, sauf de la pensée créée par une déterminante de base.

Emilia sera le générateur de toute l'histoire dans *Cinna* (ou la Clémence d'Auguste). La première information que le lecteur reçoit à son sujet est justement le doute. Dans l'exposé présent nous avons inclus l'intégralité du protoprologue de la plus grande tragédie romaine : nous pourrions inclure encore plus de vers, tellement qu'ils reflètent directement tous le noyau du doute selon la position de l'héroïne. Personne ne pourrait, pour ainsi dire, douter d'avantage de sa famille, son origine, la justesse de son comportement en rapport avec son père, Auguste et son amant, qu'Emilia. Citons propédeutique du doute dans son intégralité :

»*Durant quelques moments souffrez que je respire,
Et que je considère, en l'état où je suis,
Et ce que je hasarde, et ce que je poursuis.
Quand je regarde Auguste au milieu de sa gloire,
Et que vous reprochez à ma triste mémoire*

¹⁵ Boileau, Nicolas. *L'Art poétique*. Paris: Garnier, 1961: 172.

*Que par sa propre main mon père massacré
Du trône où je le vois fait le premier degré
Quand vous me présentez cette sanglante image,
La cause de ma haine, et l'effet de sa rage,
Je m'abandonne toute à vos ardents transports,
Et crois, pour une mort, lui devoir mille morts.
Au milieu toutefois d'une fureur si juste,
J'aime encore plus Cinna que je ne hais Auguste,
Et je sens refroidir ce bouillant mouvement
Quand il faut, pour le suivre, exposer mon amant.
Oui, Cinna contre moi même je m'irrite
Quand je songe aux dangers où je te précipite.
Quoique pour me servir tu n'appréhends rien,
Te demander du sang, c'est exposer le tien».¹⁶*

Le *cogito* d'Emilia met ainsi tout à l'envers sauf la synthèse d'Auguste. Après la phrase la plus connue de l'auteur dramatique:

*»Je suis maître de moi comme de l'univers;
Je le suis: je veux l'être. O siècles, ô mémoire,
Conservez à jamais ma dernière victoire!
Je triomphe aujourd'hui du plus juste courroux»¹⁷*

la synthèse d'Emilia est aussi:

*Est-il-perte à ce prix qui ne semble légère?
Et quand son assassin tombe sous notre effort,
Doit-on considérer ce que coûte sa mort?»¹⁸*

seulement le produit d'une pensée, qui n'est, à la fin tournée que sur elle-même, en fonction de son propre point de départ épistémologique. Le doute et la raison étouffent tout sentiment et passion même s'ils visent le plus grand défi dans l'univers connu alors, la mort du dirigeant absolu, et sont l'outil le plus grand contre la folie. Cette attitude est le contenu du protoprologue.

Le doute hyperbolique apparaît de façon encore plus forte dans la tragédie qui est intégralement consacrée à la relation dont la propriété première est d'exclure la probabilité d'une conclusion sur la certitude de quelque chose.

Il n'y a pas de point de support dans *Horace*, rien de solide, de définitif, en réalité tout est inversé, de la même manière que cela c'est passé dans l'histoire où Descartes était tenté par l'esprit malin¹⁹. Corneille a placé cela sur la base logique et délicate, là où il semble que même le doute devient déficient. Le sujet de la tragédie est le conflit entre

¹⁶ Corneille, Pierre, *Théâtre*: 902.

¹⁷ Cité *supra*.

¹⁸ Corneille, Pierre, *Théâtre*: 903.

¹⁹ Comparez la note 14.

Albe et Rome, ce qui signifie le conflit de sang le plus proche, généralisé aussi bien sur des personnes représentatives que sur l'histoire elle-même. C'est qu'Albe était la mère de Rome. Numitor était autrefois son roi mais son frère Amule le renversa du trône. La fille de Numitor était ensuite promise à la vie de vestale : elle ne devait pas se marier ou avoir d'enfants. Mais quand le dieu de la guerre, Mars, tomba amoureux d'elle, elle conçut et donna naissance à des jumeaux : l'un d'eux est invoqué directement par le monologue de Sabine dans le début de la tragédie. L'oncle mura vivante la mère,²⁰ mais épargna les enfants comme ils étaient issus de sang divin. Romulus et Remus ont été – selon la légende – abandonnés dans un panier en osier dans le Tibre. Ils échouèrent sur la côte où ils furent nourris au début par une louve, puis par la famille d'un paysan. Ils se vengèrent d'Amule lorsqu'ils devinrent adultes et remirent le grand-père Numitor sur le trône. En même temps, ils constatèrent qu'*Alba longa* était trop petite pour leurs ambitions, c'est pourquoi ils colonisèrent chacun une des collines de ce qui seront plus tard les sept collines de la ville éternelle. Romulus survécut à Remus, car il le tua après un sacrifice. Il reconnut plus tard que ce qu'il avait fait était une erreur et l'enterra avec dignité. Ce n'est qu'avec ce point de vue que le protoprologue d'Horace devient le prolégomène exhaustif de la philosophie cartésienne, ce qui est d'autant plus évident si l'on prend en compte l'ébauche de l'histoire : l'histoire romaine a commencé avec le sang fraternel versé.

*»Je suis Romaine, hélas! Puisque Horace est Romain;
J'en ai reçu le titre en recevant sa main;
Mais ce nœud me tiendrai en esclave enchaînée
S'il m'empêchait de voir en quels lieux je sois née.
Albe, où j'ai commencé de respirer le jour,
Albe, mon cher pays, et mon premier amour,
Lorsqu'entre nous et toi je vois la guerre ouverte,
Je crains notre victoire tant que notre perte.
Rome, si tu te plains que c'est là te trahir,
Fais-toi des ennemis que je puisse haïr.
Quand je vois de tes murs leur armée et la nôtre,
Mes trois frères dans l'une et mon mari dans l'autre,
Puis-je former des vœux et sans impiété
Importuner le ciel pour ta félicité«.*²¹

Et cet effusion de sang continue dans l'opposition du doute raisonné contre la base de passion et de folie, que l'on pourrait nommer pour le besoins présent le *sexus* incestueux, si l'épithète, ne signifie pas pour nous l'inceste, mais une action encore plus futile, celle de verser le sang de son parent. Sabine, à cause de son nom, implique la première action du fondateur de Rome, lorsqu'il lui vint à manquer de matériel pour la »reproduction«. A l'occasion de la fête de Neptune, »*consualia*«, il invita dans la ville les habitants des lieux voisins, dont également les Sabines avec les femmes et les filles.

²⁰ Cet exemple semble être une allusion à Antigone de Sophocle et son destin : c'est une sorte de reflet selon le principe antique *eros thanatos* : l'une est murée car elle célèbre la mort, et l'autre parce qu'elle apporte la vie.

²¹ Corneille, Pierre, *Théâtre*: 838.

Lorsque le rituel religieux détournait leur attention, les soldats de Romulus s'accaparèrent des femmes et les enlevèrent.²² C'est qu'à cette époque, Rome manquait justement de membres du sexe faible et la ville ne pouvait pas grandir au delà de ses frontières.

Sabine, des alexandrins cités ci-dessus, est comme si elle revivait de façon éponyme le destin de ses demi-sœurs du 8ème siècle avant le Christ. »L'enlevée« de la ville de Romulus, comme elle le supplie elle-même, est devenue l'élément constitutif²³ du nouveau royaume, tout comme jadis ses sœurs dans le désespoir. Ceci déjà est la première impulsion du doute : le second est le pressentiment d'une guerre fratricide qui a lié Romulus et Remus en un destin commun. La vie d'un des frères jumeaux finit sous la pelle assénée de la main même de son frère sur sa nuque. L'ensemble exprime le vers »*Tu oses transpercer le cœur de la mère*«, ce qui est *gradatio in maius* distinct et la grande trouvaille de Sabine. En dehors de l'enlèvement, du viol, de l'inceste, du fratricide et du meurtre de son oncle²⁴ c'est maintenant le tour de la forme la plus grave de parricide, c'est-à-dire l'assassinat de la mère. Comment un homme raisonné pourrait, face à cela, agir différemment que le philosophe, lors de cette nuit au centre de l'Allemagne, lorsque tout lui semblait si vide de sens que le doute en toute chose était le seul chemin vers la lumière ? Et ceci est l'état émotionnel de base de Sabine dans le prologue d'Horace. Même la foi en le plus sacré, en Dieu et les divinités ne l'arrête pas, comme en témoignent ces trois vers :

»Bien loin de m'opposer à cette noble ardeur,
Qui suit l'arrêt des Dieux et court à ta grandeur,
Je voudrais déjà voir tes troupes couronnées,
D'un pas victorieux franchir les Pyrénées,
Va jusqu'en l'Orient pousser tes bataillons;
Va sur le bord de Rhin planter tes pavillons;
Fais trembler sous tes pas les colonnes d'Hercule«.²⁵

Ceux-ci en sont la contradiction puisque l'on ne peut pas remplir les commandements des dieux avec une désobéissance diamétrale : c'est que Sabine appelle Rome à partir »vers l'Est« : alors que les divinités l'envoyèrent dans la direction opposée. Il s'agit d'un doute hyperbolique intégral, où tout est flou sauf le *cogito*.

La continuation du drame aussi signifie l'expérience du doute radical : la figure emblématique et la copie directe de la position intellectuelle de Sabine est sa belle sœur, Camille. Celle-ci effectue seulement un pas de plus de la pensée théorique à la réalisation pratique du doute : au prix de sa vie, elle rejette le résultat de la bataille et le triomphe romain : si elle reconnaissait une telle réalité, elle se trahirait elle-même et le *cogito* qui la place, en tant qu'être pensant, au dessus de l'ordre contingent des choses dans le monde.

C'est comme si tout ce qui suit ensuite dans la tragédie, confirmerait la connaissance cartésienne. Les forces qui tirent dans le sens contraire sont d'ailleurs tellement en désaccord avec la première phrase du *Discours de la méthode* de Descartes: »*Le bon*

²² Ils tuèrent principalement les hommes.

²³ C'est le matériel de reproduction.

²⁴ L'expression latine est *avunculicidus* – Les jumeaux tuent le frère de leur père, Amule.

²⁵ Corneille, Pierre, *Théâtre*: 838.

sens est la chose du monde la mieux partagée»,²⁶ que Corneille a dû baser la plausibilité de son histoire non pas sur une réalité de vie mais sur l'authenticité de la légende de Livie. Peut-on attendre que le père (le vieux Horace), lorsqu'il apprend que son fils est le dernier survivant de la bataille, maudirait celui-ci pour couardise ? Est-il possible qu'ensuite le jeune Horace, survivant miraculé, vaincrait les Curiaces absolument seul et tuerait sa sœur ? Est-ce que c'est ensuite plausible que le vieil Horace fêterait cette fois-ci ses actions ? Et ensuite : qu'il obtiendrait pour lui une grâce de l'empereur Tulle ? Et finalement, que ce dernier comprendrait tout cela et conclurait de façon heureuse cette histoire totalement malheureuse ?

Ainsi on arrive à la conclusion qui accompagne les tragédies de Corneille. La sortie du prologue n'a qu'un sens secondaire en comparaison avec le dilemme de base que ce dernier établit.²⁷ *La mort de Pompée* est l'exemple gradué du même genre. Au tout début, on trouve le doute hyperbolique. Photin, Achillas, Ptolomée et Septime débattent de toutes leurs forces sur l'attitude à adopter. Ne rien faire ? Cacher le chef militaire ? Le sauver ? Le livrer à César ? Le tuer ?

*»C'est de quoi, mes amis, nous avons à résoudre.
Il apporte en ces lieux les palmes ou la foudre:
S'il couronna le père, il hasarde le fils;
Et nous l'ayant donnée, il expose Memphis.
Il faut le recevoir, ou hâter son supplice,
Le suivre ou le pousser dedans le précipice.
L'un me semble peu sûr, l'autre peu généreux,
Et je crains d'être injuste, et d'être malheureux.
Quoi que je fasse enfin, la fortune ennemie
M'offre bien des périls, ou beaucoup d'infamie:
C'est à moi de choisir, c'est à vous d'aviser
A quel choix vos conseils doivent me disposer.
Il s'agit de Pompée, et nous aurons la gloire
D'achever de César ou troubler la victoire:
Et je puis dire enfin que jamais potentat
N'eut à délibérer d'un si grand coup d'État».*²⁸

Finalement, ils décident de faire un attentat: les avis sont que Cléopâtre se rapproche trop de César pour pouvoir laisser Pompée en vie. De ce fait, ils le tuent. Toute

²⁶ Descartes, René. *Discours de la méthode*. Paris: Flammarion, 1996: 33.

²⁷ *Le Cid*, que nous n'avons cité qu'en introduction, est le jumeau dramaturgique d'Horace. Basé sur le doute radical des personnes dans des situations identiquement impossibles comme le sont Camille et Sabine. A la fin, la solution est aussi provisoire : *Le deus ex machina* apporte le dénouement voulu qui tourne la tragédie en tragi-comédie. S'il y a des drames qui se ressemblent vraiment, ce sont ces deux là. Chimène et Rodrigue doutent et réfléchissent sans cesse sur la possibilité qui est la plus adaptée pour le futur. Sur la base de cette «vivisection» d'alternatives se forme leur identité, se confirme leur sentiment mutuel et renforce la conscience d'autonomie du sujet. Bien que *Le Cid* mérite une analyse au début du texte, on ne désigne le problème que dans la partie marginale. Que l'étude sur le phénomène de Jean Racine, écrit par Roland Barthes, serve d'excuse (Barthes, Roland. *Sur Racine* Paris: Seuil, 1963). De nombreuses affirmations de base sur la structure psycho-historique des drames de Racine y sont traitées sous forme de notes.

²⁸ Corneille, Pierre, *Théâtre*: 1050.

l'action sera ensuite tournée en arrière par César : Il le retournera littéralement au protoprologue et lavera l'honneur du chef assassiné. Le premier vers nous dirige littéralement dans ce sens, comme suit : *«Il est juste, et César est tout prêt de vous rendre / ce reste où vous avez tant de droit de prétendre»*²⁹

César remet ainsi les choses du monde dans leur état initial : Ceci est l'une des manières qu'on a déjà vue dans *Le Cid*, *Polyeucte* et *Horace* : c'est la méthode complémentaire pour faire revenir les choses à leur point de départ intégral. Ici, il possède aussi cette propriété supplémentaire montrant qu'il s'agit d'un double doute. La plus haute autorité du monde de l'époque place ce que pense Ptolémée et ses conspirateurs dans le point de départ radical de négation (donc le doute). Comme si le drame n'avait jamais eu lieu.

Le rationalisme, basé sur le scepticisme d'un côté et sur la représentation de la «noblesse généreuse» de l'autre, n'est pas visible uniquement dans les postulats physiologiques, les questions sur le dualisme philosophique : *res cogitans versus res extensis* ou la chose pensante (*cogito*) en opposition à la matière animale, et ensuite dans le doute méthodique qui mène le sujet pensant, mais représente l'appareil d'expression de la totalité des figures de Corneille, du moins de celles pour lesquelles s'applique que l'hypophyse étouffe l'impulsivité impure et les oriente vers l'idéal de la grandeur parfaite.³⁰ Il est aussi reconnaissable en ce qui concerne les quatre règles (la procédure planifiée). Une fois que le doute est arrivé au *tabulae rasae* de ce qu'il a dû supprimer comme étant un fantasme de la connaissance, le *cogito* a orienté la méthodologie de sa connaissance vers le chemin de la rationalisation des objets de connaissance. Il est arrivé ici au point clé qu'il a défini dans le sens que la pensée sans objet ne peut exister : L'Homme pensant s'établit donc dans le doute et ce dernier dans l'objet de la pensée : *«Nulle pensée sans objet»*.³¹ La règle de l'analyse est aussi la règle première des drames de Corneille, ou du moins de ses protoprologues. Toutes les figures de ce théâtre cherchent un objet sur lequel elles appliqueraient leur stature d'identité. Le mot «objet» qui est aussi important que la relation relative à la dernière phrase subordonnée, est la composante clé des drames de Corneille. *«Digne objet de ma gloire»* est la phrase qui résonne un nombre incalculable de fois dans ses drames. Le message qu'il apporte est simple à comprendre : le nouveau sujet doit s'établir dans le monde objectif, c'est pourquoi il cherche l'objet de sa réalisation. On pourrait ici de nouveau tout recommencer depuis le début, revenir à Chimène et Rodrigue, doubler cela sur Horace, arriver à la relation entre César et la veuve de Pompée et nous retrouverions toujours la même situation.

Celle-ci pourrait bien présenter l'enjeu dialectique de ce type du théâtre et mettre en question l'idée du tragique dans l'oeuvre cornélienne.

²⁹ Corneille, Pierre, *Théâtre*: 1102.

³⁰ Ils ne sont pas tous ainsi – En accord avec les convictions de Descartes – : Emilie, Ptolémée, Don Gomes, Felix et les autres. Ceux-ci sont restés au niveau de l'humanoïde qui est plus proche du monde animal qu'il n'y paraît.

³¹ Cette expression est l'une des formules de Descartes, elle signifie cependant la même chose que ce qu'indiquent les lignes précédentes.

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SUMMARIES IN SLOVENE – POVZETKI V SLOVENŠČINI

UDK 821.111(540)–4.09Rushdie S.

Silvia Albertazzi

“LOCIRANJE BRAZILIJE” SALMANA RUSHDIEJA. IZMIŠLJENE DEŽELE FANTASTIČNE KNJIŽEVNOSTI

Salman Rushdie je leta 1958 objavil dolgo recenzijo fima Rerryja Gilliama Brazilija, ki je bil nato objavljen v Rushdiejevi zbirki *Imaginary Homelands*. Članek kaže na dejstvo, da lahko ta Rushdiejev prispevek obravnavamo kot svojevrsten manifesto njegove poetike, ki temelji na ideji politične uporabe fantastičnega in njegovega concepta migranta kot centralne figure modernosti. Rushdiejeve teorije po eni strani anticipirajo ideje Deleuza in Guattarija o minornih književnostih in, po drugi, poglede Arjuna Appadurajia na “modernizem v širšem smislu”.

UDK 82(100)–31.091«18«:791.43«1987/1999«

Naomi Segal

HČERKE, SMRT IN STRAST V FILMIH *FATAL ATTRACTION*, *THE PIANO* IN *THE TALENTED MR RIPLEY*

Ojdipovski princip, ki je značilen za ‘prešuštniški’ roman 19. stoletja je uspešno preživel in našel pot v pripovedno prozo dvajsetega stoletja, kot kažeta dva filma s konca prejšnjega stoletja, *Fatal Attraction* (1978) in *The Piano* (1993). V obeh primerih postane zakon razrvan zaradi strasti outsiderja. Članek se prične z omenjeno primerjavo filmov, nato pa se posveti še tretjemu primeru sicer nekoliko drugačne triangulacije, filmu *The Talented Mr Ripley* (1999).

Melita Novak

POSTFEMINISTIČNA KONSTRUKCIJA ŽENSKÉ SEKSUALNOSTI V DRAMI *THE VILLAGE BIKE* AVTORICE PENELOPE SKINNER

Članek obravnava dramo *The Village Bike* britanske avtorice Penelope Skinner. Drama obravnava nosečnost in spolnost ter se dotika mnogih perečih tem, kot sta pornografija in seksualna 'svoboda'. Omenjeni temi nekritično obravnava in jim dodeljuje status neizprašanosti. Še celo več, drama favorizira umetno grajene družbeno-spolne konstrukte in norme ter (natančno) določeno prezentacijo zgoraj omenjene tematike. V članku se osredotočim predvsem na pornografizacijo, objektifikacijo ter seksualno 'svobodo' in razložim zakaj v omenjeni drami obravnava le-teh spada pod okrilje postfeminizma. Namreč, sodobna britanska dramatika izpod peres ženskih avtoric ne sledi feministični ideologiji in se od nje korenito odmika, kljub temu, da hkrati zatrjuje, da je njen status pro-feminističen ali celo feminističen. Penelope Skinner je ena takih sodobnih avtoric. V članku skušam pokazati, da je njena drama navkljub videzu provokativnosti, pravzaprav samo ponavljanje konstruktov ter le podpira status quo, saj 'provokacija' v dotični drami ni zastavljena kritično. Drama *The Village Bike* pripada postfeministični ideologiji predvsem, ker popularizira pornografijo in zastopa nekakšno seksualno 'svobodo', ki pa to pravzaprav ni.

UDK 82.02«18/20«

Abdulla Al-Dabbagh

PROTIROMANTIČNI ODZIV V MODERNI(STIČNI) LITERARNI KRITIKI

Negativen modernistični odziv na realizem je bil doslej pogosto obravnavan, medtem ko je bilo njegovo vehementno zavračanje romantike kritiško slabo obdelano. Čeprav je po eni strani modernizem sprejemal realizem oirova vsaj njegovo 'naturalistično' inačico, je bila njegova antipatija do osnov romantike absolutna. To je bil modernistični trend, ki je zajemal tako književnost kot tudi kritiko in modernistična značilnost, ki je segala od nemških filozofov, francoskih pesnikov, do britanskih in ameriških profesorjev književnosti.

UDK 821.163.6(71)–31.09Kramolc T.

Igor Maver

SLOVENSKA DIASPORIČNA KNJIŽEVNOST V KANADI IN TED KRAMOLC

Članek predstavlja delo in posebej njegove romane kanadskega pisatelja slovenskih korenin, Teda Kramolca. Postavlja ga v kontekst drugih književnih ustvarjalcev v Kanadi in tudi v slovenskem kulturnem prostoru ter obravnava kritični odziv na njegovo delo, predvsem v času po slovenski osamosvojitvi.

UDK 821.131.1–32.09Boccaccio G.

UDK 821.112.2–223.09Sachs H.

Marija Javor Briški

LJUBOSUMJE IN ŽENSKA UKANA. BOCCACCIOV *DEKAMERON* IN NJEGOVA RECEPCIJA V ZGODNJEM NOvem VEKU NA PRIMERU PUSTNE IGRE *DER GROSS EYFERER*, *DER SEIN WEIB BEICHT HÖRET* HANSA SACHSA

Na osnovi t. i. Zainerjevega (ok. 1476) in Cammerlandovega tiska (1535) avtorica preučuje produktivno recepcijo pete novele sedmega dne Boccacciovega *Dekameron*a in pustne igre *Der gross Eiferer, der sein Weib Beicht höret* Hansa Sachsa. V središču kontrastivne analize novele in pustne igre sta afekt ljubosumja in motiv ukane. Vzroka za transformacije v dramskem besedilu Hansa Sachsa sta med drugim dekontekstualizacija novele ter njena instrumentalizacija kot pragmatični nauk zgodnje-meščanske družbe na področju reda v zakonskem življenju.

UDK 821.112.2(494)–31.09Hug A.

UDK 821.112.2(=161.1)–31.09Bronsky A

Barbara Jesenovec

MED ODKLONOM IN STEREOTIPOM: FIGURA BABICE V SODOBNIH NEMŠKOGOVOREČIH ROMANIH *LADY BERTA* ANNETTE HUG IN *DIE SCHÄRFSTEN GERICHTE DER TATARISCHEN KÜCHE* ALINE BRONSKY

Namen prispevka je analiza literarnega lika babice v dveh modernih romanih iz nemškega jezikovnega območja, in sicer v romanu *Lady Berta* pisateljice Annette Hug ter *Die schärfsten Gerichte der tatarischen Küche* Aline Bronsky. Najprej je predstavljen proces zgodovinsko-socialnega razvoja vloge starih staršev s poudarkom na razvoju vloge

babice. Zgodovinski in sociološki pregled predstavlja podlago za analizo literarnih podob babice. Poudarek analize je na primerjavi modernih literarnih reprezentacij babic s tradicionalno oz. pričakovano podobo.

UDK 821.131.1–96.09Bruno G.

UDK 821.131.1–1.09Petrarca F.

Patrizia Farinelli

MED POLEMIKO IN RESEMANTIZACIJO: POLOŽAJ G. BRUNA GLEDE NA PETRARKO, PETRARKISTE TER ANTIPETRARKISTE

Gnoseološka refleksija Giordana Bruna je v delu *De gli eroici furori* (1585) v veliki meri oblikovana z uporabo ekspresivnih struktur in podob poezije, ki ponovno vodi do Petrarke in toka, ki se navezuje nanj. Glede na to hipotezo bi takšno izbiro lahko pojasnile zlasti strukturne analogije med fenomenologijo ljubezni, ki se prikazuje v Petrarkovi poeziji, in Brunovim pojmovanjem odnosa, ki povezuje spoznavajoči subjekt in spoznavni objekt (Eno neskončno). Čeprav je Bruno v nasprotju s svojimi nameni na koncu vendarle dejansko poudaril neko filozofično vrednost v Petrarkovi liriki, ni bil pripravljen priznati, da ima sam kakršno koli zvezo s takšno tradicijo. Njegovo radikalno zavračanje Petrarke in tistih, ki so ga posnemali in parodirali – temu so posvečene uvodne strani –, kaže predvsem na potrebo po razlikovanju med lastnim objektom proučevanja in posvetno liriko, ki je bila najbolj razširjena v njegovem stoletju (pa tudi lirika *tout court*). Četudi ne gledamo na polemičen položaj avtorja, da bi raje doumeli tisto, kar izhaja iz samega besedila, se možnost, da bi Bruna obravnavali v tolikšni meri kot petrarkista kakor tudi kot antipetrarkista, še vedno izmika, kajti adaptacija in resemantizacija lirskega koda v filozofskem smislu se v Brunovem primeru umeščata na poseben način v primerjavi s tedaj razširjeno zvezo med *imitation*, *inventiom* in *emulation*. Splošneje povedano, ker se umeščata izven književne komunikacije. Ta kod v njegovo delo vstopa predvsem v kognitivni funkciji.

UDK 821.133.1–21.09Corneille P.

Boštjan Marko Turk

VPLIV HIPERBOLIČNEGA DVOMA NA PROTOPROLOG VELIKIH CORNEILLEVIH TRAGEDIJ

Pierre Corneille je v ekspoziciji svojih najpomembnejših tragedij uporabljal element protoprologa, ki ga je prvi strukuturno umestil v literarno teorijo Aristotel. Ta s pomočjo hiperboličnega dvoma, utemeljenega na kartezijskem racionalizmu omogoča poravnati staturo tragičnega dogajanja stran od katastrofe, tako pa zastavlja vprašanje po vlogi samega tragičnega v Corneillevem delu.

