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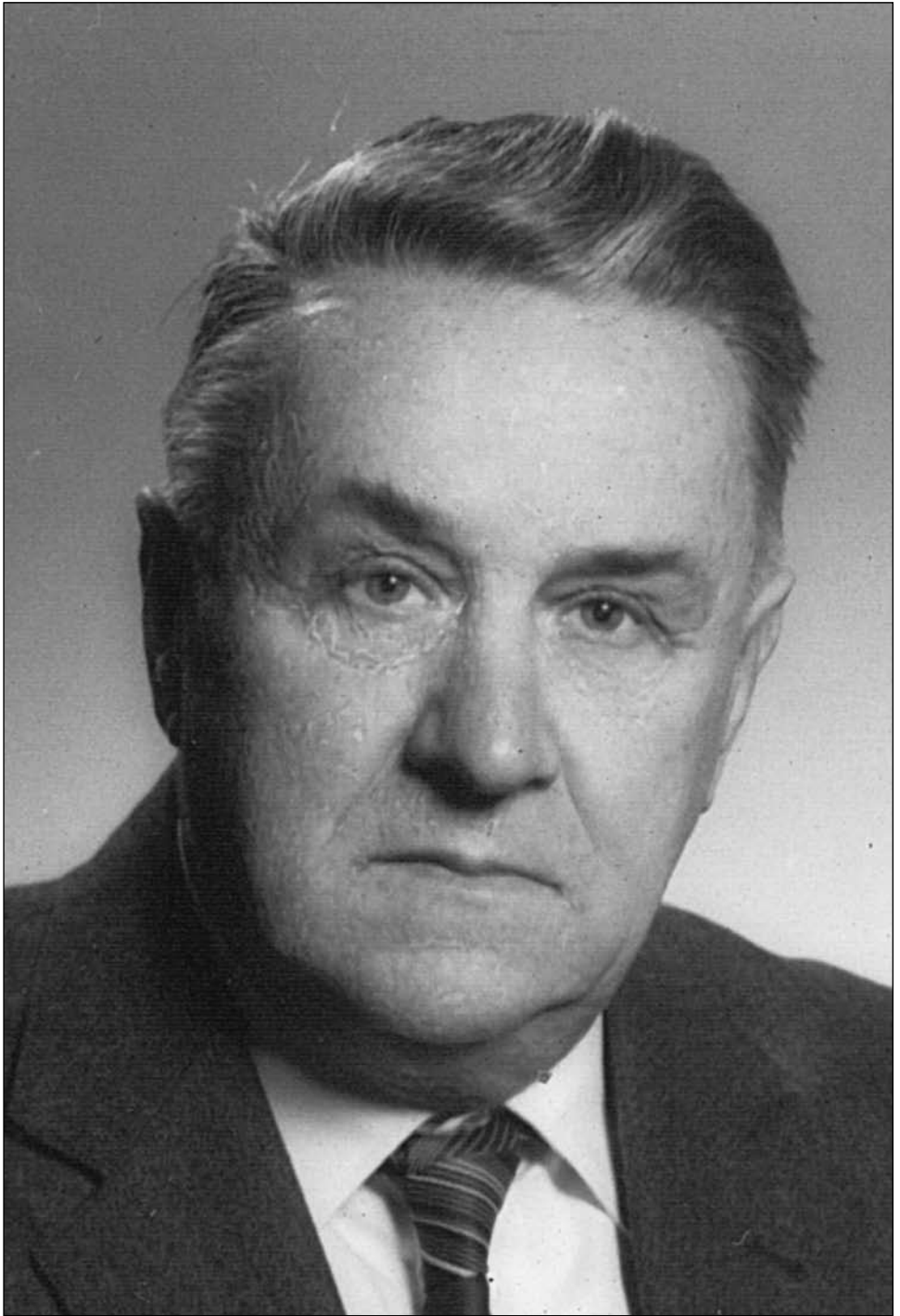
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JANEZ STANONIK – NONOGENARIAN

On January 2, 2012, Professor Janez Stanonik, Ph.D, regular member of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts (SAZU), celebrated his ninetieth birthday. He is still very active and has recently written two studies on the names of three Slovene rivers, Mislinja, Hudinja and Voglajna. These rivers run in the Štajerska region (Styria) in Slovenia. In this connection I wish to make two observations, first, the rivers create a typical landscape near the town of Celje, where Janez spent his youth, and secondly, they bring back his initial scholarly interest, which is linked with his etymological, historical and linguistic research. In these studies he does not limit his investigation only to language problems, but interprets the names of these rivers within broader historical, social and religious aspects, namely, with the old Slavic settlement of this region and with its social significance.

Stanonik's name is, of course, most closely connected with the scholarly review *Acta Neophilologica*, which he founded in 1968, and in which his followers try to keep its original orientation including the initial professional standards. We try to publish *AN* regularly, although the times are not always propitious for such endeavours.

Twelve years ago I presented an account of Stanonik's pedagogical and scholarly achievements ("Thirty-two years of *Acta Neophilologica* – with gratitude to its founder and editor Professor Janez Stanonik", 33,1-2 (2000): 3-5), in which I have also mentioned his various duties: he was not only professor of English and American literature but also the Head of the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures at the Faculty of Arts, the dean of the Faculty of Arts, as well as a member of various professional bodies set up by the University of Ljubljana.

Janez Stanonik has had, no doubt, a very rich professional life. However, he is also very pleased that at his present age he has not lost his interest in the field in which he was actively engaged in the past and to which he contributed several books and a number of scholarly studies. Let me therefore wish him on behalf of his former students, colleagues and friends, and on my own behalf, many more healthy and fruitful years.

Ljubljana, October 2012

Mirko Jurak

ARTISTIC VS. POPULAR ELEMENTS IN PAUL LARIC'S NOVEL *MARIBOR REMEMBERED*

Jerneja Petrič

Abstract

The article discusses Paul Laric's *Maribor Remembered* (1989) as a hybrid novel in terms of genre and artistic value. Essentially a detective novel, it also includes ethnic elements and humor as well as satire used to alleviate the growing tension as the elements of foul play multiply. Other elements, such as minute descriptions of Slovenian cuisine, or portrayal of Slovenian landscape further confirm the mixed-genre thesis.

Key words: Paul Laric, popular fiction, hybrid novel, WW 2, *Maribor Remembered*

1. INTRODUCTION

A debate over the value of so-called popular novel has been going on for quite some time. After all, even Henry James complained in *The Art of Fiction* about the intrusion of popular art, such as represented by the novels of Robert Louis Stevenson, in the sacred field of high art (Gelder 16). Most literary critics nowadays more or less agree about popular literature as being genre literature including such diverse genres as cowboy, western or science fiction novel, romance, crime and detective novel, thriller, mystery, etc. Neuburg brings in comics as well (7). Whereas for some "popular" is a synonym for "second-rate", "trash", "pulp" etc.¹ others see "popular" as a synonym for "successful" (*Canadian Encyclopedia*). It is not my intention to contribute towards a kind of completeness as I agree with Neuburg who in his *Popular Literature* claims to be "asking questions rather than providing a set of neatly tabulated answers" (17). My understanding being that high and popular literature are nowadays so intertwined that it is difficult to draw a clear line between the two of them, I want to focus on a Slovenian American novel in order to demonstrate both its "popular" features as well as literary qualities. If Gelder claims the characteristics of a high novel to be sophistication, restraint/discretion, potential absence of plot, high artistry and elitism (19) whereas popular novels display the opposite qualities, I want to see how this theory applies to

¹ Cf. Neuburg, Gelder, Mc Cracken, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Kmecl, Hladnik.

Paul Laric's 1989 novel *Maribor Remembered*. Another point of interest is whether *Maribor remembered* qualifies as an ethnic novel or not? According to Dorothy Burton Skårdal "authors in English who betray no trace of their foreign origin should probably be classified as American writers (...)" (51), however, Werner Sollors objects proposing "a broader and more inclusive definition" (243) such as comprising "works written by, about or for persons who perceived themselves or were perceived by others, as members of ethnic groups (...)" (Ibid.).

Slovenian Americans have left us rich written record ranging from simple letters to literature proper. In spite of the opulent variety of literary genres to be found in Slovenian American literature, detective fiction is rare which can easily be explained with the harsh reality the early authors were confronted with. Bare existential struggle prevented them to get an education; as writers they concentrated on the glooms and dooms of their immigrant existence with nostalgia on the very top of their list of writing topics. All this is to say that for the first generation immigrants mainstream literature passed by virtually unnoticed. Sweeping statements like this can, of course, be misleading and unfair. After all, Slovenian American authors have written stories and even novels that contain rudiments of detective fiction. *V močvirju velemesta* (In the Swamp of a City, 1921) by an anonymous L.C. (or L.G.), Ivan Molek's *Sesuti Stolp* (The Collapsed Tower, 1935) and his drama *Poročna noč* (The Wedding Night, 1928), Frank Tauchar's story "Slovenec, glavar Indijancev: Povest o zlatoiskalcih" (A Slovenian, Indian Chief: A story of Goldiggers, 1917), Jože Ambrožič's "Obesili so ga" (He Was Hanged, 1915), Zvonko A. Novak's "Strta življenja" (Shattered Lives, 1940), Etbin Kristan's plays *Bomba v tovarni* (The Bomb in the Factory, 1915) and "Maščevanje" (The Revenge, 1940-41) are all exceptions to the rule. Paul Laric, a first generation immigrant from Maribor further belies our bold assertion regarding first-generation immigrant authors' disregard of mainstream literature. Having emigrated on the eve of the Second World war, the circumstances of his life were radically different from the turn-of-the century Slovene immigrant who unlike Laric could not afford an education.

Laric was born March 26, 1926 in Vienna to Bohemian parents who had left their homeland six years before. They moved to Maribor and became nationalized. Paul's father owned a textile factory in Maribor where his son attended a "realka" (secondary school). The pending German aggression forced the family to emigrate – via India – to the United States. After a period of detention on Ellis Island they relatively quickly established themselves in the New World. After high school Laric studied at the Naval Academy in Annapolis graduating in 1949. He served with the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean where he met his future wife. Five years later he left the service to begin a new career working as a Public Relations officer for several New York companies and corporations. He studied at New York School of Social Research and completed a couple of courses in creative writing, public relations and advertising at New York University. He retired in 1990 but has continued to play an active role in New York's Slovene societies.

Apart from *Maribor Remembered*, Laric published *Fractured Italian* together with Frances Russell, "a collection of imaginative, and sometimes naughty translations of the way Italian words sound" (Moser 4). He co-edited *Tales from Annapolis* (2000) with Richard Zino, a

/c/ollection of 91 stories from 61 graduates of US Naval Academy from classes of 1934 through 1994 relating personal experiences from their Midshipman days. It is humorous, candid, eye-opening and entertaining. Contributing authors include a former US President, a former head of the CIA, a former Chief of Naval Operations and a former head of Naval Intelligence, as well as numerous other Academy grads. (“Annapolis, Maryland”)

Laric contributed three stories of student life in Annapolis - “Mealtime Molestation”, “Bells Galore” and “Pulling Through”.

2. MARIBOR REMEMBERED

Maribor Remembered is a hybrid novel containing such diverse components as autobiography, travelogue, memoir, detective novel, letters, history, politics and gastronomy – in short, fiction largely based on fact. Should we take it simply as an example of popular literature, “a work of amusement”² or should we lay critical demand upon it? My suggestion is to avoid the reductionist error of disqualifying an unpretentious work in advance; I want to show something of the variety and range Laric’s book offers. Although I will settle on the components mentioned above, my primary focus will be on the detective novel, a rarity among Slovenian American writers, particularly in the present time of relatively lean literary crops.

The plot is comparatively simple. An anonymous omniscient narrator tells the story of a first-generation Slovene American Peter Kovar known as Pete. The narrative opens in the French Alps in Val d’Isère where Pete and his French wife Danielle, called Dani, enjoy their skiing holidays. It is February 1984, the time of winter Olympics in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia. Vacationers watch TV broadcasts of sporting events in the evenings and when a heavy snow storm terminates all skiing for a couple of days, Pete retires to the TV room to watch the Olympics. Due to a parallel storm in Sarajevo, however, he can only watch substitute footage on Sarajevo and the fine points of Bosnian culture in the broadest meaning of the word, all of which reawakens in him a sense of nostalgia and pride. That evening he and his wife decide to visit Yugoslavia at the very next opportunity. He writes a long letter to a one-time schoolmate Boris Pravnik “who surely, following his father’s footsteps, must be a university professor and therefore be reachable by a letter addressed to him in care of the University of Ljubljana” (4), an assumption that proves him right. The letter tells about the Laric family’s last carefree days spent in Crikvenica, Croatia just before emigration, followed by a description of their hasty departure and stressful journey via Bulgaria, Turkey, Iran, India, South Africa and Trinidad to the United States – the only route still open to fugitives. Pete outlines his life story and tells about other family members as well. He emphasizes the fact that he has “been blessed with good health, a good marriage and sufficient success in /his/ chosen field to make for a comfortable, rewarding life” (9). He met Dani while on duty

² The term was coined by Herman Melville to name his last novel *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2010. 245.)

with the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean. They have a grown-up daughter Katja and a Lhasa Apso darling of the family called Kim.

Back in New York, Pete digs up some skeletons from the closets: a letter from the year 1941 written by his first love Sonja only days after his departure for the States, and another one by Tomislav or Tomi, Pete's closest friend and high school chum, dated May 8, 1941, a month after the German occupation of Maribor. Sonja's letter is deeply emotional although she bravely attempts to hide her distress under a mask of humor. Tomi's letter, on the other hand, hides a solution to the enigma to be resolved by Pete at the end of the novel. The key passage of his letter refers to a love triangle consisting of Tomi, Hinko, Pete's schoolmate, and Slava, Hinko's ex-girlfriend and Tomi's new flame. In his letter Tomi proudly reports of his successful courting of Slava which Hinko "doesn't seem to mind" (17). On the contrary, he is even prepared to go out of his way to arrange a secret meeting for the lovebirds. Tomi wants this to remain a secret between him and Pete while he proceeds with more detail,

You know that his uncle manages the Hotel Orel. Well, Hinko asked if he could use an empty suite this Sunday for a party with some friends, and his uncle said yes. Yesterday he told me that the party idea wasn't working out, and would I like to have the use of the suite for myself? Boy, did I jump at this chance to be alone with Slava! Can you imagine? When I told her about it last night, she first hesitated and blushed all over. But I told her that in these times we must take advantage of every moment because we don't know what the next day will bring. We kissed, she said she loved me and she consented. So, you see, life isn't all bad. Hinko must have connected with some new number, or else he wouldn't leave me such free reign with Slava. Anyway, he's not such a bad guy. (17)

Having re-read both letters Pete can hardly wait to see Tomi and learn the rest of the story. However, Boris' letter, which arrives shortly upon their return to New York, shatters his hopes: Tomi did not survive the war – he was shot after he had been caught in a German ambush. The majority of former schoolmates having survived the war, they now live either in Maribor or Ljubljana. Everybody is looking forward to meeting Pete after forty-five years and his wife. The couple embarks on a journey not knowing what awaits them in Slovenia.

Their journey begins in Kranjska Gora. Since skiing is not as good as expected they almost immediately contact some of Pete's friends. Everybody is married except for Slava. After Tomi's tragic death and the equally tragic deaths of her closest family members, Slava isolated herself from the world devoting her life to orphaned children. Milan, Tomi's brother and his wife visit the Kovars while still in Kranjska Gora. The phone keeps ringing all the time, life stories and old memories are being swapped. Pete and Dani visit some of the friends at their homes, each time enjoying a unique culinary experience and a very warm welcome. Then they move to Ljubljana, pay some more home visits, and then everybody, except Slava, meets at the town's foremost hotel where an unforgettable reunion is celebrated.

Eventually the Kovars move to Maribor, Pete's hometown. They check in at the Hotel Orel. This is a very emotional time for Pete: walking the streets brings back

memories of old times – it is Pete’s youth revisited. One of the most poignant moments arrives when Pete goes to see his father’s textile factory that has been nationalized and the house they lived in – now occupied by a practicing veterinarian.

Suspecting Slava is not going to participate in their Maribor reunion at the Hotel Orel, Pete visits her at her workplace, an orphanage and day-care center the director of which she is. “Seated behind a large desk in the spacious, well-appointed office was Slava, whom Pete recognized instantly because the years had only transformed a beautiful child into a handsome woman. Her eyes were as sparkling blue and her smile as warm and genuine as ever”(87). Pete shows her Tomi’s last letter; she reads it and breaks down which makes Pete angry with himself for having embarrassed her thus spoiling the moment he expected to be the highlight of his visit.

Everybody else gathers at the evening reunion at the Hotel Orel. Hinko brings his wife and, when challenged, repeats the story Pete has heard from numerous other people: that fateful Sunday when Tomi was due to meet Slava at their secret tryst, he and Hinko went to the movies together. When they were leaving the building, the Germans were waiting in an ambush. They had been shooting innocent people in reprisal for the sabotage on one of their cars that had been carried out by a resistance group. Hinko spotted the ambush and quickly returned to the building unnoticed. Tomi innocently fell in the trap and was shot. His name along with the names of other victims was printed on a leaflet and posted on the walls around the town the next day. Pete eventually articulates the inconsistency that has been bothering him ever since his arrival in Slovenia, “It’s not that, Hinko. I just can’t understand why the two of you wound up going to the movies together, instead of at least one of you going on a date with Slava. After all, it was a Sunday. Wasn’t it?” (103). A schoolmate’s teasing remark saves Hinko from having to explain the delicate situation. He just mentions that things happened such a long time ago he can no longer remember the details. After the party inconsistencies in Hinko’s story bother Pete even worse than before. He invites a schoolmate Jože and his wife to his suite where they mull over the events of that Sunday. After he reads Tomi’s letter, Jože agrees with Pete, “I see what you mean. Tomi certainly had only Slava on his mind when he wrote this letter, certainly not going to the movies with Hinko. Something must have happened to his plans with Slava”(105). Now that he knows the contents of Tomi’s letter Jože recalls that Hinko never ever mentioned Slava when talking about Tomi’s capture. As it turns out, several hypothetical explanations regarding Tomi’s silence have been passing around.

On the day of Pete and Dani’s departure from Maribor they all meet for a farewell lunch at Kliček’s Restaurant, now called The Three Ponds. It is another emotional episode for, “(...) it seemed to Pete as if the Vadnica school bell had rung and class was about to begin” (119). Everybody is there, except for Slava. Farewell speeches are delivered, toasts proposed, eyes wet “from the powerful combination of wine and sentiment” (121). Pete finally offers a toast to their common friend Tomislav Dornik thereby triggering the inescapable climax. Jože takes over informing the others about the existence of Tomi’s letter written on the day he died. Hinko is summoned to retell his version of the events of that ill-fated Sunday. He complies albeit very unwillingly; when asked what movie he and Tomi saw, he can’t remember pretending it must have been “some trashy story with Anny Ondra and Willi Fritsch, those rotten superstars of the German screen” (123).

Right after this Jože reads Tomi's letter aloud discretely masking Slava's name and then asks the question that is on everyone's mind, "What do you know about Tomi's change of plans that day?" (125). Hinko defends himself desperately claiming the details are getting fuzzy and he can no longer recall everything. But he knows they don't believe him and is eager to drop the subject, "Tomi is long dead and what difference does it make whether he spent that Sunday at the movies with me or in bed with X?" (Ibid.). Confronted with stern faces and staring eyes, he inquires, "You're not trying to pin some kind of blame for what happened to Tomi on me, are you? I just happened to be the last person to see him. That's all" (Ibid.). Before anyone can reply, a soft female voice from the doorstep announces the presence of Slava who didn't want to let Pete return to America with a feeling he had been indiscreet towards her.

Having overheard Hinko's last words Slava now wants to unburden her soul of a burning suspicion that has been weighing her down ever since Tomi's death. She offers her version of the events that took place on that black Sunday and begs everyone to keep it to themselves.

She and Tomi met at the Astoria café next to the Hotel Orel. They ordered lemonade and felt very anxious. Awhile later Tomi paid for the drinks and was preparing to run across the street to the hotel's reception desk in order to get the key to their suite. Not wanting to embarrass Slava, she was to wait for him in the café. She did as told watching Tomi as he disappeared through the main entrance. Minutes later a Nazi limousine pulled up in front of the hotel and two Gestapo officers disappeared inside. They soon returned with Tomi squeezed between them and Hinko following. They got in the limousine and drove off. She never saw Tomi again. Next day Hinko sought her out during a school break and told her the well-known movie theater story. He also tried to sweet-talk her into being his girlfriend again now that Tomi was dead. Slava rejected Hinko's persistent advances that continued for months.

At the same time she embraced Hinko's version; for one, she could not believe Hinko was capable of having his competitor murdered, and she also thought she needed to protect her reputation. She had to live with the gnawing suspicion that something was terribly wrong for which she got the confirmation once she had read Tomi's letter. Only then did she realize how naïve Tomi had been trying to arrange for their secret meeting with someone who hated him and wanted him out of the way. Had she known Hinko was the nephew of the owner of the Hotel Orel, she could have warned Tomi in time. But she hadn't had the faintest idea.

The story told, Slava bids farewell to Pete and Dani and departs, leaving behind a stunned roomful of people staring at the defiant Hinko who fights back, "Look, that's her story. Her version. There can be any number of versions. She can't prove any of it. If she tried to prove it, who would take the word of a jilted, self-pitying, semi-recluse against my word?" (129). They give him one last chance to tell a credible story that would prove Slava wrong, however, he suddenly evokes the 1962 amnesty law which – as he believes – forgave people "for any alleged complicity in collaboration with the occupying forces" (130). A schoolmate quickly sets the record straight on this informing him the law only "put a halt to further prosecution" (ibid.). Dani and Pete cannot wait any longer, they have to catch a plane. The last scene they witness looks like a "kangaroo court about to convene"(130).

3. STRUCTURE, CHARACTER, SETTING AND TIME

The structure of Laric's novel is classical, consisting of thirteen titled chapters – the only exception being Chapter One. The titles are either descriptive (e.g. Chapter 2: Val d'Isère; Chapter 3: Skeletons from Closets), named after schoolmates or after the setting (Chapter 8: Ljubljana etc.). The narrative progresses forward, one scene preparing another. The novel has a circular structure beginning at the end. Following the Acknowledgments, Laric added a note to the reader informing him/her that there is no need to read the end first for, "I've written the last chapter first" (n.p.). There are two stories, one in the past (the analytical story) and the present one (the synthetic story). The novel partly relies on the traditional modes of emplotment – structured narrative, time relations based on a stable chronology, spatial representation, etc.

Characters are either based on real personalities, made up from several personalities or are entirely fictitious. That, too, is explained by the author. The protagonist of the synthetic narrative, Pete Kovar, is presumably the writer's alter ego. Like Laric he was born to a Czech father who turned Slovenian and set up Yugoslavia's first textile factory in Maribor. Pete recalls him as a highly professional and honest man who "knew textiles from the ground up and taught the craft to every employee he hired (...) He was more interested in ways to improve production, in research, in the application of patterns he obtained for a silk-screen process that is still in use today. He was a craftsman, not a businessman"(110). He had to start all over again in the U.S., at first successfully, but then, after a spell of bad luck, lost everything and died embittered and disappointed. The protagonist of the analytical story is no longer alive. Nevertheless, his presence in the novel is strongly felt due to a letter written the day he died. We may presume that he was modeled after a real person named Bojan to whom the novel is dedicated. Other characters are presented explicitly (the narrator sums up their life stories) and dramatically, through their actions and speech. Five schoolmates died during the war whereas the others survived. Having all taken up important positions in the postwar economy, politics and health service, they represent the cream of society thus maintaining equilibrium with the well-situated and cosmopolitan Pete.

The story is told by an anonymous, omniscient third person narrator who tells the story as if it were seen and understood by Pete and occasionally by Dani. I believe the author acts self-consciously as narrator, recounting his story and commenting on it. Laric decided upon a mixture of scenic and panoramic method. The conversations are given in detail, as they occurred, objectively though frequently followed by the narrator's, or rather Pete's, commentary.

Laric has an interesting way of temporal and spatial miming. Kmecl uses the term "posedanjevalni učinek", i.e. creating an impression in the reader of everything happening now, at the time of reading, in the reader's present, as if he/she (the reader) were part of that world, time and characters (214). Indeed, Laric creates the impression of present according to the principle of "pramenska kompozicija" (streak composition) (Ibid.) – namely he omits time periods not crucial to his narrative and focuses mainly on two temporal streaks – the first weeks of German occupation of Maribor at the beginning of World War II and the Kovar's visit to Slovenia in early Spring of 1985.

Laric rearranged the chronology of events according to the “inner, literary time” (224), placing the epilogue at the very beginning of his book,

Ten days after Pete and Dani Kovar returned to New York from a visit to Yugoslavia, there arrived an airmail letter, postmarked Maribor, Yugoslavia, March 6, 1985. The flimsy, typewritten envelope bore neither name of sender, nor return address. (...) Inside was a newspaper clipping, from the front page of *Mariborski Glas*, the evening paper – and nothing else.

Pete read the headline and his face turned ashen. “Listen to this.” He began translating from the Slovenian, his voice shaking and his body tense.

BATTERED CORPSE FOUND
IN CITY POND BY CHILDREN
Police Launch Full Investigation (1)

Laric reversed the usual order in that the book’s ending poses a question whereas its beginning introduces an answer that, incomplete as it may be, is enough to trigger the reader’s interest. The newspaper article is incomplete; whoever sent it forgot (or did not bother to) cut out the follow-up as well. There is no name of the victim and nothing is said as to what may have happened. How did the body end up in the pond? In order to learn more, one must read the whole book, expecting a detective story. Making his way through a variety of genres the reader must advance carefully: things are hinted at as forthcoming, the narrator cues the reader on how the events of the novel are to be viewed. There is a character who is referred to more often than the narrative seemingly justifies – Hinko Gribec. As apparently the only witness to the incident in front of the movie theater he appears pretty untrustworthy. The narrator presents him as a person of shifting attitudes towards the Partisans and the Germans. Pete is the only schoolmate to hear his story for the first time after 45 years. Thus unburdened by possible explanations he becomes aware of the fact that, “(...) only Hinko seems to be telling the story of the hostage roundup outside the movie theater. There must have been quite a commotion with people scrambling to get away from the SS men (...) Did anybody else see Tomi apprehended? Were there any witnesses to the apprehension?” (84-5). Pete wonders why Tomi didn’t follow Hinko’s example to save his life. He questions himself what made him change his carefully prepared plan in the very last moment without saying anything to anyone, especially Slava. He feels as if he were trying to put all the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle together with some very crucial pieces missing. Apparently casual remarks only fire his suspicion, e.g. when Milan says, “The way *we were told*³ it happened...” (35) or when Zlatko remarks, “(D)on’t forget that Hinko has always been a windbag” (96). Vlado’s words of welcome upon Pete and Dani’s arrival in Maribor all of a sudden acquire a prophetic undertone; “You and Dani are in for a time you won’t forget” (71) to which the reader might want to add a pinch of genuine Montresoresque irony, “True – true” (Poe 249).

There is less chronological, synthetic action in the first four chapters and more analytical retrospection. The narrator brings into play old letters that help him portray the feelings and actions of the novel’s main characters, especially Tomi. The letters also make it possible to show one and the same action from different points of view. New

³ My emphasis.

characters are being introduced continually, all of them young teenagers of approximately fourteen, fifteen years. Dramatic details from the past are turning up thereby intensifying the suspense. The last, fifteenth chapter "The Three Ponds" resumes this kind of synthetic-analytical organization of action. When the fateful conflict erupts nothing suggests the catastrophic outcome.

4. ARTISTIC VALUE OF LARIC'S NOVEL

A popular novel like this has supposedly little or no lasting esthetic value. A brief inspection of Laric's literary style discloses a level of artistry not usually found in a novel to be read in order to pass the time. The first chapter brings news of the discovery of a body. The narrator uses short, concise sentences well suited to the dark contents. Unlike this, the second chapter set in the French Alps, contains long, complex sentences, figures of speech and sound effects. In his letter to Boris, Pete says, "You said in that letter that you and your family had moved from Maribor to Ljubljana during the war – *out of the Nazi fire into the Italian frying pan*, so to speak, because many Italians did their dirty work with occasional lapses of compassion, unlike the Germans who *went about their atrocities with bravado*"⁴ (5). In Ljubljana, the Kovars are horrified at the damage modern architecture did to the old castle causing Dani to express her indignation with a passable simile, "It's *like draping the Venus de Milo in an evening gown by Yves St. Laurent*" (54). The get-together of one-time schoolmates in a Ljubljana hotel is described by the narrator with the following words, "(...)what began as a party of some twenty guests *had mushroomed* into a mob of fifty" (63). A little later, on page 66, he creates some memorable lyric passages while describing the history of Maribor, containing personification, alliteration, assonance, sibilance and polysyndeton:

Maribor had suffered wars, the bubonic plague, hunger, fires, floods and droughts, devastations by the Turks, occupations by Crusaders, slavery under the Holy Roman empire and subjugation under the Austro-Hungarian empire. Throughout all this you have Slovenian Maribor standing tough and fighting back.

The following excerpts from Pete's letter to Boris are fine examples of rhythmical prose accomplished through careful positioning, carried out with an almost mathematical precision, of short and long vowels and diphthongs.

After graduation from Brown University, he landed a job with the State Department in Washington (we all knew that it was the CIA), got married, had three children, skied, played a lot of tennis, traveled extensively, learned new languages on top of his basic six and, despite his many previous amorous flings, became a model husband and father, until his untimely death in 1959 at age 35, under mysterious circumstances in Madrid. (8-9)
Mother is now 82, superbly active and enjoying life to the fullest with annual trips to Europe, volunteer work at the Metropolitan Opera, visits with

⁴ Italics mine.

us and friends the year round, and active correspondence with relative, and friends the world over. A tireless gourmet cook, she enjoys eating her delicacies as much as preparing them. (9)

5. HUMOR AND SATIRE

One of the greatest merits of Laric's novel is its humor ranging from verbal to situational that occasionally turns to irony. According to the narrator, the person most naturally endowed with a special kind of humor is Pete's wife Dani. Her humor may occasionally strike one as impolite although she never meant it to be that way. Here are some examples from the book.

A few days into their trip, while still in Kranjska Gora and taking a walk, Pete spots "a skier in a fur jacket and well-shaped stretch pants, walking about 100 yards in front of him" (26). The silhouette, the hair color, the gait, everything reminds him of his first love Sonja as she was 45 years ago. Suspecting that she, too, must have aged, he wonders if the silhouette could be her daughter. Possessed by curiosity, he overtakes the would-be Sonja or her daughter to end up standing face to face with "a rather bearded, mustachioed young lad with distinct Scandinavian features" (ibid). When he reports his faux pas to his wife, she fires off, "You better watch out when the real Sonja shows up. Meanwhile I'll try to warn every Swede I see about a horny ex-Slovenian on the loose"(26-7). Sonja, a happily married middle-aged lady, does turn up a few days later at the meeting in Ljubljana. Emboldened by a couple of drinks she wants to make everybody happy with a "throaty version" (63) of a song. Sensing disaster her husband comes to the rescue with a plate full of delicious canapés much to Dani's amusement, "He's either très gallant, or wants to prevent an encore by keeping her mouth occupied in other ways" (63). Back home in Maribor Pete reminisces about his clumsy skiing beginnings on a hillock called Kreningl near the three ponds, his fondest memory being how he put his arms around the girls' waists to pull them upright after they had failed to execute a stem-turn. Evidently knowing her husband very well, Dani's comment comes right on cue, "You can wipe off that smile Kovar. Does looking at this hill bring up something unmentionable?" (119).

The narrator is not particularly tactful towards Pete either for he reveals many a spicy detail concerning his youthful vices, particularly his fondness for "girls' sweaters and unbuttoned blouses" (56). The following hilarious passage describing Pete's unsuccessful attempt to borrow a pair of pants from his brother points toward a change in perspective: what was once perceived as painfully mischievous is now fondly remembered as a funny episode in Pete's young life,

Ivan, always the practical one in matters of the heart or pants, told Pete to do two things: "Use your own pants, but tie the belt around the hips instead of the waist; then go to your seat late, when the lights will be out, and just before sitting down, raise your belt again, so that you can sit comfortably. Nobody will see, and when the movie is over, pull your pants down again as you get out of your seat." (45-6)

Pete's sense of humor is as good as his wife's and he frequently pays her in her own coin as shown in the following excerpt: "Kim's outdoor mission completed, Pete hurried back to the hotel room, where Dani was putting on the last touches of eye-shadow in anticipation of the upcoming confrontation (i.e. with Sonja, J.P.), harmless as that turned out to be. Pete wondered whether the Boy Scout motto "Be prepared – always prepared" wasn't female-inspired" (45).

Although humor largely targets either Pete or Dani, it now and then escalates to ironic commentary of the nutty reality of socialist life: "The taxi was a four-door Zastava. The driver was a tall, swarthy mustachioed, middle-aged Bosnian, who had added a sideline to his taxi business. He delivered eggs and live poultry from Kranjska Gora farmers to the Ljubljana market. Dani was to sit at the back, together with the chickens" (51). The driver, only too happy to have two devoted listeners, elaborates upon Yugoslav politics so vigorously that he gets overexcited; losing control, the car veers off the road, hitting a snow embankment. "The engine stalled and for a moment there was a total silence even from the chickens, who were too stunned to complain" (53). But Mate is prepared, his panacea a bottle of slivovka which Dani and Pete eagerly accept.

What then is the function of Laric's humor? According to Sollors "the community of laughter itself is an ethnicizing phenomenon, as we develop a sense of we-ness in laughing with others"(132). Although there is plenty of laughter and merrymaking when former schoolmates come together to have fun and share memories in *Maribor Remembered* the most hilarious scenes are those shared between Pete and Dani. Rather than creating a sense of unity, the humor eases the tension as indications of foul play multiply.

There are passages in the novel that are pure history and political talk with Pete taking up the role of a tourist guide explaining and commenting. He claims to recollect what he had learned in history class forty-five years ago which is hard to believe. What's more, one would expect a lot more politics in Laric's book, however, Pete makes it clear right at the beginning that he did not come home for that. "Boris, I didn't make this trip to talk politics, much less to start a revolution. I came to see my old-time friends regardless of their political leanings. I don't give a damn, for example, if you're a 200 percent Communist" (40). Nonetheless, he can't completely avoid the topic. His former schoolmates are well-educated professionals whose potential goes unrecognized by socialism. A fellow American, a journalist from New York, whom they meet at the hotel shakes his head unable to bring together a triple digit inflation and a relatively high living standard. Mate, the taxi driver from Kranjska Gora, updates them on the political and economic retrogression since Tito's death; he is pessimistic regarding the future of the multi-nation state. Discussing the post-Tito era with the American, Pete marvels at the institution called rotating presidency comparing it to a "fast game of musical chairs" (74) to which the American retorts, "More like a Russian Roulette, if you ask me (...). A system that rewards political compliance over professional competence can't succeed, can't compete in international markets. How are they going to repay their \$20 billion foreign debt? But even more to the point, where are they going to get their next loan?" (Ibid). With the benefit of hindsight, his words sound prophetic. Nevertheless, Pete gets the wrong idea in one particular

point – the highways. Perhaps under the impression of their American friend’s negative critique of Yugoslav grandness, Pete asks himself while driving on a half-empty highway “whether this super-highway was not another bureaucratic overkill spawned by a zealous political bigwig with delusions of grandeur” (64). Today we just smile at this.

6. A POPULAR TOPIC: CUISINE

No evaluation of Laric’s novel can be complete without one of its most important as well as most popular topics – food and cooking. This does not come as a surprise for early in the novel the narrator says, “Dani identifies with gourmet cooks, from Escoffier to Julia Child. And Pete is no slouch when it comes to the palate. Both usually go to great lengths discussing the finer points of a tasty dish” (57). In many places *Maribor remembered* reads like a gourmet guide. Slivovka (Yugoslav plum brandy), for example, is mentioned time and again as inseparable ingredient of every friendly reunion, followed by “kranjska klobasa” (the Kranj sausage), “štruklji” (cooked cottage cheese roll) etc. The narrator minutely describes the meals prepared either by ex-schoolmates or their wives or served at hotels and restaurants. He dispenses with superlatives such as “a bacchanal” (63), “an unforgettable culinary and oenological experience” (79), “delicious (...) nothing short of outstanding” (111) etc. or takes pleasure in page-long descriptions of the protagonists’ response to epicurean pleasures. Sonja’s dinner renders both Pete and Dani speechless, whereas the sheer memory of it sets the narrator-Pete in ecstasy,

Their only noises were subdued groans of pleasure, morsel after succulent morsel. Sonja outdid herself with the desert. Something Pete didn’t taste since the days of the *slaščičarna* (confectionary) Ilih on Aleksandrova Street in Maribor: a real, home-made apple strudel, the kind that calls for a full day’s kneading and stretching and then rolling of the dough to a gossamer-thin consistency, adding dabs of butter, apples, raisins, cinnamon and – the crowning glory – sautéed bread crumbs with a sprinkle of irresistible goodness whose overpowering aroma promises and then delivers certainly one of the world’s supreme pleasures. (57-8)

7. POPULAR AND ETHNIC?

Maribor Remembered is not a sophisticated novel nor does its narrator show any particular restraint. Definitely not written for the elite it has a clear-cut plot and can pride itself on a visible degree of artistry. In short, *Maribor Remembered* is a well-written, readable popular novel. Does the fact that it has been written by a Slovene American automatically classify it as ethnic novel? In my opinion it is both, the origin of the author and the book’s content that do it. But Laric also draws a clear line between his

protagonist's past in the old country and the present life in the United States. There was an in-between phase, of course, of assimilation and adaptation but that is dealt with summarily, in Pete's letter to his friend Boris. The protagonist thus displays no acute sense of doubleness, the only exceptions being his visit of father's textile factory and the family's old home in Maribor. I don't believe *Maribor Remembered* was written for "the inside audience" only (Johnson in Sollors 249) despite the inclusion of Slovenian words – translation offered in parentheses – an otherwise popular formal strategy used by ethnic authors while targeting the so-called insiders.

Laric's book in a way resembles Louis Adamic's *The Native's Return* (1932). Adamic and Laric's protagonist returned home after a number of years (nineteen in Adamic's case) to meet old friends and acquaintances. Both were plagued by a similar sense of alienation. Pete expressed it in a letter to Boris in the following way, "How do you write to someone you haven't seen or heard from in 45 years? And how do you manage that anyway in Slovenian, a language that (although your native tongue) you can no longer call your own?"(5). Adamic verbalized the dilemma in a similar manner, "In those nineteen years I had become an American. (...) I spoke, wrote and read only in English. (...) of late years I could express only the most ordinary things in my native tongue. I could not write in Slovenian of involved matters, such as my life in America" (3, 6).

For both protagonists the journey begins as a geographical one but soon turns into a search for their roots. Although a sense of loyalty and belonging among the former schoolmates fascinate Pete, his visit of the family sites in Maribor creates a subtle drama: he comprehends that, although temporarily, he is defined by his Slovenian descent:

Further down, they came to a textile mill district and stopped at what were once Pete's father's weaving and spinning mills, now a part of a much larger textile complex owned by the state and administered by the workers' councils. "They just simply took over and continued what father started," said Pete almost casually. But the lump that was building in his throat did not escape the perceptive Dani. She remained silent. She knew her Pete well. She knew that seeing the factories marked another milestone in Pete's pilgrimage into the past, and that any words from her would be an intrusion. (109-10)

In the 1960s Kurt Vonnegut struggled to resolve a major dilemma; having experienced the Allied bombing of Dresden during World War II and wanting to write a novel about it, he knew the American readers were pretty much fed up with the war themes. If his novel were to succeed, he needed a modern approach and so he chose science fiction: *Slaughterhouse-Five* was and remains a success. I see a parallel with Laric's novel here, his dilemma being how to communicate an immigrant's experience of homecoming with so many similar narratives already on the shelves. The dilemma was resolved by combining the narrative of nostalgic homecoming with an exciting detective story to create "a tale propelled by the warmth of childhood memories and the power of adult vengeance" (Louis Serille qtd. on the dust jacket flap).

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CROSSING CULTURAL FRONTIERS: REPRESENTATIONS OF THE AMISH IN AMERICAN CULTURE

Maja Štekovič

Abstract

The paper deals with the typology of Amish fiction, representations of the Amish in literature, and the roles of authors, publishers and readers. Special attention is dedicated to the role of film directors as cultural travellers when crossing cultural frontiers by entering the Amish cultural milieu. The paper also presents a more critical view of the Amish by demonstrating how the perception of the Amish groups has changed with time – from victims of religious persecution in their homeland to becoming highly romanticised people in the Land of Liberty via literature and film.

Key words: Amish culture, American culture, Amish fiction, evangelical Christian publishers, romanticizing, Otherness, film representations, cultural frontier, cultural travellers.

The Amish¹ arrived to Pennsylvania in the early 1700s in search of religious freedom, which they had been denied in their homeland. It seems as though it were a story both highly improbable and unimaginably remote, but the Amish and other Anabaptist groups used to be “executed by civil and religious authorities” (Kraybill 1989, 4) on the territory of present day Switzerland. Kraybill explains that in order to escape torture, burning, drowning, imprisonment and harassing, the so-called Anabaptist heretics were forced to seek shelter in Moravia, Alsace, the Palatinate and the Netherlands before finally leaving Europe and finding peace in Northern America. However, even with the arrival of the Amish to the Land of Liberty, they did not remain in one place, but they kept migrating around the new homeland. Some Amish communities proved to be amenable to the idea of migration and were willing to cross the Canadian border in search of fertile and arable land on which the church members could survive. Seen in this context, the Amish represent a religious minority group which was forced to leave their place of origin, cross the borders and explore the hitherto little known American frontier. According to Igor Kopytoff, professor of anthropology,

¹ The name ‘Amish’ is usually used synonymously with Old Order Amish, denoting one of the most conservative Amish groups whose members do not use electricity, travel with a horse and buggy and communicate in a German dialect.

[...] frontier areas are indeed stages for new ethnicities, in that they offer the freedom to construct the kind of society the settlers desire. On the other hand, it is very likely that these new societies would be culturally conservative, since people rarely transcend their culture. Frontier cultures thus become repositories of values that have become obsolete in the [homeland] itself (quoted in Rösler, Wendl 1999, 5-6).

Although initially faced with religious intolerance in their old homeland, the Amish population has kept growing in America; it has, in fact, doubled in the past 20 years. According to The Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College the number of Amish members and their children has increased from 5,000 in 1900 to 261,150². On the outside, it may seem that the Old Order Amish groups of the 21st century represent the epitome of cultural conservatism by leading their life in a rather similar manner as the first Amish settlers; and whereas this might be true for the Amish religious life, it would be erroneous to claim that modernity with its technological advances has not had any impact on the life in Amish communities at all – they too use washing machines and telephones only with more restrictions. Despite certain differences among Old Order Amish communities, a vast majority avoid using modern conveniences such as electricity - provided by public utility companies - and driving cars; instead they prefer travelling in horse-drawn buggies. Another crucial element that clearly differentiates the Amish from non-Amish people is the simple attire they accepted as their way of dressing. However, even though the Amish appear to be “remarkably uniform to the outsider [one] cannot know how much the customs and rules of one community differ from those of another” (Hostetler 1993, 277). In Hostetler’s book *Amish Society*, for instance, there are two photographs of two Amish men, one showing “An Amishman whose church does not allow suspenders [in contrast to the other man, who is a] member of a one-suspender church” (ibid. 279).

At this point, a crucial question arises, namely, the one of accuracy of the Amish representations in literature and films when even such a small detail as wearing one or two suspenders makes a world of difference to an expert but obviously not to the writers, film-makers and even less so to the audience. The latter became particularly noticeable after the release of some Hollywood blockbusters and television series which attracted a vast audience to the cinema, among them even the experts on Amish culture who openly voiced their opinion about the misleading pieces of information that the film and TV productions contained. It might be paradoxical but it is precisely because of the Amish’s wish to remain separated from modern society that they keep attracting media attention and have appeared as leading characters in films, newspaper articles and fiction. Apart from throwing new light on the typology of Amish fiction, the article also centres on the representations of the Amish characters in literature, and the role which the Amish novels have in American culture. In the second part, the paper addresses some fundamental issues on the intentional distancing from the modern world on the part of the Amish community by creating boundaries through the use of their specific language and leading a sectarian way of life, concealed from the general public. Besides the secret fascination with the Amish, who are usually perceived as the ‘Others’, what will also be discussed is the role of film directors as cultural travellers when crossing cultural frontiers by entering the Amish cultural milieu.

² <http://www2.etown.edu/amishstudies/FAQ.asp>

Ever since the publication of *The Shunning*³ in 1997, one of Beverly Lewis' contemporary novels featuring Amish characters, this religious minority has proved to be quite a popular theme in literature, especially in novels which are popularly being called 'Amish romance novels', but some journalists have gone even further and coined terms such as 'bonnet rippers' and 'chaste romances' that carry connotations ranging from witty to roguish. However this literary subgenre is facing some unaddressed questions regarding the system of its classification and naming. Labelling all of the fiction featuring Amish characters as Amish romance novels is questionable. First of all, not every novel on the Amish falls into this category even if there is an Amish character displayed on the cover of the book, especially because there are also Amish thrillers and mystery novels that can be found on the market, not just romantic literature centred on the Amish. Secondly, each of these novels carries its own label, ranging from contemporary fiction and general Christian fiction to contemporary romance and Christian romance. How come, then, that the name 'Amish romance novel' has been stuck uniformly to every novel describing the life of an Amish character in spite of John Morton's indubitable classification of Amish fiction as one of the subgroups within Christian fiction? The answer is a complex one. There seems to be a strong presence of a 'sense of being marginalized in a dominantly secular culture' (Gandolfo 2007, 53) among evangelicals and conservative Christians, and this combined with a well-known fact that the main publishers of Amish fiction happen to be evangelical Christian publishers whose 'Christian books, if reviewed at all [by the critics of the secular culture], are still treated with disdain as something less than "literature"' (Gandolfo 2007, 57).

This apparent unpopularity of evangelicals which is projected also onto their publishing houses and the books they release on the market could partly explain why Amish fiction has earned a generalised and popularly used name Amish romance novel which attaches a negative connotation to every single fiction novel about the Amish. Even if the novels see to it that their plots unfold in accordance with the labels under which the books are advertised – some put more stress on the plot of the romance, whereas others concentrate more on the elements of the Amish life and their religious devotion – the publishers will have to take great pains to change this biased image where contemporary Christian fiction, and Amish fiction as its subgroup, is treated only as religious romance 'applying the conventions of the romance genre to spiritual experience' (Gandolfo 2007, 116). Some critics say that this fiction also has all the characteristics of popular literature that is known to be a "'light read" that makes few, if any, demands on the reader and can thus be a form of relaxation rather than study and concentration' (ibid. 67). However, claiming that every book dealing with an Amish character is a popular romance novel and thus automatically ascribing pejorative connotation to it and disregarding it completely, which is known to happen to other romance

³ Although Beverly Lewis is considered to be the pioneering author of this genre, some novels centering on Amish culture had been published prior to Lewis' publication of *The Shunning*. The first one was Helen R. Martin's *Sabina* published in 1905. Lewis, however, is believed to be among the first ones, now followed by a group of over twenty (the number may even be bigger) other authors, who keep including the inspirational element in their fiction and thus remind the readers of the importance of living up to Christian standards on a daily basis, setting the Amish as a good example.

novels too, is jumping to conclusion tantamount to saying that all Amish communities are homogeneous – an erroneous assumption based on lack of knowledge about the variety of Amish groups, since it is possible to find at least some Amish novels of good quality within the great bulk of repetitive material of the Amish fiction subgenre.

Amish novels are perceived as depicting the Amish people in a highly romanticised manner, but this is only true if we believe that all Amish people have the same personalities. Neither do all Amish (or any other people) have identical characters nor does all fiction depict only the positive side of the Amish people or their way of life, not even so-called ‘Amish romance novels’. Putting just two novels featuring Amish characters under the magnifying glass we are guaranteed to find descriptions that are less than flattering to the Amish protagonists or their culture in general. Helen R. Martin’s *Sabina: A story of the Amish* and W. Dale Cramer’s *Levi’s Will* are two novels as different as chalk and cheese, yet they both share one thing - they present at least one Amish protagonist who is not positively portrayed, and the same can be said of his or her culture. *Sabina*, originally published in 1905, is one of the earliest fiction novels dealing with the lives, locale, dress and customs of the Amish in local colour⁴ writing, which adds interest and authenticity to the plot. The Amish community in Martin’s novel, however, is seen as having ‘queer appearance’ (Martin 2009, 25) and the main protagonist Augustus Acker, who is not Amish, finds the Amish women to be so ‘pensive-looking, [that] they ma[ke] him think of caged animals transported to an alien clime’ (ibid. 26). The outsider Augustus wants to spend time with an Amish family who has excited interest in him after seeing them at the Lancaster markets and get ‘to know them in their native surroundings, to learn what [i]s the religion and what the life that produce[s] these odd people’ (ibid.). The description given here does not place the Amish on a pedestal; rather, it puts them in the subordinate position of ‘the Other’ lacking refinement. Bad manners and no sophistication on the part of the Amish are even intensified when one of the male Amish characters displays what Augustus sees as clearly sexist behaviour. This occurs when the Amish man Levi makes no effort to help Aunt Susanna carry heavy rocking chairs in the house, ‘for an Amishman’s idea of the relation of the sexes is not unlike that of a North American Indian-it is the part of the female to wait on the male and make him comfortable. This, indeed, is the chief end of woman’ (ibid. 54). Through Ackner, the artist with acute powers of observation, the author represents the Amish as strange people where especially women are denied many rights under the patriarchal dominance.

In Cramer’s *Levi’s Will* the portrayals of the Amish characters tend to rely on the experience of the author’s father who left his community in his youth. In this novel, the descriptions of the Amish are more balanced. The author writes about childbearing in a negatively inclined way, and thus presents a view diametrically opposed to what would be a typical opinion regarding an Amish person. In a conversation about wives and kids, Will listened to another man who

‘told them about a man he knew in Lancaster County whose first wife bore fourteen kids in the space of seven years - all twins and triplets. When she died he remarried - apparently right after the funeral - and his second wife was as fruitful as the first,

⁴ Definition taken from *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* by J. A. Cuddon.

spitting out babies like watermelon seeds. After fifteen years of marriage there were thirty-two children in the house' (Cramer 2005, 157-8).

As indicated in this quote, Cramer also writes about the gossipy nature of the Amish people, realistically presents some of their customs such as a funeral and a Sunday service, and what problems the Amish had to face being conscientious objectors during World War II in the midst of the dominant American society, which was very unsupportive of the Amish nonparticipation in combat, not knowing anything about their pacifist nature. Apart from shedding light on Amish culture, *Levi's Will* is also of significant importance for everyone who wants to gain historical and cultural insights into American society by further examining extra-textual references to Hershey's bar, Clark Gable, DiMaggio, the importance of the 60s and American attitude towards the Russians, Koreans and the Cold War. The accuracy and literary merit of these two and several other novels will be dealt in detail in my PhD dissertation, though one can expect marked differences between novels, depending on the authors' expertise in Amish culture and their flair for writing.

Most of Amish fiction gets published by evangelical or Christian publishers or their division such as Zondervan, WaterBrook Multnomah Publishing Group, Bethany House, Revell, etc. WaterBrook, for example, describes itself as the evangelical division of Random House,

'committed to creating products that both intensify and satisfy the elemental thirst for a deeper relationship with God. By communicating encouraging and life-enriching truths, WaterBrook Multnomah provides resources that can be trusted to be spiritually sound and readers will find to be captivating and enlightening. In providing these products as a Christian publisher, [they] hope that readers of all ages will gain a deeper understanding of God and live a life pleasing to Him.'⁵

This is not an isolated case of how 'the "billion-dollar book industry" of evangelical publishing houses and bookstores, developed in response to a de facto censorship of Christian literature' (Gandolfo 2007, 56) presents its vision to persuade the Christian readers in the value of rich spiritual life that can, so it seems, be achieved even when reading Amish fiction. It is not uncommon to hear the readers of Amish novels, in contrast to the readers of traditional romance novels, discuss that they do not experience any pangs of guilt while they are reading. This can be interpreted that even the vague sense of spirituality offered to the readers in the form of brief passages which describe Amish characters reaching out to God and God showing them his will is instantly deemed sufficient to meet the readers' religious needs. Another role that these novels perform is that they fulfil the readers' presumable wish to widen their horizons. Most of them, after all, would know that the next time they buy some cheese at an Amish stand they have to say '*danki*', '*denki*', or is it '*dankes*'⁶ to thank the Amish salesperson in Pennsylvanian Dutch and ask about the state of health of the new '*Bobbeli*' and its '*Mamm*'. This subgroup of Christian fiction enables a brief glimpse into Amish culture,

⁵ <http://waterbrookmultnomah.com/about-us/>

⁶ If three different authors write the expression 'thank you' in three different ways, it might be difficult for the readers to know which is the correct one.

and thus allows its readers to explore the cultural frontier which might otherwise remain unexplored since it can be difficult to physically enter an Amish community, especially without any connections. The strong publishing industry and the authors, some of whom may personally know or be related to some Amish people, and the majority who have just done some research on Amish society and undertook writing novels, have partly disclosed the Amish culture to those interested in the subject. The readers are invited to follow further literary novelties on the market by either receiving books as freebies or seeing them promoted via numerous Facebook groups, personal Facebook profiles⁷, different blogs and radio talk shows such as *Amish Wisdom* on Toginet Radio. It seems that Amish novels have created a close-knit community of mostly middle-aged religious women sharing a passion for reading this type of fiction because they, too, can relate to the feeling of being marginalised in terms of being women within a patriarchal society and Christians within a secularized society. Their own subordination makes the Amish fiction with predominantly female characters of a religious minority group easy to identify with. Although the emergence of Amish fiction has not occurred as a direct reaction to the formulaic romance genre charged with sexual plot and graphic descriptions of love making, as depicted in Harlequin and Silhouette romances, it presents a refreshing change for the fans of romance novels who now enjoy the ‘alternative to the secularizing influences of the dominant culture’ (Gandolfo 2007, 65). The new type of novel featuring Amish protagonists, often categorised as inspirational or devotional novel, falls under Christian fiction and introduces what can be called a clean romance, which targets the readers with Christian religious values and religious background who cherish ‘purity in values, faith and honesty’ and also ‘family time, togetherness, daily devotion [and] prayer times’⁸ as one of the readers in my online survey suggested. Several responses from the survey revealed that during and after the act of reading, some readers may get a sense of embarking on a spiritual journey when drawing parallels between their religious experience and the one of the Amish character from the book. The Amish protagonists, who are usually presented positively, although this is not always the case, function as role models on how to become even better Christians, and sometimes the readers might even feel inclined to try to surpass the romanticised depiction of the Amish character. But most of all, these novels are clean and therefore not likely to offend the readers.

As far as the situation in Slovenia is concerned, the Slovenian publishing market has not yet picked up on this American literary phenomenon. However, it is intriguing to note that when I ordered some Amish fiction at a bookshop, the bookseller said she could not resist flicking through my selection of the books on the Amish, which she found an exciting read so much so that she was not able to put them down. There is a similar anecdote with Suzanne Fisher Wood’s *Amish Proverbs* that I ordered via the same bookshop. When I got there to collect my book, I noticed that mine was not the only copy in the shop, there were at least five additional copies exhibited on the bookshelf proving that there is a certain kind of universal and immediate appeal that lies in the Amish way

⁷ For more details, check: Amish Literature Fans, Amish Books Readers, and profile pages of authors Beverly Lewis, Wanda E. Brunstetter, Suzanne Woods Fisher, etc.

⁸ <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/viewform?formkey=dGIVd3JEYXRabUpRR09mZVY3X2c3bn c6MQ#gid=0>

of life. Apart from my personal bookshop experience, there seems to be a relatively good supply of books about the Amish in Slovenian libraries. As far as fiction is concerned, Beverly Lewis, the author contributing greatly to the popularity of Amish fiction, is well represented with five novels, among them the renowned novel *The Shunning* from 1997 that actually paved the way for contemporary Amish fiction in the United States. Whereas Lewis's books have not yet been translated into the Slovenian language, there are at least Jodie Picoult's *Plain Truth*⁹ and Suzanne Woods Fisher's *Amish Peace*¹⁰ that Slovenian readers can enjoy in their mother tongue. Should one be interested in non-fictional and more in-depth representations of the Amish, great books to be found in Slovenian libraries are John Hostetler's *Amish Society* and Donald Kraybill's *The Riddle of Amish Culture*. Amish culture has also been inspiring to some of the Slovenian undergraduate students studying to obtain their BA. According to Co-operative Online Bibliographic System and Services (Cobiss), there are three students who dedicated their time to researching and getting an insight into the peculiarities of Amish culture in their BA theses¹¹. However, none of them has ever spent time living in an Amish community, whereas Andreja Rustja, a theologian, tourist guide, journalist and a traveller, has. She described her unique experience in travelogues held in libraries all around Slovenia. Those who missed the opportunity to attend one of her picturesque presentations in front of a live audience can listen to her radio interview on RTV SLO¹², although the recording cannot compete with her live performance in a real Amish dress.

Apart from their distinctive clothes there is another way through which the Amish have managed to maintain a gap between their and 'the English'¹³ culture, namely through the use of a specific dialect, called Pennsylvania German or Pennsylvania Dutch. It is surprising that even though the Amish wish to live secluded lives they speak not only their own language but are also fluent in English. Having their own dialect and mastering the language of the mainstream culture, in fact, stresses the need for "the differentiation between me and the other, between us and them, between those I feel close to and those I feel difficult to relate to" (Schubert 1999, 201). The underlying message being that when the Amish resort to the local dialect this clearly demonstrates that they are highly protective of their own culture and are strongly inclined to preserving their close-knit communities. This is particularly noticeable in the action-adventure television series *MacGyver*. In the third episode of season four, with a rather telling title *The Outsiders*, the tyre on MacGyver's car blows out, which results in his skidding off the road into a ditch where he ends up lying injured. As he begins to regain consciousness, the protagonist can faintly hear the voices of Amish men, muttering something in a language completely unintelligible to an outsider such as himself. It seems as if MacGyver not being fully conscious earns him the privilege of hearing what is supposed to be the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect, while being carried to one of the Amish homes.

⁹ Translated as *Preprosta Resnica* by Ana Pogačar.

¹⁰ Translated as *Zgodbe o amiših* by Neva Demšar.

¹¹ The three authors are Kamenšek Darja (*Tradicionalna (manjšinska) verska skupnost v modernem okolju: primer amišev*), Zlobec Vanja (*Amiši: primer verskega tradicionalizma*) and Hotko Ženja (*Kulturno-zgodovinski prikaz življenja skupnosti Amišev*).

¹² <http://tvslo.si/predvajaj/andreja-rustja/ava2.98148438/> (12. 3. 2012)

¹³ According to the author David Weaver-Zercher, the label 'the English' 'is favored by many Amish persons' (Weaver-Zercher 2001, viii) when referring to the non-Amish people.

Never again does the protagonist hear the sectarians' dialect, instead the Amish people represented in the series keep conversing strictly in English, which could be explained in two quite opposing ways. According to John A. Hostetler, once a leading scholar of Amish society, the Amish try to be considerate to non-Amish people and therefore whenever "an outsider dines with an Amish family, he may hear dialect chatter at the other end of the table, but out of courtesy, the general conversation will probably be in English" (Hostetler 1993, 242-243).

The other side of the coin, as one of my colleagues in the field experienced himself, is that the Amish are simply reluctant to share the Pennsylvania Dutch with 'the outsiders'. This is, to some extent, quite understandable, proving that the Amish are obviously aware of the fact that "languages have boundaries that [can] constitute limits of communication" (Schubert, 202) through which they can preserve their distinctive character and reject homogenization with relative ease. What an insurmountable boundary a language can present is well seen in the MacGyver series. In 1988 when the episode *The Outsiders* was released, the protagonist wants to make some jokes while repairing his damaged car. MacGyver utters "I'll make a grease monkey out of you" to one of the Amish female characters while she gives him a hand passing the tools over to him. The young woman gives him a puzzled glance, looking sheepishly in the direction of other Amish people, who are also helping MacGyver, to see what their reaction will be like. The event demonstrates how complicated it can be to enter a cultural sphere different from your own even with the use of humour, especially if it is not understood. On some other occasion, MacGyver is once again confronted with the lack of understanding on the part of the Amish concerning his jokes. The scene takes place just after his car was towed to the farm by Thunder, the Amish people's horse. MacGyver marvels at the horse's beauty and strength, asking "What do you feed him? Miracle-Gro?" to which he does not receive a response, obviously because the Amish have never heard of the brand name MacGyver uses to make a joke. It is evident that when the protagonist uses the intercultural reference Miracle-Gro¹⁴ for his joke, this has no informative value for the Amish people because of the cultural boundaries created by their way of living. As mentioned earlier, this may have been so in 1988 when the series was released, and the Amish were perhaps not that exposed to the mainstream culture. Nowadays, however, according to one of the readers of the blog *Amish America*, the Amish people "in [her] community know who all the Pooh bear characters are and [she] was shocked to hear they knew who Sponge Bob was! They didn't know that they were TV characters but they still knew who they were. [And she] found that kinda funny!" As can be understood from this blog post, the knowledge of the Amish is apparently not limited solely to their own culture, as the majority of people like to think. Another blog reader, working as a driver for the Amish contributes a self-explanatory post:

They [...] have assimilated with our own culture quite well, referencing TV shows, music, current events, etc. They have a much greater knowledge of our culture than we do of theirs! Whenever a society is ignorant about a certain culture, myths are created and there remains a certain mystique to that culture, just as we have done with the Amish (ibid.).

¹⁴ Scotts Miracle-Gro Company manufactures branded consumer products for lawn and garden care, and also provides products for professional horticulture.

Apart from the Amish dialect, another element often represented in film or TV productions is religion, although not many film producers actually include an Amish religious service in their final product. Instead they rather focus on more conspicuous features of the Amish religion trying to shed light on their lifestyle. Referring back to MacGyver and *The Outsiders*, the television viewer can immediately turn to the most eye-catching idiosyncrasies of the Amish people: plain dressing, non-resistance and shunning of obdurate members of community. The way Amish people dress could, similarly as their dialect, be seen not only as a means of maintaining their cultural identity by expressing “obedience to God and [protest] to the proud and disobedient world” (Hostetler 1993, 237) but also their inclination to create boundaries between the members and non-members of their community. Because there are many subtle differences in Amish people’s clothing between different communities, it is reasonable to conclude that actors’ costumes are most of the time misleading. It is thus difficult to judge whether or not the Amish represented in *The Outsiders* are clothed in authentic attire.

In *The Outsiders*, Lee David Zlotoff’s attempt to incorporate yet another cultural peculiarity of the Amish people, namely their inability to put up strong resistance, proves futile. The creator of the show introduces a bitter dispute between construction workers who want to relocate a local Amish family to new land in order to build a modern intersection on the Amish farm and thus create several new jobs in the region. The Amish family who have just begun digging a well on their farm clearly state that they have no intention of leaving the farm, explaining that “God put [them there] to tend [the] land [assuring the owner of the construction company that they] are not going to leave” (*The Outsiders*). Hostetler’s study tackling the issue of non-resistance says that

The Amish have no rationale for self-defense or for defending their possessions [...] Hostility is met without retaliation. The Amish farmer who is in conflict with the world around him is admonished by his bishop to follow the example of Isaac: after the warring Philistines had stopped up all the wells of his father, Abraham, Isaac moved to new lands and dug new wells (Gen. 26: 15-18). This advice is taken literally, so that in the face of hostility, the Amish move to new locations without defending their rights (Hostetler 1993, 76).

The reaction of the Amish in the MacGyver series indicates that Zlotoff’s representation is misleading for various reasons. First of all, judging by Hostetler’s book the Amish would move if they were attacked, whereas in MacGyver they “have no intention of leaving the land” (*The Outsiders*). Moreover, it is even less likely to expect that the Amish would form a human chain as a way of showing their protest to the construction workers’ plans to raze their home to the ground, which was seen in *The Outsiders*. What is correctly presented is that the Amish would never try to go to court to solve their problems, since this is “not [their] way, [they] do not know how to fight, even legally” (*The Outsiders*). What is intriguing, after all, is that Zlotoff makes an explicit biblical reference to Isaac digging another well, mentioned also in Hostetler’s book.

One of the most riveting features of the Amish religious life presented in MacGyver is most likely the so-called *Meidung* or social avoidance, which was not represented even in such a controversial film as *Witness*. In *The Outsiders*, one of the younger Amish men

is shunned on moral grounds. William is excommunicated from the Amish society as the result of his rebellion against traditional Amish values by running away and leaving the community without saying a word. During his two-month stay in Philadelphia, William supposedly went to movies, drove in automobiles and saw the city. MacGyver's spur-of-the-moment reaction is "that sounds kinda normal for a guy his age" (*The Outsiders*). The protagonist's pointing out what the acceptable behaviour for a young person in his culture is like, is completely opposite to what is considered desirable of the Amish youth. William could only have explored the pleasures of the modern world had he been in his 'rumspringa', the period that literally translates as 'running around', when he would have been allowed to try out all the above mentioned activities. It is for purely commercial purposes that the media has often misrepresented this period as the time in the lives of the Amish youth when they are allowed to display some boisterous behaviour, such as consuming alcohol, abusing drugs and engaging in sexual intercourse, and in this way experience the *real* outside world. According to some popular representations, the end of the 'rumspringa' ultimately leads to a young person's decision to either get baptized in order to join the church or leave the Amish life altogether. This period is, in fact, not as wild in all of the communities as it usually gets presented in the mainstream media. There are only some communities in which the youth has built up a more unsavoury reputation, but generally, the period of 'rumspringa' is dedicated to joining a youth group and engaging in various social activities such as singing, playing volleyball, picnics, ice skating, etc., and it ends when a young person finds a lifelong partner with whom they are joined in a holy matrimony. In *The Outsiders*, the spectator is never offered a full insight into the Amish rules concerning social avoidance; however, according to Donald B. Kraybill, an expert on Amish groups, "Amish-born people who have never joined the church are not shunned. Only those who break their baptismal vow by leaving the church or falling into disobedience are ostracized" (Kraybill 1989, 116). One can, therefore, conclude that if William is punished for his two-month getaway, he must have been baptized and is now a full member of the Amish church. Had he been in his 'rumspringa' period, leaving the family for some time would not have led to such serious consequences as social avoidance.

For decades the film directors have been trying to represent the Amish way of life, but only some of their efforts were met with success. Reasons why they have been doing this may differ considerably, from making money to attracting audience's attention, which in the end results in earning a handsome profit. Many film directors have managed to cross the cultural frontiers, the invisible boundaries between two completely different cultural spheres and present to the non-Amish people the culture which has been ever so enthralling to them. At this point, a question arises as to what is so captivating about the Amish that they have been a topic of discussion for almost a century. Due to their secluded way of life, shaped by religious beliefs, specific dialect and dress code, the Amish have been perceived as such a different group that they have been labelled as 'the Others', despite being white and belonging to Anabaptist Christian denomination. However, their 'otherness' is still a compelling object of representation, strengthened by people's lack of knowledge about Amish culture. Bearing this in mind, the filmmakers keep whetting the audience's appetite for finally getting what they have been craving for by representing the supposed virtues of the Amish and their simple lives in a highly

idealized way. Even in *The Outsiders*, MacGyver begins his journey to Pennsylvania describing it in a highly glorifying way, saying that:

There's just something about the Pennsylvania countryside. It smells clean and innocent. And after four weeks crammed inside a stuffy space simulator testing lab [his] senses needed to get reacquainted with nature. It's as close to paradise as you can get - fresh air, cool green trees, warm sunshine, and wildlife (*The Outsiders*).

If MacGyver feels so strongly about the Pennsylvanian nature, it is not surprising that he will have a similar attitude towards the Amish as well, perceiving them almost as an extension of nature. The way this series differs from other film and TV productions is that the Amish are presented both positively and negatively at the same time. MacGyver's behaviour shows that he highly cherishes the Amish for their generous help offered to him after the car accident, and pays them off by helping his hosts when they become involved in the dispute with the construction workers, and especially after helping to save both a non-Amish girl and her little Amish friend from an abyss. The builders, however, see the Amish as having 'thick skulls [and being] too good to mix with [them]' (*The Outsiders*), reproaching them for not taking part in wars. They insult the Amish that they do not follow the state's laws because they are not able to understand English (*The Outsiders*). But which of the two is the preferred meaning shown in the series if one takes into account that the spectator is presented with two binary opposing Amish depictions? In the beginning the Amish are portrayed as stupid people, only later on, with MacGyver's appearance and development of a friendly relationship with the Amish are they seen as positive characters. Obviously, the good wins; if not for any other reason it is because the tendency of MacGyver's series is to end on a positive note, leaving the audience with an encouraging message.

The Amish are paler than pale, they are whiter than white, but despite that they have been ascribed certain negative and positive stereotypes. Although there is a minority of people who openly admit to perceiving the Amish as a fundamentalist religious group, "an obscure sect living by ridiculous customs, as stubborn people who [have] resist[ed] education and exploited the labour of their children" (Hostetler 1993, 4), their voices tend to be heard on various forums. According to a colleague in the field, some Amish are even the victims of racism, because they are supposedly restricting other members' individual freedom. The negative aspect of the Amish life usually gets presented mostly in documentary films in order "to make a buck, and to convey newsworthy or culturally significant information" (Eitzen 2008, 45) by disclosing the less appealing side of the Amish way of life. This is another example of the Amish being exploited, since it is the documentary film directors who are in a position of power, but it is essential to take into consideration that 'power also involves knowledge, representation, ideas, cultural leadership and authority' (Hall 2000, 261). Since the nature of the Amish religious set of beliefs is such that they live humble lives, not being interested in the world around them and not willing to take part in changing it, their voices are kept unheard. The flip side of the Amish way of life, presented in documentary films, may to some extent help not just the greater part of the American society but other people who keep romanticizing the Amish, to learn the truth about this religious community that continues to be

misrepresented in almost every single TV or film production. It is of utmost importance to realise that the Amish people, as any other minority group who have been ascribed certain characteristics and put in the role of the 'Other', are not necessarily better or worse, and certainly far from perfect. They come in all shapes and sizes and can have bad days and be grumpy.

The paper has, hopefully, raised awareness of the problems when categorising all Amish fiction under the label of 'Amish romance novels' which tries to mould all novels with Amish characters into a single unit, and represent the whole culture and its members in a romanticised way. The article has also illustrated the roles of the authors, publishers and readers of the novels, whereas the analysis of the MacGyver series centres on how Amish groups manage to keep their distance from the mainstream American society through the use of their specific language and religion which "is a total way of life, not a compartmentalized activity" (Hostetler 1993, 76), all of which helps to establish, not so much, real boundaries but imaginary ones. Since any kind of boundaries are often equated with the appeal of the unknown, some film directors have transformed themselves into cultural travellers in order to disclose the truth about the Amish way of life, hidden from the vast majority of people, but who have created an idealized mental picture of the Amish people and their lifestyle. It seems that there are some filmmakers who continue to portray idyllic perceptions of the Amish, but there are also creators of documentaries tackling the dark side of the highly romanticized people by depicting some Amish people's dissatisfaction with their supposedly perfect lives. Apart from bringing money to the filmmakers, both positive and negative representations try to fascinate, shock, and attract attention of the worldwide audience. It is up to the general public to finally realise that "all of life, including Amish life, comes not in 'black and white' but in 'subtle shades and hues of gray'" (quoted in Weaver-Zercher 2001, 19).

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ENGLISH DRAMA AT THE GERMAN THEATRE IN LJUBLJANA IN THE LAST DECADES OF THE HABSBURG MONARCHY

Margarete Rubik

Abstract

This article examines the English repertoire of the German theatre in Ljubljana in the last decades of the Habsburg monarchy and its reception by the local German newspaper, *Laibacher Zeitung*. It considers only drama, not operas or operettas. The English plays were, of course, performed in translation, in German, as opposed to the plays performed in the Slovenian language from the late 18th century on and especially within the Dramatično društvo circle established in 1867. The choice of performances gives interesting insights into the late 19th century attitude towards English culture as well as the self-image fostered by the German stage in Ljubljana.

Keywords: English theatre, German theatre, Shakespeare, Viennese theatre

Although at the end of the 19th century the Germans were only the third largest ethnic group in Slovenia, their influence on the cultural life was disproportionately high: more than one hundred entertainments, performances, balls and other festivities were organized every year (Matić 343) and played an important role in the identity construction of this minority, which was politically and culturally not marginal in the last decades of the Habsburg monarchy. These theatrical and other popular events helped the German speakers to “preserve their culture by using and cultivating their mother tongue publicly and as frequently as possible (Koter and Virč 278). In 1887 the (German) Ljubljana province theatre burned to the ground, where the Slovenian Philharmonic stands today, which paradoxically gave rise to a quick development of the Slovenian theatre that was opened in 1892, despite the many obstacles the German officials of the duchy of Carniola (Kranjska) set before it. It was called Kranjsko deželno gledališče during 1892-1919, today it is used for musical performances only and is called Slovensko narodno gledališče Opera in balet (The Slovenian National Theatre Opera and Ballet). The German community wanted to have their own theatre so they raised money and established a new German theatre (called both Deutsches Theater and/or Kaiser Franz Joseph Jubiläumstheater only between 1911-1919), which was active until the dissolution of the monarchy. Today it is the central Slovenian national theatre called Drama Slovenskega narodnega gledališča v Ljubljani (see Miladinović Zalaznik 2008).

As Dušan Ludvik (165) points out, theatrical activities in Ljubljana date back to the Middle Ages; from 1653 strolling German players occasionally performed in the town, and the Jesuits also staged plays in their college. The German playhouse was opened in 1765, but no early records of the repertoire have survived. Ludvik (170) calls the German theatre an import from a foreign culture and language sphere, but Matić (343) concedes that among its patrons were also members of the Slovenian intelligentsia. At least until 1848, he claims, the theatre did not become involved in nationalist conflicts (Ludvik 171) – but the repertoire even after the Revolution year gives no indication of cultural or political strife or nationalist antagonism. Ludvik in his study also relied on Peter von Radics, who in 1912 wrote the very first study of German theatre in the Slovenian space).

In the archives of the National Museum of Slovenia 2303 playbills from the German theatre have been preserved, but this documentation is incomplete, although many documents could probably still be found in the papers collected by Peter von Radics kept in the National Museum. No records are available of activities before 1886, and only 41 posters have been archived for the years 1886 – 1892 (Koter and Virč 270). It can therefore be assumed that more than 2303 performances took place until the end of the monarchy, when the German theatre closed down. That would mean that about a hundred performances took place each year. Since the theatrical season only lasted eight months, more than ten new plays were performed each month, which must have put a considerable strain on the actors to memorize their lines. The brief runs of the plays were probably due to the small reservoir of potential spectators, although, as mentioned above, educated Slovenians also attended performances at the German theatre. The cast, according to Koter and Virč (278), was fairly multicultural, though the directors were usually German. The theatre cooperated with various other theatres in the Habsburg Empire, but also in Germany, arranging a number of guest performances. There seems to have been little interaction with Slavic culture (Koter and Virč 279) but French and English drama was regularly staged, although plays by English authors constituted only a small percentage of the total repertoire. Of the 2303 playbills, only 40 advertise new productions of English drama.

What role, then, does English drama play in the repertoire of this theatre, which by and large primarily considered itself a vehicle for the dissemination of German culture? What plays were chosen for production (in comparison, for instance, to the Slovenian theatre and to productions in Vienna), and how did the *Laibacher Zeitung* react to English plays and playwrights?

For any stage in a regional capital the first and foremost consideration would, of course, have been the ability of plays to draw crowds of spectators. Hence the policy of successive playhouse managers in Ljubljana was by necessity a mixture of light entertainment to satisfy the taste of a less sophisticated audience, interspersed with occasional productions of the classics for the social elite and to boost up the theatre's reputation as a serious cultural venue. As Radics (95-127) points out, opera played an important part in the repertoire, already at the beginning of the 19th century. Especially in the second half of the century, English plays were part of the policy of widening the scope of the repertoire, both for the sake of innovation and to create a cosmopolitan atmosphere, though which texts, in particular, were selected for performance must have

depended not only on the taste of various managers, but also on financial considerations and the availability of actors.

Shakespeare had almost been incorporated among the German classics ever since his plays had been made known to German speakers by the splendid Schlegel-Tieck translations (for detailed studies about Shakespeare's influence on Slovenian playwrights and on Slovenian performances of Shakespeare's productions in Slovenian theatres between 1896-1922 see Jurak). The German theatre prided itself on regular performances of plays by the English bard, whom critics acknowledged as the greatest playwright of all times (Rev. of *The Merchant of Venice*, 1896) and produced Shakespeare even more often (namely eighteen times in the period surveyed) than the Austrian national playwright Grillparzer, and considerably more frequently than Goethe. Of course the theatre had to make do with limited funds, and had to select plays with an eye to the set and décor needed and the employment of actors suitable for particular roles. For instance, the appearance of guest performers from Vienna or other big theatres inside and outside the Habsburg Empire gave opportunities to stage plays by Shakespeare, Schiller or Goethe for which experienced and particularly gifted actors or actresses were needed. By and large, however, the management of the German Theatre in Ljubljana throughout the period surveyed opted primarily for an "easy-going repertoire" reflecting "the specific cultural atmosphere of the time" (Koter and Virč 277). Koter and Virč hypothesize that such a fairly trivial programme may have served to alleviate the political tensions between German and Slovenian speakers. However, it is more likely that the playhouse managers by performing light hearted comedies and operettas hoped to draw in a wide range of spectators, not only from the German community, but also from other language groups, as Koter and Virč (277) also suggest.

The records in the archives of the National Museum in Ljubljana pertaining to the German theatre only date back to 1886. However, Radics (99) mentions stagings of *King Lear* and *Hamlet* in 1825 and a guest performance of the renowned Viennese actor Löwe as Hamlet in 1849 (120). Besides, a short note of 9 January 1875 in the *Laibacher Tagblatt* refers to a performance of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* (*Die bezähmte Widerspenstige*), which shows that Shakespearean plays, at least, were presented sporadically throughout the 19th century. The first playbill from the archives referring to an English play at the German theatre is from 3 Nov. 1891 and advertises the staging of *Jane Eyre* (*Die Waise von Lowood*), in an adaptation by Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer (1800–1868), a writer specializing in dramatizations of well-known novels.¹ Why this, by the time fairly antiquated, play was chosen, is difficult to say. With its mixture of romance and emancipatory rhetoric Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre*, as I have pointed out elsewhere,² nowadays belongs to the most popular canonical English novels. Birch-Pfeiffer's adaptation, however, considerably changed and sentimentalized the plot, turning Rochester's mad first wife into a relative he charitably looks after. In 1891, the play may have been the explicit choice of the Viennese guest performer, Laura Friedländer and/or of the director, a Mr. Thomas, who played Rochester to her Jane. Interestingly, *Jane Eyre* had been performed only two months earlier at the Volkstheater in Vienna (where it is also the first English play on record), with a dif-

¹ Several of her works were performed in Ljubljana in the mid-century (cf. Radics 114 and 118).

² See Rubik and Mettinger-Schartmann.

ferent cast, which indicates that the piece must have enjoyed considerable popularity, whatever fault the Ljubljana critics found with it. The National Imperial Stage, the Burgtheater, of all places, had performed the play already in 1853. Remarkably, the play had been staged by the National Slovenian theatre on 8 January 1888, a date preceding the recorded performances both at the German theatre in Ljubljana and the Volkstheater in Vienna, and had been revived in Slovenian in 1889 and twice in 1891, another testimony to the extraordinary appeal the play must have had to audiences across various cultures. Birch-Pfeiffer's *Jane Eyre* adaptation was given further four new productions at the German theatre in Ljubljana until 1907, more than any single Shakespearean play, and thus was second only to the absolute front runner in popularity, Brandon Thomas' *Charley's Aunt*, which saw six performances all in all until 1918. When it was first staged under the playhouse management of Alfred Freund in 1894, Brandon Thomas' play ran for an extraordinary four days – normally, even repeat performances were rare. Although this farce was so popular in Ljubljana, it was not shown in the prestigious Viennese theatres, which regarded low-brow comedy as too trivial a genre for their venerable halls, but was shown in the Habsburg capital in 1911 by the Theater in der Josefstadt, which at that time had a reputation for specializing in broad farce and popular entertainment.

Another popular sentimental play performed at the German theatre on 11 January 1895 was the dramatic adaptation of Hodgson Burnet's *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, which had been put on in the Vienna Volkstheater only a few weeks previously, on 28 Dec. 1895, and had had an extraordinary successful run of 57 performances. The fact that the Ljubljana production followed so quickly on the heels of the Vienna staging indicates that the managers in Ljubljana kept their eyes on metropolitan tastes and tried to keep abreast of what was fashionable and successful in the big cities.³ Also popular – both with German speaking and Slovenian audiences in Ljubljana – were dramatic adaptations of the adventures of Sherlock Holmes, which indicates the international appeal of the famous English detective.

In the long run, Shakespeare was, of course, the most frequently performed British playwright even in the German theatre in Ljubljana in the last three decades of the Habsburg monarchy (as, indeed, he was in the Slovenian National Theatre; for a detailed study of Shakespeare's performances and influences in Slovenia see Jurak 2009, 2010). Shakespeare's individual plays, however, were upstaged in popularity and the number of productions in the German theatre by *Charley's Aunt* and *Jane Eyre*. By comparison, in Vienna the Burgtheater almost exclusively concentrated on the Bard in its English repertoire (bringing out 21 productions between 1891 and 1916). The Volkstheater followed suit with 14 productions of different Shakespearean plays in the course of this period, although after the turn of the century Shaw outrivalled the Elizabethan playwright in popularity and the number of productions there. A comparison between the repertoire of the Volkstheater and the German theatre in Ljubljana shows some noteworthy similarities: all in all, 40 English plays

³ The play was performed in Hungarian at the Theater in der Josefstadt in 1912. The fact that in the 19th century the German stage in Ljubljana was both modelling itself and also competing with Viennese stages is also evident from Radics' pride, in 1912, that Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* had been performed in Ljubljana in 1826, one year before its Vienna premier (Radics 99).

were staged at the German theatre in Ljubljana, and 40 at the Volkstheater, where the records date back to 1889. The choices made from the Shakespeare canon were also similar, though the Volkstheater in addition to the plays popular in Ljubljana also staged, for instance, *Twelfth Night*, *Richard III* and *The Winter's Tale*. The Shakespearean plays selected for production at the German theatre in Ljubljana comprise only a very limited range of his complete works. *Hamlet*, considered to be Shakespeare's greatest tragedy, of course had to be part of the repertoire and saw at least four productions all in all (three in the period surveyed and one in 1825 mentioned by Radics (99). It is understandable that a play like *The Taming of the Shrew*, containing broad comedy and therefore possibly attractive to a wider audience, should have been staged thrice – though the play is seldom performed nowadays. It is also no wonder that the magic and romance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* should have delighted the audience, or that *Romeo and Juliet* was popular. Both plays were also performed three times in the period surveyed. It seems remarkable, however, that *The Merchant of Venice* was also staged thrice at the German theatre in Ljubljana. As will be analyzed in greater detail below, reviews suggest that the figure of the Jew exerted a particular fascination, in spite of – or perhaps because of – the growing wave of anti-Semitism in the Habsburg Empire around the turn of the century. Other Shakespearean works, such as the histories and Roman plays, and even some of the famous comedies, such as *As You Like It*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, or *Twelfth Night*, were never performed at the German theatre.

The theatre manager Karl Dietrich must have been particularly Anglophile. In the half year of his time in office, no less than six English plays were staged, four of them by Shakespeare. In contrast, his successor, Berthold Wolf, who stayed in office for 9 years and who is said to have broadened the repertoire by including plays from various nationalities (Koter and Virč 277), at first seems to have taken no interest in English drama, until he suddenly brought out no less than six English plays in 1907. During his time in office, only four Shakespearean plays were performed, but, apart from some light comedies, Wolf introduced the Ljubljana audience to Oscar Wilde and G. B. Shaw. Theatre goers became acquainted with Wilde through two performances of *An Ideal Husband* and a dramatic version of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, all in the same year 1907, the former being put on again in 1913, when it was also brought out on the Slovenian stage. *An Ideal Husband* had scored a spectacular success with 114 performances at the Theater in der Josefstadt from November 1906 on, as part of an attempt of the new manager, Josef Jarno, to raise the quality of the repertoire, and the German Theatre in Ljubljana (whose repertoire, despite its penchant for the light muse, was certainly more canonical by and large) closely followed suit in January 1907, probably drawn to the play by its remarkable popularity in the capital. Since the Theater in der Josefstadt had first staged this comedy of manners with great success, the play was not performed at the Volkstheater, where Wilde was represented instead by *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *A Woman of No Importance*, in 1905 and 1907 respectively. The Burgtheater, which generally concentrated on the classics, somewhat belatedly produced *An Ideal Husband* in 1910, after staging Wilde's fragment *A Florentine Tragedy* in 1909.

In 1907, German theatre audiences in Ljubljana were also introduced to G. B. Shaw, namely to his *Mrs Warren's Profession*, for the first and only time, which is surprising, given the popularity on the Vienna stages of a playwright especially beloved by the Germans. In the pre-war years, even the Burgtheater brought out 3 Shavian plays, and the Volkstheater staged no less than 6 plays by Shaw between 1907 and 1909, and was to produce two more in 1911 and 1913. Even the Theater in der Josefstadt, normally given to very light fare, produced four Shavian plays between 1904 and 1917. Shaw seems to have been much less popular in Slovenia, though, remarkably, Ljubljana had for once beaten the metropolis in bringing out *Mrs Warren's Profession*, since in the Volkstheater it was on only in 1908.

Other instances of plays performed in close temporal proximity, first in Vienna, then in Ljubljana, were Jerome K Jerome's farcical *Miss Hobbs* (performed both at the Volkstheater and the German theatre in Ljubljana in 1902) and J. M. Barrie's sentimental comedy *The Little Minister* (staged both at the Burgtheater and the German theatre in 1908). This again suggests that the management of the German theatre kept an eye on the goings-on in the capital and, when possible, aligned its repertoire of new plays with what was happening in Vienna. In the case of performances of Shakespearean drama, however, there is no such close correlation. To be sure, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was performed at the Burgtheater in December 1894 and three months later in Ljubljana, but the rest of the Shakespearean stagings at the German theatre in Ljubljana were not synchronous with Vienna. A provincial theatre could hardly hope to imitate the metropolitan models since the range of actors available and the money that could be spent on a production was limited. Also as far as the Slovenian stages were concerned, the repertoire differed substantially from the German rival institution: although Shakespearean plays were performed less often in Slovenian, the Shakespeare canon shown was more diversified, ranging from such popular plays as *Romeo and Juliet* or *The Merchant of Venice*, to little performed plays such as *The Comedy of Errors* and *Julius Caesar*, neither of which were ever produced at the Ljubljana German theatre. Inevitable staples like *Charley's Aunt*, *Jane Eyre*, or *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, were also performed in Slovenian, just like adaptations of the Sherlock Holmes stories (also popular at the German theatre), as well as Wilde or Somerset Maugham, but the repertoire also included melodramatic historical plays by Barret Wilson (*Quo Vadis*; *The Sign of the Cross*). It is therefore unlikely that the two rival Ljubljana stages should have imitated one another or come to any agreement as to the choice of the English repertoire.

Critics of the *Laibacher Zeitung* (see Miladinović Zalaznik 2000) usually complained about the predominance of the "harmless light genre" (Rev. of *Hamlet*, 1895) in the repertoire of the German theatre, and commended the courage of directors and managers who ventured upon high literature, such as Shakespeare, Schiller, Goethe or Grillparzer. When the German theatre remained half empty for a performance of *Hamlet*, the theatre public was chided for missing this "noble intellectual stimulus" (Rev. of *Hamlet*, 1895)⁴. To the immense satisfaction of the reviewer, a large and enthusiastic crowd had turned up for the performance of *The*

⁴ All quotes from the reviews in the *Laibacher Zeitung* have been translated into English by the author.

Merchant of Venice in 1896, despite the fact that prices had been “extraordinarily” raised.⁵ Similarly, it was commended that in spite of the unpropitious date on Ash Wednesday, a fairly large audience had appeared to see *Romeo and Juliet*, thereby proving their “sense for the eternally true and good” (Rev. of *Romeo and Juliet*, 1900). Critics were always at pains to stress that the classics, too, will be greeted with enthusiasm, and that their production is not only a noble, but also a lucrative task (Rev. of *Hamlet*, 5 March 1908). In the follow-up review, a defender of high culture once more exclaimed against the “tedium of the light muse” which was the usual fare in the German theatre (Rev. of *Hamlet*, 6 March 1908).

Such support for the classics was, of course, not confined only to the English canon. Critics were equally enthusiastic about Schiller, Goethe, Lessing or Grillparzer. The reviews especially of Schiller-performances frequently stress the young spectators’ “ardent enthusiasm” as proof that the great works of canonical playwrights will be appreciated (Rev. of *Braut von Messina*). The actors who acquitted themselves well in a performance of Lessing’s *Nathan der Weise*, in turn, served as proof that the cast could do better than confine themselves to insipid farce (Rev. of *Nathan der Weise*). On 20 Nov 1900 the review waxed enthusiastic about the charming staging of *The Midsummer Night’s Dream*, which made one forget “the sirens’ songs of the light muse”. The same phrase was used again a few years later in a review of *Romeo and Juliet* (1908). Indeed, throughout the decades, the attitudes of the critics hardly changed. The German theatre in Ljubljana, it was felt, ought to have started the season of 1902/03 with a worthier (i.e., classical) play than *Miss Hobbs*, a farce which supposedly boasted of little originality but a lot of ribald humour (Rev. of *Miss Hobbs*) – always considered an undesirable quality. Indeed, hefty jokes generally failed to please the taste of the reviewers, even when they came in the shape of popular Austrian folk comedy such as Nestroy’s *Der Zerrissene* (Rev. of *Der Zerrissene*) or the widely popular *Lumpacivagabundus*, which was classified as “funny”, but “certainly not based on good taste” (Rev. of *Lumpacivagabundus*).⁶

As was to be expected in a climate of such enthusiasm for the classics, Shakespeare held extremely high cultural prestige, and his works and dramatis personae were constantly characterized as deeply complex and hence difficult to perform on a provincial stage, without first class actors. *Hamlet*, for instance, was called a tragedy too deep to fathom (Rev. of *Hamlet*, 1895), and was considered to be Shakespeare’s “greatest and deepest play” (Rev. of *Hamlet*, 5 March 1908). But Goethe’s *Faust*, too, was regarded as one of the most difficult plays in world literature, which no-one had yet fathomed (Rev. of *Faust*, 1912). Perhaps surprisingly, Petruchio was also considered to be one of the most difficult roles in dramatic literature, because of the wide gap between contemporary attitudes to marriage and the “medieval” views of the Bard (Rev. of *The Taming of the Shrew*, 1893), which can easily make *The Taming of the Shrew* degenerate into burlesque. *Othello* was said to send “a tragic shiver” down one’s spine (Rev. of *Othello*, 1899). *Romeo and Juliet* was praised for

⁵ Generally, seats for opera were more expensive than for plays, and tickets could also be raised e.g. for benefice nights (Radics, 105).

⁶ Radics reports that *Lumpacivagabundus* in 1835 caused a riot of tailors, who protested against a salacious song sung by the actor playing Zwirn, the tailor, on stage.

its “exalted poetry” (1900) and for its “lyrical beauty” (1901) and was called the bard’s most perfect masterpiece (1908). The reviewer also celebrated the poetry and fine humour of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1895).

Critics for the *Laibacher Zeitung* frequently seem to have looked down upon provincial stages and to have taken their standards from the big theatres in the German-speaking cities, particularly from Vienna. They kept repeating that performing Shakespeare was a difficult undertaking for a provincial theatre, since sophisticated scenery and great actors would be needed (Rev. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, 1895, 39). Frequently, they condescendingly acknowledged the plodding exertions of the provincial actors, since no more was to be expected from their limited talents. This patronizing tone was adopted, for instance, in a review of another production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*: in a provincial theatre, it was felt, one had to be satisfied when the “kernel” of a play was preserved, the language not mutilated, and the action not held up by the staging. The German theatre in Ljubljana could not hope to meet the demands for décor and theatre machinery necessary for a really professional production of the play, but, it was condescendingly added, the performance was “pretty” enough, although the actors were mediocre (Rev. of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, 1907).

In general, the theatre reviews in the *Laibacher Zeitung* give the impression that the critics were unwilling to let any production off completely unscathed - if they had nothing else to criticize, they complained about the long intermissions and the overheated theatre (Rev. of *Romeo And Juliet*, 1900). Most of the complaints, however, referred to the faults of the actors and absurdities of the production. Since the exalted language of the classics gave rise to particular enthusiasm on the part of the critics, it is not surprising that a frequent cause for censure was the indistinct pronunciation of actors and their inability to do justice to verse. Thus the reviewer of a performance of *Hamlet* criticized the actors’ lack of modulation (Rev. of *Hamlet*, 1895). In contrast, Miss Werney as Julia was celebrated for her “wonderful rendering” of Shakespearean verse, which she made sound like music (Rev. of *Romeo and Juliet*, 1908). The cast in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* of 1899 were admonished for not learning their lines properly (20 Nov 1899, 2116). The performers of the 1907 production of *An Ideal Husband* did not speak distinctly enough, so that some of Wilde’s humour was lost and the scenes became boring (18 Jan 1907, 130). A Mr Mraschner – evidently no native German speaker – who took a role in *The Merchant of Venice*, was censured for pronouncing ü like i (3 Feb. 1911, 241). A North German accent, however, was also considered offensive (Rev. of *Faust*, 1912) – an indication that the ingrained dislike of the Austrians for the “Prussians” was palatable also on the periphery, in Ljubljana, despite the political alliance of the two states.

Those plays which were no classics usually met with a less friendly reception. *Jane Eyre*, which was popular for years at the German theatre in Ljubljana, was rejected as a sample of Birch-Pfeiffer’s worn-out oeuvre dug out from dusty archives, with an unconvincing main character. At least the actors of the 1891 performance, it was acknowledged, avoided pathos and sentimentality (Rev. of *Jane Eyre*, 1891). The attack on the play was repeated in 1897, when the reviewer would have preferred a classic for a guest performance. Young people, it was claimed,

want to hear “the hot breath of convincing eloquence” and intellectual challenge, instead of this old-fashioned “warmed-up romantic porridge” (Rev. of *Jane Eyre*, 1897, 47). The audience, however, seems to have liked the play and the histrionic performance style and rewarded the actors with enthusiastic applause. In 1907, *Jane Eyre* was again ridiculed as part of Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer’s band-conveyor literary production, an “incredibly trivial” work written for a naive audience, on a topic which may have moved our ancestors to tears but seems ridiculous to us nowadays (Rev. of *Jane Eyre*, 1907).

In contrast to the reception of *Jane Eyre*, the “pretty comedy” *Little Dorrit*, adapted from Dickens’ novel and equally sentimental, pleased both the reviewer and the scanty audience who had turned up for the occasion (Rev. of *Little Dorrit*). The critic, on the other hand, could not see why audiences should have taken an interest in the dramatic version of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* and its depiction of the conflict between British aristocrats and American democrats, but he approved of the affecting tone and the celebration of the love between mother and child, and hence concluded that the play did not deserve the condemnation it had met with in Vienna (Rev. of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, 1896). Later, the play was classified as a “harmless sentimental comedy”, pleasing to the audience, although being full of “terribly good people” who, at least in the theatre, are rarely as interesting as evil ones. The second act, in which the boy wins his grandfather’s heart, was commended as “touching”, while the sensationalism of the third act met with disapproval (Rev. of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, 1900).

Charley’s Aunt was tolerated as a carnival joke, possibly because, as is noted explicitly, it had also been successful in Vienna (Rev. of *Charley’s Aunt*, 1894). Its hefty humour was not really to the critic’s taste, but the comedy scored with the audience through its effective situation comedy. The patronizing tone adopted by the reviewer is typical of the attitude the *Laibacher Zeitung* took towards light comedy and popular culture. In 1896, the critic was equally sceptical. Again, the scanty plot and the “ribald style typical of English humour” were mentioned, though it was conceded that the actors made the well-known farce, which had become popular on German stages, seem funny (Rev. of *Charley’s Aunt*, 1896). Equally condescending was the reaction to the dramatized version of *Sherlock Holmes* one of the actors had chosen for his benefit night, which was considered to be food mainly for sensation-hungry spectators (Rev. of *Sherlock Holmes*).

On the other hand, *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* found approval, since it came from the pen of “a brilliant playwright” and was said to widen the horizon of the audience (Rev. of *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*, 17 Oct. 1907). The follow-up review on the next day was more cautious. Shaw was carefully set off from those modern playwrights who scavenge moral degeneration to find topics for their works, because – as the critic commends – he takes a socially critical view and castigates the lax morality of the English upper class. Besides, he adds with self-congratulation, “we are not philistines, like our grandparents” and realizes that “art must address conflicts in all areas of life” (Rev. of *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*, 18 Oct. 1907). Such pride in the supposed progressiveness of the age can be found in several reviews. The fact that critics were not hostile on principle to problem plays tackling taboo

subjects had already been evinced by the positive review of Ibsen's *Nora*, in spite of its provocative treatment of marriage and of the "awakening of a woman's serious self-awareness" (Rev. of *Nora*).

In contrast, surprisingly, the plot of *An Ideal Husband* was rejected as being in the French style (which must have meant: concerned with sexual intrigue), though made more winning through sarcasms and aphorisms. Oscar Wilde, it was acknowledged, was no moralist, but ridiculed the triviality of English upper class society with "amiable unselfconsciousness" (Rev. of *An Ideal Husband*, 1907) – not a term one would nowadays want to apply to Wilde. It is the style, the critic maintained, that makes the play attractive, not its plot. Unfortunately, the actors did not speak distinctly enough, which ruined the effect of the scenes. *Dorian Gray* was also received with mixed feelings. The critic did not really know what to make of this "mixture of the sensational and the supernatural" (Rev. of *Dorian Gray*, 28 Nov. 1907). The audience, too, seems to have rejected George Bentley's adaptation of Wilde's famous novel. In a more extended review on the next day, it was castigated as a "horrible play" although it came from the pen of "one of the most genial new dramatists" (Rev. of *Dorian Gray*, 29 Nov. 1907). Its success in Vienna was ascribed to the fact that the metropolitan audience must have known the novel, with which spectators in Ljubljana were unfamiliar. The dramatic version mangled the exquisite character portrayal, turning Wilde's sparkling world view into kitsch and mere English spleen. It was unfortunate, the critic complained, that the brilliant British dramatist was only known in Slovenia through his *Ideal Husband*, which, as has been shown above, had received a negative reception in Ljubljana in the same year 1907. Six years later, the harsh criticism had been forgotten and the reviewer assured the readership that a new production of *An Ideal Husband* confirmed the positive impression the play had made some years ago (Rev. of *An Ideal Husband*, 1913) – a rare case of an evaluation reversed within a relatively short span of time, proving that, although critical tastes often remained stable for decades, the reaction of the reviewers was not always predictable. Thus, despite their dislike of light comedy, Barrie's *The Little Minister* was considered a good choice, when compared to French fashions (associated invariably with sensationalism and the breaking of sexual taboos). The play was welcome as a fairy tale full of sentiment and warmth, challenging tears of emotion and delightful for its unsophisticated humour (Rev. of *The Little Minister*).

In general, these reviews give only a very limited insight into the actual way in which plays were staged or characters interpreted; we can gain but fleeting impressions of the performances through such criticism. A Mr. Pregler in 1895, for instance, played Hamlet as a man of "sophisticated deliberation" and "sharp intellect," not as a melancholic, whereas, much to the amazement of the critic, Ophelia was portrayed as a sentimentalist (Rev. of *Hamlet*, 1895). In 1899, a Mr. Kirsch presented the Danish prince not as a melancholic either, but as a man working unscrupulously for his aim of revenge (Rev. of *Hamlet*, 1899). The actors in the 1908 production of *Hamlet* were criticized for slavishly following the old models (whatever these may have been), without attempting to adapt to modern attitudes or considering that such antiquated styles might cause unexpected bursts of exhilaration (Rev. of

Hamlet, 6 March 1908). Such mistakes, the critic lectured in the hope of improving the quality of productions in the future, could have easily been avoided – giving one of the most detailed descriptions of a performance of Shakespeare that we have. The ghost entered in a ridiculous veil instead of an armour, and for obscure reasons his encounter with Hamlet was split into two parts, one taking place in the castle, one in a wood. The play within the play was performed at the extreme side of the stage, so that half the audience could not see what was happening. Absurdly, Hamlet looked behind the curtain before stabbing Polonius. The set was too shabby for a King's palace. The actor impersonating Hamlet interpreted the Prince as a man of quick action, not of hesitation and indecision, and spoke so indistinctly as to be incomprehensible, hurrying over Shakespeare's magnificent verses, though "each word expresses golden wisdom" (6 March 1908, 478). The leading actress lacked the maturity and experience required for the role of Ophelia, playing her too demurely. Polonius was too jovial, the Queen too superficial, an actress forgot her text and all minor roles were unsatisfactory.

Slating reviews also abound in other cases, affording brief glimpses of the performance practices at the German theatre. The actor performing Othello was criticized for his histrionics (Rev. of *Othello*, 1899); similarly, the performer taking the title role in *An Ideal Husband* was said to act too pathetically, and the other thespians supposedly tried the patience of the audience – for what reason, is not made quite clear, probably for not speaking distinctly (Rev. of *An Ideal Husband*, 1907). Demetrius and Lysander in the 1895 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* did not find the appropriate comic tone (Rev. of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1895), whereas Ernst Hartmann threw the audience into "raptures" as Petruchio because he turned him into an attractive comic figures, quickly passing over the character's brutality and concentrating on his "tender geniality" – a somewhat unexpected description of Petruchio's behaviour. Miss Jenbach's Catherine, on the other hand, was considered to be "too ribald" (Rev. of *The Taming of the Shrew*, 1893).

The set occasionally also came in for its share of criticism. Thus a niggling reviewer took offense at the worn-down carpet leading to Theseus' throne in the 1899 staging of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (20 Nov 1899, 2116). Similarly, the props were too shabby for a King's palace in *Hamlet* (19 March 1908, 471).⁷ Although the 1908 production of *Romeo and Juliet* was praised for relying more on the imagination than on decorations and sets, this supposedly did not work well for the masked ball (Rev. of *Romeo and Juliet*, 1908). The production of *Mrs. Warren's Profession* seems to have failed to make the milieu of Shaw's play unequivocally clear, and the actress playing the main part was felt to look too respectable for the madam of a brothel. Mishaps also happened in other productions of the classics. Thus Gretchen's room in *Faust*, to the scorn of a reviewer, was anachronistically lit by a modern lamp (Rev. of *Faust*).

There are few reviews in the *Laibacher Zeitung* of performances in the Slovenian Theatre in Ljubljana, but notice was taken of *Othello*. Although "a single

⁷ The precarious financial situation of the theatre is also illustrated by a humorous mid-century episode recounted by the famous actor Karl Basel: as the theatre did not provide him with an appropriate 18th century costume, he helped himself by using a lady's underpants as a jabot (qt. Radics 126).

mistake” might have made the whole performance ridiculous, the actors acquitted themselves creditably and played with “fire”. Fault was only found with the haphazardly jumbled costumes (Rev. of *Othello*, 1896). The staging of *The Merchant of Venice* at the Slovenian theatre was not considered to be equally successful, especially in the depiction of the minor roles – which, according to the patronizing critic, was no wonder, since Shakespeare posed great difficulties to small theatres, which tend to show only a distorted image of the great bard’s art. The actors at the Slovenian theatre, however, avoided “the worst”, the critic added approvingly (Rev. of *The Merchant of Venice*, 1897).

The interpretations Shylock was given in the German theatre in the period surveyed deserve special attention. In 1896, *The Merchant of Venice* was considered to be one of Shakespeare’s least accessible plays. The Jew was seen as a complex character eaten up by religious hatred and demoniac malice on the one hand, but also endowed with noble reserve (26 March 1896, 554), which the actor, a Mr. Lewinsky, who specialized in the impersonation of demonic characters, could not quite bring across. It is particularly interesting to compare two later reviews reacting to performances of *The Merchant of Venice* in two consecutive seasons under the management of Karl Richter. The reviewer “P” in 1911 regarded the Jew as a tragic figure who, at the climax of his revenge, is cast into the dust and in his despair even promises to abandon his faith. Next to Lessing’s Nathan, P opines, Shylock is the most touching embodiment in world literature of “the fate of this singular race.” By contrasting the ancient Jewish concept of law with the ideal of mercy, Shakespeare addressed “the deepest problems of religious history.” In Shakespeare’s less refined age, P explains, Shylock was considered a figure of fun, though he seems tragic to us today. Instead of reacting to the Jew with glee, “we” have learned to put ourselves into the place even of a despised people and “we” no longer laugh at the suffering of a man, though he himself may be partly responsible for his fate. Joseph Beck’s impersonation of the figure was praised, though his youth supposedly prevented him from presenting Shylock’s thirst for revenge convincingly. Shylock, the reviewer argued, must be made to seem a “volcano of century-old hatred, who in between metamorphoses into a whining dog” – a metaphor which makes one doubt the liberalism and tolerance of the critic after all (3 Feb. 1911, 241).

In contrast, in 1912, critic “J”, though praising *The Merchant of Venice* as a “grandiose play” deserving a place in the repertoire of every sizable playhouse, interpreted Shylock as a “horrible villain” motivated by relentless hatred, not as a tragic hero deserving of our pity. Quite on the contrary, he ought to arouse anger and repugnance, and Portia’s judgment should be accepted with satisfaction by the audience. In accordance with this anti-Semitic stereotype, Mr. Grine played the Jew with “gnashing teeth, cowering, staring with a poisonous gaze, full of hatred and anger at his oppressors” – the reason for this hatred being “the aversion of the usurer to the morally superior Antonio” (14 Dec 1912, 2773). The two reviews following each other in such quick succession map out the ideological conflicts over anti-Semitism at the time.

Although these reviews allow us some insight into the political, and socio-cultural debate of the time, the German theatre in Ljubljana in the last decades of

the Habsburg monarchy was not regarded as a vehicle for political comment, but as a place of escapist amusement or bourgeois cultural exercise. Critics did not try to establish connections between the plays performed and the political or social context of their time. This would hardly have been possible with such pieces as *Charley's Aunt*, *Jane Eyre* or *Sherlock Holmes*. But neither was it attempted for Shakespearean plays or for Schiller – and the latter, in particular, would have afforded ample food for political propaganda. On the contrary, critics seemed to emphasize that the conflict between the English and the Americans in *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, for instance, was too far removed from continental experience and did not interest the local audience, or that Wilde criticizes the triviality of the *English* upper class. Even when the topical subject matter in *Nora* or *Mrs. Warren's Profession* are discussed, this does not seem to lead to a genuine schema disruption as regards patriarchal attitudes at home – quite on the contrary, critics frequently wax complacent at the age's supposed progress in tolerance and understanding. The same holds true for *The Merchant of Venice*: although the reviews allow glimpses of anti-Semitism, they show no awareness that the hostile attitude towards Jews was a contemporary problem as well. Plays performed by the German theatre in Ljubljana in the last decades of the Habsburg monarchy were thus escapist entertainment or a bourgeois exercise of immersion into world literature, not only as far as the English Repertoire is concerned.

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Performances of English Plays at the German Theatre in Ljubljana (1875-1916)

Premiere	Title (author/translator). Notes.
09/01/1875	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> (Shakespeare)
03/11/1891	<i>Jane Eyre</i> (Die Waise von Lowood) (adapted from Charlotte Brontë by Ch. Birch-Pfeiffer)
13/03/1893	<i>Jane Eyre</i> (Die Waise von Lowood) (adapted from Charlotte Brontë by Ch. Birch-Pfeiffer)
19/12/1893	<i>Sweet Lavender</i> (Zwei Rosen) (A. W. Pinero)
22/12/1893	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> (Shakespeare)
22/01/1894	<i>Othello</i> (Shakespeare)
01/02/1894	<i>Charley's Aunt</i> (Brandon Thomas). Repeated Feb. 2, 3 and 14.
05/01/1895	<i>Hamlet</i> (Shakespeare)
14/02/1895	<i>Jane Eyre</i> (Die Waise von Lowood) (adapted from Charlotte Brontë by Ch. Birch-Pfeiffer)
27/03/1895	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> (Shakespeare)
11/01/1896	<i>Little Lord Fauntleroy</i> (F. Hodgson Burnett). Repeated Jan 20.
23/03/1896	<i>Charley's Aunt</i> (Brandon Thomas)
25/03/1896	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> (Shakespeare)
08/01/1897	<i>Jane Eyre</i> (Die Waise von Lowood) (adapted from Charlotte Brontë by Ch. Birch-Pfeiffer)
08/03/1899	<i>Hamlet</i> (Shakespeare)
09/11/1899	<i>Charley's Aunt</i> (Brandon Thomas)
19/11/1899	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> (Shakespeare)
07/12/1899	<i>Othello</i> (Shakespeare)
05/01/1900	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> (Shakespeare)
28/02/1900	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Shakespeare)
15/03/1900	<i>Little Lord Fauntleroy</i> (F. Hogson Burnett)
31/03/1901	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Shakespeare)
31/12/1901	<i>Charley's Aunt</i> (Brandon Thomas)
01/10/1902	<i>Miss Hobbs</i> (Jerome K. Jerome)
14/02/1906	<i>Sherlock Holmes</i> (adapted from A. Conan Doyle)
02/11/1906	<i>Little Dorrit</i> (adapted from Dickens)
16/01/1907	<i>An Ideal Husband</i> (Wilde). Repeated Jan. 23.
13/03/1907	<i>Jane Eyre</i> (Die Waise von Lowood) (adapted from Charlotte Brontë by Ch. Birch-Pfeiffer)
02/10/1907	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> (Shakespeare)

16/10/1907	<i>Mrs. Warren's Profession</i> (Shaw). Repeated Nov. 14.
27/11/1907	<i>Dorian Gray</i> (adapted from Wilde)
20/02/1908	<i>Charley's Aunt</i> (Brandon Thomas)
04/03/1908	<i>Hamlet</i> (Shakespeare)
07/10/1908	<i>The Little Minister</i> (J.M. Barrie)
14/12/1908	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Shakespeare)
01/02/1911	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> (Shakespeare)
09/01/1916	<i>Charley's Aunt</i> (Brandon Thomas). Repeated Oct. 19.
04/02/1916	<i>Sherlock Holmes</i> (adapted from A. Conan Doyle)

Performances of English Plays at the Burgtheater in Vienna

Premiere	Title (author/translator). Notes.
17/11/1889	<i>King Lear</i> (Shakespeare)
14/12/1889	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> (Shakespeare)
31/12/1889	<i>A Winter's Tale</i> (Shakespeare)
13/02/1890	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> (Shakespeare)
09/04/1890	<i>Twelfth Night</i> (Shakespeare)
10/05/1890	<i>Henry V</i> (Shakespeare)
02/06/1890	<i>Henry IV</i> (Part 1) (Shakespeare)
12/06/1890	<i>Henry IV</i> (Part 2) (Shakespeare)
05/07/1890	<i>Richard II</i> (Shakespeare)
31/12/1890	<i>Der Maskenball</i> (original not identifiable; trans. Christiane Gräfin Thun)
29/05/1891	<i>Julius Caesar</i> (Shakespeare)
31/10/1891	<i>Macbeth</i> (Shakespeare)
29/02/1892	<i>Richard III</i> (Shakespeare)
31/03/1892	<i>Henry VI</i> (Part 1) (Shakespeare)
11/05/1892	<i>Henry VI</i> (Part 2) (Shakespeare)
11/10/1894	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> (Shakespeare)
05/12/1894	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> (Shakespeare)
05/04/1895	<i>Coriolanus</i> (Shakespeare)
15/04/1896	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> (Shakespeare)
27/04/1898	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i> (Shakespeare)
03/05/1901	<i>Richard II</i> (Shakespeare)
18/01/1902	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i> (Shakespeare)

13/03/1902	<i>Measure for Measure</i> (Shakespeare)
27/02/1904	<i>Quality Street</i> (Im stillen Gäßchen) (J.M.Barrie/B. Pogson)
17/03/1906	<i>You Never Can Tell</i> (Shaw)
22/12/1907	<i>Julius Caesar</i> (Shakespeare)
09/03/1908	<i>The Little Minister</i> (Barrie)
22/04/1909	<i>A Florentine Tragedy</i> (Wilde)
23/12/1909	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> (Shakespeare)
13/05/1910	<i>An Ideal Husband</i> (Wilde)
16/06/1910	<i>Richard III</i> (Shakespeare)
23/03/1911	<i>The Builder of Bridges</i> (Dorothy's Rettung) (Sutro)
28/03/1912	<i>Caesar and Cleopatra</i> (Shaw)
01/02/1913	<i>The Lottery Man</i> (Wie man einen Mann gewinnt) (R.J. Young)
16/10/1913	<i>Pygmalion</i> (Shaw)
15/02/1914	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Shakespeare)
28/03/1914	<i>Othello</i> (Shakespeare)
30/05/1914	<i>Richard II</i> (Shakespeare)
11/03/1916	<i>Twelfth Night</i> (Shakespeare)
08/06/1916	<i>King Lear</i> (Shakespeare)

The following earlier Burgtheater productions continued to be staged into the period surveyed:

27/05/1850	<i>Julius Caesar</i> (Shakespeare). Staged until 30.09.1888.
13/02/1851	<i>Hamlet</i> (Shakespeare). Staged until 11.12.1909.
10/12/1853	<i>Jane Eyre</i> (Die Waise aus Lowood) (adapted from Charlotte Brontë by Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer). Staged until 03.03.1895.
20/09/1862	<i>A Winter's Tale</i> (Shakespeare). Staged until 04.10.1888.
30/01/1875	<i>Richard II</i> (Shakespeare). Staged until 01.01.1888.
22/02/1875	<i>Henry IV</i> (Part 1) (Shakespeare). Staged until 18.03.1888.
04/03/1875	<i>Henry IV</i> (Part 2) (Shakespeare). Staged until 20.03.1888.
19/03/1875	<i>Henry V</i> (Shakespeare). Staged until 08.04.1888.
10/10/1877	<i>Macbeth</i> (Shakespeare). Staged until 02.02.1888.
13/06/1880	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Shakespeare). Staged until 29.06.1911.
21/06/1880	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> (Shakespeare). Staged until 26.06.1888.
02/12/1881	<i>Othello</i> (Shakespeare). Staged until 15.12.1895.
11/05/1885	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> (Shakespeare). Staged until 11.04.1888.
16/01/1886	<i>Twelfth Night</i> (Shakespeare). Staged until 06.09.1888.

Performances of English Plays at the Volkstheater in Vienna

Premiere	Title (author/translator). Notes.
12/09/1891	<i>Jane Eyre</i> (Die Waise von Lowood) (adapted from Charlotte Brontë by Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer)
26/04/1892	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> (Shakespeare)
11/02/1893	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i> (Shakespeare)
01/02/1895	<i>Masqueraders</i> (Schattenspiel) (A.F. Jones)
21/09/1895	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Shakespeare)
28/12/1895	<i>Little Lord Fauntleroy</i> (F.H. Burnett)
17/02/1896	<i>Twelfth Night</i> (Shakespeare)
11/03/1897	<i>Hamlet</i> (Shakespeare)
03/04/1898	<i>Othello</i> (Shakespeare)
10/11/1900	<i>The Gay Lord Quex</i> (Pinero)
04/01/1902	<i>Miss Hobbs</i> (Jerome K. Jerome)
05/01/1903	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> (Shakespeare)
12/12/1903	<i>Salome</i> (Wilde)
30/04/1904	<i>The Tyranny of Tears</i> (Chambers-Haddon)
08/10/1904	<i>Candida</i> (Shaw)
09/12/1905	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> (Eine triviale Komödie für seriöse Leute) (Wilde)
25/12/1905	<i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i> (H. MacNaughten)
11/02/1906	<i>Leah Kleschna</i> (MacLellan)
12/03/1906	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i> (Shakespeare)
01/02/1907	<i>A Woman of No Importance</i> (Wilde)
13/04/1907	<i>His House in Order</i> (Pinero)
27/04/1907	<i>Man and Superman</i> (Shaw)
25/05/1907	<i>Salome</i> (Wilde)
23/09/1907	<i>Richard III</i> (Shakespeare)
28/04/1908	<i>The Philanderer</i> (Shaw)
12/09/1908	<i>Mrs Warren's Profession</i> (Shaw)
27/03/1909	<i>Major Barbara</i> (Shaw)
28/06/1909	<i>The Philanderer</i> (Shaw)
27/11/1909	<i>The Doctor's Dilemma</i> (Shaw)
09/02/1910	<i>Jack Straw</i> (Mein Freund Jack) (Somerset Maugham)
05/03/1910	<i>The Passing of the Third Floor Back</i> (Der Fremde) (Jerome K. Jerome)

14/08/1910	<i>Hamlet</i> (Shakespeare)
18/03/1911	<i>Misalliance</i> (Shaw)
27/03/1911	<i>Othello</i> (Shakespeare)
14/10/1912	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Shakespeare)
14/08/1913	<i>Arms and the Man</i> (Helden) (Shaw)
20/08/1913	<i>Salome</i> (Wilde)
18/03/1916	<i>The Devil's Disciple</i> (Shaw)
05/10/1916	<i>A Winter's Tale</i> (Shakespeare)
22/02/1917	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> (Shakespeare)

ETHNIC ISSUES IN THE WORKS OF JOHN STEINBECK

Polona Vičič

Abstract

John Steinbeck is an author whose literary oeuvre has evoked a rich palette of reactions, from open admiration to total rejection. This divided reaction to his works is probably at least to some extent due to the fact that his works address several contentious issues, one of them being ethnic issues, which will be discussed in this paper.

Key words: ethnic issues, ethnicity, literary works, non-literary works

1.0. JOHN STEINBECK AND HIS HOMELAND

In his literary career, Steinbeck ventured in many different directions in terms of the subject, genre, as well as style and form. Regardless of his many ventures, he could be said to be primarily a naturalist writer dedicating most of his literary works to his homeland, California. Steinbeck's literary beginnings were humble, the first turning point in his literary career being his California novel *Tortilla Flat* (1935), a picaresque account of the lives of Monterey paisanos, followed by three novels dealing with the plight of migrant labourers *In Dubious Battle* (1936), *Of Mice and Men* (1937) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), all of which further promoted Steinbeck's career as a writer.

Steinbeck proved to be at his best when writing about his homeland and the people he encountered there, that is why, according to many critics his works written prior to his change of residence from California to New York, which coincided with the onset of World War II, established him as a prominent and important American novelist of his time. After experiencing the terrors of the war front in 1943, he returned to New York disillusioned by what he had seen and once again retreated to the security of his homeland, now by writing about it, the result being the novel *Cannery Row* (1945). Most of Steinbeck's literary as well as non-literary works that followed did not attract much attention from contemporary critics or were most often denounced by them. His reputation also declined with readers, whose limited attention was attracted only by the works of American pastoral life, including the novelette *The Pearl* (1947) and the epic novel *East of Eden* (1952).

2.0. STEINBECK'S TREATMENT OF ETHNIC ISSUES

No matter which direction Steinbeck took in his literary career, one of the features that can often be traced in his works is his interest in the lives of the marginalised, the dispossessed and the poor. This paper will focus on the author's interest in the representatives of different ethnic minorities and related issues. Following the three main areas into which most of Steinbeck's literary works have been grouped since 1947 – novels focusing on the California working class, witty comedies and works of American pastoral life – I will first briefly outline the treatment of ethnic issues in the works within these three groups. As the questions who Americans are and what the prevailing characteristics of American society are, are also dealt with in the non-literary works that Steinbeck wrote in the last decade of his life, the paper will round up with a discussion on the treatment of ethnic issues in these works. Some of the topics which will be discussed in my article have also been dealt with in studies written by Danica Čerče.

2.1. Ethnic issues in literary works

2.1.1. Works focusing on the California working class

In the novels that focus on the California working class – *In Dubious Battle*, *Of Mice and Men* and *The Grapes of Wrath* – Steinbeck relates the struggle of the migrant workers in California, taking a different point of view in each of them.

The novel *In Dubious Battle* depicts events in California orchards, where migratory workers organise themselves against the orchard owners. Steinbeck objectively recognises and exposes the main failings of both sides – the exploitation of the individual resulting in the sacrifice of an individual for the 'common cause' and the depersonalization of individuals. Both of these characteristics are also discernible in the treatment of ethnic issues, which deal with various aspects of ethnicity in the USA. The first brief mention of ethnicity, in which the protagonist Jim Nolan relates his experience of sharing a cell with "a Mexican and a Negro and a Jew and a couple of plain mongrel Americans like me" (Steinbeck 1936: 24), concludes with the realization that "In that cell were five men all raised in about the same condition" (ibid.). By treating nationality as a fact that has no further implications, Steinbeck sets the scene for his "phalanx theory," which he primarily uses "to explain mob psychology" (Lisca 1958: 118). His concept of a group-man (ibid.) is further elaborated in relation to ethnicity when Mac, the strike organiser and Jim's teacher, explains that the violent citizens or vigilantes are "the same ones that burned the houses of old German people during the war... that lynch Negroes" (Steinbeck 1936: 166). While Mac and Jim, when addressing their cause, use minorities, the orchard owners, on the other hand, when later in the novel they are trying to persuade strikers to stop the strike by offering them a minimum wage rise, use the American majority: "I know American working men. Give American working men something reasonable to listen to, and they'll listen" (244). The last treatment of ethnic issues is included in Mac's narration of a string of events at the lynching of a "nigger" (269), which is again used to demonstrate the phalanx theory and mob psychology.

The short novel *Of Mice and Men* relates the life of farmhands who live an underprivileged life at the bottom of society in California. In contrast to the protagonists of the preceding novel, the protagonists of this novel accept their lot and do not question the structure of society (Fontenrose 54). In the framework of this central topic, Steinbeck also addresses the still topical issue of the position of African Americans in American society. The latter is addressed in the treatment of the Negro stable keeper Crooks, who is forced into a subservient position because of social prejudice and racial discrimination felt and openly expressed both by the ranch owners as well as the white farmhands. His name Crooks could thus symbolize not only his bent spine but also the subservient position of the black race. To avoid being hurt for being isolated by other farmhands, he retreats into self-imposed isolation and tries to fight loneliness by reading books. One night his solitude is disturbed by the intrusion of Lennie, the simple-minded protagonist, who in his childlike neglect of social rules approaches Crooks and shares with him his dream of a home for himself, George and Curley. By approaching Crooks, he not only awakens that same dream in him but also reminds him of his loneliness. Crooks thus pleads with Lennie and Curley, who also joins them, to let him join their plans for the future and offers to work for them for free, which again symbolizes his subservient position. The reality of the fact that he and his race are still at the very bottom of the social-ladder is openly addressed by the farm owner's wife, who reminds him of his subservient position in class as well as race when she intrudes on the three of them: "Well, you keep your place then; Nigger. I could get you strung up on a tree so easy it ain't even funny" (Steinbeck 1937: 141). Crooks' dream of a better life and companionship thus lasts only for a brief moment; disheartened he asks Lennie and Candy to leave his room and retreats to nursing his bent spine.

The last novel from this trilogy, *The Grapes of Wrath*, depicts the plight of the dispossessed farmers from Oklahoma who are forced to set off for California to find work as fruit pickers and a new home. In the framework of ethnicity, 'Okies' could be seen both as an underprivileged minority in California, whose dream of a better life is soon ruined by the hostile attitude of the locals, as well as a microcosm of the American nation for possessing the will to go on and the opposition to become serfs (Thorp 131). Because of their will to endure, they paradoxically pose a threat to California middle class fruit owners, who strive to retain their position by holding on to their property and the rights deriving from it (115). In this respect, the minority issues related to 'Okies' are intricately interwoven with the native theme, primarily with the 'primal sin' (Tóth 6) in the history of the USA – the killing and dispossession of the Native Americans: "Grampa took up the land, and he had to kill the Indians and drive them away" (Steinbeck 1939: 45). Further reference to Indians and their legends can be found in the opening inter-chapter on the land turtle, in which the westward migration of the Okies is related to the Native American legend about a turtle that led an Indian tribe to "a new and unknown land" (Tóth 5). The fact that Indians and their culture continue to present an important aspect of contemporary American society is exposed in the episode depicting the migrants' Saturday night dance in a government camp, in which Steinbeck juxtaposes Indian culture with American by depicting a "Texas boy" and "Cherokee girl" (449) who join the dance.

2.1.2. Witty comedies

In the witty comedies *Tortilla Flat*, *Cannery Row* and *Sweet Thursday* (1954), Steinbeck, in a comically romantic tone, recounts the lives of Monterey “drop-outs” (Lisca 1972: 78) living in two special areas of Monterey, Tortilla Flat and Cannery Row.

The first and most successful of these comedies is the novel *Tortilla Flat*, which portrays Monterey paisanos, who are uncorrupted by the materialism of twentieth century civilisation and live in the poor uphill district called Tortilla Flat. The destinies of these protagonists, who upon returning from World War I gather around Danny, a newly proclaimed man of possession, are set in a plot inspired by the Arthurian legend, which interfaces with the organismic and ecological themes. By recounting the lives of paisanos, mixed-blooded Mexican-Americans, Steinbeck in this novel intricately interweaves the aforementioned Arthurian, organismic and ecological themes with ethnic issues. Although paisanos are “a mixture of Spanish, Indian, Mexican and assorted Caucasian bloods” (Steinbeck 1935: 57), which is pointed out when they are first introduced and on several other occasions, ethnic issues do not seem to be in the forefront of their treatment. Nevertheless, as regards their ethnicity, it should be noted that paisanos are not equally proud of their entire heritage and like to stress their Spanish blood as dominant and superior to their Mexican and Indian ancestry. The ethnic group that frequently meets with paisanos are the Italians, who together with Americans inhabit the lower parts of Monterey. Most of these Italians are men of some possession and thus the superior race on which paisanos depend on for their survival, which could be one of the reasons why paisanos do not think and speak fondly of them, be it the fishermen whom Danny meets in the harbour and verbally attacks, or the Italian local wine merchant, from whom they buy low-quality wine and who eventually buys Danny’s house, the only possession left after the house rented to Pilon has burnt to the ground. The novel thus ends with the dissolution of Danny’s group, which is brought about by the group’s failure to resist the weight of property ownership.

After witnessing the horrors of World War II, Steinbeck, upon his return home, tried to find an escape from the war and the discontenting realities of post-war times in the novel *Cannery Row*, which recounts the lives of Monterey bums in the 1930s, this time the ones living in the lower parts of Monterey, called Cannery Row. The protagonists of this witty comedy are Mack and his boys, who are “American bums,” not the paisanos of *Tortilla Flat*. The topical thread of the novel is again intricately interwoven with the organismic and ecological theme, both of which occasionally intersect with the ethnic theme, especially when the basic organism formed around Mack and his boys, and the broader one, Cannery Row and its community, are juxtaposed with Lee Chong, a Chinese grocer, and with the old Chinaman. In this respect, Lee Chong could be seen as a representative of a foreign culture who successfully adapts to the community of Cannery Row. With the help of oriental philosophy, he namely manages to establish a mutually beneficial relationship with Mack and his boys and the other residents of Cannery Row and thus lays ground for his successful business and the respect he enjoys. His successful adjustment is not the result of an unconditional surrender to American culture and its shortcomings but rather of his successful balancing of these shortcomings with

the oriental philosophy. His diametrical opposite is the old Chinaman, who unlike Lee Chong is completely detached from the community of Cannery Row, crossing its streets at dusk and dawn with his wicker basket like a ghost, evoking in the Row's residents their greatest fears. The old Chinaman's total detachment could be interpreted as his total rejection of American culture and his aversion to assimilation, whose inevitability is foreshadowed in a young boy's rhyme: "Ching-Chong Chinaman sitting on a rail – 'Long came a white man and chopped off his tail" (Steinbeck 1945: 14).

The last novel in this group is *Sweet Thursday*, which repeats not only the setting and many of the characters of *Cannery Row* but also the general outline of the plot. In this novel, Steinbeck's disillusionment with the post-war society of Cannery Row is also reflected in the treatment of ethnic issues through the replacement of Lee Chong and his Oriental philosophy with Joseph and Mary Rivas, a Mexican American with a questionable reputation, whose core business is not selling groceries but smuggling illegal immigrants from Mexico. While Lee Chong, whose sudden and unexpected departure takes the residents of Cannery Row by surprise as well as disappointing them, stands for wisdom and natural goodness, his successor could in this respect be seen as his direct opposite: "Everything he did naturally turned out to be against the law" (Steinbeck 1966: 11). Another contrasting difference between Lee and Joseph and Mary is their relationship with other people; while Lee predominantly fosters altruistic and mutually beneficial relationships, Joseph and Mary is predominantly driven by self-interest, which leaves little room for altruism and charity. Accordingly, his prime interest in the grocery is not selling groceries but providing "a kind of labor center" (15) for illegal immigrants from Mexico. His lack of morality is further demonstrated by his exploitation of his own people, who are less fortunate and in a worse position than he is. Besides repeating the setting and general outline of the plot, Steinbeck in this novel thus also repeats the focus of ethnic identity; following the pattern of *Cannery Row*, he again contrasts two groups of immigrants to American society, this time from Mexico, and their level of assimilation. In this respect, Joseph and Mary's denial of his roots, his self-interest and preoccupation with money-making could be interpreted as his total surrender to American culture, resulting in his "successful" assimilation and putting him in a superior position to his less privileged and unassimilated fellow countrymen, the advantage of which he takes without much of a guilty conscience.

2.1.3. Works of American pastoral life

In the works *The Pastures of Heaven* (1932) and *The Long Valley* (1938), Steinbeck takes us to the idyllic countryside of the Salinas Valley, while the novelette *The Pearl* recounts the legend of an Indian living in a coastal village in the suburbs of the Mexican town of La Paz.

In *The Pastures of Heaven*, Steinbeck recounts lives in the seemingly idyllic valley situated about twenty miles from Monterey. A series of ten stories, each of them an account of the destinies of a chosen individual or family, is rounded up by the opening and closing chapter, in which first the Spanish corporal and finally the bus driver and his passengers stop at the top of a ridge and contemplate the possibility of retreating

to this village. The ill fortune of the valley and its inhabitants is foreshadowed in the first chapter, which recounts the story of a Spanish corporal, who discovers the valley after recapturing a group of runaway Indians that had escaped forced labour in clay pits. Admiring the beauty of the valley's countryside from a nearby ridge, he dreams of retreating to its beauty and peacefulness in his old age. The realization of his dream is later prevented by his death of pox, which has ironically been transmitted to him by an Indian woman. The valley, being spoiled by the primal sin of the American culture, is ironically named The Pastures of Heaven, the name chosen by a Spanish corporal whose "rapacious manhood was building a new race for California" (Steinbeck 1932: 2). The origins of the valley being linked to this "savage bearer of civilization" (ibid.), thus inevitably result in the curse that hangs over the valley as well as its inhabitants from the very beginning and is reawakened with the arrival of the Munroe family, whose main sin seems to be their mediocrity, which has unforeseeable consequences for the valley's inhabitants. After the explicit treatment of ethnic issues related to the Spanish conquerors and Native Americans and their implications for life in the valley, Steinbeck later deals with ethnicity in a less explicit manner. When recounting the destinies of the valley's inhabitants of Indian origin, he thus only briefly mentions or just alludes to their ethnic origin; such examples are a Mexican Indian Pancho, a farm hand who one day finds an infant Tularecito, whose very name, affinity with nature and the alienation from the world of the whites allude to his Indian roots. Not being able to conform to the norms of the white majority, Tularecito is confined to a mental asylum. Similarly, the paisano sisters Lopez, who make their living by selling Mexican food and providing their customers with sexual services, when faced with the accusations of a jealous village woman, can do nothing but leave the valley for San Francisco to become prostitutes. Steinbeck's interest in ethnicity is further developed in his treatment of the Mustrovics, a family of Slavic origin, whose members almost completely isolate themselves from other residents, with whom only the son occasionally speaks. The family, whose Slavic origin is alluded to with their surname, physical appearance and foreign accent, departs the valley as mysteriously as they had settled in it. Their apparent opposition to assimilation is provided a counterpart in an old German worker, whom the idle Junious Maltby hires as a farm hand and who readily surrenders to idle contemplation over any thought that might enter Junious's and his mind.

The Long Valley is another collection of short stories, most of which share the same setting, Steinbeck's native region of the Salinas Valley. The latter being a homeland to a relatively large number of Indians, it is no surprise that Native Americans and their present day descendants represent the most often addressed ethnic group in this work. The first story to address the native theme is "Flight," an account of a young Indian's initiation into manhood. Most of the story concerns itself with a set of events triggered by the protagonist's impulsive killing of a man, which forces him into a flight into the mountains. Upon his final departure from his family, the protagonist's mother presents him with his late father's possessions, all of which are symbols of Western civilisation. On his journey to an inevitable death in the mountains, he gradually rids himself of these "Western artefacts of his family's acquired culture" (Britch and Lewis 45), and freed of them as well as being matured by his experience, he proudly awaits the deadly shot. While Pepé, the protagonist of "The Flight," retreats into the moun-

tains to face his untimely death, Gitano, a paisano character of “The Great Mountains,” retreats into the mountains to await his timely death. After being rejected the right to await death at the farm where he was born, he steals an old horse named Easter and rides him to the mountains, taking only his father’s rapier with him. Like Pepé, Gitano is also influenced by Western culture, which is symbolised by the horse’s name and a rapier that accompany him on his final journey. Leaving behind all other artefacts of Western culture, he rides out proudly “in the manner of a warrior and an Indian” (51). Besides Indians, Steinbeck also presents a representative of the Chinese and Yugoslav minority. The racial prejudices linked to the Chinese minority are addressed in “Johnny Bear,” in which a town’s respected aristocratic spinster gets pregnant with a Chinese tenant farmer. Her sin of carrying an illegitimate child is doubly degrading because of the child’s Chinese paternal origin. The sin being unacceptable to the town’s social norms, the pregnant sister, to protect the family’s reputation, commits suicide. Another story alluding to the perceived racial superiority of Nordic peoples (French 86), “The Murder,” could be interpreted as a study of the constraints of a mixed culture marriage experienced in small-town America during the time frame of the story (Schultz and Li 143). On the wedding day, the protagonist Jim, of apparent Anglo origin, is warned by his father-in-law: “Jelka is a Slav girl. He’s not like American girl. If he’s bad, beat him” (Steinbeck 1956: 173). No matter how appalled by this proposal, Jim later, after finding his wife in bed with her cousin, kills him and on the next day severely whips her. The fact that he is so deeply offended by his wife’s adultery, although he himself regularly visits a town’s whorehouse, and the fact that he gets away with murder, illustrate Jim’s superior position as a man and as an American.

The novelette *The Pearl* is a parable set in a Mexican fishing village, La Paz, recounting an anecdote of a Mexican-Indian boy who finds a great pearl. The discovery of the pearl brings to Steinbeck’s protagonist, Kino, the promise of future prosperity and happiness. After experiencing the evil that the pearl has brought, the promise of future prosperity turns into the ominous symbol of greed and envy. By pointing out the evil that materialism brings as well as its effect on the inhabitants of a small Indian fishing village, on the one hand, and the townsmen, most of whom are Mexicans of Spanish descent, on the other, this story could also be read as an insight into ethnic divisions in Mexico (Methuen’s Study-Aids 22). Kino is thus a representative of the oppressed and exploited Indian community, which lives by Indian traditions as well as adapts to some aspects of Western culture; he and his wife instinctively first revert to their ancient tradition – chant their songs to give voice to their inner feelings, treat their son with a poultice – but seek further advice and help from the town-community and their culture – their Christian religion, medicine and the commercial contacts of the pearl buyers. The latter representing their oppressors, the Indian community fosters mixed feelings of awe and distrust towards them, both longing for the prosperity and safety that Western culture and Christianity promise as well as being cautious of their greed and treachery. Losing his beloved son as well as all of his possessions, Kino realizes that his dreams of happiness that the pearl should bring were as misleading as his illusion that he could fight against the injustices inflicted upon his community by the townsmen. Realizing that materialism does not bring happiness or respect from the oppressors, he finally throws the pearl back into the sea and reverts to living by Indian traditions.

2.2. Ethnic issues in non-literary works

Although Steinbeck is primarily known for his literary works, it should be noted that his non-literary works provide us with an invaluable insight into his concepts and view of life by shedding a different light on both of them. To round up the treatment of ethnic issues in Steinbeck's works, this paper will thus conclude with a discussion on how ethnicity is dealt with in the travelogues *The Log from the Sea of Cortez* (1951) and *Travels with Charley in Search of America* (1962) and a collection of essays *America and Americans* (1966).

The Log from the Sea of Cortez recounts the experience, biological findings and philosophical views pertaining to the biological expedition to the Gulf of California or Sea of Cortez, which Steinbeck joined to escape his long feared popularity and public attention. This work gives full voice to the concepts already dealt with in his previous works, including his views on ethnicity and related issues. The first treatment of the latter is included in the appendix dedicated to Edd Ricketts, in an account of an incident in which an Italian woman, upon visiting Edd's laboratory, is shown the foetus of a Negress and a Chinese. Unlike the representative of an aristocratic white race, Amy, from "Johnny Bear," who commits suicide, this Negress is killed against her will, her murderer being unidentified. Furthermore, while Amy's foetus is buried together with her, the Negress' foetus is exposed to public scrutiny, which further alludes to the Negress' apparent inferior position. This incident could also be interpreted as an allusion to the Italian woman's non-assimilation into American society, which is demonstrated by her inability to speak English. With regards to assimilation, two representatives of Chinese origin, a young Chinese who one day visits the laboratory and speaks perfect English as well as the Chinese grocer who like in *Cannery Row* and *Sweet Thursday* is treated with respect, could be seen as her opposite for their successful assimilation. In the chapters recounting a set of events from the biological expedition, ethnicity is primarily dealt with in encounters with the inhabitants of the Gulf of California and its hinterland. In their first encounter with the locals, the latter board or near the ship in hierarchical order: first the Mexican officials in uniforms, then business agents in business suits, after them the soldiers and finally the Indians. Further in the bay, the crew is approached by the Indians who are very cautious, which Steinbeck ascribes to the "evil that the white man had brought to their ancestors" (Steinbeck 1967: 135). Steinbeck's sympathy with the natives, who are uncorrupted by the materialism of modern society, is outspoken in several more accounts of encounters with them, as well as further developed in his criticism of tasteless Spanish wooden sculptures of Christ, created to "impress the Indians of the Gulf" (142) and the failures of American society, the biggest of them being materialism. Although admiring the Indians' still clean and unspoiled minds, Steinbeck concludes his brooding over their destiny and the effects of Western culture on them by foreshadowing the inevitable change in their attitude towards "temporal and material things" (292), resulting in their surrender to them.

The travelogue *Travels with Charley in Search of America* is an account of a journey Steinbeck took across the United States with the goal of rediscovering and redefining his home country as well as identifying Americans and their defining traits.

His only companion on this journey was his dog Charley, with whom he travelled in a camper called Rocinante, the name symbolising his Don Quixotian quest for the idealized America of his boyhood in the commercialized “atomic-age” America of the 1960s (Fontenrose 138). Striving to identify Americans, Steinbeck in this work inevitably deals with various aspects of ethnicity in the USA, including specificities of inhabitants of various regions, the problem of racial discrimination and segregation, the concept of the melting pot, and the common traits of all Americans. In this patchwork of America’s rich ethnic makeup, Steinbeck strives to find the prevailing traits of Americans as “a nation, a new breed” (Steinbeck 1962: 185). To his fascination, all Americans have developed certain common traits that define them as Americans.

His concern about Americans and the contentious issues of contemporary America are further discussed in his collection of nine essays titled *America and Americans*. In these essays, Steinbeck addresses the topical issues of his America, starting where he left off in *Travels with Charley in Search of America*: “our people are every race, of every ethnic category – and yet ...Americans” (Steinbeck 2002: 319) and continuing with his search for the answer to the question who Americans are. In the opening essay, he first provides us with his insight into the underlying reason for the fast assimilation of newcomers into mainstream American culture – the “very cruelty toward newcomers” (322) – and the development of their common traits, which as he observes is reflected in “an American look” (324) recognized worldwide. The two ethnic groups that are set apart from more or less fully assimilated newcomers are the Indians and the Negroes. In the essays to follow, Steinbeck addresses several more contentious issues of American society, some of them being their paradoxical dream of home struggling with their restlessness, slavery and related issues, the illusion of a classless society, the irresponsible exploitation of the land, and their attitude toward foreigners (Schultz and Li 28-30). In his final essay, Steinbeck concludes that present day America might be permeated with failures and vices, many of them originating in materialism and the insatiable desire for material things, but he still believes that based on their previous knowledge and experience, Americans will find a way to successfully adapt to “the change that is coming” (Steinbeck 2002: 402).

3.0. CONCLUSION

It seems inevitable that Steinbeck, as the author who was deeply concerned with the social and economic issues of the America of his time, should pay as much attention as he did to the divisions in contemporary American society, including class, ethnicity and race. In the treatment of ethnicity, he casts light on important aspects of American society, including the native theme, the phenomenon of the melting pot and assimilation, and the position of immigrant workers. His treatment of ethnic issues culminates in the attempt to find the answer to the paramount question who Americans are and how well they are prepared for the challenges of the America of the 20th century.

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**WENDY JONES NAKANISHI: AN AMERICAN RESIDENT IN JAPAN
HER LIFE AND WORK THROUGH THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND
LITERARY CREATIVITY**

Nataša Potočnik

Abstract

Wendy Jones Nakanishi is a professor of English Language and Comparative Cultures at a small private college located in the south of Japan: Shikoku Gakuin University in Kagawa prefecture. It is a life far removed from her roots. She grew up in a tiny town in the northwestern corner of Indiana and spent her childhood holidays at her grandparents' farm in the central part of the state. She received graduate degrees in Indiana, in England and in Scotland and she also spent a year in France and half a year in Holland.

Nakanishi has published widely in America, Japan and Europe. Her academic research ranges from eighteenth-century English literature to the analysis of contemporary Japanese and British authors to sociological topics related to Japan. She was an Associate Member of the Ruskin Programme, based at Lancaster University in England, and currently belongs to the Iris Murdoch Society of Japan.

She has published a considerable body of academic work – critical monographs, articles and book reviews – and, in recent years, has embarked on writing short stories and 'creative non-fiction' pieces based on her experience of living in Japan for the past twenty-seven years as an American 'ex-pat', as a university professor, and as the wife of a Japanese farmer and the mother of three sons. Her stories have been published in various literary magazines in Japan and abroad and reflect her 'life story' as a foreigner residing in that country. In this article, I will focus on her 'creative non-fiction' stories.

Key words: Wendy Jones Nakanishi's short stories and her biography, portrayal of Japanese and American societies in her works, as a woman and a foreigner in Japan

INTRODUCTION

The ability to exhibit tolerance and to live in peace with others is a key to leading a happy life. It may be that the cultivation of this virtue is especially recommended for literary-minded expatriates – people who decide to write about different cultures on the basis of their life experiences in the countries they have chosen to inhabit.

The importance of such literature penned by creative emigrant writers, whether it takes the form of poetry or prose, is that it offers an intimate perspective on a country and culture perceived as foreign to the writers: a viewpoint that is both personal and

objective. The author pens his own feelings and reactions while remaining distanced from what he describes. His work thus becomes a source of information that can entertain and instruct his readers.

Important literature has been written by Slovenian emigrants living abroad and especially by those residents in the United States. Among Slovene priests who went to the United States as missionaries (the best known are M. A. Kappers, Friderik Baraga and Andrej B. Smolnikar) who were followed by thousands of emigrants in the 19th and 20th century. Many of them wrote autobiographies, prose works, poetry and plays. They published their works mainly on Slovene, although the best known author among them, Louis Adamic (1898–1951), wrote all of his works in English.

Wendy Jones Nakanishi is an American who is a long-term resident of Japan. Her life experiences in her adoptive country are vividly expressed through her short stories, often taking the form of autobiographical fragments. I believe she is an author worth mentioning. She is a good observer of the mysteries and contradictions inherent in Japanese culture. I have been fortunate enough to become personally acquainted with her this article. I would like to analyse briefly her work.

GROWING UP IN THE UNITED STATES: INDIANA AND HER EDUCATION

Wendy Jones was born on June 21st, 1954, in Goshen, Indiana. She lived in the small town of Syracuse in northern Indiana until she was three. Her father was an assistant cashier at the only bank in that town. Her mother was a farmer's daughter from central Indiana. Nakanishi had an older brother and two older sisters. When she was two her father contracted polio. He had been a very keen athlete, fond of baseball and tennis and of swimming in the area's numerous lakes, but polio struck suddenly and left him with a slight limp, a disaster, in Nakanishi's opinion, that affected him mentally as well as physically:

Certainly, he never really recovered from losing his ability to walk easily. He could walk, with or without using a cane, but it really made him rather bitter and he left off playing sports altogether. (Potočnik 2010: n.pag.)

When she was three, her family moved seventy miles north, to a tiny town in the northwestern corner of Indiana called Rolling Prairie that had a population of only 500, and her father became the manager of the Rolling Prairie Bank. It was a 'new start' for them all, but their happiness was to be short-lived. When Nakanishi was seven, her father left the family home forever; when she was nine, her parents divorced. Shortly afterwards, her father married a local girl from Rolling Prairie who used to work at his bank and moved back to Syracuse, where he had become president of the bank.

Wendy then experienced a sad period of her life, as she explained in the course of an interview I conducted with her:

This situation was pretty catastrophic for my brother and sisters and me because our mother sank into a deep depression after Dad left and, although

we lived in quite a nice house, she just couldn't summon up enough energy sometimes even to leave her bedroom. Things fell apart. It was a sort of schizophrenic existence: my family had had social status, had joined the kind of 'elite' of the town when my father was with us but, when he left, our house became shabby and dark and we felt quite poor in a way. We didn't have nice clothes and our mother rarely got up to prepare our breakfasts or our lunches for school. I was very depressed actually, and I felt life was very grey and that there was little to be hopeful about. (*Ibid.*)

Until Wendy was about thirteen, she was doing badly academically as well as personally. She knew that things must change when she entered junior high school and came to the realization that if anyone was going to change her life, it had to be her. She started working harder at school and became a top student. In her final year of high school, when all her siblings had already left home, she experienced a sense of liberation, changing from being a shy girl with few friends to a popular student who was the editor of the school year book and the president of its French club. Just before graduating she learned that she had been awarded two scholarships, making possible her plan to study at Indiana University with few financial worries. She left Rolling Prairie at the age of eighteen never to return for any length of time. She would only go back for short visits. As she later recalled:

I think it was probably a kind of inspiration. I felt that I had to make a change, and that I needed to escape from my own background. (*Ibid.*)

At Indiana University she was thrilled suddenly to be immersed in an interesting, challenging environment, rubbing shoulders with students of all backgrounds, from all over the world. She had left behind, forever, she thought, a tiny, occasionally claustrophobic environment, landing in a lively and vibrant intellectual community that she loved.

On graduating from high school she had embarked on a tour of Europe, courtesy of her father. She feels he was stingy emotionally and financially with her throughout his life, but she would always be grateful for the one wonderful life-changing present he had bestowed on her, as she recollected in my interview:

One thing my father did do for me and my two sisters was to treat us to a trip to Europe as a high school graduation present. The trip lasted about two months, and I was with a lot of other high school students from all over the States. When the plane landed at O'Hare, I was the last person off; I just wanted to stay on the plane and return to Europe. (*Ibid.*)

Wendy realized then that she wanted travel and adventure. At Indiana University she eventually settled on English literature as her major, and this would enable her to return to England on a 'Junior Year Abroad' program. She went to Lancaster and, again, was reluctant to return to America, but she needed to go back to graduate from Indiana University. She did her senior honors thesis on the topic of marriage in three of Jane Austen's novels. After graduating from Indiana University, she went to Paris and got a job as an au pair, working for a family in a tiny town called L'Etang-la-Ville on the

outskirts of Paris for three months. Her short story "One Day" appeared on the Internet Short Story Forum and is based on this experience.

Later Wendy rented an apartment in nearby St. Germain-en-Laye and set up her own private language school with an English friend. She stayed in Paris for about nine months and easily made a living by catering to the large number of French people eager to learn English. After her year in France, she returned to Lancaster and got her MA in 1978 with a thesis on the topic: 'The Familiar Letter in the Eighteenth Century, with Special Reference to Horace Walpole and to Swift's *Journal to Stella*'. She graduated with first-class honors, and Dr. Clive Probyn, her favorite professor at Lancaster University, urged her to continue her studies. But her father had refused to help her financially with her postgraduate studies, so she needed to return to America to work to repay the loan she had taken out for her year at Lancaster. She worked as a secretary in Chicago, employed for six months by Rotary International and then for six months by Northwestern University's mathematics department. When she had nearly repaid her loan, an English friend urged her, as she recalled in the course of our interview, to 'Just give it all up and come and join him'. (*Ibid.*)

Wendy joined him in Groningen for six months. She knew that her friend was applying to do a doctorate at Edinburgh University and, during her time working as a secretary in Chicago, she had typed up an application for Edinburgh for herself, sending it off with a copy of her MA thesis. When she returned to America from Holland to find work for the summer, she was amazed and delighted to discover that she had been awarded a full scholarship at Edinburgh University. On the advice of her tutor she devoted her research to a study of the letters of Alexander Pope and, under the guidance of another tutor wrote her doctoral thesis on the contemporary context of his correspondence.

But fate did not intend for her to rest comfortably on her laurels in Britain. It so happened that, in her last year, she saw a notice posted by a certain Professor Tanizaki from Japan who wanted to create a link between his new university, Tokushima Bunri, in Kagawa prefecture in Japan, and Edinburgh University. So he put up an advertisement for a position there for an Edinburgh graduate starting in the spring of 1984. Knowing that her prospects for obtaining a teaching position were bleak in America or Europe, as there were few spots open for eighteenth-century scholars, Wendy decided to apply for the job. To her surprise, she got it. This is the story of how and why Wendy first ventured to Japan, a country, she admits, she knew nothing about at that time and had little interest in.

Wendy arrived in Japan in March 1984, having just completed her doctorate at Edinburgh University. After first teaching for five years at Tokushima Bunri University, she got a tenured position at Shikoku Gakuin University in Zentsuji, and has been teaching there for the past twenty-two years.

She had only meant to spend a short time in Japan, but two years after her arrival in Japan, she happened to meet the Japanese man whom she would marry a year later. She now lives in Kinashi, a western suburb of Takamatsu on the island of Shikoku, with her husband and their three sons. As she recalls in one of her stories, she had felt initially dismayed by her new life in Japan, but meeting her future husband changed her feelings:

Never mind, I thought. It's only for a few years. But a chance encounter with a farmer changed all that, diverting my future in a direction I never could have predicted, let alone sought. (Nakanishi 2005b: 290)

AS A WOMAN AND A FOREIGNER IN JAPAN

Wendy Jones Nakanishi thinks that Japan remains a fundamentally chauvinistic society, with men routinely accorded higher social status and better salaries than women. Japanese women continue to suffer gender discrimination, although the situation has improved somewhat in recent years.

When Wendy first arrived in Japan, she felt that she was treated extremely well even though she was a woman. She believes that this was partly attributable to her being an Edinburgh graduate with a Ph.D. In her writings, she has fondly recalled those early days of being a 'pampered pet':

I'm occasionally nostalgic for the days of special privileges. When I applied for a driver's license over twenty years ago, for example, I was escorted into a special room at the license center, plied with tea and cakes, and treated like an honored guest while my papers were being processed. (Nakanishi 2007c: 16)

She had a very nice life as a single woman, a professional, but she thinks she never really understood the Japanese experience until after she had been in the country for three years and got married. Then she began to comprehend what it really means to live in Japan and to be not only a foreigner but also a woman. For one thing, as a westerner she had been raised with the idea that gratifying personal desires is natural, not reprehensible. This notion of 'treat yourself, you're worth it' needed to be discarded when Wendy began living in Japan as a woman married to a Japanese. She came to realize that, in Japan, the individual is seen as rather unimportant compared to the group: whether that group represents the family unit or society at large. She learned that individual desires often have to be sacrificed and that privacy is not much valued in Japan. This meant that a kind of personal transformation was required:

It was a really painful self-education and I am afraid that I inflicted my own spoiled personality on my in-laws. However, I have managed. I often think of the words of a famous pop song by the 'Rolling Stones': "You don't always get what you want, but sometimes you get what you need". And I think I needed to grow up in ways that I probably couldn't or wouldn't have been forced to do in America or England, where that kind of self-education isn't required in daily life. Living here, with my husband and children, I have had to learn the meaning of self-sacrifice, and this was especially true in raising my boys and in trying to help my in-laws and to adjust to their ways. (Potočník 2010: n.pag.)

Nowadays men and women are still unequal in Japan. Women continue to suffer from discrimination, Nakanishi believes, or, as she has remarked:

I didn't want a daughter unless she could live abroad because I felt women still had so many obstacles to overcome in Japan, so she would be constantly struggling. My husband and I have two nieces who live nearby, two really bright girls, and I feel they have had to work hard to find personal fulfillment, more than if they had been boys, perhaps. (*Ibid.*)

In the 'old-style' Japanese marriage, the husband is the principal wage-earner. The wife is in charge of all the finances and of the children and their education. In this respect, Nakanishi believes that Japanese women are brave and capable: they manage the household and the household money. It is the custom for the husband to turn over his paycheck to his wife, and she doles out a small allowance to him for living expenses. The Japanese woman also faces a difficult challenge in, as tradition dictates, shouldering the huge responsibility of taking care of any children and their education. In Japanese society the strongest tie within the Japanese family is between a mother and her son. The father is usually employed full-time, works long hours, and does not spend much time at home with the family, as noted in sociological studies of the Japanese:

The Japanese mother traditionally has been idealized as a self-sacrificing, angelic soul "devoted to her children", [who] always shows them affection, and is willing to sacrifice her own plans and desires on their behalf. (Ohinata 1995: 205)

What is the nature of the post-war Japanese nuclear family? The modern-day Japanese family has been characterized as a "father-absent system". Given the long hours he must work, the dedication to the firm he must display, and the lack of holidays or personal leave he is allowed, the Japanese full-time employee is usually male and expected to put his duties as a worker above any responsibilities as a husband or father. The wife and mother also has a prescribed role to play. She is expected single-handedly to manage the household and its finances and to take care of the children. (Nakanishi 2010a: 3)

According to one of Nakanishi's students, and her own research about Japanese and American husbands, the average Japanese man does six per cent of the family's housework and the American husband, forty-five per cent:

I know my own husband does more than most of his friends: he washes up the dishes every evening, he helps the children with their homework, he washes the cars, and, in winter, he keeps the log-burning cast-iron stove supplied with wood. (Nakanishi 2008c: 118)

In conservative old rural areas of Japan, a woman who consents to marry the *chonan* or oldest son of a farming family is expected to move in with his parents. Many such families still exist in Nakanishi's neighborhood. These families retain the custom of the eldest son of a farming family continuing to inhabit the family home into adulthood. It is the place to which he will bring his bride, and it is where they will raise their children. It is his wife's duty to look after his mother and father as they grow

older and to nurse them through any illnesses. The farmer's wife also is supposed to assist her husband with the agricultural labor. Nakanishi comments on all this in one of her stories:

I suspect I have only found it bearable because again, as a foreigner and one who holds what is considered a high position in society as a university professor, I have been exempted from some of these expectations. I rarely help with the farm work, and my husband and I have been able to construct our own home ... Still, we are expected to join in memorial services for Kenji's ancestors, ... My husband is required to assist his parents on a nearly daily basis. ... (Nakanishi 2008b: 131)

In general, however this old 'generational' system is now breaking down in Japan. Even in rural areas, many women are working, often at part-time jobs requiring a forty-hour working week, but they are still expected to manage their family's finances and the children's education, with the children attending day-care centers until they are six and can enter the regular school system. The common perception is that those privileges once attached to being male in Japanese society have largely vanished, with now only the responsibilities remaining.

Nakanishi thinks young women in Japan have seen so many films set in foreign countries featuring helpful husbands and fulfilled, ambitious wives that they have found their own situation in Japan hard to accept. In the past men would expect women to be housewives and to take care of the children, to do the shopping, the cooking, and so on. Nowadays the situation has changed somewhat, but the writer believes the typical Japanese woman continues to lead a far from enviable life:

There is still this idea that men come 'first'. However, I think that, fortunately, the lot of even the average Japanese woman has changed very much over the last twenty years. I am so delighted to see the growth of the companionate marriage which, when I first came to Japan, was almost unheard of. My husband belongs to this 'older' generation with the old-fashioned expectations of marriage. He would never have any idea of our doing 'fun' things as a couple. The custom in our area was that men went out with male friends and women, with female ones. All that has really changed amazingly over the last ten years. I see young fathers with children and, often, the father alone taking care of his children. Twenty years ago that would have been impossible. And I see men who now do the cooking, shop, help with cleaning. I am so glad. I also think Japanese women are much more career-minded, too, nowadays. They used always to be the people who had to serve coffee and tea in the office, they were given trivial tasks, and they were expected to quit their jobs after marrying and devote all their energies to their husbands and children. If they worked after marriage, they could only get some low-paid part-time job. This job might require them to work forty hours a week, for a very low salary, and no benefits like insurance or belonging to a pension scheme. (Potočník 2010: n.pag.)

Family life and the personal relationships between family members are very different in Japan from in America. The whole idea of the family is different. In Japan the family unit is of utmost importance, and its power and significance lasts throughout an individual's life. Even on achieving adulthood, a Japanese often remains physically close to his family, and he is expected to continue, indefinitely, obediently to meet family demands and expectations. In America, on the other hand, a child achieves independence at an early age. On reaching adulthood, it is supposed he will be engaged in his own life, in new relationships he has made, often at a far remove, in terms of distance, from his parents and siblings. This contrasting view of the family's significance has proven a source of anxiety and conflict for Nakanishi, with some of her short stories focusing on her struggle to come to terms with her in-laws' proximity and the demands that were made of her:

I think I mentioned to you in one of my stories that when my husband and I thought of marrying he said that he was in a boat with his parents and that I could get in but he could not get out, and I came to realize he meant that he was metaphorically and even literally bound to his parents until their deaths or until his own. My father-in-law died a year ago, but my mother-in-law constantly needs help. My husband goes to her house nearby almost every day to ferry her to doctors' appointments or to shops. Japanese children are taught to depend on the family and that they belong to the family unit forever whereas in America, from the earliest years the children are encouraged to stand on their own feet and to be independent. The American child usually leaves home when he is about eighteen. There is such an emphasis on personal mobility in the States that very few people end up in the same town they grew up in. In Japan, on the other hand, or at least that part of it that I inhabit, generation after generation after generation of a family often remain in the same place. (*Ibid.*)

WENDY JONES NAKANISHI'S WORKING AND WRITING CAREER

Wendy J. Nakanishi has worked as a full-time professor at Shikoku Gakuin University in Zentsuji, Japan since 1988. Her teaching duties include MA classes in the Department of Language and Culture as well as undergraduate courses in basic English. Her graduate courses often focus on comparing and contrasting American, British and Japanese culture. In her classes, Nakanishi mostly speaks in English but with a smattering of Japanese. She claims always to have enjoyed her work as a professor, relishing the opportunity to share her broad knowledge of different cultures and intercultural relationships with her students. She also likes to use literature in these classes. She describes her teaching load in these terms:

After we've compared cultures in the graduate classes, we often look at short stories written by Japanese, American, and British authors and try to think of how different cultural backgrounds are manifested within their

writings. We look at English videos as well as study children's literature and short stories. (*Ibid.*)

Nakanishi's academic work and creative writing include a wide variety of writers and topics. She has published a number of articles, critical monographs and short stories that reflect her research on literature and, in her 'creative non-fiction' pieces, her life experiences in Japan. Her work on English, Japanese, and American literature ranges from the eighteenth to the twenty-first centuries, focusing on such a variety of authors as Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift, John Ruskin, Virginia Woolf and Iris Murdoch, and Ariyoshi Sawako and Murakami Haruki. She has written not only about literature but also on such sociological topics as the nineteenth and twentieth-century arts and crafts movements in Korea, Britain, and Japan and the recent *hikikomori* phenomenon of acute social withdrawal among Japan's young people. In this article, I am only looking at her 'creative non-fiction' stories.

Nakanishi often compares the characters and values of people in those countries she has inhabited. She talks about different cultures and the importance of knowing and accepting different ways of life. She is a good observer and provides the reader with a vivid picture of her perceptions:

To me the most noticeable differences are found in the ideas of societies. Japan is very much an Asian country in which the group takes precedence over the individual whereas, especially in England, the individual is highly regarded and eccentricity and idiosyncrasy are, if not always praised, at least tolerated. In Japan, private life is not as valued as in Britain and America. I'm interested, too, in the ramifications of a country's being 'new' and 'old'. Britain and Japan are countries with very long historical traditions while the United States remains a relatively recent phenomenon as a nation state. I like to think of how this has an impact on the citizens of these countries. (*Ibid.*)

Other frequently-discussed topics in Nakanishi's writings include such problems of modern, post-war Japanese society as its "father-absent system", the high rate of suicide in the country and, again, the *hikikomori* syndrome. As for the latter, Nakanishi observes that:

Hikikomori is a Japanese term meaning "acute social withdrawal" that refers to a recent phenomenon among young Japanese, mostly male, who choose to retire completely from public life and sequester themselves at home and usually in their own bedrooms. (Nakanishi 2010a: 1)

Just as the young Japanese male is at greatest risk of succumbing to the *hikikomori* syndrome, the suicide victims in Japan are usually young adults and mostly men:

Among Japanese aged 15 to 25 and those aged 40 to 54, suicide is the second leading cause of death. It is the leading cause of death for those aged 25 to 39, with the suicide rate of middle-aged men five times that of women. (*Ibid.* 10)

Nakanishi has written several articles speculating on the causes for Japan's boasting the dubious distinction of having the highest rate of suicide in developed countries. She explains the cause of her initial fascination in the subject in this anecdote:

The reason why I got interested in suicides was that once, when writing a piece about crime fiction, I read a Japanese book that included twelve short detective stories that had been translated into English. Within these stories, the supposed 'murder' in seven or eight cases actually turned out to be a suicide. In Western literature – or life – this frequency of suicide would be remarkable and almost unbelievable. After reading this curious publication, I talked to friends, both Japanese and fellow foreigners here, and it seemed nearly everybody knew someone who had committed suicide or had heard of someone who had. This struck me as amazing. I know of scarcely anyone, nor do my American friends, of a person in the States who has killed himself. In Japan, I think, in fact, that there are many more suicides than the official statistics report. It seems to represent a traditional, honorable way of death here. (Potočník 2010: n.pag.)

Nakanishi feels that there are many motives for suicide in Japan. Suicide can be seen, for example, for a bullied school child or one under terrible pressure from exams, as the only means of escaping from a situation perceived as unbearable. There is also the suicide chosen as the means of repaying a perceived 'debt' or of expiating guilt.

THE WRITER'S LOVE FOR LITERATURE AND HER CREATIVE NON-FICTION

Nakanishi loves literature and, from her early years, harbored ambitions as a writer:

I think that anyone who loves English or American literature or, of course, any kind of literature also has a longing to write it. I had this longing early instilled in my consciousness, when I was in the fifth grade of my tiny school in Rolling Prairie, Indiana. I came up with one short story called the 'The Littlest Pioneer'. My teacher praised it highly. (*Ibid.*)

She first entered Indiana University and began studying for a degree in English literature. The dream of doing some 'creative' writing herself was cherished but suppressed as she busied herself with her academic career, embarking on a master's degree and then a doctorate. When Wendy came to Japan and began a university job, she was preoccupied with lesson preparation and then, with the birth of three sons, the demands and cares of motherhood. She published academic articles and book reviews, but she longed, in that tiresome phrase, to 'express' herself as well. She began to write stories that she would classify now as 'creative non-fiction' based on her experiences as an American woman teaching at a Japanese university, the wife of a Japanese farmer and the mother of three biracial boys. This writing became not only been a source of great delight and amusement for her but also it represented a healing sort of exercise, a kind

of catharsis. She confessed that she felt she needed to tell somebody about her experiences because:

... sometimes they have been painful or confusing. Writing them down is a sort of a release and a way of understanding what's happened to me. (*Ibid.*)

Most of her creative writing has been thinly-disguised autobiography, a circumstance that she regrets, observing:

I wish I had more of an imaginative capacity, but I seem only to be able to write about what I personally have experienced. Luckily, I think I've had many sorts of 'adventures', which is probably a great advantage as a writer. (*Ibid.*)

In her short stories Nakanishi draws upon her personal history, describing her life in Indiana, Britain, France and eventually in Japan. She presents a vivid picture of these different, evolving 'life scenes', expressing the deep feelings, wishes and thoughts she has experienced in the successive stages of her life. She can achieve a number of objectives in this personal approach.

"My Mother's Daughter", for example, is a story in which her ambiguous feelings regarding her mother can be expressed. The story traces her evolving emotions, from the adoration of the child to the critical stance of the teenager, with her anger at and frustration with her mother finally resolved in love, acceptance and understanding as she became an adult. The relationship between them grew problematic when Nakanishi was seven and her father left the family home. The beautiful woman she had cherished as a little girl became a hateful figure:

After my father left, it had been easy and useful to blame my mother for everything. I blamed her for the plunge in our living standards. I blamed her for losing the rich social life she had enjoyed as a wife of the town's bank manager. I blamed her for dating men I thought unsuitable but then, inconsistently, I also blamed her for remaining single. I blamed her for the messiness of our house. Only age and experience brought forgiveness, when I could recognize that it had been depression that caused the chaos in our household, that it was misery that had made her retreat to her bedroom after my parents' separation, rarely, it seemed, to emerge for years afterwards. (Nakanishi 2008a: 10-11)

Nakanishi came to understand that her mother, in her old age, viewed her children as her greatest accomplishment and her consolation for a life less than satisfactory or fulfilling. Some of her siblings chafed at this assessment, unwilling to attribute any success they had achieved in life to a parent they remembered as neglectful and self-absorbed, but Nakanishi found it a source of solace to allow her mother this happiness, however delusional it might have been. As she grew older and entered an assisted living facility, her mother's goal was to be reunited with all her offspring. Nakanishi's mother died in 2008.

Now, with her own three boys, Nakanishi feels she can understand and respect many things she was taught by her mother. In particular, she is grateful for the unconditional

love and support her mother always showed her, which she feels is the greatest gift that a parent can give a child. Her fondest memories now are of the times when her mother was like a child herself, playing with Wendy and her siblings in the snow, stooping by a flowering bush to savor the perfume of a blossom, bidding her children to join her outside to see a particularly beautiful moon. Wendy now can see how warm-hearted her mother had been, an individual who bestowed and received love freely and, in doing so, made life worthwhile. Nakanishi recollected how her mother insisted on hugging and kissing and how she often praised her children and told them how much she loved them. Nakanishi's mother professed herself their greatest fan, as Nakanishi recalls in her story about her:

Now that I'm a mother myself, I see my own mother in a much different way than I had as recently as twenty years ago. I love her. I hope my own children will think of me as fondly. (*Ibid.* 13)

In Nakanishi's other stories the reader can also vividly picture the writer's life story and empathize with her experiences. In "The Mountain", for example, she describes the simple outlines of her life in Japan:

I have been resident in Japan for the past twenty-five years. I live in a rural area with my Japanese farmer husband, Takehito and our three boys. Our house is on the outskirts of Takamatsu on the island of Shikoku, and in an enclave of my husband's relatives: his parents, a brother and his family, his aunts and uncles. (Nakanishi 2010b: 107)

The writer describes the family life she enjoys there, her pride in her three sons, her love for her husband and her respect for her in-laws. She asserts that she and her husband could not have had a more dissimilar upbringing or been raised in a more different culture, which makes it all the more remarkable that they share a similar system of values. She says that they both love jazz, the 'simple life', and simple pleasures. They also both longed for children, and this formed part of their initial attraction when they first met, when Wendy was thirty and her husband three years older. Nakanishi describes her feelings for her 'improbable' soul-mate in "Sons and Mothers" and, in "A Life in a Day", in the former, her first impression of him and, in the latter, her feelings after many years of marriage:

I came to Japan for a job. I was already thirty when I began work at a small private university here. When I met Takehito, I was longing to settle down, and he felt the same. (Nakanishi 2009b: 34)

On our way home, I am afforded the occasional glimpse of his face as illuminated by streetlights and by stop signs. A harsh face; a kind heart. Doubly incomprehensible as a man and as a Japanese. Completely reliable. Inexpressibly dear. (Nakanishi 2008c: 119)

After her initial discomfiture at being thrown into intimate relations with her husband's family, kindly strangers divided from her by culture and by language, Nakanishi came to love and to respect her 'Japanese parents'. She was particularly intrigued by her mother-in-law, or, in Japanese, 'Okaasan', and she wrote a story about her that was subsequently published in *The Kyoto Journal*:

Okaasan has had a difficult life if one typical of Japanese women of her age and background. She was born on a farm some three miles from the one she now inhabits with my father-in-law. There were many brothers and sisters. Life was hard: an endless round of backbreaking physical labour, with holidays providing the only respite from the usual strenuous routine. (Nakanishi 2001b: 11)

Nakanishi's father-in-law was the subject of "Otoosan", a story written eight years later, dedicated to the memory of her husband's father, who had died in 2009 at the age of eighty-seven. This tale, published in a short story collection about foreigners' impressions of Japan, focuses on the story of Otoosan (Father) and the turbulent times he experienced in his lifetime, raised as the child of one of the principal landowners in his area, enlisting in the Japanese imperial army as a young man, being sent to Manchuria as a cavalry officer, his return to Japan after the war, followed by the loss of most of the family estate through land redistribution measures imposed by the postwar government, and Otoosan's life-long but financially unsuccessful dedication to growing oranges on the remaining land. The story honors him as a hardworking man whose strenuous labors only ceased with serious illness and then death.

'Otoosan', the Japanese for 'father', had been seriously ill. When I married Takehito over twenty years ago, I had encountered, in his father, the traditional Japanese *hatarakimono hito*, an individual whose whole life revolved around work. (Nakanishi 2010c: 207)

One day, when her father-in-law was in his final illness, she visited him in the hospital and watched in horror as his sinewy hands, hardened by labour, the same hands that she had seen picking oranges, pruning trees, weeding the garden, and expertly fashioning rice cakes, now set themselves to their new task; it was attempting to get out of the hospital by:

gripping the bars of the bed and shaking them, or tugging at his clothes. (*Ibid.* 210)

Otoosan died and a Buddhist service was held for him. Nakanishi describes the service and the funeral in detail in her story:

We entered the hall, already crowded with mourners. Most were people unable to attend the funeral the following morning. Otoosan's coffin now occupied the central position at the front of the hall, placed below a huge array of lilies, chrysanthemums, and orchids, all white, the traditional colour of death in Japan. (*Ibid.* 212-213)

Nakanishi also often writes about her three boys. In her short story "My Half Family" she presents her close relationship with them and notes with bemusement the Japanese custom of referring to such children as 'halves' because they are biracial, a custom she finds hurtful and one that seems to diminish the individual to whom such an epithet is applied. In any case, the writer believes the relationship between her and her sons is different from that typical between Japanese mothers and their sons because of

the 'language gap', with Nakanishi only superficially fluent in Japanese and her sons, in English. This results in the necessity for more physical communication:

My boys and I are playful; we make jokes. If actions speak louder than words, we know each other profoundly but at an intangible level. (Nakanishi 2009a: 4)

When her sons were small, Nakanishi tried to take them often abroad, alternating visits to America and England every year and, when she was forty-one, she was granted a year's sabbatical leave of absence by her university, spending that time in Britain, in the town of Halton near Lancaster, where her two elder sons attended the local primary school. Nakanishi feels that through such experiences and because she, their mother, is simply of a different culture, she has imparted a sense of the larger world to her children and that they have imbibed western values they might not have encountered in a purely Asian environment. Her sons, like their mother, place a premium on privacy and independence and, perhaps most important, although raised in an insular society, can envisage a life outside Japan. She hopes that they are 'international citizens', familiar not only with the States and England but the other countries she has taken them to: Germany, Holland and France and Taiwan. When people call her children 'halves', or when her boys refer to themselves by that term, Nakanishi is in the habit of saying, "Not half, but both". (*Ibid.*)

As a writer, Nakanishi wonders if she is sometimes too critical about life in Japan, which can be a country hard to accept for a foreigner because it represents a culture so different than a western one. She hopes that any remarks in her stories that might appear negative or judgmental are more than counterbalanced by the great admiration and respect she feels for Japan. She believes her compulsion to write about Japan can be accounted for as the temptation felt by nearly every 'foreigner' after prolonged residence in Japan to 'explain' it: the desire to make sociological pronouncements about the Japanese, to 'understand' them, to analyze them and their society.

Nakanishi found Japan a difficult country, particularly in her early years of residence, and she felt she needed to accommodate herself to new expectations about nearly every aspect of her life: as a university professor, as a young unmarried and then a married woman, and as a mother. One thing she found hard to adapt to was the conformist nature of Japanese society apparent even in their clothes, as she remarks in her story *Japanese Journal*:

Perhaps it is an odd country, a strange society, which exerts subtle pressure on his citizens to dress in ways it deems appropriate for any occasion ... Japan is such a country: the Japanese comprise such a society. ...

I was shocked when I attended my first sports day at the children's school. Not only were the children all dressed the same – all wearing the obligatory 'sports' uniform of white T-shirt, white shorts, and red cap – but most of the mothers and fathers seemed to be wearing a kind of uniform as well... (Nakanishi 2001a: 33)

Nakanishi also writes about the famous Oriental inscrutability, about the Japanese as people who are very polite but indirect because they do not want to offend or, even worse, risk open confrontation or the possibility of argument:

I think it's hard to know what they think. The idea of the mask is very popular here, whether it's the makeup Japanese women lavishly apply every morning or the white surgical masks people feel compelled to wear when they are ill or actual masks appropriate to dramatic performances. There is a famous novel called *Masks* by Fumiko Enchi and, of course, masks play a large role in Noh plays and in Kabuki. I think a big theme of Japanese life is that, depending on circumstance, you adopt the mask appropriate for your age and sex and social conditions, and the person you really are is underneath somewhere, hidden away. Social interactions are based on the presumption that you know what you are supposed to do and what people expect of you and that you are willing to play along accordingly. (Potočník 2010: n.pag.)

The writer believes the Japanese do not want to engage in a frank exchange of views: the emphasis is on a smoothly functioning society, on social harmony. This harmony would be disrupted were people actually to say what they thought or do as they wanted. It is almost as a form of comic relief that some Japanese seek out the company of foreigners because, then, all those rules they labor under each day are suddenly inapplicable:

I often think that the Japanese love to be with foreigners because it's a great struggle for them to keep up this pretence all the time. They know that with foreigners they can relax and speak freely. (*Ibid.*)

On the one hand, Nakanishi is fascinated by Japanese traditions and culture, particularly by the rituals associated with the celebration in August of 'O-Bon' which, after New Year's Day, represents Japan's most important festival, admitting that she often finds herself close to tears when she participates in the Buddhist customs intended to honor the spirits of one's ancestors. On the other, Nakanishi believes the Japanese are subjected to almost unbearable stresses and frustrations in their daily lives:

In their self-discipline and concern to maintain social harmony, the Japanese are wholly admirable. But they pay such a terrible price, one which they acknowledge when, for example, my students admit that they feel "freer" when they speak English in our classes, or for those rare, darling souls willing to risk venturing abroad alone - not on a package holiday with other Japanese - who confess to feeling that a great burden has been lifted from their shoulders once they've left their own country. (Nakanishi 2002: 2-3)

Nakanishi esteems the Japanese for their self-discipline, politeness, courage, and hard work, all of which were on public display and inspired the amazement and admiration of the world during Japan's recent earthquake, when there was no looting, when, in the aftermath of the catastrophe, the Japanese worked together to alleviate the suffering

of the victims. Nakanishi thinks the Japanese are a very tough race, physically and psychically, who have triumphed over daily adversity as residents of an overcrowded, tiny nation with few natural resources, living in a place prone to such disasters as typhoons and earthquakes:

What is amazing about the Japanese is that they have had to endure the harshest of conditions but have evolved an exquisite politeness in their day-to-day interactions. Every foreigner who comes here remarks on that. But the toughness is there, and we foreigners also remark on that, with some of us feeling that, when we're old, when we retire, perhaps we'd prefer not to spend our twilight years here because of the powers of physical endurance required. Great bravery is expected, as I learned when I had my three sons here. There was no question of an epidural's being administered. The Japanese woman gives birth, at least in such rural areas as mine, with no pain relief provided at all, and Japanese women are supposed to endure childbirth in silence, without crying out in pain. I wasn't even allowed an aspirin after my third child's birth as there were fears any medication might contaminate breast milk. It's an odd paradox: on the one hand, the wonderful gentleness and courtesy, on the other, the admonition to 'gaman shinasai' – to endure any physical pain without complaint. (Potočník 2010: n.pag.)

To her chagrin, Nakanishi has realized that the Japanese have a very different sense of humor from her own. Hers owes a great deal to the sly wit of the English, but she has found that the Japanese can find anything approaching sarcasm, however affectionately expressed, hurtful and incomprehensible. She admits that she now adopts an approach of trying always to be sincere and emotionally supportive with her Japanese friends. But she thinks it a pity, in a sense, as these friends cannot, she believes, know her 'truest' self, which delights in teasing and irony. But this was also true, she found, in America, where words intended to be interpreted as jokes were taken in all seriousness. In this regard, Nakanishi feels most at home in Britain, where people seem to speak the English that she speaks herself.

For Nakanishi, the notion of privacy is valuable although, ironically, she often writes of herself and her family in her stories. In one of her earliest short stories she explains about the resentment she experienced when she had recently arrived in Japan and was on a ferry to Honshu Island where she attracted the attention of three junior high school girls who wanted to communicate with her because she was a foreigner. Nakanishi made hurried apologies, escaped to an upper deck, and spent the rest of the journey there, hiding from her 'admirers', while ruefully reflecting on the rudeness of her own behavior:

"I don't feel proud of myself," I admitted. "I'm sure those girls were nice, whatever that means. I just can't bear being considered public property, having complete strangers feeling entitled to come up and monopolize my time simply because I'm not Japanese." (Nakanishi 2007a: 16)

But the Japanese inquisitiveness about foreigners can also lead to comedy. In a story entitled “Imperfect Strangers” Nakanishi recalls her first presentation at an Iris Murdoch Society of Japan conference. She had hoped that her talk entitled ‘The French – and Irish – Connections: Comparing *Under the Net* and *The Red and the Green*’ might inspire a lively debate on Murdoch’s possibly delusional concept of herself as a member, like Elizabeth Bowen of the old Anglo-Irish aristocracy and the ramifications of this belief in her novels. Rather, to Nakanishi’s amusement, her talk was productive of inspiring the conference participants to a rather different area of enquiry:

An elderly professor with a polka-dot tie who had sat with impassive face during my talk leaps to my side once I have returned to my seat. He says he has many questions to ask me. My talk is never touched on; he wants to know about my personal life: do I speak English at home? Does my husband help with the cooking? Can I use chopsticks well? (Nakanishi 2006a: 36).

As we have seen, Nakanishi is a writer who values eccentricity and idiosyncrasy but thinks that, like privacy, they are accorded little value in Japan. She feels happy to inhabit Japan, however, and especially her rural area where she can admire and bask in the natural beauty that surrounds her:

I love Japan, but I would hate to be a Japanese. I like the structured nature of society here and the security it offers my family, but I dread our falling prey to its emphasis on conformity. In a place that can physically resemble a paradise, I am reminded of Sartre’s notion of hell as represented by “other people”. Here, one is constantly watched and judged, but it is possible sometimes to escape those prying eyes, to find peace in the great natural beauty by which we are surrounded. (Nakanishi 2001a: 38)

In many of Nakanishi’s short stories different people, cultures, countries and landscapes are described and contrasted, with the writer trying, but sometimes failing, not to judge one as better than another. In her stories “From Indiana to Kagawa: From Tomatoes Ripe to Oranges Sweet” and “Glimpses” she makes a humorous comparison between the American and the Japanese notion of a ‘farm’:

The country in the United States meant something quite different from the country in Japan. And when her new husband talked about their “farm”, she had to laugh. Her parents lived on a farm: acres upon acres of corn and soybeans stretching monotonously to the horizon, a barn housing livestock, a windmill and a farmhouse, while her new home consisted of a prefabricated building attached to the family house in a dusty courtyard enclosed by a concrete block wall. The orange groves were up the mountain; the carnation greenhouses, near the main road leading to an ugly, medium-sized city three kilometers away. (Nakanishi 2003: 9)

In the story entitled “Glimpses”, which she admits she intended as a kind of memorial to her beloved maternal grandfather, LaMont O’Harra, she rehearses childhood memories of happy times spent on his spacious farm, ‘The Maples’, in central Indiana.

As a little girl, the writer had had three dreams: she wanted a horse, she wanted long hair, and, finally, she wanted to marry someone like her grandfather:

In retrospect, it occurs to me that one of my childhood dreams was directly related to my Grandpa. This, of course, was the dream of marrying a farmer. (Nakanishi 2005b: 296)

Ironically, of her three girlish dreams, this was the one that came true, although a Japanese farmer is quite different from an American one. In this story Nakanishi compares her Japanese father-in-law, a thin, small, wiry individual, to her 'Grandpa O'Harra':

Sometimes I compare him to my grandfather, whom I think of as an American counterpart, but the discrepancies in physical appearance could scarcely be greater. My grandfather was a big man in every sense. ... He was a tall, commanding figure who carried his girth with dignity and authority. ... he was the most knowledgeable individual I have ever encountered. Like my grandmother, he was self-taught, ... he was especially interested in politics and history – especially the Civil War. (*Ibid.* 295)

It may be possible to say that Nakanishi has conflicted feelings about her homeland. Although she loves her many family members and friends still resident in America, in the story "Peace Beyond National Boundaries", written shortly after the terrorist attacks that destroyed New York's World Trade Center, we find the writer trying to analyze her own ambiguous relations with the United States and ways in which it inspires both nostalgia and fear, affection and dislike:

I find my native land, America, an insoluble paradox. The United States is not only the world's wealthiest nation and its single surviving 'super-power', but, of all the countries of the world, it also has the most diverse population, its citizens drawn from every nation on earth. It is a place where a great variety of cultural customs are observed, a huge number of languages are spoken, ...

America is also a country which can be vengeful and angry, as witnessed by the general reaction of its citizens following the events of September eleventh of last year. (Nakanishi 2002/2003: 1)

But despite her current feeling of disaffection for America, Nakanishi has fond memories of her childhood and her hometown, that are revived with surprising force, she finds, whenever she revisits Rolling Prairie, Indiana. On such occasions, she recalls how each tree in her yard and in her neighborhood represented a childhood friend for a little girl fond of lying under trees or of climbing them. Her parents' separation had had a devastating affect on a child who once had been sunny and sociable:

I imagine my childhood friends would have characterized me as a girl who was lonely and shy, who dreaded attracting attention. This was especially true in the difficult years after my parents' divorce. (Nakanishi 2006b: 57)

I felt increasingly alienated from my siblings, parents and from the wider world, retreating into a world of books. Only they, and nature, were reliable; only literature, plants and trees could be loved without fear or confusion. What a relief it was to leave Rolling Prairie! (*Ibid.* 55)

Now, after so many years' absence, a trip to Rolling engenders pity as well as nostalgia. Nakanishi describes these emotions in the story entitled *Home Thoughts*, in which a journey to her old home makes her realize the changes, mostly negative ones, which have taken place since her last visit:

I felt a familiar ambiguity of emotions: depression jostled with curiosity, steeled myself and glanced up. The old house looked worse each time I revisited it. (*Ibid.* 53)

In this tale Nakanishi recounts how she feels she has become a foreigner in her own country. She has been mistaken there for a German, an Australian, and a Briton. She occasionally feels the awkwardness and discomfort of a visitor in a strange land when she visits America. But she harbors a philosophy about 'home' which makes this bearable:

Home is where the heart is. If we can learn to find happiness and respect, we need never consider ourselves 'strangers', wherever we may be. My relatives live in America but most of my closest friends are in Britain and Japan. (*Ibid.* 58-59)

Nakanishi has come to realize that, in being with the family she loves, the place where she and her family were meant to be is Japan or, as she remarks in a new story, "I am in the place where I belong" (Nakanishi 2012, p. 55).

THE IMPORTANCE OF WENDY JONES NAKANISHI'S WORK AND HER FUTURE PLANS

With her numerous academic publications, research projects, and short, semi-autobiographical stories about her personal experiences in Indiana, England, France and Japan, Nakanishi has made a contribution not only to world literature but to the present-day interest in multiculturalism. With her vivid descriptions and deft narrative style, her feeling for language and the frequent comic touches to be found in her 'creative non-fiction' pieces, Nakanishi is able to capture on paper the paradoxes of modern life, with its rootless citizens who travel the globe, charmed, amused and perplexed by the unfamiliar customs they encounter on their journeys.

Her insights into Japanese life are of particular value as she is one of the few non-native authors to stay long term in Japan and enter fully into the life of the country, working full-time since her arrival while raising a family with a Japanese husband. Nakanishi has lived in Japan for more than twenty-seven years, and her non-academic work has the ring of an authenticity derived from writing based on personal experience: it is evocative of a human consciousness reacting to unusual circumstances.

Nakanishi is especially keen to try to 'translate' her life in Japan into stories, to make it accessible to others and especially to compatriots who have never ventured beyond America's borders as she recognizes that most people's perceptions of life are dictated by circumstance. Few of Nakanishi's family and friends in America have ever lived for any substantial period of time in another country, and she thinks this can limit their ability to understand or accept differences in culture:

I think that, unless you live in Japan, it's impossible to realize how different everything is here: the expectations and assumptions. Superficially the country looks Western, but the basic premises underlying ordinary life are worlds away. Though tourists may come here and spend some time in Japan, I think they often can't understand the typical Japanese at all. (Potočník 2010: n.pag.)

Nakanishi is a good narrator capable of producing short stories that often strike an emotional chord with their readers, whether she is writing of her joys and worries as a teacher, wife, mother or daughter. She is a devoted parent to her three sons and places the demands of her family life before those of her working and writing career. One of her professed dreams is "to see her boys grown up, to see them get married and to dance at their weddings..." (*Interview With Wendy J. Nakanishi*, 2007; Internet). If her writings cannot be considered 'great' literature, they are valuable in dramatically conveying the sense of a certain place and time and the feelings that adhered to them.

Yet, despite her fondness for humorous touches, there is a tangible sadness about much of her work. Her short stories about her life express, for example, her deep feelings for her family in Japan while acknowledging the barriers that separate her from them. Her composition of such tales might be construed as a kind of 'love letter' to her boys, but one they may never be able to read as she writes in English, a language that her children were, until recent years, largely unable to understand. Her work also reflects the frustration of a long-term resident of Japan who is condemned always to being an 'outsider' both because of an inadequate command of the language and because of her physical appearance. Being fair-skinned, blue-eyed and brown haired, she is always instantly recognizable as a 'foreigner' and condemned to the position of an observer who can never fully integrate into Japanese society.

But this is not an author who believes that life will be 'easy' or even that it should be. If there is a 'message' or 'moral' in Nakanishi's writing, it might be expressed in the adages of popular culture. Like David Bowie, she would counsel us to 'turn and face the strange' or, like Ann Landers, advise that if 'life offers lemons, make lemonade'. Nakanishi absorbed from her neglectful parents the helpful lesson of the benefits that can be garnered from negative example; similarly, although she might wish to have made Britain rather than Japan her home, she has been able to make the most of her new exotic homeland and to find happiness there.

In 1997 Nakanishi and her family were filmed in for a TV Tokyo program on international marriages. It was an experience that led them all to question themselves. Nakanishi found herself wondering if her relationship with her husband was more of a partnership than a romantic relationship; her husband was challenged on whether he provided sufficient emotional supportiveness towards his wife and children: the three

boys were forced to confront their biracial identity. In the end, there was a general consensus that such self-examination was fruitful however painful:

I had thought it would be 'fun'. I was wrong. But somehow it has felt like an education of sorts – perhaps in self-knowledge – however involuntarily acquired, however unwelcome the conclusions. (Nakanishi 2007b: 24)

Although she harbors doubts about the generally-accepted desirability of the unfettered movement of people and goods about the earth, the writer believes that, given current trends of globalization, with the world 'shrinking' in effect, there exists a greater need than ever for people to respect different cultures and to try to comprehend that others may hold values different than their own. She has come to the conclusion that any encounter with the 'other' leads to greater awareness both of it and of self. It may be possible to say that Nakanishi's non-fiction 'creative' writing is most valuable as a kind of representation of modern-day multiculturalism, as a plea for the understanding and tolerance of unfamiliar belief systems. In this respect, we could say that her work contributes to "the creation of a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations and cultures". (Leskovar 2001: 461).

But this is not enough to satisfy Nakanishi. She would like to write more and, in fact, become a different kind of author altogether, as she remarked in a recent interview:

One thing, I wish I were a different kind of writer. This is something Agatha Christie also said. She knew that she could write a certain kind of story, that she was the undisputed master of the detective novel, the 'Crime Queen', but that it would be bliss if she were able to pen something quite different. My fate seems to be to write recollections of my past or thoughts about my present situation. I wish I were a writer who could write about other things. I'm hoping in future to write about other places and people and perhaps use my imagination more in my stories rather than recording something based on my own experience. (Potočnik 2011: n.pag.)

CONCLUSION

I believe emigrant literature can play an important role in our modern-day 'global' society, in which we are required to learn about and to exhibit tolerance towards different cultures. Expatriate writers can assist us in this process by recording their impressions of and their experiences in their adoptive countries. The literature they produce is a valuable testament to the human ability to accept and even to embrace change and difference. It can also amuse and entertain as well as instruct and enlighten.

Not much has been written about or by foreigners resident in Slovenia. An exception to this general rule is provided by Erica Johnson Debeljak, an American married to a Slovenian, raising a family here who, in her works, offers a vivid depiction of her experience of life in a culture foreign to that in which she was raised. In this respect, she resembles Wendy Jones Nakanishi. As Nakanishi observes, although Japan is superfi-

cially westernized, it remains, at heart, an essentially alien culture, whose customs and beliefs defy western expectations and assumptions. This makes it all the more important that voices like Nakanishi's are heard, to explain 'east' to 'west'.

I embarked on this research project concerning Nakanishi's work mindful of its importance for our multi-cultural world and also because I wish to bring her writings to a wider audience.

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ANGST – TRAUER – ZORN. ‚EMOTIONEN‘ IM *NIBELUNGENLIED*

Marija Javor Briški

Abstract

Im Fokus dieses Beitrags stehen die im *Nibelungenlied* dominierenden ‚Emotionen‘ Angst, Trauer und Zorn. Die besagten Emotionsdarstellungen sind u. a. Verhaltensmuster, die bestimmten kulturellen Konventionen unterliegen und denen bestimmte Bedeutungen in der sozialen Interaktion zugeschrieben werden. Beleuchtet werden sie im Wesentlichen unter genderspezifischen Aspekten, in ihrem Verhältnis zur Rationalität und als Symbolhandlung. Ferner soll die Frage beantwortet werden, ob die Trauer stets eine Reaktion auf ein nicht umkehrbares Leid darstellt und der Zorn tatsächlich nur dann entsteht, wenn das Übel noch reversibel scheint.

Key words: Nibelungenlied, Emotionen, Symbolhandlung, Rationalität, Angst, Trauer, Zorn, Gender

Kaum ein anderes Werk der mittelalterlichen Literatur ist wohl so emotionsgeladen wie das *Nibelungenlied*. Liebe, Angst, Trauer, Hass, Wut und Zorn, weniger Lachen als Weinen beherrschen die Figuren – Männer und Frauen gleichermaßen. Niemand scheint frei zu sein von Emotionen, die in ihrer Stärke die emotionalen Ausdrucksformen der Moderne bei weitem übertreffen. Dieser vermeintliche Pathos emotionaler Ausbrüche der Menschen im Mittelalter führte den Soziologen Norbert Elias in seiner bekannten Studie *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation* zu der Annahme, dass es am Übergang zur Neuzeit zu einer Domestizierung bzw. einer Verinnerlichung der Gefühle gekommen sei, eine These, die in neuerer Zeit vor allem von dem Historiker Gerd Althoff (1996b: 62) in Frage gestellt wurde. Er betont vielmehr den Symbolcharakter und die Zeichenhaftigkeit emotionaler Inszenierungen in der öffentlichen Kommunikation (Althoff 1996a, 1996b, 2006). Irrelevant ist dabei die ‚Echtheit‘¹ der Gefühle. Das, worauf es ankommt, ist die Unmissverständlichkeit der durch inszenierte Emotionen vermittelten Botschaft. „Emotional wirkende Verhaltensweisen lassen sich“, wie Althoff (1996b: 64) schreibt, in ganz bestimmten Situationen mittelalterlicher Kommunikation beobachten. Sie finden sich am Beginn von Konflikten, in der Phase ihrer Entstehung, sowie am Ende ihrer Auseinandersetzungen.“ Die zur Schau gestellten Emotionen waren „verbindliche

¹ Wie Jan-Dirk Müller (1998: 209) betont, schließt der demonstrative Charakter von Gefühlsäußerungen die Spontaneität nicht unbedingt aus.

Absichtserklärungen, sei es der Konflikt-, sei es der Friedensbereitschaft“ (Althoff 1996b: 76). Um die Eindeutigkeit solcher Botschaften zu gewährleisten und die intendierte soziale Interaktion zu generieren, unterlagen die emotionalen Verhaltensweisen der in einer Gesellschaft festgelegten Konventionen und waren demnach historisch und kulturell bedingt (vgl. Kasten 2010: 1, 8).

Im Zusammenhang mit der Emotionsdebatte haben sich in der Mediävistik die Begriffe ‚Codierung‘ und ‚Code‘ (Kasten 2010: 8ff.) etabliert. Emotionsdarstellungen sind also vor allem durch Körperinszenierungen, Sprache und Schrift vermittelte Verhaltensmuster, die bestimmten kulturellen Konventionen unterliegen und denen bestimmte Bedeutungen in der sozialen Interaktion zugeschrieben werden. In der folgenden Untersuchung werde ich meinen Blick auf die Emotionen richten, die im *Nibelungenlied* dominieren: auf Angst, Trauer und Zorn. Da traditionsgemäß Angst und Trauer den Frauen zugeordnet werden, der Zorn dagegen den Männern (Sieber 2003: 223, 227; Braun 2010: 85; Gerok-Reiter 2010: 228f.), werde ich sie im Wesentlichen unter genderspezifischen Aspekten beleuchten und mich ferner der Frage zuwenden, in welchem Verhältnis die besagten Emotionen zu rationalen Erkenntnissen der Agierenden² stehen und welchen symbolischen Zeichencharakter sie haben.

Nach den Seelenlehren des Mittelalters (Koch 2006: 32) gehören Angst und Trauer zu den vier Grundaffekten, wobei Angst durch Erwartung eines Übels und Trauer durch die Gegenwart des Übels definiert werden. Zorn und Trauer seien, so Elke Koch (ebd.), eng miteinander verwandt, da beide durch die Gegenwart eines Übels erregt würden. Ob der Zorn, wie sie fortfährt, tatsächlich nur „dann entsteht, wenn das Übel noch umkehrbar scheint“, und die „Trauer durch ein unwiderruflich eingetretenes Übel ausgelöst“ wird, soll anhand einer exemplarischen Analyse dieser Emotionen, wie sie sich im *Nibelungenlied* manifestieren, später noch überprüft werden.

Wie Annette Gerok-Reiter (2010: 222ff.) schreibt, sind bei der Analyse von Angst vier Kategorien zu berücksichtigen: Körper, Raum, Interaktion und Kognition. Angst äußert sich durch eine „ausgeprägte körperliche Symptomatik“. Wie die Lexeme des Wortfeldes Angst³ suggerieren, versetzt die Emotion Angst den Körper im Raum in Bewegung, und zwar in entgegengesetzten Richtungen. Zum einen führt sie durch ein „Gefühl der Enge, des Beengtseins“ zu einer körperlichen Paralisierung, zum anderen zu einem „Ausweich- bzw. Fluchttrieb“. Unter dem Aspekt der Interaktion gibt die Richtungspräposition Aufschluss über die Bedeutungsnuancierung der besagten Emotion. Bekanntlich unterscheidet man zwischen ‚Angst vor‘ und ‚Angst um‘, bei der Angst kann es durch Kollabierung der Richtungszuschreibung, die einer Angsstarre gleichkommt, allerdings auch zu einem Aussetzen der Interaktion kommen. In Bezug auf die Kognition unterscheidet die Autorin zwischen ‚normaler Angst‘, die, auf adäquater

² Zum Verhältnis von Emotion und Ratio in der Literatur des Mittelalters vgl. Klaus Ridder 2003 u. Ingrid Kasten 2008.

³ Gerok-Reiter 2010: 223: „etymologisch geht der Terminus Angst zurück auf ig. **angʰu* (,eng, bedrängend‘) – wg. **angusti-* / lat. *angustum* (,Enge‘) – ahd. *angust* / mhd. *angest* (,Bedrängnis‘, ,Not‘, ,Angst‘). Mhd. *angest* ist somit vorrangig das, was von außen bedrängt, deshalb Lebensraum ,eng‘ werden lässt und so Raumdeprivation bedeutet. Intensive Bewegung im Raum betonen dagegen ahd. *irscricchan* (,aufspringen‘) – mhd. *erschrecken* / *erschricchen* (,aufspringen‘, ,aufschrecken‘, ,erschrecken vor‘) (...) ahd. *intsizzen* (,aus dem Sitz kommen‘, ,sich fürchten‘) – mhd. *entsetzen* (,zurücksetzen‘, ,außer Fassung bringen‘, ,sich scheuen, fürchten vor‘).“

Erkenntnis beruhend, als angemessene Reaktion auf „gefährdende Erscheinungsformen der Realität“ betrachtet wird, und der ‚Angststörung‘, der „der Erkenntnisindex der Angemessenheit“ fehlt. Ergänzend kann man hinzufügen, dass die Angstabsenz bei nicht angemessener Einschätzung von Gefahrenkonstellationen desgleichen das Fehlen von adäquaten kognitiven Prozessen indiziert.

Wie manifestiert sich nun die ‚Angst‘ im *Nibelungenlied* und wer hat Angst? Bei genauerer Prüfung der einschlägigen Textpassagen, kann man feststellen, dass von der Angst keinesfalls allein Frauen ergriffen werden, auch Männer sind davon betroffen. Was Kriemhild, die weibliche Protagonistin anbelangt, so fällt auf, dass sie im ersten Teil des Werkes die Angst um ihren Geliebten oder ihren Bruder plagt, was auf ihre emotionale und verwandtschaftliche Bindung hinweist.⁴ Diese Angst ist aufgrund der Rechtslage der Frau umso verständlicher, als sie zunächst unter der Obhut ihrer männlichen Verwandten und nach der Eheschließung unter der ihres Mannes steht (vgl. Signorini 2008: 119; Köbler 2002: 918f.; Schulze 2002: 858). Das Wohlergehen des Bruders oder Ehepartners bietet also auch Kriemhild den notwendigen Schutz in der Gesellschaft vor den Übergriffen Dritter. Damit soll aber keineswegs behauptet werden, dass ihre Angst allein auf die Sorge um ihre persönliche Existenz zurückzuführen ist. Abgesehen von den Angstträumen (13–15, 921f., 924), auf die ich hier nicht näher eingehen werde und denen in der mittelalterlichen Literatur im Allgemeinen eine symbolisch verdichtete, vorausdeutende und spannungserzeugende Funktion zugesprochen wird (Eming 2003: 41), ist ihre Sorge ein Resultat, das auf angemessener Einschätzung möglicher Gefahren beruht, und ist demnach rational begründet. Doch ist das daraus resultierende Handeln nicht unbedingt von der Vernunft gesteuert, wie die Preisgabe von Siegfrieds verwundbarer Stelle an Hagen verdeutlicht (901ff.). Erst als es zu spät ist, erkennt Kriemhild, falsch gehandelt zu haben:

*Do gedâhte si an diu mære (sine tórste ir niht gesagen),
diu si dâ Hagenen sagete: dô begunde klagen
diu edel küneginne daz sie ie gewan den lîp.
dô weinte âne mâze des herren Sîfrides wîp. (920)*

Augenfällig ist, dass sich Kriemhilds Angst im Verlauf des Geschehens in eine ‚Angst vor‘ Gefahrenkonstellationen wandelt, die ihre Existenz⁵ direkt bedrohen, das Schicksal ihrer Mitmenschen ist ihr gleichgültig, nicht einmal um das Leben ihres Sohnes Ortlieb, den sie bewusst zur Durchsetzung ihres Racheaktes opfert, ist sie besorgt.⁶ Sie ist fixiert auf sich und die Durchführung ihres Rachefeldzugs, der im Tod fast aller Beteiligten mündet.

Siegfried, der männliche Protagonist, entspricht im Wesentlichen den stereotypen Vorstellungen eines furchterregenden Helden. Nicht er hat Angst, sondern es ist er, der

⁴ Z. B. NL 374: *Sie sprach: „herre Sîvrit, lât iu bevolhen sîn / ûf triuwe und ûf genâde den lieben bruoder mîn, / daz im iht gewerre in Prînhilde lant.“ / daz lobte der vil küene in froun Kriemhilde hant.*

⁵ Z. B. NL 1985: *„Neinâ, herre Dietrich, vil edel ritter guot, / lâzâ hiute schînen dînen tûgentlichen muot / daz du mir helfest hinnen oder ich belîbe tât.“ / der sorge gie Kriemhilde vil harte græzliche nôt.*

⁶ NL 1912: *Dô der strît niht anders kunde sîn erhaben / (Kriemhilde leit daz alte in hêrzen was begraben), / dô hiez si tragen ze tische den Etzêlen sun. / wie kunde ein wîp durch râche immer vrêislicher tuon?*

Angst bei anderen erregt oder durch sein Eingreifen, die Angst der anderen vertreibt.⁷ Seine Furchtlosigkeit ist aber nicht immer das Resultat adäquater Einschätzung der Lage (z. B. 61), was ihm letztlich auch zum Verhängnis wird, als er Hagens Einladung zum Brunnen Folge leistet (969ff.). Dennoch ist auch Siegfried, der meist furchtlose Held, nicht ganz frei von dieser ‚weiblich konnotierten‘ Emotion. Im Kampf mit dem tobenden Torwächter der Nibelungen hat auch er Todesangst: *ein teil begunde fürhten Sîfrit den tôt* (491,2). Kurz vor seinem Tod bewegt ihn schließlich die Sorge um das Schicksal seiner Frau (994,4) und er erinnert Gunther an die Treueverpflichtungen gegenüber seiner Schwester⁸.

Auch Gunther hat Angst, und das nicht selten. Bei der Brautwerbung beschwört ihn Siegfried keine Angst zu haben (426), obwohl sie aus Kenntnis der Umstände (441) allerdings durchaus nachvollziehbar ist, weil das Leben Gunthers und das seiner Begleiter konkreten Gefahren ausgesetzt sind. Ihn plagen nicht nur existenzielle Ängste, sondern auch die Angst vor dem Verlust der Ehre, sollte das beschämende Traitement seiner Gemahlin im Schlafgemach öffentlich werden.⁹ Bei all den Ängsten um seine Person hat er den Bezug zu den anderen nicht verloren. So ist er in Sorge um seinen Freund Siegfried, der ihm bei der ‚Zähmung‘ seiner Frau behilflich ist (674). Auffallend ist, dass der anfangs so jämmerliche Held im Kampfgetobe am hunnischen Hof nicht mehr von der Emotion der Angst übermannt wird oder davon zumindest nicht mehr explizit die Rede ist (33.–39. Aventure) .

Schließlich soll noch Hagen, der ‚Schreckliche‘, in den Fokus der Betrachtung rücken. In ‚Erwartung des Übels‘ – konkret formuliert, in rational wohl kalkulierter Voraussicht auf Kriemhilds Rache¹⁰ – übermannt Hagen nicht die Angst. Die zu erwartende Gefahr verleitet ihn vielmehr zu rationalem Handeln: Er raubt Kriemhild den Nibelungenhort, mit dem sie Gehilfen für ihre Vergeltungsschläge hätte anwerben können. Doch ist seine Angstlosigkeit nicht immer das Ergebnis adäquater Einschätzung der Gefahrenlage. Um dem Vorwurf der Angst zu entgehen¹¹ oder doch aus Angst, aber aus Angst vor Verlust der Kriegerehre, schließt Hagen sich dem Zug ins Hunnenreich an und agiert unter dem Aspekt der Lebenserhaltung vernunftwidrig, wie auch Kriemhild in einer Unterredeung mit ihm deutlich signalisiert¹². Aus der Sicht der Bewahrung seiner Ehre ist aber sein Handeln durchaus rational nachvollziehbar. An einer Stelle ist

⁷ Z. B. NL 426: *Sîfrit der vil küene zuo dem küene trat, / allen sînen willen er in reden bat / gegen der küeginne; er solde âne angst sîn: / „ich sol iuch wol behûeten vor ir mit den listen mîn.“*. Siehe auch NL 479: *Dô sprach der starke Sîfrit: „daz sol ich understên. / des ir dâ habt sorge, des lâze ich niht ergên. / ich sol iu helfe bringen her in dîz lant / von ûz erwelten recken die iu noch nie würden bekant.*

⁸ NL 996–997,2: *Dô sprach jæmerliche der vérchwûnde man: / „welt ir, küene edele, triuwen iht begân / in der werlt an iemen, lât iu bevolhen sîn / ûf fuwér genâde die holden triutinne mîn. // Und lât si des geniezen, daz si fuwer swester sî / durch aller fürsten tugende wont ir mit triuwen bî. ...“*

⁹ NL 649–950,3.: *Dô sprach der wirt zem gaste: „ich hân lâster unde schaden, / want ich hân den übeln tiuvel heim ze hûse geladen. / do ich si wände minnen vil sêre si mich bant. / si truoc mich zeinem nagele unt hie mich hôhe an die want. // Dâ hienc ich angestlichen die naht unz an den tac, / ê daz si mich enbunde wie samfte si dô lac! / daz sol dir frîuntliche ûf genâde sîn gekleit.“*

¹⁰ NL 1210: *„Daz ich dâ wol bekenne, daz tuon ich iu kunt. / sol si nemen Etzel, gelebt si an die stunt, / si getûot uns noch vil leide, swie siz getraget an. / jâ wirt ir dienênde vil manec wætlicher man.“*

¹¹ NL 1512: *Er het ez widerrâten, wan daz Gêrnôt / mit ûngefuoge im alsô missebôt: / er mante in Sîfrîdes, froun Kiemhilden man. / er sprach: dâ von wil Hagene die grôzen hovereise lân.“*

¹² NL 1787: *Si sprach: „nu saget hêr Hagene, wer hât nâch iu gesant, / daz ir getorstet rîten her in dîz lant, / und ir daz wol erkandet waz ir mir habet getân? / hetet ir guote sinne, ir soldet ez bîlliche lân.“*

auch von Hagens Sorge um seinen Bruder Dankwart die Rede, doch gründet die Sorge nicht vorrangig auf emotionalen Bindungen, sondern vielmehr auf verwandtschaftlicher Treuepflicht: *daz besôrgete sîn bruoder, als im sî trûwé gebôt* (1974). Nur einmal wird Hagens Angst um sein Leben erwähnt, und zwar auf der Brautwerbung an Brünhilds Hof, doch zeigt seine aufgebrachte Rede, wie schnell bei ihm die Angst in Zorn umkippen kann (477f.). Die Demonstration seiner Furchtlosigkeit am Hofe der Hunnen (1781, 1785f.) hat indes zeichenhaften Charakter in der öffentlichen Kommunikation. Damit will er den Gegnern verdeutlichen, dass es für sie besser wäre, Konflikte mit ihm zu vermeiden.

Schon in der ersten Strophe wird durch die unheilvolle Vorausdeutung *von weinen und von klagen* ein zentrales Motiv angesprochen: das der Trauer, die, wie es Elke Koch (2006: 26) formuliert, als „Reaktion auf *leit*, d. h. auf objektiv defizitäre und konfliktträchtige Konstellationen“ definiert wird. Trauer kann u. a. hervorgerufen werden durch den Verlust gesellschaftlichen Ansehens infolge öffentlicher Diffamierung, was bei Brünhilds Reaktion im Streit mit Kriemhild vor dem Münster der Fall ist.¹³ Brünhilds Tränen sind die körperliche Ausdrucksform ihres Leides. Diese nimmt den Charakter einer symbolhaften Inszenierung an, als Brünhild in aller Öffentlichkeit weint und damit die Schwere ihrer Ehrverletzung kundtut. Mit ihrem Gebaren sucht sie Verbündete, um sich Genugtuung zu verschaffen (852, 854). Vor allem Hagen soll ein Werkzeug ihrer Vergeltungspläne werden und, wie die Wirkung ihrer demonstrativen Zurschaustellung ihrer Tränen zeigt, ist er sofort bereit, sie zu rächen:

*Er vrâgete waz ir wære, weinende er si vant.
dô sagte si im diu mære. er lobte ir sâ zehant
daz ez erarnen müese der Kriemhilde man,
oder er wolde nimmer dar umbe vrælich gestân. (864)*

Auf die Details der rituellen Inszenierung der Trauer anlässlich des Todes von Siegfried (vgl. Braun 2010: 53, 69ff.) möchte ich hier nicht näher eingehen, sondern lediglich betonen, dass das ‚Klagen und Weinen‘ sowohl von Kriemhild als auch von Gunther und Hagen deutlich als zeichenhaftes Handeln für ihre intendierte Botschaft an die betreffenden Empfänger zu verstehen ist. Kriemhild klagt laut um den bitteren Verlust ihres Mannes. Die ‚Echtheit‘ ihres Gebarens ist sicherlich nicht in Frage zu stellen, doch markieren ihre Klagen auch eine unmissverständliche konventionalisierte Verhaltensweise: Sie verfolgt die Absicht, mit ihrer Trauerinszenierung Verbündete für ihre Rache zu gewinnen¹⁴ (vgl. Greenfield 2000, 111f.). Auf der anderen Seite will sie ihre Tränen in der Öffentlichkeit verbergen (1415), da sie unmissverständlich als Zeichen zur Konfliktbereitschaft verstanden werden könnten. Dies könnte ihren Plan, die

¹³ NL 843: *Prünhilt dô weinde: Kriemhilt niht lānger lie, / vor des küneges wībe inz münster si dô gie / mit ir ingesinde. dā huop sich grōzer haz: / des wurden liehtiu ougen vil starke trūebe unde naz.* NL 850,3f.: *dô den (ihren Gürtel, Anm. von der Verf.) gesach frou Prünhilt, weinen si began. / daz muose vreisichen Gunther und alle Burgonden man.*

¹⁴ NL 1228,2–4: *dô pflac niwan jāmers der Kriemhilde lîp. / ir wāt was vor den brūsten von heizen trāhen naz. / der edel marcgrāve wol sāch an Kriemhilde daz.* NL 1255,3–1256: *er (Rüdeger, Anm. von der Verf.) wolde si ergetzen swaz ir ie geschach / ein teil begunde ir senften dô ir vil grōzer ungemach. // Er sprach zer küneginne: „lāt iuwer weinen sîn. / ob ir zen Hiunen hêtet niemen danne mîn, / getriuwer mīner māge und ouch der mīnen man, / er müeses sêre engelten, unt het iu iemen iht getân.“*

Brüder und ihren Erzfeind Hagen ins Hunnenland zu locken und ihre Rache realisieren zu können, gefährden. Die Absenz dieser offenkundigen Zeichen führt, mit Ausnahme bei Hagen, dann tatsächlich auch zur Fehlinterpretation ihrer Absichten durch Gunther und ihre anderen beiden Brüder.¹⁵

Befremdlich wirkt, wenn man die näheren Umstände von Siegfrieds Tod vor Augen hat, die Szene, in der Gunther und Hagen sich den Wehklagen der Trauergemeinschaft anschließen (1040f.). Ihre damit beabsichtigte Botschaft, Siegfrieds Tod habe sie mit Leid erfüllt, wird von Kriemhild zwar nicht angenommen, doch wahren sie den Schein des für ihre Rolle konformen Verhaltens.

Und nun zum Zorn, der dritten ‚Emotion‘, die vor allem im letzten Teil des *Nibelungenliedes* allgegenwärtig ist. Der Zorn, der nach Aristoteles als „das Verlangen, eine Kränkung zu vergelten“ und „in der Nachfolge der Stoa als Ausfall der Vernunft“ (Hedwig 2002: 674) definiert wird, hat in den zeitgenössischen theologischen Diskursen eine unterschiedliche Bewertung erfahren. Als unkontrollierte, den Verstand ausschaltende Emotion zählte sie seit Cassian zu den sieben Hauptsünden; in der Nachfolge der biblischen Tradition der *ira Dei* als Empörung über Sünder wurde sie dagegen als gerecht angesehen (ebd.). Auch der sog. königliche Zorn war gerechtfertigt und das Ergebnis rationalen Denkens (Millet 2012: 142). Die Beurteilung des Zorns war demnach abhängig von den religiösen, juristischen und ethischen Beweggründen des Zürnenden. Wenn die Manifestation des Zorns den höfischen Regeln von *zuht* und *mâze* auch zuwiderlief (Keller 2003: 125), galt sie in der literarischen Tradition im Allgemeinen als positiv konnotierter Handlungsmotor eines Helden (Sieber 2003: 223). Wie Jan-Dirk Müller (1998, 208) formuliert, ist der *zorn* im Unterschied zu *trûren* eine aktive angemessene Reaktion auf *leit*, und zielt auf die Behebung dieses „defekten Status‘, der von einem anderen Menschen verschuldet ist.“ Zorn ist aber zugleich auch der „zur Gewalttat passende Habitus“ (Müller 1998: 206) bzw. Ausdruck für Kampfbereitschaft (Millet 2012: 141). Welche Beweggründe den Zorn bei wem auslösen, wie er sich manifestiert und wie dieser zu bewerten ist, soll anhand einiger Beispiele im Folgenden skizziert werden.

Die erste Erwähnung des Zorns im *Nibelungenlied* erfolgt im Zusammenhang mit der Vorstellung Siegfrieds als vorbildlichen Helden, dessen Zorn sich im Kampf mit den Nibelungen entlädt und schließlich zu seinem Sieg führt (94). In diesem Kontext erscheint der Protagonist als fuchterregender Held (95, 97), der seine Ziele erreicht. Auch an anderen Stellen ist Siegfrieds durch Zorn angestachelte Kampfeswut durchaus positiv konnotiert (z. B. 210). In der öffentlichen Kommunikation, bei der der Zorn als Zeichen zur Demonstration der Ernsthaftigkeit des Begehrens fungiert (Althoff 1996b: 67), kann der drohende Konflikt durch Einlenkung des Widerparts deeskaliert werden, wie beim ersten Zusammentreffen Siegfrieds mit den Burgunden (123, 127). Dies ist ein Beispiel für den Zorn als symbolhafte Inszenierung im Medium der Sprache und er ist als solche ein wichtiges Moment in der Konfliktregulierung. Zornentbrannt ist

¹⁵ NL 1399,4: *den argen willen niemen an der küneginne ervant.* NL 1415: *Und swaz ir mîner friunde immer muget gesehen / ze Wormez bî dem Rîne, den sult ir niht verjehen / daz ir noch ie gesæhet betriebet mînen muot. / und saget mînen dienest den helden kûene ûnde guot.* NL 1460f.: *Dô sprach der kûnec rîche: „mîn swester lie ir zorn. / mit kusse minneclîche si hât ûf uns verkorn / daz wir ir ie getâten, ê si von hinnen reit. / ez ensî et, Hagene, danne iu êinem widerseit.“ //* „Nu lât iuch niht betriegen“, sprach Hâgene, „swes si jehen, / die boten von den Hiunen. welt ir Kriemhilde sehen, / ir muget dâ wol verliesen die êre und ouch den lîp: ez ist vil lancræche des kûnec Etzêlen wîp.“

Siegfried u. a. auch im Angesicht des Todes, als er sich, wild um sich schlagend, der Freveltat Hagens bewusst wird (985ff.). Aus der „Aufwallung von Gerechtigkeitsinn“ (Grubmüller 2003: 51) herrührend, ist der Zorn auch hier positiv zu bewerten.

In seiner Todesstunde bezeichnet Siegfried den an ihm begangenen Meuchelmord als schändlichen Treuebruch. Hagens Zorn, dessen ursprünglicher Beweggrund hier zwar die Restitution von Brünhilds Ehre war, lässt sich nicht rechtfertigen, denn er verstößt gegen göttliches Gebot und das Gesetz der Feudalgesellschaft, das Menschen einer auf gegenseitige Treue basierenden Bindung zur Loyalität verpflichtet; eine Verletzung dieses Gesetzes haftet nach damaligen Vorstellungen als Makel auf allen kommenden Generationen:

*Dô sprach der verwunde: „jâ ir bæsen zagen,
waz helfent mîniu dienst, daz ir mich habet erslagen?
ich was iu ie getriuwe: des ich engolten hân
ir habt an iuwern mâgen leider übele getân.*

*Die sint dâ von bescholten, swaz ir wirt geborn
her nâch disen zîten. ir habet iuwern zorn
gerochen al ze sêre an dem lîbe mîn.
mit laster ir gescheiden sult von guoten recken sîn.“ (989f.)*

Das Handlungsmovens des grimmigen Hagen scheint oft der Zorn in seiner negativen Ausformung als sein Handeln dominierende Gewaltbereitschaft zu sein, bei der zwar nicht unbedingt der Verstand, aber meist alle ethischen Skrupel ausgeschaltet sind. Eine Gewalthandlung Hagens, die große Missbilligung bei Giselher hervorruft und dessen ‚gerechten‘ Zorn im Sinne einer Empörung über die Schandtät (vgl. Althoff 2002: 675) entfacht, ist sein brutaler Versuch, den Kaplan im Fluss zu ertränken; Hagen will damit überprüfen, ob die Vorausdeutung der Meerfrauen der Wahrheit entspricht und erkennt schließlich, dass die Burgunden ihrem Schicksal nicht entinnen können (1574ff).

Als gut reflektierte Symbolhandlung entbrennt der Zorn auch auf Seiten der Gefolgsleute der Burgunden, als sie durch das demonstrativ provokative Auftreten Siegfrieds befürchten, dass ihr Herrscher seine Länder verliert.¹⁶ Mit ihrem Zorn zeigen sie unmissverständlich, dass sie als Vasallen die Rechte ihres Königs, der sich angesichts der impertinenten Forderung nur wundert, energisch verteidigen werden. Doch auch Gunther vermag sich zu ‚erzürnen‘, als ihm die falsche Botschaft von der Kriegserklärung durch die Dänen überbracht wird (880). Ein Zorn in dieser Situation ist für einen Herrscher zwar legitim, weil er mit einer solchen Inszenierung kundtut, dass er auf seinen Rechten beharrt, doch handelt es sich bei Gunthers Auftritt nur um einen vorgetäuschten Zorn, der Siegfried hintergehen soll. Erst auf der Reise ins Hunnenland zeigt sich Gunther als ‚zorniger‘ Herrscher, der gegenüber seinen Gefolgsleuten, die eigenmächtig gegen die Bayern gekämpft haben, deutlich seine Missbilligung zu erkennen gibt (1624f.). ‚Zornig‘ gemahnt Gunther auch Etzel an seine Pflichten, als Gastherr dem Gemetzel an seinem Hofe Einhalt zu gebieten und seinen Gästen den rechtmäßigen Schutz zu bieten (2094). Der Zorn ist also hier unmissverständlicher Ausdruck der Forderung auf

¹⁶ NL 111: *Den künec hete wunder und sîne man alsam / umbe disiu mære diu er hie vernam, / daz er des hete willen, er næme im sîniu lant. / daz hórten sîne degene; dô wart in zürnén bekant.*

Einhaltung des Gastrechtes (vgl. Weitzel 2002: 1130). Zorn bei Gunther im Sinne einer tatsächlichen Demonstration seiner Kampfbereitschaft, seine Existenz zu verteidigen und den Tod seiner Gefolgsleute zu rächen, findet man schließlich im Kampfgemetzel an Etzels Hof.¹⁷

Als erste weibliche zornige Figur, die dem weiblichen Handlungsmuster widerspricht, tritt Brünhild im Kampf mit Siegfried bei der Brautwerbung auf, als sie verliert (462, 465). Ihr Zorn äußert sich beim ersten Mal in ihrem kämpferischen Einsatz, den jedoch Siegfrieds Stärke überbietet. Bei ihrer zweiten Niederlage manifestiert er sich in einem körperlichen Symptom, nämlich in der Rotfärbung ihres Antlitzes. Aufgrund der Gefahr, die den Helden durch ihr zorniges Handeln droht, nennt sie Hagen *tíuvéles wîp*, weil sie in ihrer Kampfeswut sich gegen die festgelegten Geschlechterrollen auflehnt (438)? Erst durch die Restituierung der anerkannten genderkonformen Handlungsmuster erscheint Brünhild, nachdem ihr Zorn gezügelt wurde, in einem positiveren Licht (681). Der nächste Zornausbruch, in den Brünhild involviert ist, wird auf der gleichen Geschlechterebene ausagiert und entzündet sich in einem eskalierenden Wortgefecht, das in der Verleumdung Brünhilds durch Kriemhild kulminiert (823ff.). Der Zorn der beiden Frauen ist Ausdruck ihres Bestrebens, ihre vorrangige Position in der Gesellschaft zu manifestieren.

Kriemhild, das *vil édel magedîn* (2)¹⁸, zunächst geleitet von Angst und Trauer, wandelt sich im Verlauf der Handlung, um das Wort Dietrichs und Hagens zu gebrauchen, in eine zornrasende *vâlandinne* (1748,4, 2371,4). Geleitet von dem Zwang, sich Vergeltung zu verschaffen für ihren nie überwundenen Verlust, ignoriert sie alle ethischen Schranken, alle verwandtschaftlichen Bindungen, doch nicht den Verstand, der ihre Zornhandlungen reguliert (1767); der Hauptgrund für ihren Zorn ist ihre Besessenheit von der Idee, ihre Rache zu realisieren. Doch was ist der wesentliche Unterschied zwischen Kriemhild und Hagen als zornagierenden Figuren? Kriemhild übertritt im Gegensatz zu Hagen die genderstereotypen Verhaltensmuster (vgl. Greenfield 2000: 100, 112ff.) und erscheint in einer von Männern beherrschten Gesellschaft, wie es die mittelalterliche sicherlich auch war, schon allein deshalb als teuflisch. In den Kampfhandlungen an Etzels Hof mündet der Zorn aller Beteiligten schließlich in einer eskalierenden Gewaltspirale, der kein Einhalt zu gebieten ist.

Bei der Manifestation der ‚Emotionen‘ Angst, Trauer und Zorn kommt es zum sog. ‚Emotionscrossing‘, wonach es in Anlehnung an ‚Gender Crossing‘ und ‚Cross Dressing‘ zu „Überschreitung(en) von Geschlechterstereotypen durch Übertretung (...) der jeweils zugeschriebenen emotionalen Scripts der Geschlechterrolle“ (Gerok-Reiter 2010, 221) kommt. Angst, Trauer, Zorn werden sowohl Männern als auch Frauen zugeschrieben, wenn die einzelnen ‚Emotionen‘ bei den Geschlechtern auch unterschiedlich dominieren. Wie die Analyse gezeigt hat, schließen Emotionalität und Rationalität einander nicht aus, vielfach ist ‚emotionales‘ Handeln auch rationales Handeln, vor allem, was die bewusste Inszenierung von Emotionen mit symbolischem Zeichencharakter in der öffentlichen Kommunikation anbelangt.

¹⁷ NL 2358: *Swie vil der herre Dietrich lange was gelobt, / Gunther was sô sêre erzürnet und ertobt, / wande er nâch stakem leide sîn herzevient was. / man sagt ez noch ze wunder, daz dô her Dietrich genas.*

¹⁸ Zu Kriemhilds Entwicklung vgl. Almut Suerbaum 2003: 24.

Zum Schluss möchte ich noch die Frage beantworten, ob die Trauer stets eine Reaktion auf ein nicht umkehrbares Leid darstellt und der Zorn tatsächlich immer nur dann entsteht, wenn das Übel noch umkehrbar scheint. Als Gefühlsäußerung ist Trauer sicherlich eine Reaktion auf eine schwerwiegende Verlustsituation, die den Trauernden meist in einen Zustand der Passivität versetzt. Anders verhält es sich mit der symbolhaften Inszenierung von Trauer, wie die obigen Beispiele von Brünhilds und Kriemhilds Verhalten zeigen. Zwar verharren sie als ‚Trauernde‘ in einer eher passiven Haltung, ‚aktivieren‘ aber ihre Verbündeten, das ihnen zugefügte Unheil zu vergelten. Die Ehrverletzung Brünhilds soll durch Hagen gerächt werden, um ihr gesellschaftliches Ansehen wiederherzustellen. Siegfrieds Tod ist zwar ein unwiderrufliches Übel, das Kriemhild zugefügt wurde, doch ist Kriemhild bestrebt, sich für den schmerzlichen Verlust durch ihre intendierte Rache als „Zeichen der *triuwe* der Sippe“ (Greenfield 2000: 111) auf anderer Ebene Genugtuung zu verschaffen. Erst als sie mit der Trauerinszenierung allein, ihre Racheziele nicht zu realisieren vermag, wird sie schließlich aktiv. Ihre Trauer schlägt um in unbändigen Zorn, der die Rachehandlungen antreibt. Jedoch kann Kriemhild mit ihrem Zorn den Verlust ihres Mannes de facto nicht umkehrbar machen. Auch ist der Zorn der Burgunden und aller anderen im Gemetzel am hunnischen Hof sicherlich nicht dadurch zu begründen, dass die fatale Lage noch reversibel erscheint. Zorn ist hier vielmehr ein Handlungshabitus, um die unausweichliche Entwicklung zu vollenden.

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DIE »POETISCHE AUTOBIOGRAPHIE« *MEHR MEER* VON ILMA RAKUSA

Barbara Jesenovec

Abstract

The goal of the following contribution is to analyse the book *Mehr Meer* by the Swiss author Ilma Rakusa in terms of genre designation. The fascinating text contains many autobiographical elements and references but is exquisitely literary formed, in style it does not differ from other texts of the author. Because *Mehr Meer* is written in an explicit poetic style, typical for the Swiss Author, and because the work is formed by different literary strategies, the most appropriate terms seem to be literalized or poeticized autobiography.

Key words: autobiographical discourse, autobiography, literalized autobiography, Swiss literature, German contemporary literature

Die Anwesenheit von autobiographischen Elementen in literarischen Texten und das literaturwissenschaftliche Streben, sie zu klassifizieren und zu systematisieren, bilden seit langem den Gegenstand so mancher literaturtheoretischer Forschungsarbeit. Zudem sind heute immer noch Versuche aktuell, neue Begriffe zur Bestimmung und Bezeichnung von autobiographischen Texten zu finden und sie in den wissenschaftlichen Diskurs einzuführen. Obwohl nicht immer alle neu vorgeschlagenen Begriffe allgemein akzeptiert und angewendet werden, deuten sie jedoch auf die Unbestimmbarkeit sowie Ambivalenz der Problematik des autobiographischen Schreibens, was sie noch anziehender macht.

Anhand von Ilma Rakusas Text *Mehr Meer*, das viele autobiographische Bezüge aufweist, wird der Versuch unternommen, eine weitere Facette im autobiographischen Diskurs aufzuzeigen und den Text seinem Genre nach zwischen Autobiographie, poetisierter Autobiographie und autobiographischem Roman anzusiedeln. Die Unterschiede erweisen sich als besonders interessant auch wegen der Widersprüchlichkeit, die bei einer genaueren Analyse des Textes zum Vorschein kommt. Diese ist eng mit der Schreibweise der Autorin verknüpft. Ich gehe von der These aus, dass sich *Mehr Meer* am besten zur Kategorie „poetisierte bzw. literarisierte Autobiographie“ zuordnen lässt, weil im Text viele nachprüfbare außerliterarische und autobiographische Elemente vorkommen, zugleich ist aber der außerliterarische Stoff mittels verschiedener literarischer Strategien und Verfahren äußerst poetisch geformt.

Mit einer ähnlichen Thematik, zwar anhand des Erstlings *Zaznamovana* der slowenischen Autorin Nedeljka Prijevec, hat sich ausführlich Alenka Koron in ihrem Beitrag *Avtobiografija, fikcija in roman: O možnosti žanra ,roman kot avtobiografija‘* (2003) auseinandergesetzt. In ihrer Studie versucht sie mittels eines »pragmatischen« Modells für die Unterscheidung von Fiktion und Realität von Irmgard Nickel Bacon, Norbert Groeben und Margrit Schreier (2000) zwei autobiografisch gefärbte Werke zu analysieren, die gleichfalls typisch literarisch gestaltet sind. Sie schlägt eine neue Bezeichnung »Roman als Autobiographie« für autobiografischen Texte vor, deren Anteil an autobiografischen und fiktionalen Elementen ausgewogen ist. Mit dem neuen Begriff soll stärker das Außerliterarische bzw. Reale im Werk betont werden. Die Bezeichnung »autobiographischer Roman« soll dagegen Werke bezeichnen, die offensichtlich sowohl reale als auch fiktionale Elemente enthalten, wobei die fiktionale Seite stärker im Vordergrund steht. Beide Genrenamen sind bis zu einem gewissen Grad ebenso für Rakusas *Mehr Meer* zutreffend. Trotzdem entspricht für die Genrezuordnung des Textes von Ilma Rakusa meiner Meinung nach keine der beiden Bezeichnungen, sondern eher eine dritte, und zwar »poetisierte Autobiographie«, weil diese die literarische Gestaltung außerliterarischer Wirklichkeit in den Mittelpunkt stellt. Im Folgenden möchte ich meine These sowohl theoretisch wie auch textanalytisch begründen.

ZUM BEGRIFF DER AUTOBIOGRAPHIE

Bevor Ilma Rakusas Buch einer genaueren Analyse unterzogen wird, muss überhaupt geklärt werden, was uns veranlasst, einen Text als Autobiographie zu bezeichnen. Viele theoretische Auseinandersetzungen mit der Definition des Begriffs Autobiographie stellen fest, dass sie kein leicht definierbares (literarisches) Phänomen ist; einerseits weil sich die fundamentalen Merkmale der Autobiographie im Laufe ihrer Entwicklung dermaßen verändert haben, dass sie für die moderne Autobiographik in den meisten Fällen nicht unbedingt charakteristisch sind (vgl. Holdenried 2000: 14), andererseits weil sie wegen ihres realitätsbezogenen Charakters und ihrer sprachlichen Gestaltung der (außersprachlichen) Wirklichkeit, deren Hauptquelle (in vielen Fällen für die Lesenden unverifizierbare) Erinnerungen sind, eine prekäre Position im literarischen System einnehmen. Je nachdem welche Aspekte im Text überwiegen bzw. hervorgehoben sind, nähern sich autobiographische Texte anderen (literarischen) Formen an, wobei die Grenzen immerhin offen und vage bleiben. Vor allem sind oft die Unterschiede zwischen der »eigentlichen« Autobiographie und dem autobiographischen Roman schwer zu bestimmen. Für letzteren ist vor allem typisch, dass »der Autor das Material seiner Lebenserfahrung konsequent in einen fiktionalen Rahmen umsetzt und integriert.«¹ Deshalb wird der Text *Mehr Meer* u. a. aus dieser Perspektive betrachtet, d. h. was die Texthauptquelle ist, welche (literarischen) Strategien angewendet werden, wie die Realien im Text fiktionalisiert werden.

Bereits Ingrid Aichinger (1989: 173) stellt fest, dass die meisten Studien über die Genreproblematik des autobiographischen Diskurses von der wortwörtlichen Überset-

¹ <http://www.uni-due.de/einladung/Vorlesungen/washeisst/autobiogr.htm> (Zugriffsdatum: 26. 11. 2011)

zung des Begriffs ausgehen. Georg Misch hat das bildhaft in seiner Definition formuliert: die Autobiographie sei »die Beschreibung (*graphia*) des Lebens (*bios*) eines Einzelnen durch diesen selbst (*auto*)« (1989: 38). Diese Formulierung enthält drei wesentliche Merkmale eines autobiographischen Textes und lässt zugleich genug Raum für verschiedene Textvarianten der Autobiographie. Der Ausdruck Beschreibung, an dessen Stelle Aichinger das Wort »Darstellung« (1989: 177) verwendet, die »Fülle und Ausdruckskraft der Sprache [impliziert]« (ebda.), deutet auf die wichtige Rolle der sprachlichen bzw. »sprachkünstlerischen Gestaltung« (1989: 199) des Stoffes. Die Versprachlichung hängt unmittelbar mit dem Sprachgebrauch, (un)bewussten Stilisierungen und sprachlichen Strategien zusammen, was zu (un)absichtlichen Fiktionalisierungen und Annäherungen an das Fiktionale führt.

Philippe Lejeune schlägt im Buch *Der autobiographische Pakt* (1989) eine breite Definition der Autobiographie und anderer Texte vor, »deren gemeinsames Thema es ist, das Leben von irgend jemandem zu erzählen« (ebda. 215). Wichtig sind vor allem seine Behauptungen, dass »die Identität von *Erzähler* und *Hauptfigur* [...] die Voraussetzung für die Autobiographie« (ebda. 217) sei und dass die Gleichheit zwischen den beiden hergestellt werden könne, auch ohne Verwendung des Erzählens in der ersten Person. Bei der »Namensidentität zwischen Autor, Erzähler und Figur« (ebda. 232) geht es darum, dass anhand des (Autoren)Namens auf dem Titelblatt des Buches festgestellt werden kann, ob die Identität im Text hergestellt wird. Wenn das der Fall ist, wird ein »autobiographischer Pakt« geschlossen und die Lesenden gehen davon aus, dass der Text eine Autobiographie ist. Der Pakt spielt eine wichtige Rolle bei der »Unterscheidung zwischen Fiktion und Autobiographie« (ebda. 243), weil es nach Lejeune »auf der Ebene der internen Textanalyse« (ebda. 230) keine Differenzen gebe. Je nachdem, als welche literarische Textsorte die Lesenden einen Text erkennen, hängt auch deren Rezeptionsweise ab. »Die Geschichte der Autobiographie wäre also vor allem die Geschichte der Art und Weise ihrer Lektüre.« (ebda. 257)

Lejeune (ebda. 234-243) hat ein Modell entwickelt, das bei der Genrezuordnung der Texte hilft, die autobiographische Elemente aufweisen. Dabei geht er von zwei Kriterien aus. Erstens, von der Art der Beziehung zwischen dem Namen der Figur sowie dem des Autors, und zweitens von der Art des im Text geschlossenen Paktes. Aus diesem Modell ist deutlich zu sehen, in welche Kategorie ein bestimmtes Werk eingeordnet werden kann. In Rakusas *Mehr Meer* ist die Übereinstimmung des Namens der Protagonistin mit dem Namen der Autorin weder bestätigt noch unbestätigt.² In solchen Fällen spielt nach Lejeune eine wichtige Rolle, ob ein Pakt geschlossen wird, und wenn das der Fall ist, um welche Art des Paktes es sich handelt – um den romanescen oder den autobiographischen. Für letzteren ist entweder »die Verwendung von *Titeln*« (ebda. 232) oder der »Eingangsabschnitt« (ebda.) erforderlich, mithilfe dessen der Autor zugibt, dass er selbst sowohl Erzähler als auch Hauptfigur ist, auch wenn im Text sein Name nicht vorkommt (was auch für *Mehr Meer* gilt). Unter den »Titeln« sind die Bezeichnungen auf dem Titelblatt, etwa „Autobiographie“ gemeint.

² Die Erzählerin bleibt im Text namenlos, nur eine Anspielung lässt die Verbindung zwischen dem Namen der Autorin und der Protagonistin ahnen. »Nach dem Sommerkurs fuhr ich auf die andere Seeseite, Seewinkel genannt. Nach Illmitz, dessen Name wie prädestiniert für mich schien.« (Rakusa 2009: 209)

Gérard Genette³ hat sich (ähnlich wie Lejeune) mit den lektüresteuernenden Elementen beschäftigt. Nach Genette beeinflussen die Textrezeption nicht nur Titel und Untertitel, sondern auch andere sog. »paratextuelle Elemente« (ebda.) wie Widmung, Motto, Vorwort (was ebenfalls unter Lejeunes Begriff »Eingangsabschnitt« gemeint ist), Interviews oder Kommentare des/r Autors/in über sein/ihr Leben und seine/ihre Texte sowie deren Entstehungsgeschichte; deswegen werden die erwähnten Elemente in die Analyse des Buches *Mehr Meer* einbezogen.

ILMA RAKUSA – EINE »SCHWEIZER« AUTORIN

Ilma Rakusa gilt heute als Schweizer Autorin, obwohl sie 1946 in Rimavská Sobota in der Slowakei als Tochter einer Ungarin und eines Slowenen geboren wurde. Die Familie blieb nach mehreren Ortswechseln (Budapest, Ljubljana, Triest) in Zürich, wo Ilma Rakusa auch die Schule besuchte. Sie studierte allerdings nicht nur in der Schweiz, sondern absolvierte ein Studienjahr in Frankreich (Paris) und eines in Russland (Sankt Petersburg, damals Leningrad). Erst war sie als Assistentin und Lehrbeauftragte an der Universität Zürich angestellt. Freiberuflich ist sie als Publizistin, Lyrikerin, Essayistin, Schriftstellerin, Herausgeberin und Übersetzerin aus der französischen, russischen, ungarischen und serbokroatischen Sprache tätig. Für ihren übersetzerischen und schriftstellerischen Beitrag wurde sie mehrmals mit verschiedenen Preisen ausgezeichnet, u. a. bekam sie den Vilenica-Preis und den Schweizer Buchpreis.

Vesna Kondrič Horvat stellt in ihrem Beitrag *Transkulturalität der ‚Schweizer‘ Autorin Ilma Rakusa* (2008) anhand des Lebens und (frei)beruflichen Schaffens der erwähnten ‚Schweizer‘ Autorin fest, wie/dass der Begriff Transkulturalität⁴ bzw. »transkulturelle Kompetenz«⁵ die schriftstellerische, publizistische und übersetzerische Tätigkeit Rakusas am besten beschreibe. Sowohl im privaten als auch im (frei)beruflichen Leben seien ihre Offenheit gegenüber allem Fremden, Grenzüberschreitungen im wortwörtlichen und übertragenen Sinn sowie die Synthese von verschiedenen Kulturen und Sprachen ersichtlich. Neben den zahlreichen Übersetzungen von Autorinnen und Autoren (Danilo Kiš, Marguerite Duras, Marina Zwetajewa, Imre Kertész), ist sie nämlich Autorin unzähliger Rezensionen, Nachworte, Kommentare, Arbeiten, Aufsätze über verschiedene kultur- und literaturwissenschaftlichen Themen sowie Herausgeberin verschiedener Anthologien. (Vgl. Rakusa 2006: 166) Einen wichtigen Teil ihres Werks bilden auch Essays und andere Texte, wo sie u. a. eigene schriftstellerische, publizistische und übersetzerische Tätigkeiten reflektiert (z.B. *Farbrand und Randfigur*, 1994; *Zur Sprache gehen*, 2006).

³ Zit. nach: <http://handbuch.literaturwissenschaft.de/forum/viewtopic.php?t=66> (Zugriffsdatum: 26. 11. 2011)

⁴ Der Begriff Transkulturalität wird im Beitrag nach der Definition von Wolfgang Welsch verwendet. Im Gegensatz zum Begriff Multikulturalität bzw. Interkulturalität, wo die Kulturen »homogene Insel oder begrenzte Sphären seien« (zit. nach Kondrič Horvat 2008: 58) wird Transkulturalität »vielmehr als kulturelle Mischung denn als Aufstellung von klar abgrenzbaren Kulturen« (ebda.) verstanden.

⁵ Der Begriff stammt von Fons Trompenaars und wird als »die Fähigkeit, scheinbar gegenteilige Werte in Einklang zu bringen« (ebda. 57) definiert.

Ihr literarisches Werk umfasst vor allem Gedichtsammlungen (*Wie Winter*, 1977; *Les mots/morts*, 1992; *Ein Strich durch alles*, 1997; *Love after love*, 2001), dann Erzählungen (*Die Insel*, 1980; *Miramar*, 1986; *Steppe*, 1990; *Durch Schnee*, 2006) und Dramolette (*Jim*, 1993). 2010 ist die Kindergeschichte *Alma und das Meer* erschienen. Dass ihr die große Form nicht liegt, wie Ilma Rakusa selbst in Interviews⁶ und Poetikvorlesungen zugibt, ist auch in ihrem umfangreichsten autobiographischen Werk *Mehr Meer* (2009) deutlich zu sehen, das aus (Prosa)Miniaturen, Passagen oder Vignetten besteht. In ihren Texten stehen im Vordergrund oft Impressionen, Erinnerungen, »Evokation der Bilder und Gefühle« (Kondrič Horvat 2008: 58), Momentaufnahmen, »auf das Minimum verknappte Erzählungen« (ebda. 60). Allen erwähnten Werken, unabhängig davon, ob es um Prosa, Lyrik oder Theaterstücke geht, ist in stärkerem oder geringerem Maße Rakusas Vorliebe für Aufzählungen, Reihungen und Wiederholungen gemeinsam, »[i]n der [...] eine besondere Aneignung von Welt [liegt]: eine insistente, aber niemals aggressive, eine rhythmisch-gliedernde, musikalische« (Rakusa 1994: 9). Weiter bestimmen ihre Texte Poetizität, Rhythmus, Assoziativität, Anspielung, Annäherung, Konstruktion, Verdichtung, Intensität, Komplexität, Dialogizität (mit anderen Texten), Verfremdung sowie die Tendenz zur Sprachautonomie und zum Sprachspiel. Dadurch können die Texte hermetisch und fragmentarisch wirken, zugleich aber bieten sie viel Freiraum. »Der Stoff determiniert. Ein Set von Bildern, Gedanken ist parat und verlangt, in eine Form gebracht zu werden.« (Ebda. 32) Sie experimentiert immer wieder mit literarischen Formen und probiert aus, das Gleiche auf verschiedene Weisen zu versprachlichen, wofür sie selbst in den Poetikvorlesungen schreibt (Vgl. ebda. 110-116). In ihrem ganzen Opus wiederholen sich die gleichen Themen, Bilder, Symbole, Topoi, die immer wieder in einen anderen, neuen, (auch fiktionalisierten) Kontext gebracht werden und/oder eine neue Form annehmen (deren Grundzüge wiederum beibehalten werden).

MEHR MEER ALS POETISIERTE AUTOBIOGRAPHIE

Im Mittelpunkt meiner Analyse steht das Buch *Mehr Meer*, das wegen der ausgeprägten poetischen Sprache und Stilisierungen als Roman wirkt, zugleich aber auffällige Parallelen mit der tatsächlichen Biographie von Ilma Rakusa und der außerliterarischen Wirklichkeit aufweist. Es geht um einen Text, der vom Genre her eine gewisse Ambivalenz aufweist und deswegen mehrdeutig ist und verschiedene Lesarten ermöglicht.

Appliziert man die theoretischen Ausführungen konkret auf *Mehr Meer*, fällt sogleich auf, dass die Ich-Erzählerin im Buch keinen Namen hat und es gibt auch kein Vorwort, in dem der autobiographische Pakt geschlossen würde. Aber mehrere paratextuelle Hinweise ermöglichen die Zuordnung des Textes zur Autobiographie. Einerseits heißt der Untertitel *Erinnerungspassagen*, woraus man schließen kann, dass es im Buch um (eigene) Erinnerungen der Autorin geht, andererseits lautet eines der zwei Motti, das dem Buch *Autobiographie* von Jacques Roubaud entnommen ist, »La vie est unique, mais les paroles d'avant la mémoire font ce qu'on en dit.« (Rakusa 2009: 5) Im Motto wird ebenfalls darauf hingewiesen, dass es dabei vor allem um

⁶ http://www.novinki.de/html/zurueckgefragt/Interview_Rakusa.html (Zugriffsdatum: 26. 11. 2011)

die Versprachlichung von Erinnerungen geht, was (wie schon erwähnt wurde) eigene Gesetzmäßigkeiten hat.

Bei der Zuordnung zur Gattung bzw. zum Genre können weiter auch Epitexte helfen, das sind die schon oben erwähnten Interviews, Kommentare des/r Verfassers/in und andere Bezeichnungen, die den Text betreffen. Die Autorin leugnet nicht, dass es sich um eine Autobiographie handelt. Sie kommentiert ihr Buch u. a.: »Für einmal kein Beziehungsthema, sondern der Blick schweift zurück. Diesmal decken sich bei mir authentisch und autobiographisch.«⁷ oder »Beim Schreiben meiner autobiographischen Vignetten« (ebda.). Daraus kann man schließen, dass der behandelte Text bewusst und absichtlich viele autobiographische Elemente enthält, die aber aus verschiedenen Gründen (wie u. a. Literarisierung) modifiziert vorkommen (können). Darauf macht sie aufmerksam mit den folgenden Worten: »Mit Triest habe ich, über solche Miniaturen hinaus, noch einiges im Sinn. Viel Material ist gesammelt und recherchiert. Und je weiter die Kindheit wegrückt, je mehr Patina sich über die Erinnerung legt, desto offener werden die Horizonte.« (Rakusa 2006: 86) Die offenen Horizonte und die entfernte Zeit der Kindheit tendieren eher zu Veränderungen autobiographischer Tatsachen, wie auch die von der Autorin selbst erwähnte Bezeichnung Roman für das (damals noch nicht erschienene) Buch *Mehr Meer*.

Im nächsten Roman soll er [der Osten] präsent sein, wenn es um die Kindheitsstädte Rimavská Sobota, Budapest und Ljubljana geht, wenn ich von meinem Studienjahr in Leningrad erzähle und von Reise nach Litauen, Polen und Tschechien. (Ebda. 103)

Solche kontradiktorischen Aussagen lassen keine einfache Zuordnung des Textes zu und tragen zur unterschiedlichen Rezeption bei.

Alenka Koron hat in ihren Beiträgen (2003, 2009) ein »pragmatisches« Modell für die Unterscheidung von Fiktion und Realität⁸ anhand verschiedener Texte mit autobiographischen Zügen vorgestellt und verwendet. Die Methode geht von drei Ebenen aus und unterscheidet sowohl die Produktions- wie auch die Rezeptionsseite. Bei der ersten pragmatischen Ebene geht es um Gattungsbezeichnungen, (Namens)Identität zwischen Autor und Hauptfigur, Andeutungen auf das Genre. Die nächste Ebene ist semantisch. Wie auch Milena Kerndl in ihrer Magisterarbeit zusammenfasst, seien hier die Parallelen zwischen der tatsächlichen Biographie des Autors und seinem Text wichtig, die Überprüfbarkeit der Tatsachen, Orts- und Personennamen, die »Abwesenheit irrealer fiktiver Elemente« (2009: 37) und anderer Phänomene, die den »Wirklichkeits«bezug beweisen, etwa die detaillierte Darstellung der Außenwelt, »der Gebrauch der Vergangenheitsform für die Beschreibungen der Erinnerungen« (ebda.), die Innenperspektive der ErzählerInnen, konkrete Zeit- und Raumbezeichnungen. Problematisch, da empirisch unüberprüfbar, bleiben immerhin Gedanken, Träume und persönliche Reflexionen.

Um die biographischen Parallelen zwischen dem Leben von Ilma Rakusa und dem Dargestellten in *Mehr Meer* festzustellen, muss kurz der Inhalt vorgestellt werden. In

⁷ <http://www.culturactif.ch/viceversa/rakusaprint.htm> (Zugriffsdatum: 27. 11. 2011)

⁸ Das Modell haben Irmgard Nickel Bacon, Norbert Groeben und Margrit Schreier entwickelt. Vgl. Nickel-Bacon, Irmgard/Norbert Groeben/Margrit Schreier: Fiktionssignale pragmatisch: Ein medienübergreifender Modell zur Unterscheidung von Fiktion(en) und Realität(en). In: Poetica 32.3-4 (2000): 267-299.

groben Zügen wurde er bereits im ersten Abschnitt wiedergegeben, bei der Biographie der Autorin, und zwar nur bis zur Ende ihres Studienjahres in Leningrad (wobei die Studienzeit in Zürich ganz ausgelassen ist). Der Text folgt konsequent Rakusas Biographie mit eingeschobenen kürzeren Episoden, die sich auch lange nach der Leningrader Zeit ereignet haben. Die offensichtlichen Verbindungen zum tatsächlichen Leben von Ilma Rakusa bestätigen die Vermutungen, dass es sich um einen autobiographischen Text handelt. Aber nicht nur die erwähnten Ähnlichkeiten tragen dazu bei, sondern auch andere Erscheinungen sind Indizien für die Wirklichkeitsnähe, etwa die realen Orte (Besuche in Maribor bei den Großeltern an der Adresse Vrbanska 5, der Hügel Kalvarija in der Nähe von Maribor), die realen Personen (z. B. ihr Großvater Rudolf Rakuša, der sich wirklich mit Esperanto beschäftigt hat; die Čačinovič-Töchter, deren Vater Konsul in der Schweiz war, was leicht nachprüfbar ist); sowie reale bzw. nachweisbare Datenangaben bzw. die genaue chronologische Datierung wie »1966, ich studiere französische und russische Literatur« (Rakusa 2009: 245) oder »Heute fällt die Grenze kaum ins Gesicht, damals, 1969, startete sie vor Gewalt.« (ebda. 206) Es geht um Angaben, die jederzeit leicht nachzuprüfen bzw. zu vergleichen sind. Dazu gibt die Autorin vieles in Interviews und den Poetikvorlesungen über sich und ihr wirkliches Leben preis und dieselben Episoden und Ereignisse kommen dann auch in *Mehr Meer* (und in anderen Texten, stellenweise modifiziert) vor.

Zuletzt bleibt noch das syntaktische Niveau, das die Erzählstruktur und die Art und Weise der Versprachlichung bzw. Vermittlung der empirischen Wirklichkeit, der eigenen Lebensgeschichte, umfasst. Für die Autobiographie ist sowohl das »assoziative« Prinzip (der/ie Erzähler/in überlässt die Reihenfolge des Erzählten freien Assoziationen), als auch das »chronologisch-lineare« Prinzip (hier wird die reale zeitliche Abfolge der Erzählung berücksichtigt) typisch. Die für *Mehr Meer* charakteristische Verflechtung der beiden Prinzipien, ist wegen ihrer Komplexität typischer für fiktive Formen. Innenfokalisation, zeitliche Distanz, metareflexive oder autoreferentielle Kommentare der ErzählerInnen/ AutorInnen sind wiederum (zumindest konventionell) ein Zeichen der Autobiographie (Koron 2009) und auch in Rakusas Buch vorhanden.

Mehr Meer entspricht demzufolge vielen Kriterien nach der Gattungsbezeichnung »Autobiographie«. Vor allem auf der semantischen Ebene sind zahlreiche Ähnlichkeiten festzustellen. Eine genauere Analyse ergibt aber auch viele Elemente, die in erster Linie Poetizität und Fiktionalität signalisieren. Die Tendenz zu einem poetischen Werk, in dem gleichzeitig stark autobiographische Züge vorhanden sind, ist genauso vom Titel des Buches abzulesen. Der Titel (*Mehr Meer*) verwendet bereits typische literarische, lyrische, Verfahren: eine Metapher, Alliteration und Homophonie, die Mehrdeutigkeit produzieren. Er zeigt auf inhaltliche Elemente des Textes sowie deren Verflechtung.

Wie bereits angeführt, kommt im Text einerseits die Thematik aus dem wirklichen Leben der Autorin/Erzählerin vor, andererseits ist sie offensichtlich in einer poetischen Sprache niedergeschrieben und literarisch geformt. Für die literarische Gestaltung eines Textes, d. h. für den Einsatz literarischer Strategien und anderer literarischer Mittel sowie Darstellungstechniken, verwende ich den Begriff *Literarisierung*. Hingegen wird der Ausdruck *Fiktionalisierung* eingesetzt, wenn das Moment des Fiktionalen (im Sinne vom bewusst Erfundenen) betont werden soll. Die Grenze zwischen den beiden ist fließend, weil es durch den Literarisierungsprozess auch zu Veränderungen bei dem Anteil der

Realität bzw. Fiktionalität kommt. Aber das Auseinanderhalten beider Ausdrücke ist wegen ihrer unterschiedlichen Konnotationen notwendig. Der Bedeutungsunterschied zwischen den beiden Ausdrücken spielt eine wichtige Rolle bei der Bestimmung und Auseinandersetzung mit der Schreibweise Rakusas.

Die wichtigsten im Text verwendeten literarischen Verfahren und Strategien, durch welche der außerliterarische Stoff literarisch geformt wird, sind Wiederholung, Opposition, Montagetechnik und Verwendung von literarischen Figuren sowie eine poetische Sprache. Weil Rakusas Schreiben für ihre poetische Schreibweise und ihren spielerischen Umgang mit Worten besonders bekannt ist, folgt nun eine Zusammenfassung der in *Mehr Meer* vorkommenden sprachlichen Besonderheiten.

Bei Ilma Rakusa hat die Arbeit mit/an der Sprache, der Gebrauch der poetischen Sprache und das Überlassen dem (inneren) Rhythmus (der Sprache) ohnehin meist die oberste Priorität, was logischerweise bald zur Verselbstständigung des Textes und dessen Eigendynamik und Autonomie führt. In allen ihren (literarischen) Texten fällt sofort ihr enormer Wortschatz auf, womit sie alle Nuancen und Details darstellen kann. Dadurch entsteht eine mehrdimensionale, plastische Welt, die alle Sinne durch synästhetisches Beschreiben anspricht. Das, was nicht beschrieben ist, können sich die LeserInnen leicht selbst vorstellen, weil sie mitten in der dargestellten Welt stehen. Das Gleichgewicht und genügend Freiraum wird durch die einfache Syntax und das vorwiegend Parataktische erreicht und bewahrt. Sie schreibt äußerst kommunikativ, als ob sie mit jemanden (sich selbst?) einen imaginären Dialog führte. Oft sind rhetorische Fragen zu finden (»Hinkt er?« - Rakusa 2009: 98, »Was heißt musikalisch?« - ebda. 144, »Die Zeit? Weggeschwemmt.« - ebda. 174), Ausrufe (»Und war doch erst sechs!« - ebda. 169), Kommentare (»Hier zeigte er mir einige seiner Schätze: Briefe von Sergej Jessenin, Aquarelle von Maximilian Woloschin. Originale, was denn sonst.« - ebda. 289). Diese (Selbst)Kommunikation und die oft vorhandene Dialogizität treiben nicht nur die Handlung voran, sondern erzeugen auch Textdynamik. Charakteristisch für die literarische Sprache ist ebenso der häufigere Gebrauch von rhetorischen Figuren. In *Mehr Meer* wird dadurch eine eigenständige literarische Welt mittels vieler solcher literarischer Mittel erschaffen. Im Folgenden führe ich zur Illustration einige rhetorische Figuren mit Textbeispielen an: Eine Synästhesie finden wir im folgenden Satz: »Wenn es nach Heu duftet, sehe ich hunderterlei Bilder aufsteigen.« (ebda. 315). Personifikationen treten gleichfalls zahlreich auf: »Die Bäume nickten mir zu, die Felder und Kirchtürme grüßten, als kennten sie mich.« - ebda. 211), sowie Ellipsen: »Hier also. Weg mit den Koffern, hinaus ins Freie.« (ebda. 88). Vergleiche überraschen die Lesenden: »Kaum ausgesprochen, stürzt die Gegenwart in die Vergangenheit, als fiel sie rücklings ins Meer.« (ebda. 89). Alliterationen wirken melodisch und intensivierend: »Glück wie: Geborgenheit, Gerstenbrot, Graugans.« (ebda. 303), Neubildungen, häufig in Form von neuen Komposita: »Gefühlsalphabet« (ebda. 14), »Kofferpathologie« (ebda. 34) und Metaphern wie: »Schlagartig begriff ich, was Vereinzelung ist. / Und Kälte.« (ebda. 86) regen die Vorstellungskraft an. Parallelismen und Asyndeta strukturieren den Text und geben ihm einen lyrischen Ton: »Daß sie mich spielend überdauern können, ist gut. / Daß sie mich zur Ordnung rufen, ist gut. / Daß sie, ohne sich selber zu verändern, mir zeigen, wie ich mich verändert habe, ist gut. / Daß sie (meiner Sentimentalität zum Trotz) unabhängig sind, ist gut.« (ebda. 314), und »Bei der stickigen Luft, den Weih-

rauchschwaden, dem ausgenücherten Magen, dem endlosen Singsang, vier Stunden nonstop.« (ebda. 198). Rhetorische Fragen und Dialogismen verstärken die Einbeziehung der Lesenden: »War das ein Sommer?« (ebda. 91) sowie »Gab es ein zweites Mal in dieser Art? Ich glaube nicht.« (ebda. 239).

Das ist nur eine kurze Aufzählung einiger im Text vorkommenden rhetorischen Mittel, die sehr häufig eingesetzt werden. Die Erzählerin geht offensichtlich souverän mit der literarischen Sprache um, was sie auch mit der Modifizierung von Redewendungen, fester Wortverbindungen und Sprüche beweist. Indem sie sie teilweise zerlegt und dann neu zusammenstellt, passt sie die Sprache, die Wörter, ihrer Welt an und hat sie dadurch unter Kontrolle. Einige Beispiele, wie die bekannten Phrasen verändert und dem Kontext angepasst werden, sind etwa: »Aber die Stadt bereitet mir ihren eigenen Empfang, als wäre ich eine verlorene Tochter.« (ebda. 28), »Ich lese, also bin ich« (ebda. 103), »Wie ein Zelt ist das Bett, ist der Fliederbusch, ist der Tisch« (ebda. 103), »Die Liebe macht uns nicht blind, zu zweit sehen wir mehr.« (ebda. 249), »Tischlein deck dich – und sie [Lena] zaubert Piroggen und Kuchen« (ebda. 278). Der Text macht sich dadurch selbstständig und scheint von den realen außerliterarischen Tatsachen befreit zu sein, weil die formalen Eigenschaften und die Literarisierungs- sowie Fiktionalisierungsprozesse eine derart starke Wirkung haben, dass das Literarische über das Autobiographische hinausreicht und damit in den Bereich der Kunst eintritt. »[D]ie Autobiographie [wird] nur dann zum Kunstwerk [...], wenn sie in sich selbst ruht, wenn sie lediglich um ihrer selbst willen gelesen werden kann« (Pascal 1989: 149) und

wenn man trotz der Absicht etwas über eine bestimmte Person zu erfahren, bei der Lektüre in Wirklichkeit über den besonderen Fall und das historische Umfeld hinausgeschoben wird und fühlt, ‚hier ist der Mensch‘, nicht ein ganz bestimmter Mensch, hier ist Kunst, nicht exakte Geschichte. (Ebda. 149)

Inwieweit *Mehr Meer* als fiktionaler literarischer Text gelesen werden kann und ob (wie) er als eigentliche Autobiographie von Ilma Rakusa erkennbar ist, bestimmen die eingesetzten Fiktionalisierungs- und/oder Literarisierungsmittel sowie die Rezeption. Da der Anteil des Fiktionalisierten/Erfundenen kaum zu bestimmen ist, habe ich einige Geschichten aus ihrem Erzählungsband *Miramar* und *Steppe* (beide ohne direkte Zeichen, dass es nicht um Fiktion geht) mit den Passagen, die (inhaltlich leicht modifiziert) auch in *Mehr Meer* vorkommen, analysiert und verglichen, um zu sehen, wie und ob sich die Schreibweise und Rezeption solcher Texte Rakusas, die fiktiv wirken, von ihrem als Autobiographie geschriebenen Text *Mehr Meer*, unterscheiden. Aus Platzgründen werden im Folgenden lediglich die Forschungsergebnisse dargestellt.⁹

Der Ausgangspunkt der Analyse war die These von Ilma Rakusa aus ihrer Poetikvorlesung *Zur Sprache gehen*, wo sie selbst genau ihre Erzählung *Arsenal* (aus *Miramar*) analysiert: »Nennen wir das Fundament autobiographisch, nicht aber die erzählte

⁹ Für die ganze Analyse siehe: Jesenovec, Barbara: *Autobiographische Schreibweise in den Werken Mehr Meer von Ilma Rakusa und Zaznamovana Nedeljke Pirjevec. Avtobiografska pisava v delih Mehr Meer Ilme Rakuse in Zaznamovana Nedeljke Pirjevec*. Skupno diplomsko delo. Ljubljana: Univerza v Ljubljani, Oddelek za germanistiko z nederlandistiko in skandinavistiko, Oddelek za primerjalno književnost in literarno teorijo, Filozofska fakulteta 2011.

Story.«¹⁰ (2006: 79) Das Fundament ist demzufolge real(istisch), die erzählte Story als solche erfunden. Und das ist das Postulat ihres Schreibens. Was die Schreibweise bzw. den Stil betrifft, sowohl in den offensichtlich fiktiven Texten (wie *Andrei*) als auch in denen, wo das Autobiographische bzw. zahlreiche autobiographische Elemente zu finden sind, gibt es keine deutlichen Unterschiede zu bemerken. Ilma Rakusa bleibt ihrer Schreibweise treu – sie bevorzugt kürzere, schnell wechselnde Formen, Parataxen, eine einfache Syntax, Zitieren, Intertextualität, Intensivität, rhetorische Figuren, Wiederholungen, Gegenstellungen, Montage, teilweise hermetische Textteile, Perspektivenwechsel, Arbeit an der Sprache, Wortspiele und rhythmische Textstrukturierungen. Der Literarisierungsprozess erfolgt durch den Gebrauch von rhetorischen Mitteln und anderen literarischen Strategien wie Intensivierung, Verschiebung, Verdichtung, Montage, Zitieren, Intertextualität, wobei es wichtig ist zu betonen, dass dadurch keine Veränderung des Wirklichkeitsgrades beabsichtigt ist.

Bekanntlich werden gewissermaßen ähnliche oder gar gleiche Techniken und Mittel zur Literarisierung auch in Werken mit einer autobiographischen Vorlage eingesetzt. Der Unterschied zwischen *Mehr Meer* als Autobiographie und fiktiven/fiktionalisierten Texten Rakusas, wo (nach der Analyse des Autobiographischen) klar ist, dass es viele autobiographische Elemente gibt, wie in einigen Erzählungen (*Arsenal*, *Warngeschichte*), liegt deshalb nicht im Literarisierungs-, sondern im Fiktionalisierungsprozess. Wo der letztere überhaupt stattgefunden hat, verraten in ihren Werken vor allem die paratextuellen Elemente, die die Rezeption beeinflussen und auf den (nicht)fiktiven Charakter des Textes hinweisen. Ausschließlich nach innertextuellen Kriterien, ohne die Auseinandersetzung mit ihren anderen Texten sowie der offiziellen Biographie der Autorin kann das Autobiographische in den Werken, wo kein autobiographischer Pakt geschlossen worden ist, weder bestätigt noch geleugnet werden. Ob der Text in dem Fall doch an der Schreibweise bzw. an den Wirklichkeitsindizien als Autobiographie erkannt werden könnte, hängt jedoch von den RezipientInnen und deren Rezeptionsart ab. Der Anteil der fiktionalisierten Elemente gilt aber allgemein als Kriterium, ob ein Text zur Autobiographie oder zum (autobiographischen) Roman gezählt wird. (Kerndl 2009: 30)

Fiktionalisierung ist durch die offensichtlichen Veränderungen der Tatsachen, die ausgestalteten Textstrukturen und die Komplexität sichtbar. In *Mehr Meer* sprechen für die Fiktion u. a. die Beschreibungen der Atmosphäre und Stimmung, einige vage beschriebene Orte und Personen, abgekürzte Namen, stellenweise keine harten Umrisse der Ereignisse, genügend Leerstellen, subjektive (nicht überprüfbare) Textteile. Weiter werden nach Koron (2003, 2009) zu den Zeichen der Fiktion ebenfalls verschiedene Verfahren wie Verdichtung und Verschiebung gezählt. Das Erzählte/Dargestellte nimmt lyrische Züge an, der Signifikant steht im Vordergrund, wobei der Inhalt (die Wirklichkeitsdarstellung) im Schreibprozess ebenso der Sprache, dem Rhythmus überlassen wird, was unbedingt zur Modifikation der Tatsachen führt.

¹⁰ Das Autobiographische ist eine der wichtigsten Quellen für ihr Schaffen. Sie stellt selbst fest: »Ich möchte literarisch eine Welt erschaffen, die möglichst viel Welt speichert, ausgehend von persönlichen Erfahrungen, Lektüren und Utopien.« (Rakusa 2006: 15) Sie arbeitet zwar viel mit autobiographischen Elementen auch in den a priori nicht autobiographischen Texten, die aber in erster Linie nur als Basis für ihre literarischen Texte dienen und sehr stark modifiziert bzw. der literarischen Form angepasst werden.

Die Autorin selbst ist sich der Fiktionalisierung bewusst, wie ihre Aussagen über die Geschichte *Rundfahrt* aus *Miramar* bestätigen: »Der Fiktionalisierungsgrad ist in diesem Text deutlich höher« (Rakusa 2006: 90). »Eine der hier angedeuteten Ventoux-Fahrten habe ich einmal zu einer längeren Erzählung, betitelt *Rundfahrt*, verarbeitet.« (Ebda.)

ZUM ABSCHLUSS

Im Mittelpunkt der vorliegenden Beitrags steht die Problematik des Autobiographischen und der autobiographischen Schreibweise. *Mehr Meer* kann weder eindeutig zur Autobiographie noch zur Fiktion (dem Roman) zugezählt werden. Es gibt sowohl solche Hinweise, die die literarische und fiktive Lesart fördern, als auch diejenigen, die repräsentativ für die Autobiographie sind.

Meiner Meinung nach beschreibt das Buch am besten der Ausdruck »die poetische Autobiographie«, der den im Text stark präsenten poetischen Ton suggeriert und hervorhebt. Das Poetische lässt sich nicht nur in der Schreibweise Rakusas beobachten, sondern auch in ihrer Themenauswahl, bei der sie sich vor allem auf die emotionalen Erlebnisse und Augenblicke ihres Lebens konzentriert. Diese Verknüpfung von knappen kurzen Episoden und dem lyrischen Stil erweckt den Eindruck eines reichen und tief empfundenen Lebens, das eine präzise Beobachterin und sprachlich äußerst versierte Autorin geschildert hat. Sie findet mit dieser Facette des autobiographischen Schreibens die passende Form für die Versprachlichung ihrer Lebensgeschichte, die neben Schilderungen der erlebten Ereignisse einiges über ihre Denkweise, Weltanschauung und Werte preisgibt.

Die Entscheidung, ob sich die Werke als (poetisierte) Autobiographie oder als autobiographischer Roman lesen, hängt von den Lesenden ab. Genau die Abhängigkeit des Genres von der Rezeption ist eines der wesentlichen Merkmale des autobiographischen Schreibens, das in seinen diversen Formen und unterschiedlichen literarischen Verfahren ein undefinierbares und hybrides Genre bleibt, und somit stellt es auch in der Zukunft eine Herausforderung dar.

Ljubljana, Slowenien

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IL PREDICATORE DI FRANCESCO PANIGAROLA*: UN NUOVO MODELLO DI ELOQUENZA SACRA PER IL SEICENTO

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Abstract

The seventeenth century marks the advent of preaching, in both Italy and Europe, as a literary form. Francesco Panigarola (1548-1594) did certainly play a major role in this process thanks to his treatises on sacred oratory and years of preaching activity in several Italian and European cities – during which he developed important relationships and personally experienced some of the most significant events of the century. Panigarola's *Il predicatore* is a seventeenth-century example of rhetoric that whilst based on classical oratory complies with the precepts of the Counter-Reformation. This treaty, published posthumously in 1609, is structured as a commentary on the pseudo-Demetrius's work on eloquence. *Il predicatore*, besides serving as an Italian/Florentine translation of and commentary on Pier Vettori's *De elocutione* (the Latin version of *Peri Hermeneias*), passes on and adapts the rhetorical precepts of classical oratory to the renewed exigencies of the language and of Italian preachers.

Key words: sermon, homiletic eloquence, panigarola

Le retoriche borromiane, a differenza della predicazione dotta e scolastica e di quella popolare e diatribica, mirano a ricollegarsi all'eloquenza dei Padri della Chiesa, il cui ideale raggiungerà il suo risultato più alto solo nel XVII secolo con Bossuet in Francia e Paolo Segneri in Italia. Sarà certamente utile ricordare qui quanto sull'oratoria sacra del Seicento scriveva il Pozzi nel suo libro su Emmanuele Orchi:

Chiunque osservi il posto che l'eloquenza sacra occupa via via nel corso dei secoli [...] noterà [...], che, mentre in ogni altro tempo le prediche tengono delle posizioni periferiche di fronte alle rispettive iniziative letterarie, nel Seicento invece la prosa di predicazione è l'espressione più genuina e più violenta del movimento specifico del secolo, il concettismo. [...] Che l'eloquenza del pulpito occupasse nella repubblica delle lettere un posto ufficiale, lo provano i sonetti ed epigrammi encomiastici, dovuti a volte a penne famose, che spesso precedono le stampe delle prediche, e, viceversa, la fortuna incontrata dal Marino in quanto finto oratore.¹

¹ Pozzi, 1954: 13-14.

Tra i protagonisti di questo processo storico e letterario descritto dal Pozzi, un ruolo di importanza primaria spetta certamente a Francesco Panigarola² e non solo per la fama delle sue rutilanti prediche. In un noto saggio sulla storia della predicazione Roberto Rusconi sostiene che “estremamente importanti e decisivi nel determinare l’orientamento della predicazione post-tridentina in Italia furono quattro trattati di Francesco Panigarola: due guide pratiche, *Modo di comporre una predica* e *Trattato della memoria locale*;³ e poi, *Il predicatore, ovvero Parafrase, commento e discorsi intorno al libro dell’elocutione di Demetrio Falereo*, che riassume e svolge i principî dell’eloquenza religiosa elaborati dal Panigarola a contatto con l’azione pastorale di Carlo Borromeo; le *Questioni intorno alla favella del predicatore italiano*, che svolgono la funzione di introdurre la predicazione nel campo della letteratura italiana”.⁴ Se tuttavia nel *Modo di comporre una predica* il Panigarola si concentra sull’*inventio*, il *Predicatore* è dedicato all’*elocutio* (applicabile, secondo il Panigarola, a tutti i generi della prosa).⁵ L’opera era già stata progettata intorno al 1579 durante l’insegnamento a Roma in Aracoeli, mentre per la concreta realizzazione del trattato bisogna risalire agli ultimi anni di vita del Panigarola.⁶

*Il predicatore*⁷ si apre con una serie di dieci *Questioni secolari* e di dieci *Questioni ecclesiastiche*; seguono la *Parte Prima* (dalla *Particella I* alla *Particella XXIV*) che affronta l’aspetto più strettamente grammaticale-sintagmatico; l’*Apparato per la seconda parte* – sono le *Questioni intorno all favella del predicatore italiano* –; la *Seconda Parte* (dalla *Particella XXV* alla *Particella CLXX*) che tratta le quattro “note” dell’espressività della prosa.⁸

La *Parte Prima*, trattazione dei membri e dei periodi della prosa, e la *Parte Seconda*, che descrive e argomenta le quattro forme dell’eloquenza (la “magnifica”, la “venusta”, la “tenue” e la “grave”) si sviluppano attraverso il susseguirsi di capitoli chiamati *particelle*. Ciascuna *particella* è a sua volta strutturata secondo uno schema che si ripete lungo l’intero trattato secondo la seguente sequenza: 1. testo dello pseudo-Demetrio tradotto in latino da Pier Vettori; 2. *Parafrase* del Panigarola; 3. *Commento* dove il Panigarola si avvale degli esempi de’ *Poeti gentili o vani*; 4. *Discorso ecclesiastico* con il quale si fanno gli esempi di *Poeti ecclesiastici e sacri* considerati superiori ai primi. Con il *Commento* il Panigarola intende “giovare alla lingua italiana” nel tentativo di adeguare il sistema retorico greco a quello italiano e suggerendo un’ampia casistica circa le possibilità stilistiche della prosa italiana. La funzione del *Discorso ecclesiastico* consiste invece nel “giovare ai religiosi” attraverso un processo di rimodulazione consistente nel “rubar le spoglie agli Egitij e donarle al

² Per il ruolo storico e letterario del Panigarola si segnalano i fondamentali Sevesi, 1946 e Pozzi, 1960; Si vedano inoltre: Lay, 1966; Mouchel, 2001; Bramante, 2007; Giunta, 2007; Laurenti, 2008; Meroi, 2008; Benzi, 2009; Giunta, 2009; Beniscelli, 2010; Henares Díaz, 2011.

³ Panigarola, 1603.

⁴ Rusconi, 1981: 1004.

⁵ Si veda in particolare Laurenti, 2008.

⁶ In una lettera del 5 febbraio 1592 il Panigarola scrive: “Quello intorno a che io sudo adesso, se bene di febraro, è una parafrase, un commento e molti discorsi intorno al libro della elocutione di Demetrio Falereo, che sarà opera di tre anni di tempo almeno [...]”, in Panigarola, A., 1629.

⁷ Panigarola, 1609.

⁸ Occorre sottolineare che ciascuna sezione (le *Questioni* assieme alla *Parte Prima*, l’*Apparato* e la *Seconda Parte*) presentano una paginazione autonoma.

Dio d'Israele". La trattazione si dipana quindi lungo due piani: teorico-normativo ed esemplificativo.

La *Seconda Parte* costituisce la trattazione più ampia (*Particc. XXV-CLXX*) in cui vengono affrontati i quattro stili della prosa: bassa, magnifica, ornata e severa.⁹ Con il *Discorso ecclesiastico* della *Partic. XXV*, in cui si cerca di mostrare il sostanziale accordo – in merito alle caratteristiche dei quattro stili –, tra le tesi di pseudo-Demetrio e quelle agostiniane del IV libro del *De doctrina christiana*, il Panigarola dichiara che non farà “molta fatica a ritrovare ecclesiastici autori i quali in materia d’elocutione habbiano di quel medesimo soggetto e ragionato e dati insegnamenti, del quale in questa particella tratta Demetrio”.¹⁰ Successivamente individua quattro passi tratti da predicatori italiani quali esempi per le quattro “note”: “per la magnifica” Cornelio Musso, “per la venusta” Gabriele Fiamma, “per la tenue” il Passavanti, e per la “nota aspra” la scelta del Panigarola ricade su se stesso.

Il primo argomento ad essere trattato è la “magnificienza nel dire” che, secondo l’insegnamento dello pseudo-Demetrio, “in tre cose consiste, cioè nelle cose, nelle parole e nella struttura d’esse parole. Si come non questa nota sola ma tutte l’altre ancora di queste medesime tre cose hanno bisogno, né le virtuose forme solamente ma le vitiose ancora”.¹¹ E alla nota magnifica viene destinata la trattazione più ampia perché la più decisiva e importante ai fini della predicazione. Di questa il Panigarola fornisce l’oggetto (“il christiano dicitore sempre dice cose grandi”¹²), e la forma (quale tipo di parole, di sillabe e vocali, di accenti impiegare). Il principio stilistico che presiede alle scelte del predicatore dovrà essere quello della “mediocritas” che il Panigarola definisce “mediocrità arificiosa”. Da ciò deriva che oltre alla trattazione delle quattro “note” viene presentata, specularmente, quella dei “vizii” (l’allontanamento cioè dalla “mediocritas”):

quante note semplici vitiose si ritrovano, tante virtuose semplici bisogna che si trovino; da ciascuna delle quali una delle vitiose pigli origine; ma quattro vitiose note c’insegnerà Demetrio e la speranza medesima, che sono del freddo, dell’arido, del cacozelo e dell’indecoro, dunque quattro note [sic] virtuose semplici bisogna dare affine che dalla magnifica nasca la frigida, dalla tenue l’arida, dalla venusta il cacozelo e dalla grave l’indecoro.¹³

Lo stesso concetto si ritrova nell’autobiografia del Panigarola: “né materia se gli presentò mai, o magnifica o tenue o venusta o grave, sopra la quale ragionando, nei medesimi termini e note, non sapesse contener se stesso senza mai commettere una frigidità, mai una aridità, mai un cacozelo o un indecoro”.¹⁴

Uno degli obiettivi del Panigarola è poi quello, riguardo al discorso relativo al ritmo della prosa, di adattare le regole greche a quelle italiane. Operazione meritevole in quanto molto ampia è la diversità fra le due lingue. E alla trattazione dello pseudo-

⁹ Panigarola, 1609, *Partic. XXV*, II: 3.

¹⁰ Ivi, *Disc. eccl.*, II: 9.

¹¹ Ivi, *Partic. XXVI, Commento*, II: 19-20.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ivi, *Partic. XXV*, II: 8.

¹⁴ Panigarola, 2008: 213-214.

Demetrio vengono aggiunte due digressioni: una relativa alla tonalità “magnifica” (*Digressione intorno al numero oratorio della volgar nostra favella*¹⁵), l’altra relativa alla nota “venusta” (*Intorno al numero venusto italiano*¹⁶). Per ottenere il medesimo effetto ritmico del greco il Panigarola nella *Digressione intorno al numero oratorio* esamina tutte le differenze che intercorrono fra il sistema fonico quantitativo greco-latino e il sistema tonale italiano ed individua otto aspetti:

Ove (I) appresso a’ Greci e a’ Latini niuna sillaba in quale si voglia parola si trovava o truova che per se stessa non habbia la sua quantità; [...] nel nostro volgare italiano niuna sillaba per se stessa ha quantità alcuna; (II) ove fra Greci e Latini l’accento [...] non serviva e non serve a’ tempi et a’ ritmi ma a’ suoni ed alle harmonie [...] fra noi l’accento serve non solo all’armonia ma anche al tempo; [...] (III) in ogni parola nostra volgare ponendosi un accento acuto ne segue di necessità che ogni parola habbia una sillaba lunga (IV) [...] le parole composte o derivate [...] hanno una certa lunghezza originale, in quell’altra sillaba che quando era separata haveva l’accento; (V) non è possibile né necessario ridurre le nostre sillabe et i tempi loro in misure de’ piedi come fecero i Greci et i Latini; (VI) l’accento nostro posto sull’ultima sillaba [...] leva a tutta quella parola la magnificenza et ogni celerità, leggerezza e bassezza; ma l’accento posto nell’ultima sillaba come peso soverchio dando il tracollo alla bilancia si tira dietro precipitosamente e fa che proferiamo con molta celerità tutta la parola che gli aggrava; (VII) tutte le parole di più sillabe, non avendo l’accento nell’ultima, tanto saranno più magnifiche e più gravi quanto l’accento sarà più verso il fine, più grave quella che l’haverà che nella antepenultima e così di mano in mano; (VIII) se bene una parola considerata in se stessa [...] tanto sarà più magnifica, quanto haverà più sillabe.

Il Panigarola stabilisce dunque un parallelo fonico fra la sillaba tonica della lingua italiana e la sillaba lunga del greco-latino. Di conseguenza l’italiano ha una sola sillaba lunga per ciascuna parola. Inoltre, visto che per lo pseudo-Demetrio sono le sillabe lunghe a conferire magnificenza al discorso, “tutte le parola di più sillabe tanto saranno più magnifiche e più gravi quanto l’accento sarà più verso il fine della parola”. Ma il Panigarola è comunque consapevole che nella prosa i valori ritmici risaltano soprattutto all’inizio del periodo o in clausola e nella *Partic. VIII*¹⁷ traduce così il testo latino del Vettori:

Tempo ancora d’adoperare clausule brevi è nella nota grave, cioè quando nel ragionare vogliam parere severi, aspri, austeri e vehementi: perché invero in quanto minor luogo riducono le forze loro, tanto sono le cose, et appaiono a noi più vigorose. I Lacedemoni per questa cagione, come grandemente affettavano la severità, così brevissimi erano nel ragionare. Et i padroni nel comandare a’ servi a pena con una meza [sic] parola, anzi con una sillaba sola vogliono essere intesi.¹⁸

Nel *Commento* Panigarola cita Torquato Tasso “sempre meraviglioso, quando nel primo Libro della Gierusalemme conquistata, fa che Iddio comanda all’Angelo,

¹⁵ Panigarola, 1609, *Partic. XXVII*: 32-43.

¹⁶ Ivi, *Partic. CI*, II: 591-2”.

¹⁷ Ivi, 95: “Parvorum autem membrorum, et in gravi nota usus est: gravior enim est, quod in paucis multum intus apparet, et vehementius; unde ut Lacones sunt breviloquentes, gravitate ipso impellente, et imperare concisum, et breve: et omnis dominus servo unius syllabe”.

¹⁸ Ibid.

che vada a trovar Goffredo e fargli un'ambasciata, tante picciole clausule caccia ne i versi; come si sente qua: *Goffredo hor trova, / e digli in nome mio: perché si cessa? E poco più giù: Chiami i Duci a consiglio, e i tardi mova; / gli sparsi accoglia, il temp, e l'ora appressa, / che s'inchini il possente e ceda il veglio / e'l gran Duce ab eterno in Cielo io sceglio*".

È nel *Discorso ecclesiastico* che Panigarola cerca di dimostrare la superiorità della veemenza cristiana:

Quanto a quello che dicevamo che le vehementi persuasioni denno farsi con membri brevi; e che così nelle perorationi fece quasi sempre Cicerone; vorrei potere opporre a tutte le persuasioni vehementi di lui, alcune di quelle de' nostri Dottori, affin che si vedesse che differenza c'è dall'arte lisciata e vana de gli oratori mondani, alla vehemenza Divina de' dicitori ecclesiastici.¹⁹

Qui Panigarola cita solo San Girolamo. Ciò che interessa è il riferimento alla veemenza del Musso:

Monsignor Cornelio anch'egli nella nostra lingua nel persuadere è vehementissimo; e bene spesso principalmente nel fine delle prediche, quest'arte della brevità delle clausule, mostra molto bene d'essersi raccordata. Come quando nel fine delle prediche delle vittorie fatte nel Concilio di Trento, volendo persuadere a Carlo Quinto la guerra contra gli heretici della Germania, introduce la Chiesa che dice così [...].²⁰

Lo stile veemente viene però affrontato con maggiore precisione nella *Seconda Parte*. Ecco come il Panigarola parafrasa l'incipit della *Partic. XXV*²¹: "Sono le note o forme del ragionare quattro semplici: la bassa, o tenue che vogliamo dire, la magnifica et alta, la ornata e florida e, finalmente, la severa e grave".²² È nel *Commento* che il Panigarola spiega il significato di *nota* usato dal Vettori: "Dimandano queste forme di dire i Greci *χαρακτεῖρας* che in latino tanto suona quanto *notas*, in quella maniera che *notae* ancora si domandano que' segni o quelle marche le quali per distinguere le razze e gli armenti, con infocato ferro sopra le cosce o fianchi de' cavalli e d'altri animali vengono impresse".²³ Più avanti, dopo aver accennato all'esistenza delle forme miste e alle tre sole forme del dire di Cicerone, torna a proporre una sorta di schema sinottico tra i termini greci, quelli latini e quelli volgari impiegati per definire i quattro stili:

De' quattro caratteri di Demetrio, quello che egli chiama *ισχνός*, *tenue dicendi genus* l'hanno dimandato i Latini. *Subtile, exile, paruum, summissum, pressum, infimum, siccum*; e noi nel nostro volgare italiano possiamo nominarlo: modo di dire basso, picciolo, tenue, comune, ordinario, e simili. Quello che lo pseudo-Demetrio nomina *μεγαλοπρεπείς*, i Latini *magnificum genus*, l'hanno detto *amplum, grande, grave, summum, copiosum*. E noi altri possiamo dire che è la maniera del dire magnifica, ampla, grande, alta, splendida, rilevata e piena di maestà. Il terzo carattere che

¹⁹ Ivi: 100.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ivi, *Partic. XXV*, II: 1-2: "Sunt autem quatuor simplices notae: tenuis, magnifica, ornata, gravis".

²² Ivi: 3. Della *magnifica* si discute dalla *Partic. XXVI* alla *LXXII*; della *venusta* dalla *LXXIII* alla *CV*; della *tenue* dalla *CVI* alla *CXXXIV*; della *grave* dalla *CXXXV* alla fine.

²³ Ivi, II: 5.

γλαφυρός fu detto da Demetrio, i Latini lo nominano *genus venustum, ornatum, floridum, pictum, flores, concisum, excultum, elegans, lepidum, pingue*. E noi lo possiamo dimandare leggiadro, ornato, fiorito, florido, gratioso, dipinto e vago. Finalmente quello che Demetrio nominò *δεινός*, latinamente si dice *genus grave, asperum, acre, vehemens, ardens breve*. Et in lingua nostra vuol dire severo, aspro, vehemente, ardente e simili.²⁴

Dalla *Partic. CXXXIV*²⁵ comincia la trattazione vera e propria della *nota vehemente*: “Resta la quarta e ultima nota del dire che grave, severa, vehemente et aspra nominammo. E che anche essa come le altre, in tre cose consiste, nelle cose che si dicono, nelle parole e nella loro struttura”.²⁶ Qui Panigarola aggiunge nuovi aggettivi in volgare per definire questa “nota”: “atroce”, “austera”, “impetuosa”. Nel *Discorso ecclesiastico* è San Giovanni Battista il modello della veemenza ecclesiastica. Seguono i Padri greci e latini. E tra gli Italiani che “fanno molto frutto e meritano molta laude” viene citato padre Lupo²⁷ quale uno di quei predicatori (e qui la chiosa appare polemica) che “dal principio al fine de’ ragionamenti loro, da questa nota sola vehemente et aspra non esceno quasi mai”.²⁸

Di particolare interesse è la *Partic. CXXXV*:

Cose appartenenti a questa ultima nota sono tutte le atroci, viciose, aspre e repressibili; e queste sono tali che chi parlando ne fa mentione, pare che tratti aspramente, se bene per altro lo stile di lui non fosse tale; come occorse in Teopompo il quale ove per notare i costumi effeminati degli Ateniesi disse che altro non si vedevano quivi che dishoneste sonatrici nel Pireo e lupanari e sonatori e musici e saltanti percioché fece questa congerie di cose repressibili, parve che iratamente et aspramente dicesse anche con istile che in vero era languido e snervato.²⁹

Il Panigarola dunque elenca una serie di esempi dove un certo numero di colpe o di pene “adunate insieme” vengano considerate “appartenenti a nota grave”. E prosegue subito con l’esempio di Cornelio Musso quando, durante i giorni di carnevale, il popolo fa “a gara a chi potea far peggio in spese superflue, in abiti dishonesti, in parole sporchissime, in compagnie scelerate, che io non voglio hora dire per riverenza di questo luogo gli stupri, i rapti, gli incesti et altre scelerità”. Le “cose severe” allora “hanno questa forza”: fare in modo che “la nota acquisti sempre come dice Demetrio severità et asprezza et c.”.³⁰ A questo punto non è possibile non ricordare quanto scriveva Giovanni Pozzi nella prefazione alle *Dicerie sacre* del Marino, a proposito del Panigarola: “modello primo e quasi emblema” delle “unità ammassate”, mentre si interroga sulla

²⁴ Ivi, II: 5-6.

²⁵ Ivi, *Partic. CXXXIV*, II: 776: “Et quae de gravitate quod reliquum est aperta esse possunt ex iis, quae dicta iam sunt, quod et haec existit in tribus, in quibus etiam formae, quae sunt ante ipsam: etenim res quaedam per se ipsas sunt graves, adeo ut qui dicunt ipsas graves videantur, quamvis non graviter dicant”.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Alfonso Lupo (Lopez o Lobo, o Lovo) era originario di Medina Sidonia (Andalusia). In italiano il suo nome fu tradotto con Lupo (Lupus).

²⁸ Panigarola, 1609, *Partic. CXXXIV*, II: 778.

²⁹ Ivi, II: 782.

³⁰ Ivi, II: 785-786.

natura espressiva di certe sue “filatesse”, di “tante coorti di vocabili”, dell’“equivalente linguistico d’una parata processionale”.³¹

Nella *Partic. CLX* Panigarola parafrasa il passo dello pseudo-Demetrio sui modi di dire “alla demadea”:

Acerbi riescono parimente alcuni modi di dire alla demadea, se bene hanno un poco del singulare e dello stravagante. E la acerbità nasce in loro da tre figure unite insieme: da enfasi, perché mettono innanzi a gli occhi un’altra cosa da quello che dicono; da allegoria, perché questo fanno con continuate metafore; e da hiperbole, perché cose dicono che eccedono quello che ordinariamente è credibile che possa essere.³²

Diversi sono gli esempi ma, riguardo all’ultimo, il Panigarola vi include un brano tratto dalle “Calviniche nostre”³³: “Della Francia dicemmo che quasi frenetica volgeva i denti in se stessa, squarciava le carni, rompeva l’ossa, succiava le medolle a sé medesima”.³⁴

Il *Predicatore* non è in fondo che una minuziosa giustificazione dell’eloquenza isocratica della *venustas* e della *suavitas* attraverso la quale il Panigarola si sforza di riprendere e tradurre le obiezioni di Agostino alla *delectatio* del linguaggio, cercando così di mostrare una sorta di “coïncidence entre la grandeur austère du contenu de la foi et la beauté charmante du discours qui le célèbre. En termes de rhétorique, cela signifie contaminer la grandeur et la suavité”.³⁵ Scrive infatti il Panigarola nella *Partic. III* che gli argomenti ecclesiastici per se stessi comportano necessariamente l’uso di antitesi e quindi, di conseguenza, di ornamenti e artifici retorici. E l’antitesi è indicata da S. Agostino come fondamento della eloquenza cristiana.³⁶ Vi sono dunque nelle materie ecclesiastiche delle opposizioni determinate quali Dio e Diavolo, carne e spirito, senso e ragione, ecc. Con un ampio uso di figure retoriche e la ricerca di effetti musicali erano state riunite le componenti che contribuirono a formare un successo popolare tale che, attraverso il Panigarola, l’eloquenza sacra divenne un genere alla moda degno di essere imitato anche da scrittori laici, il più brillante dei quali fu senza dubbio Giambattista Marino. Questo ideale del discorso come polifonia della varietà e bellezza consistente nell’armonica coesistenza dei contrari ci riporta a Panigarola e attraverso lui, ad Agostino e alla sua concezione musicale della creazione. Anche per questo motivo il modello di magnifica soavità propugnata dal Panigarola trovò un tenace avversario nell’Oratorio Romano di Filippo Neri che invece non credeva all’eloquenza opulenta.

Il dibattito sul rapporto fra semplicità ed eloquenza³⁷ vedeva schierati i protestanti contro i cattolici. Tuttavia, anche sul fronte interno,³⁸ dei francescani in particolare,

³¹ “a quale categoria iscriverla?”, in Marino, 1960: 46-48.

³² Panigarola, 1609, *Partic. CXXXV*, II: 893.

³³ Panigarola, 1582.

³⁴ Ivi, II: 897. Il passo integrale si legge in Panigarola, 1582: 170r-v: “Ecco subito Francia che quasi frenetica volge i denti in se stessa, che squarcia le carni, che rompe l’ossa, che succhia le medolle a sé medesima e di quell’arme ch’entravano tremende fin dentro a gli arsenali dell’Asia e che recuperavano il sepolcro di Christo si serve adesso a far piache mortali entro al suo proprio corpo e far entro a i suoi campi fiumi di sangue de’ suoi proprij figli”.

³⁵ Mouchel, 2001: 438.

³⁶ Mohrmann, 1958.

³⁷ Per quanto riguarda il Panigarola si veda Giunta, 2009.

³⁸ Delcorno, 1995: 296.

la questione era aperta. Ad esempio, secondo quanto scriveva Giovanni Pozzi sulle *Costituzioni* del 1536, offerto dall'ordine dei Cappuccini:

uno stretto legame fra le normative del comportamento ascetico e di quello linguistico nella predicazione è fortemente sottolineato dalle prime costituzioni che rifiutano “terse, phallerate e fucate parole” e le vogliono “nude, pure, semplice [sic], umile [sic] e basse”. I primi tre termini dell'ultimo segmento si possono applicare anche al rigore dell'ascesi, ma i due ultimi rinviano scopertamente alla tradizionale teoria degli stili.³⁹

L'argomento è stato trattato molto bene da Christian Mouchel il quale scriveva che “il Concilio di Trento aveva strettamente fissato i limiti della *delectatio* all'interno di un'eloquenza cristiana necessaria e legittima”.⁴⁰ E ancora “il Concilio, in un'abile sintesi di s. Paolo e s. Agostino, si prende cura di fissare come norma del discorso ideale una medietà della quale la semplicità aspra costituisce il difetto, e la *voluptas* ciceroniana l'eccesso”.⁴¹ I Cappuccini come Francesco da Milano, Alberto da Bergamo e Felice da Cantalice o l'amico di Filippo Neri, membro dell'Osservanza regolare Evangelista Marcellino Gerbi (uno dei più severi avversari del Panigarola), erano convinti che solo attraverso l'affermazione e il successo di uno stile austero e ruvido fosse possibile rispondere al primitivismo protestante, mostrando così che la Chiesa cattolica era rimasta sempre fedele all'eloquenza semplice delle sue origini.

Ma il Panigarola segue comunque la sua strada cercando di rifondare la legittimità dell'eloquenza asiana. È ancora il Mouchel a offrirci una chiara prospettiva della situazione quando scrive che Panigarola sembrava l'uomo della provvidenza. La “bonheur” di Pio V, Gregorio XIII e Sisto V era quella d'aver trovato in Panigarola l'oratore che, dopo Cornelio Musso, avrebbe ricongiunto nella maniera più mirabile “la necessaire affirmation du prestige romain”, sia sul piano religioso che su quello politico, “avec les joies d'une fête publique”.⁴² Continua il Mouchel scrivendo che “Panigarola fut l'homme de la situation, pour la plus grande gloire de la monarchie pontificale”. Il nuovo soffio che l'eloquenza asianista riceveva da questo oratore francescano doveva riaccendere la querelle dell'*optimus stylus* cristiano”.⁴³

Grazie a queste premesse, scriveva il Pozzi, “possiamo concludere che per il predicatore della prima metà del Seicento il Panigarola è, se non sempre il modello diretto, almeno la premessa letteraria insostituibile della sua eloquenza”; ma soprattutto, “passando dal contenuto alle forme, è facile scoprire come nel Panigarola ci siano già, in modo abbastanza esplicito, le iniziative linguistiche e stilistiche che formeranno la caratteristica della prosa oratoria sacra del Seicento”.⁴⁴

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³⁹ Pozzi, 2001: 66.

⁴⁰ Mouchel, 1989: 497. Ma si veda anche il capitolo *Une leçon d'âpreté: les Capucins (1528)*, in Mouchel, 2001: 173-244.

⁴¹ Ivi: 505.

⁴² Ivi: 417.

⁴³ Ivi: 419.

⁴⁴ Pozzi, 1960: 315-322. E si ricordi che “gli interventi del Panigarola sull'ordine sintattico, la sua analitica attenzione alla lunghezza dei membri del periodo, agli effetti prodotti dalle loro diverse combinazioni possibili, ne fanno un punto di riferimento per i decenni successivi”, in Bolzoni, 1984: 1062.

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IL CONFRONTO TRA CULTURE NELLE RELAZIONI DI VIAGGIO DEL SECONDO SETTECENTO ITALIANO: ALBERTO FORTIS E SAVERIO SCROFANI

Ricciarda Ricorda

Abstract

Travel writing is a literary space particularly promoting moments of cross-cultural contact. In 18th century, Enlightenment new ideas encourage the production of odepors in Italian literature, while writers and readers' interest for this genre increases conspicuously.

The article mainly focuses on two travel books suggesting some remarkable research cues, *Viaggio in Dalmazia* by Alberto Fortis and *Viaggio in Grecia* by Saverio Scrofani, considering the travellers' specific approach and depiction of local people and analyzing their capability to turn these experiences into occasions to get closer to the Others and to represent them.

Key words: travel writing, Fortis, Scrofani, otherness

Le scritture di viaggio si configurano, per la loro stessa natura, come spazi letterari destinati a favorire il contatto tra culture; per l'ambito italiano lo si può verificare, in particolare, nell'area della letteratura settecentesca che, in sintonia con le novità e le istanze dell'Illuminismo e con la tendenza al *mouvement*, che viene accentuandosi nel corso del secolo, vede il moltiplicarsi delle opere odeporiche e la crescita dell'interesse di scrittori e lettori per tale genere letterario.

Due testi offrono rilevanti spunti di indagine, utili a sondare i rapporti tra le nostre culture nella seconda metà del Settecento: *Viaggio in Dalmazia* di Alberto Fortis (1774) e *Viaggio in Grecia* di Saverio Scrofani (1799). Si tratta di volumi di diversa impostazione, dovuti alla penna di due autori la cui formazione e il cui profilo intellettuale risultano per più aspetti distanti, ma con alcuni elementi in comune: oltre all'itinerario che porta entrambi a visitare una parte della penisola balcanica, condividono l'intenzione di accrescere conoscenze e competenze anche in vista di una fattiva collaborazione con il potere, secondo un'ottica illuministica che punta, nell'utopica ricerca della felicità, al miglioramento delle condizioni di vita di tutti.

Si prospetta per altro, nelle opere dei due autori, una sorta di *impasse* che si ripropone nelle pagine dei viaggiatori, tanto più 'inquietante' quanto più aperto e rispettoso delle realtà dei luoghi visitati appare l'approccio privilegiato dai viaggiatori medesimi:

nella misura in cui l'accostamento e la conoscenza dell'altro hanno come premessa ed esigenza di fondo la definizione dell'identità di se stessi, di un sé che arriva a riconoscersi proprio rifrangendosi nello specchio dell'alterità, risulta attiva una tendenza ad accostarsi all'altro secondo un'istanza strumentale, per così dire, che favorisce la creazione e l'accettazione, anche da parte dei viaggiatori più aperti e disponibili, di immagini stereotipate.

Il caso del *Viaggio in Dalmazia* appare particolarmente significativo: Alberto Fortis¹, naturalista ed etnologo, apprezzato giornalista, collaboratore dell'*Europa letteraria* e del *Giornale enciclopedico* dei Caminer, l'ala più avanzata della cultura della Serenissima, si segnala come figura di spicco nel contesto veneto del tempo, per la varietà delle sue competenze, lo slancio riformistico sotteso ai suoi scritti, il respiro europeo delle sue intuizioni.

Il suo interesse per la costa e le isole della Dalmazia, a parte un rapido passaggio a Pola e dintorni già nel 1765, si sviluppa all'interno del dibattito suscitato a Venezia nel 1770 dall'intervento russo in Montenegro e in Morea durante il conflitto russo-turco: a questa contingenza può essere riportato, come suggerisce Franco Venturi, "l'inizio di una originale e multiforme scoperta" della Dalmazia, attenzione capace "di rivelare una realtà naturale ed umana dimenticata, seppellita sotto l'oblio e l'indifferenza dei secoli"; rivelatrice anche la convincente conclusione dello studioso: "la spinta più autentica egli trovò in se stesso, nella sua inquietudine e volontà di trovare mondi più veri e autentici"².

Da tale, duplice disposizione di partenza hanno origine le prospettive di fondo che animano le pagine odeporiche fortisiane, da un lato la volontà di acquisire e far acquisire conoscenza approfondita, ispirata a un'ottica scientifica, di una regione su cui Venezia stendeva un dominio "egoista e assente"³, traendone soldati e poche merci, "volutamente ignara e dimentica della realtà sociale del paese", dall'altro l'ammirazione per un mondo fatto da un paesaggio naturale e da piccoli centri costieri che si configuravano come un'isola intatta nel cuore dell'Europa, in grado di offrire al dotto viaggiatore settecentesco l'esempio di una vita colta nella sua originaria purezza, un panorama poco segnato dalla presenza dell'uomo.

Prospettive simili animano altri intellettuali del tempo, a partire da quel John Stuart conte di Bute, già mecenate di Macpherson, il creatore del mito di Ossian, che 'sponsorizza' nel maggio del 1771 la spedizione di Fortis, in compagnia di Domenico Cirillo e di John Symonds, da cui ha origine il *Saggio d'osservazioni sopra l'isola di Cherso ed Osero*, pubblicato nel medesimo anno: opera di impianto erudito, ricca di citazioni, di notizie storiche, di osservazioni naturalistiche, ma animata anche dall'evidente intenzione di arrivare a conoscenza sicura della zona e con significative aperture sulle condizioni degli abitanti e della vita civile.

¹ Nel rinomato salotto della madre, Alberto Fortis (Padova 1741-Bologna 1803) ebbe modo di conoscere alcuni dei più importanti protagonisti della cultura scientifica veneta; entrato nell'ordine degli Agostiniani, dopo un periodo trascorso a Roma, si stabilì a Venezia nel 1767. Divenne "pubblico revisore de' libri", si dedicò all'attività di giornalista e di traduttore; fece numerosi viaggi, durante i quali ebbe modo di approfondire i suoi interessi di naturalista. Trascorse gli ultimi anni a Bologna, ove fu prefetto della Biblioteca.

² Ancora suggestivo il profilo che dell'intellettuale veneto ha consegnato alle pagine del suo *Settecento riformatore*; per le citazioni riportate, cfr. Venturi, 1990: 75-76.

³ Per usare le parole di Torcellan, 1965: 288.

Dopo questa spedizione, il naturalista veneto ritorna in Dalmazia e nelle isole più volte: frutto di esplorazioni, che, compiute tra il luglio del medesimo 1771 e il 1773, in compagnia di lord Frederick Hervey, toccano varie località della costa e dell'entroterra, è il fortunato *Viaggio in Dalmazia*. La relazione si sviluppa in due volumi, il primo dedicato ai Contadi di Zara (Zadar) e di Sebenico (Šibenik), il secondo a quelli di Traù (Trogir) e di Spalato (Split) e alle isole; si articola in lunghe lettere indirizzate a destinatari illustri, amici e celebri scienziati, dal patrizio veneziano Jacopo Morosini a John Stuart, da naturalisti italiani come Antonio Vallisnieri, Gabriello Brunelli, Giovanni Marsili e Lazzaro Spallanzani, ed europei, lo svedese Johann Jacob Ferber, a nobili inglesi come John Strange e Frederick Hervey: insomma, un "picciolo numero d'illustri amatori o di celebri professori", ai quali l'autore si sente legato, come dichiara lui stesso, dal "vincolo fortissimo degli studi comuni", e a cui ci tiene a sottoporre le proprie ricerche, anche per averne adeguato riconoscimento⁴.

Le lettere hanno una struttura simile a quelle delle 'memorie' scientifiche: i materiali vi sono divisi "ora seguendo la separazione topografica dei distretti, ora il corso de' fiumi, ora il circuito dell'isole, ora la natura ed analogia delle materie"⁵, dunque secondo un criterio di ordine geografico-tematico e non odeporico; in effetti, la relazione di Fortis, che non appare scandita in tappe, ma in capitoli dotati di una loro coerenza sul piano dei contenuti, risulta per tipologia ancora prossima al trattato, piuttosto che al modello dell'itinerario, destinato ad imporsi di lì a non molti anni e a portare in primo piano la soggettività dell'autore: nel suo testo, infatti, prevale la focalizzazione sul viaggiatore inteso come narratore, invece che come personaggio. Le singole lettere sono organizzate secondo un modello ricorrente: un breve preambolo, rivolto al dedicatario della missiva, fissa qualche nota di fondo che si ritroverà nella lettura, affrontando spesso anche aspetti più teorici implicati dal testo – ad esempio l'impossibilità di raggiungere, con "brevi peregrinazioni" come le sue, un quadro completo della "Dalmazia Veneta"⁶ –; segue la descrizione dell'aspetto fisico della regione di volta in volta visitata, con particolare attenzione per gli elementi naturalistici, quindi la storia locale e culturale, con l'elenco degli uomini illustri o comunque dei personaggi più distinti che vi abitano, e infine trova spazio la riflessione sull'economia.

Ad accompagnare il fluire della scrittura, accanto alle cartine che introducono ciascun tomo dell'opera, con la mappa dei relativi territori, tredici incisioni dovute a Giacomo Leonardi e tratte dai disegni schizzati dal vero da Angelo Donati, che aveva seguito Fortis nel viaggio: il segno delle illustrazioni, che rappresentano qualche spaccato del paesaggio, costumi degli abitanti delle diverse zone, tavole naturalistiche, appare preciso e nitido; i non numerosi quadri della natura, giocati su un bianco e nero non troppo contrastivo, come si può verificare ad esempio nella raffigurazione della cascata di Velika Gubaviza, restituiscono un senso di distensione, anche laddove rappresentano

⁴ Fortis, 1987: 7. Per le strategie sottese all'attenta scelta fortisiana dei dedicatari, nell'equilibrio tra personalità straniere e patrizi veneziani, Repubblica di Venezia e Repubblica delle Lettere, cfr. Wolff, 2001: 84-90.

⁵ Fortis, 1987: 7.

⁶ *Ibid.*. Anche per questo aspetto, Wolff (2001: 90) suggerisce la presenza di una strategia precisa, volta a evidenziare, attraverso la sottolineatura dell'ampiezza degli spazi, l'importanza di tali terre nei domini della Serenissima.

un panorama “teatrale” come questo del “selvaggio ed alpestre precipizio sotto Duare”, nella caduta delle acque “fra dirupati massi appié del monte”⁷.

Nonostante la precisa organizzazione dei materiali e la limitatezza dei riferimenti espliciti alle avventure del viaggiatore, la sua personalità non manca di palesarsi, sia in episodi e annotazioni particolari⁸, sia, più in generale, nella scrittura, che procede agile, animata da una sua vivacità, con esiti più felici laddove l’interesse naturalistico si apre a quello per gli uomini, rivelando un ricercatore tanto serio sul piano scientifico, quanto appassionato nelle sue argomentazioni e nei suoi contatti con gli altri.

Si ritrovano così alcune suggestive descrizioni paesistiche, filtrate attraverso l’occhio di un osservatore capace di emozionarsi davanti a uno spettacolo naturale, ad esempio la già ricordata cascata di Velika Gubaviza, lungo il fiume Cettina, in un capitolo assai noto:

Le acque, che piombano da più di centocinquanta piedi d’altezza, fannovi un rimbombo cupo e maestoso, ch’è reso ancor più grave dall’eco, che lo ripete fra quelle ripide e nude sponde marmoree. Vari massi rovesciati, che impacciano il cammino al fiume caduto dall’alto, rompono i flutti e rendono ancora più orgogliosi e mugghianti. Le spume loro ripercosse violentemente si sminuzzano in istille candide, e sollevansi a nugoli successivi, cui l’aria agitata va spingendo pell’umido vallone, ove di rado penetrano a diradarli i raggi del sole. [...] Due grandi pilastri sono piantati come a guardia laddove cade il fiume nell’alveo inferiore; l’uno di essi è attaccato di fianco alla sponda dirupata, ed ha la sommità coperta di terra ove allignano alberi ed erbe; l’altro è di marmo, ignudo, isolato. Mentre il mio compagno disegnava questo pezzo magnifico (Tav. XI), io lo descrissi a mio grand’agio, e non trascurai d’esaminare le materie che compongono quell’alte rive scoscese. Vi trovai una spezie d’oolito molto osservabile, i di cui granelli sono connessi da un forte cemento spatoso, propagantesi a foggia di reticella, e una bella pasta di breccia, pezzata di bianco, angolosa e vergata di vivacissimo rosso.⁹

La lunghezza della citazione punta a suggerire anche l’idea della ricchezza della pagina di Fortis, pronto a passare dalla considerazione estetica del paesaggio alla verifica naturalistica: lasciati i panni dello spettatore ammirato, eccolo rivestire quelli dello scienziato, che fonda il proprio metodo sull’osservazione diretta, come più volte dichiara nel corso della relazione, a partire dalla prima lettera, laddove adombra se stesso sotto le spoglie dell’”osservatore taciturno e raccolto in se stesso”, per passare poi attraverso affermazioni esplicite e ribadire il richiamo a non fidarsi delle voci riportate, delle conoscenze delegate alle testimonianze altrui¹⁰.

Per quanto lo riguarda, dichiara infatti a proposito di una varietà di pesci irsuti che, secondo i locali, si troverebbero nei laghetti di Krin, di non essere disposto “a credere, in fatto di stravaganze fisiche, se non quello che vedo; e quindi avrei voluto vedere il pesce peloso per credere che vi fosse”. È anche vero che lui stesso, in qualche caso,

⁷ Fortis, 1987: 169 e 171; il senso di distensione indotto dall’incisione originale (*ivi*. 170) si può apprezzare se la si confronta con un’altra del medesimo panorama, datata XIX secolo, introdotta qualche pagina più avanti nell’edizione novecentesca del *Viaggio* (*ivi*. 173).

⁸ Ad esempio, laddove Fortis si rappresenta tanto agile nell’arrampicarsi e nello scendere fra le balze dei monti, da suscitare il commento compiaciuto di uno dei suoi accompagnatori Morlacchi, “Signore, tu non se’ un Italiano-poltrone, tu se’ un Morlaccol”: commento che, ammette lo scrittore, lusinga non poco il suo “selvaggio amor proprio”, *ivi*. 169-170.

⁹ *Ivi*. 169.

¹⁰ Cfr. *ivi*. 8, 86 (“la gran madre maestra” indica tradizionalmente la natura) e 119.

magari meno ‘stravagante’, si affida alle informazioni che gli forniscono amici fidati: ma, in qualche modo, cerca di tutelarsi sull’affidabilità della fonte, ricorrendo solo a voci autorevoli e di comprovata serietà.¹¹

Fortis punta ad applicare il metodo dell’osservazione diretta anche al mondo umano e ai fatti culturali: certo, le difficoltà sono destinate a moltiplicarsi, in questa direzione, sia per la complessità di tale ambito, che per il maggior peso che non poteva mancare di esercitare la soggettività dell’osservatore, come è stato sottolineato da Božidar Jezernik¹².

Tuttavia, va riconosciuto il debito peso a due fattori ben presenti a Fortis nella sua ricerca: in primo luogo la volontà di smentire erronee convinzioni circa il modo di essere di popolazioni cui è stata attribuita fama di barbarie che non si meritano, poi l’intenzione di richiamare la classe dirigente della Serenissima ai suoi doveri nei confronti di sudditi, le cui condizioni di vita potevano e dovevano essere adeguatamente migliorate, grazie a un più oculato sfruttamento delle risorse disponibili.

Quest’ultimo punto è stato approfonditamente analizzato da Larry Wolff, che ha chiarito come l’operazione di Fortis, cui riconosce per altro di aver svolto un ruolo di primo piano nella settecentesca “scoperta della Dalmazia”, abbia fornito alla Serenissima il modello ideologico per una prospettiva imperialistica nell’Adriatico¹³, commisurata sui principi e sui valori dell’Illuminismo: l’incremento del commercio, il miglioramento delle condizioni economiche, l’utilizzazione di nuovi metodi in agricoltura, sottolinea lo studioso, apparivano infatti finalizzati a rendere gli Slavi “more useful to the state”¹⁴. In una simile strategia, ha chiarito ancora Wolff, un elemento di primaria importanza è rappresentato dalla missione civilizzatrice che Venezia si è attribuita nei confronti dei locali, in particolare dei primitivi Morlacchi¹⁵: com’è noto, l’‘irruzione’ di questo popolo nel campo letterario è dovuta proprio a Fortis, che ha dedicato una lettera, indirizzata non a caso a John Stuart, ai loro costumi; si tratta di pagine molto conosciute, per l’attenzione che riservano a una cultura popolare l’interesse per la quale si sarebbe accampata, di lì a non molti anni, al centro del pensiero romantico; attenzione che aveva trovato sanzione significativa, nelle pagine fortisiane, nella traduzione della *Canzone dolente della nobile sposa d’Asan Aga*¹⁶, destinata ad affascinare Goethe, Herder, e poi molti dotti europei, da Mérimée a Tommaseo.

¹¹ Cfr. *ivi*. 142-143. Il riferimento ai pesci “pelosi” si legge *ivi*. 165.

¹² Jezernik, 2010: 52-82; a Fortis è dedicato quasi l’intero cap. III, *Allattamento al seno e pregiudizio*. Per un’accurata analisi del metodo scientifico fortisiano, cfr. Ciancio, 1995.

¹³ Wolff (2001: 25-29 e 56-75) analizza anche il ruolo giocato da Carlo Goldoni con la tragicommedia *La dalmatina* (1758), per il cui inquadramento cfr. la densa *Introduzione* di Anna Scannapieco, in Goldoni, 2005: 11-81.

¹⁴ Wolff, 2001: 320-322. Sul dominio veneziano in Dalmazia nel secondo Settecento, cfr. anche l’ampio volume di Paladini, 2002, che, a proposito di Fortis, parla di “via letteraria allo sfruttamento della Dalmazia” (*ivi*. 233).

¹⁵ Wolff, 2001: 322.

¹⁶ Quanto alla competenza linguistica di Fortis, se Jezernik (2010: 59), ricordando alcuni riferimenti, nel *Viaggio in Dalmazia*, alla presenza di interpreti, parla di “conoscenza superficiale del croato”, Ciancio (1995: 70) ne attesta al contrario l’impegno assiduo nello studio della lingua illirica e dei dialetti slavi, impegno su cui concorda anche Gilberto Pizzamiglio (Fortis, 1987: XIX-XXI) che sottolinea a ragione l’attenzione riservata dallo scrittore alla problematica linguistica nelle stesse pagine del *Viaggio*, ricche di riferimenti etimologici nell’indagine toponomastica e di nomi slavi, forniti a proposito di oggetti d’uso, reperti naturalistici, cerimonie.

Per un’approfondita ed equilibrata analisi del morlacchismo di Fortis, cfr. Bešker, 2007: 98-122.

Tuttavia, la prospettiva da cui l'intellettuale padovano osserva costumi e usanze dei Morlacchi ha una sua specificità, perché è decisamente simpatetica; lo scrittore avverte infatti il 'dovere' di smentire stereotipi che fissano questo popolo come "razza d'uomini feroce, irragionevole, priva d'umanità, capace di ogni misfatto", testimoniandone una ben diversa indole, sperimentata direttamente:

Io mi credo di dovere alla nazione, da cui sono stato così ben accolto e umanamente trattato, un'amplissima apologia, scrivendo ciò che personalmente delle sue inclinazioni e costumi ho veduto [...]. I viaggiatori si studiano per l'ordinario di magnificare i pericoli a' quali sono andati incontro, e i disagi sofferti ne' remoti paesi. Io mi trovo ben lontano da sì fatte ciarlatanerie.¹⁷

A quanti poi, soprattutto gli abitanti delle città della Dalmazia, accusano i Morlacchi di aver compiuto "eccessi più atroci d'uccisioni, d'incendi, di violenze", Fortis oppone che si tratta di fatti d'antica data oppure che, se accaduti recentemente, vadano ascritti piuttosto "alla corruzione di pochi individui, che all'universale cattiva indole della nazione"¹⁸: riesce dunque a evitare i rischi delle semplificazioni e delle generalizzazioni, sempre in agguato, anche ai nostri giorni, in questo ambito.

Certo, anche Fortis non riesce a evitare le secche dello stereotipo: Jezernik lo rimprovera di aver accolto qualche diceria poco onorevole sui Morlacchi, qualche 'storiella' caratteristica destinata a essere tramandata nel tempo, ad esempio laddove illustra con un episodio comico una pretesa "fortissima inclinazione al rubare" che sarebbe propria dei Morlacchi di Vergoraz (anche loro, per altro, subito 'giustificati' dalla loro situazione "fra monti inaccessibili e sterili")¹⁹. Ancora, evidenzia come alcuni tratti che lo scrittore attribuisce alle donne morlacche appaiano segnati da eccessivo gusto del colore e addirittura sfiorati dal rischio del razzismo: gli sembra andare in questa direzione l'esagerata sottolineatura della sporcizia loro attribuita e l'accettazione di un pregiudizio circa la dimensione delle loro mammelle, che sarebbero enormemente ingrandite dai lunghi periodi di allattamento dei figli²⁰.

D'altro canto, l'immagine della Dalmazia che usciva dalle sue pagine non sarebbe stata apprezzata, a suo tempo, da intellettuali dalmati come Pietro Nutrizio Crisogono, di Traù, o il giovane Giovanni Lovrich, di Sign: entrambi restii a riconoscersi nella realtà descritta dal naturalista veneto e pronti a rinfacciargli errori e incomprensioni²¹.

Ora, se certo nel popolo dei Morlacchi Fortis ha trovato, per così dire, quello che cercava – un mondo semplice – nota su cui ritorna a più riprese –, ancora vicino a uno stato di natura, genuino, schietto nella manifestazione dei suoi affetti, capace di canti il cui merito appare "ricordante la semplicità de' tempi omerici", e lo ha 'consegnato' all'immaginario del tempo, disponibilissimo ad accoglierlo e rielaborarlo, nelle sue pagine a colpire è, per usare ancora le parole di Franco Venturi, "quell'elemento di sorpresa, di scandalo" che lo aveva mosso a rivelare tutti gli aspetti, anche "i più oscu-

¹⁷ Fortis, 1987: 36.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ivi.* 40.

²⁰ Jezernik, 2010: 75-77.

²¹ Sul dibattito contemporaneo sulle posizioni di Fortis, cfr. Venturi 1990: 347-357, Wolff 2001: 237-264 e Jezernik 2010: 70-73.

ri e gravi”²², di una terra che egli era andato scoprendo e su cui aveva indubbiamente attirato, per primo, l’attenzione dei paesi europei, immettendola nel dibattito culturale dell’Illuminismo.

Anche nel caso di Saverio Scrofani²³ l’interesse per le terre visitate risulta animato da un’ottica illuministica: quando salpa alla volta della Grecia sulla nave destinata a condurre a Patrasso il console designato Baldassarre Palese, ha alle spalle un bagaglio di esperienze che lo rende promettente osservatore delle regioni verso cui è diretto, in bilico com’è tra la dimensione del letterato illuminista, buon conoscitore della realtà contemporanea e desideroso di porre le proprie competenze al servizio del potere, e quella dell’avventuriero, pronto a muoversi senza scrupoli: condizione da cui deriva, nelle sue pagine, il fortunato equilibrio di componenti diverse, di un *côté* storico-informativo da un lato e di un piano letterario-narrativo dall’altro²⁴.

L’itinerario che compie la nave su cui Scrofani è imbarcato segue la rotta consueta dei bastimenti veneziani; passata l’Istria, visitati Omago e Pola, lasciata la Dalmazia, il viaggiatore approda a Corfù e alle isole Ionie, per poi proseguire alla volta della Grecia: lo spostamento lungo la costa dalmata non si prospetta dunque come la scoperta di una zona poco praticata e poco nota, come era avvenuto nel caso di Fortis, ma si configura piuttosto, secondo una modalità decisamente più frequente al tempo, come fase di passaggio verso altra destinazione, in genere l’oriente di Costantinopoli.

Diversa anche l’attitudine del viaggiatore, che appare immune dalla ricerca del primitivo, dal mito del ‘buon selvaggio’, interessato piuttosto alle tracce dell’antico, la cui eccezionale concentrazione nelle terre visitate mette di continuo in evidenza: interesse che però non prospetta nel quadro di un’erudizione di marca classicista, poiché finalizza l’osservazione non tanto a una conoscenza razionale, ma piuttosto al sentire, un sentire che fa appello al ‘cuore’, alle vibrazioni della sensibilità; in una sorta di ribaltamento delle gerarchie del codice settecentesco del *voyage*, Scrofani esibisce infatti le impressioni soggettive, le proprie emozioni in luogo del discorso scientifico, prospettando una scrittura odeporica che si allontana dalla struttura del trattato per accostarsi a quella dell’itinerario: a differenza di quanto avveniva nel *Viaggio in Dalmazia* di Fortis, la focalizzazione è ora sul viaggiatore in quanto personaggio, cui compete una prospettiva necessariamente parziale e le cui reazioni divengono il fulcro della narrazione, con una nuova apertura sull’io e sulle sue dinamiche.

Tutto ciò non impedisce allo scrittore siciliano di prestare sensibilissima attenzione alla situazione storico-politica delle regioni che attraversa, pronto a registrarne le disastrose condizioni che riporta, per quanto riguarda le terre ancora appartenenti alla

²² Venturi 1990: 350.

²³ Saverio Scrofani (Modica 1756-Palermo 1835), ottenuta la veste di abate, rivolse la sua attenzione alle scienze economiche; lasciata l’isola natale, dopo un breve soggiorno a Firenze, dove poté frequentare gli esponenti del riformismo illuminato, passò in Francia tra Grenoble, Marsiglia e Parigi, ove ebbe modo di seguire i primi sviluppi della Rivoluzione. Tornò a Firenze nel 1791, per trasferirsi poi a Venezia: spostamenti determinati talvolta da motivazioni non proprio onorevoli. La sua tribolata esistenza continuò a svolgersi, anche al ritorno dal viaggio in Levante, nella ricerca costante di agganci con il potere, da Pietro Leopoldo a Maria Carolina, da Napoleone ai Borboni. Cfr. in merito Scrofani 1988: 9-31.

²⁴ Complesse le vicende editoriali del *Viaggio in Grecia*: lo scrittore avrebbe tentato di pubblicarlo a Firenze, senza riuscirci; poté farlo stampare solo nel 1799, nella Repubblica Romana e con la falsa indicazione di Londra, dal Salvioni (ma il ritorno di Pio VI ne avrebbe bloccato la circolazione).

Serenissima, all'amministrazione 'coloniale' veneziana, ma anche alla scarsa intraprendenza degli abitanti, e in riferimento alla Grecia, al dominio turco.

Le lettere, che si immaginano inviate a una cerchia di amici e sodali sono costruite come microstrutture dotate di una loro autonomia, nell'attenta alternanza di toni: descrizione più o meno lirica, intervallata a scene più movimentate, spesso con andamento dialogico, e ancora a riflessioni di vario genere, di ordine artistico o antropologico, per così dire. In particolare, alla parte 'balcanica' del viaggio sono dedicate le prime sedici lettere, delle sessanta che compongono il *Viaggio in Grecia*; ne costituiscono forse la sezione più felice, anche da un punto di vista letterario, proprio grazie ai numerosi riferimenti all'attualità e agli incontri con i locali che contengono: così, ad esempio, a Omago lo spirito galante di Scrofani è allietato da quattro "belle, fresche, e cortesi giovani", figlie del "notaro", che lo cibano con pane e ottimi fichi, mentre l'osservatore 'politico' ha modo di apprezzare il comportamento del podestà, l'entrata della cui casa è aperta a tutti, pronto com'è a ricevere chiunque abbia bisogno di lui²⁵.

Anche nel suo caso, non manca il cedimento a qualche *idée reçue*, ma nel complesso appare abbastanza attento a distinguere e ad apprezzare comportamenti virtuosi da parte di chiunque li pratici. Per converso, le responsabilità delle condizioni di indigenza in cui versano i Corfuotti vengono equamente ripartite tra il rapace dominio veneziano e l'inerzia degli abitanti:

Al vedere in Corfù l'indigenza passeggiare per le strade, e invadere ogni casa, dal pianterreno al terrazzo, sono tentato di sospettare che i possessori delle terre di quest'isola dimorino altrove: ma dove vanno a perdersi 300.000 giare d'olio, che si estraggono annualmente da Corfù? A Venezia. E 100.000 zecchini che vi lascia ognanno l'armata veneta? A Venezia. Per chi travagliano i 60.000 abitanti del paese? Per Venezia. Corfù è dunque nello stato in cui erano, è già un secolo, le colonie d'America. Le contribuzioni sono forse pesanti? No. I litigi, i decreti, le grazie del senato, costano forse più cari a' Corfuotti, che a quei di Cefalonia e di Zante? No. [...] Zante e Cefalonia sono meno grandi di Corfù; la loro popolazione è minore, i dazi, le gabelle, le imposizioni eguali; perché dunque i Cefalonioti e Zantiotti sono benestanti, e le lor terre fioriscono? Perché? Perché sono industriosi: ecco la parola che scioglie l'anima.²⁶

In effetti Scrofani, come hanno recentemente dimostrato le ricerche degli storici, si dimostra capace di cogliere con precisione la situazione delle terre in cui viaggia²⁷, pronto a rilevare l'inadeguatezza del personale amministrativo veneziano, dal provveditore di Cefalonia C...M..., "un cortese cavaliere, erudito, e che sta scrivendo sull'antico commercio de' Veneziani", attività, questa, che lo distoglie colpevolmente dal presente²⁸, al provveditor D, di stanza a Zante, convinto di esservi stato mandato dal Senato "per far denaro", di livello culturale tanto basso da usare la parola 'anabattista' in luogo di 'ametista'; alla fine, lo scrittore sbotta: "O Venezia, qual è dunque il mistero,

²⁵ Scrofani 1988: 40.

²⁶ *Ivi.* 48.

²⁷ Cfr. Viggiano, 1998: 113-114.

²⁸ Scrofani 1988: 60, icastico ritratto, testimonia ancora Viggiano (1998: 179-180), del rappresentante veneziano Carlo Antonio Marin, autore di un'opera in 8 volumi sulla *Storia civile e politica del commercio de' Viniziani*.

qual è l'incantesimo che ti conserva il dominio di questi popoli? E potrai tu regnare eternamente, se regni ancora per mezzo di tali uomini?"²⁹.

Ancora più dura è la requisitoria nei confronti dei dominatori Turchi, più avanti: rivelatrici, a questo proposito, già le righe che descrivono, con l'arrivo a Patrasso, l'approdo del viaggiatore alla tanto agognata meta, una Grecia il cui aspetto suscita un'impressione di assoluta desolazione.

Io sono dunque nel Peloponneso, nella Acaia? [...] oggi calpesto il terreno che produsse tanti eroi. Ma qual silenzio, qual tristezza vi regna? Qui tutto è muto; questa terra non offre che un quadro, quello d'un naufragio: non si vedono le ruine di qualche antico tempio o sepolcro sparse per la campagna, che come le rotte antenne galleggianti sul mare. Se senti una voce, è d'una lingua barbara, strumento d'un popolo più barbaro ancora; se si incontra un uomo è un selvaggio, che si crede forte per l'altrui debolezza, che ha il vestito, le armi, i gesti, il cuore d'un selvaggio. Come si chiama quel tiranno, che con la sciabla alle mani minaccia quegli infelici? Un turco: e come si chiamano quegli schiavi che s'inclinano così vilmente, che non osano neppur lagnarsi, o mirarlo? Greci. Greci? ... E perché non hanno essi cambiato questo nome?³⁰

Tuttavia, il permanere di un *animus* illuministico è verificabile nelle lettere dedicate ai costumi e alle usanze dei Greci e dei Turchi: pagine che lo scrittore tende a mimetizzare, configurandole come momento di pausa nella narrazione e insistendo sulla voluta non-sistematicità del discorso in merito³¹, ma che risultano in realtà interessanti soprattutto per l'atteggiamento critico del viaggiatore nei confronti dei due popoli, che gli permette di evitare semplicistiche generalizzazioni e di distinguere ciò che vi è di positivo e di negativo negli usi di entrambi.

La sua condanna colpisce invece a fondo il dispotismo turco, di cui individua la parabola discendente, prevedendone l'imminente crollo: da questo punto di vista, Scrofanì dimostra di guardare alle vicende elleniche con la medesima, sensibile attenzione che il primo tentativo di insurrezione e di liberazione nazionale sviluppatosi in occasione della guerra russo-turca negli anni Settanta aveva suscitato in tutta l'Europa 'illuminata'.

Ritornando conclusivamente al quesito posto in apertura circa la responsabilità delle scritture di viaggio nella creazione degli stereotipi etnici, punto che rimane senza dubbio problematico, a fronte per altro dell'insostituibile ruolo di contatto tra culture svolto dal *mouvement*, mi sembra che i due testi settecenteschi di cui si è discusso, e in particolare quello di Alberto Fortis, presentino un'impostazione peculiare, per la volontà di conoscere che li sottende e che si sviluppa sul piano della comprensione, piuttosto che su quello del giudizio³²: impostazione diversa da quella che caratterizzerà la ripresa di immagini destinate a farsi stereotipate nel tempo, secondo traiettorie di ricezione con esiti assai distanti dalle intenzioni e dall'impostazione originarie.

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²⁹ Scrofanì 1988: 67.

³⁰ *Ivi.* 67-68.

³¹ *Ivi.* 97 e 135.

³² Lo stesso Jezernik (2010: 63), che non lesina critiche a Fortis, non può non riconoscerne le "capacità di onesto e acuto osservatore".

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**RACCONTARE LA CRITICA.
L'INTERPRETAZIONE DI MODE E MODI LETTERARI EUROPEI DEL
SETTECENTO NELLA *FRUSTA LETTERARIA*
DI GIUSEPPE BARETTI.**

Ursula Reuter-Mayring

Abstract

Giuseppe Baretti's literary journal, *La Frusta letteraria* (1763-65), is a poetic piece of fiction about the contemporary world of literature in the 2nd part of the Eighteenth century. Baretti performs in it his criticism on contemporary literature as well as on the conventional and common processes implicit in literary scene at that time, reflecting also on his own experiences and observations as a 'modern' and cosmopolitan author. To stage this he uses various literary models which were traditional or 'in vogue' at that time in Europe. A critical analysis also reveals the journal in whole to be a closed text constructed strictly according to literary principles, which establishes it as a cohesive piece of poetic art.

Key words: Baretti, *La Frusta letteraria*, journal

Giuseppe Baretti¹ fu senz'altro uno dei veri cosmopoliti settecenteschi. Per diversi decenni il piemontese visse fuori del paese nativo e viaggiò in diverse parti dell'Europa come tanti altri artisti, scrittori e letterati del suo tempo. Durante tutta la sua vita ebbe un occhio acuto per i fenomeni culturali e sociali dell'ambiente in cui si trovava insieme ad una mente sveglia per recepire quei fenomeni e un'attitudine individualistica e forse altera. Di questa vena sono impregnate fortemente le sue opere letterarie. Per illustrare come esistessero degli "spazi letterari in contatto" non nel senso strettamente geografico ma nella ricezione ed elaborazione letteraria di questo letterato (che, come tanti in

¹ Giuseppe Baretti (1719-1789), autore di critica letteraria (a parte la *Frusta letteraria* è suo per esempio anche il *Discours sur Shakespeare et sur monsieur de Voltaire*, 1777) e di un'edizione di Machiavelli (1772), dell'epistolario *Lettere familiari ...* (1762-63), di letteratura odepica, come *An Account of the Manners and Customs of Italy ...* (1768) o *A Journey from London to Genoa, through Portugal, Spain and France* (1770), di numerose opere di carattere pragmatico-linguistico e di diversi dizionari, di traduzioni, per esempio di brani di Orazio, Cervantes e Corneille, e scrittore di poesia, per esempio de *Le piacevoli Poesie* (1750), parzialmente nella tradizione bernesca. La sua intera opera include ca. 37 libri, più le loro traduzioni contemporanee in diverse lingue europee, pubblicate già in vita. Scrisse in italiano, inglese, francese e spagnolo.

quel periodo, fu un intellettuale ‘europeo’), presenterò alcune osservazioni sul contesto di mode e modi letterari europei e come questi si rispecchino nel piano poetico della rivista *La Frusta letteraria* di Baretti² (cap. 3.). Sono precedute da alcune annotazioni generali su Baretti e la *Frusta letteraria* (cap. 1.) e da un abbozzo sulla struttura della *Frusta letteraria* (cap. 2.).

1. ANNOTAZIONI GENERALI SU BARETTI E LA *FRUSTA LETTERARIA*

Giuseppe Baretti fu un rinnovatore della critica letteraria – come dice Walter Binni (Binni 1969, 45) – e secondo Bruno Anglani è l’autore “di alcuni dei libri più belli del Settecento italiano” (Anglani 1997, 11). La sua rivista *La Frusta letteraria* si era guadagnata una certa fama in Europa quando egli era ancora in vita; veniva citata non solamente da Alfieri e più tardi da Foscolo, ma anche da Lessing (Ritter-Santini 1993, 121). All’inizio del Novecento il nome di Giuseppe Baretti, scelto come titolo della rivista di Piero Gobetti, servì da metafora per una critica letteraria nuova, polemica, battagliera³. Nel 2000 nacque infine una rivista online, *La Frusta*, che dichiara “la ripresa della rivista settecentesca implicita nella [nostra] impresa”. *La Frusta letteraria* di Giuseppe Baretti uscì dall’ottobre del 1763 fino al gennaio del 1765; era stampata e pubblicata a Venezia (“Rovereto”) da Antonio Zatta Editore/Stampatore. Come tiratura iniziale – così si afferma – ebbe 6000 esemplari, numero straordinario paragonato alla tiratura di 500 esemplari de *Il Caffè* (Francioni 1998, LXXXII) o a quella di 1500 esemplari progettati 1793/94 da Goethe e Schiller per *Die Horen* (Safranski 2009, 100). Il 20 gennaio 1765 fu vietata dai *Riformatori dello Studio di Padova* a causa di una polemica contro Bembo in cui Baretti l’aveva chiamato “uno de’ più magri poeti d’Italia”. Successivamente la *Frusta letteraria* uscì per altri nove mesi – dal febbraio fino al novembre del 1765 – ad Ancona (“Trento”) presso Bellelli Editore/Stampatore.

Baretti nacque a Torino nel 1719 e morì a Londra nel 1789. Più di trent’anni della sua vita visse in Inghilterra, la maggior parte del tempo a Londra, in quei tempi la capitale dell’Europa moderna, specialmente in relazione alle idee politiche e letterarie. L’amicizia con Samuel Johnson, con cui condivise la passione per la critica e la filologia, e con David Garrick, il famoso attore di Shakespeare, a cui dovette una ricezione profonda e vivace delle opere shakespeariane, ha lasciato delle impronte ben visibili nella poetica e nelle imprese letterarie di Baretti. Impressionato positivamente dalle condizioni socio-culturali inglesi, Baretti, una volta tornato in Italia, cercò di realizzare a Venezia l’ideale di un autore moderno che scriveva in modo indipendente per un pubblico ed un mercato nuovo – ruolo finora esistente solamente in Inghilterra e in nessun altra società e cultura europea. Durante i suoi diversi soggiorni a Venezia, per tradizione centro prestigioso della stampa e dell’editoria ed un ambiente quasi liberale e tollerante, conobbe i Gozzi⁴ e diventò ammiratore specialmente delle opere teatrali

² Non saranno però analizzati – in questa relazione – riguardo ai loro significati narrativi e ai valori metaforici o allegorici per *La Frusta*.

³ *Il Baretti* uscì dal 1924 al 1928 a Torino.

⁴ Dell’amicizia con Gasparo e Carlo ed anche con la loro sorella Angela, di cui Baretti – a quanto dice – s’innamorò e che avrebbe voluto sposare, danno prova gli epistolari sia dei Gozzi sia di Baretti.

di Carlo che vedeva inserirsi anche nella tradizione del grande modello inglese: “il più sorprendente genio che dopo Shakespeare sia comparso in alcun secolo o paese”⁵.

La rivista di Giuseppe Baretti deve essere considerata come una finzione letteraria. Anche se sembra presentarsi al lettore come strumento di espressione di tante opinioni, in realtà ha un autore unico, Baretti, il cui programma è: *raccontare* la critica. E l'autore Baretti si descrive come protagonista nell'ambito letterario del Settecento. Concordo con la tesi di Martino Capucci il quale individua la finzione barettiana come l'invenzione dell'autore del giornale e ci nota una “interna coerenza tra l'immaginario autore e ciò che nel giornale ci dice” (Capucci 1998, 748). Ricordiamo che all'epoca nasce il paradigmatico genere moderno: il romanzo. Il pubblico desidera trovare se stesso e le sue condizioni attuali raccontati in una prosa moderna, adeguata e ‘poetica’. E viene raccontato tutto: la propria vita e i viaggi fatti sia come *grand tour*, sia per motivi professionali o politici. La letteratura autobiografico-memorialistica e quella odepórica sono presenti nelle opere di Alfieri, Verri, Goldoni, Gozzi, Casanova ecc. Ma anche la saggistica, perfino quella di carattere scientifico, e le poetiche – o le estetiche, per dirla con un termine nato nel Settecento – vengono scritte seguendo i metodi narrativi del raccontare, sia quelli tradizionali che quelli moderni. Un bell'esempio sono le *Lettere virgiliane* (1758) di Saverio Bettinelli. Nell'atmosfera illuministica questo *raccontare* assume la funzione di una messinscena dei contenuti considerati utili della “ansiosa cultura settecentesca del sapere” con il suo “nuovo entusiasmo per le scienze piacevoli” (Stafford 1998, 53 [trad. U. R.-M.]).

2. LA COSTRUZIONE DELLA *FRUSTA LETTERARIA*

La Frusta – intesa come testo unico – può essere analizzata nella sua interezza cercandone i principi narrativi. Troviamo una costruzione formale che rivela due parti principali, ognuna con una struttura schematica fatta di elementi testuali rigidi. Per la prima parte (No. I-XXV) Baretti inventa un racconto di cornice il cui protagonista principale è l'editore immaginario *Aristarco Scannabue*. In forma di rivista il personaggio di *Aristarco* presenta le sue critiche, gli articoli di corrispondenti finti, le lettere all'editore e le sue risposte – finte anche queste – così che il lettore trova tutti i tipi testuali caratteristici delle riviste dell'epoca. Sparse fra le parti ‘ufficiali’, nelle così dette *Chiacchiere domestiche*, Baretti fa raccontare al suo personaggio *Aristarco* le storie della sua vita ‘privata’ in provincia insieme all'amico *Don Petronio*. Sul palcoscenico della cornice vediamo e sentiamo il processo di ricezione letteraria in una poli-prospettiva: e questa ricezione viene messa in scena proprio come si effettua nei testi e nelle voci della rivista. Allo stesso tempo viene creato uno spazio di *periferia* tramite la vita straordinaria, quasi esotica di *Aristarco*, ora ‘ritiratosi’, che – secondo me – rappresenta una bella soluzione poetica se viene letta come allegoria *in nuce* della posizione di alterità del critico moderno, solitario e soggettivo, come è stato proposto generalmente dalla critica e approfondito molto bene nel caso di Baretti da Ilaria Crotti (Crotti 1992, 14).

⁵ Così nella versione italiana di *An Account of the Manners and Customs of Italy ...* (1768), si veda Soldini 2004, 98n.

Nella seconda parte (No. XXVI-XXXIII) Baretti abbandona gli espedienti della cornice e del racconto insieme a tutti gli elementi da rivista: da quel momento in poi pubblica invece i *Discorsi*. Questi *Discorsi* fanno parte di una polemica reale fra due autori reali: Giuseppe Baretti e Appiano Buonafede, l'autore del *Bue pedagogo*, quel libro di critica distruttiva della *Frusta* pubblicato nel 1764 sotto lo pseudonimo di Luciano da Firenzuola. Per i *Discorsi* Baretti sceglie un genere ed una voce. In opposizione al carattere aperto e vivace del *racconto* della prima parte, creato tramite una polifonia di testi e voci, nei *Discorsi* adopera strategie ben diverse per formare però una eterogeneità simile lavorando con trasgressioni formali alle norme del genere: tradizionalmente il discorso è collegato al contesto erudito e conseguentemente riservato alle spiegazioni serie, alle deduzioni logiche e alle riflessioni teoriche. Baretti invece parla con tanta ironia e vi infila numerosissime divagazioni su aspetti marginali, frantumando così argomenti e frasi. Le strategie narrative del *racconto* sembrano rispecchiate sul livello testuale del *discorso* con tutto il suo contesto semantico. La strategia del rispecchiamento può essere individuata sia per la costruzione intera sia per tutti i suoi sub-livelli. E per darne almeno un esempio: le *chiacchiere domestiche* fra i protagonisti del *racconto* vengono riprese come *dialogo* nei *Discorsi*. Da questa lettura risulta che le due parti stanno in una relazione di *testo* e *metatesto*: Il *testo* funziona come 'racconto di una rivista letteraria' operando con gli elementi narrativi, il *metatesto* funziona come 'commento' al 'racconto' della prima parte, operando da parte sua con le caratteristiche formali del genere prescelto. La funzione della strategia di rispecchiamento adoperata nell'intera *Frusta* è quella di stabilire e dimostrare continuamente la coerenza fra *testo* e *metatesto*.

3. IL CONTESTO DI MODE E MODI LETTERARI EUROPEI

Per realizzare il suo progetto Baretti sceglie poi dei motivi fra i più discussi nell'ambito culturale europeo della sua epoca e applica delle strategie letterarie di gran successo presso il pubblico contemporaneo. Fra le grandi tematiche rintracciabili nella *Frusta*, rilevabili specialmente il relazione al personaggio di *Aristarco*, si trovano menzionate per esempio delle riflessioni da opere di Montesquieu e di Rousseau intorno alla relazione fra *natura* e *civilizzazione*, insieme al vasto interesse per i *luoghi esotici e primitivi*, dove si sviluppa l'ideale di un atteggiamento naturale che sta in contrasto con le artificiali norme sociali del mondo europeo: *Aristarco* ci viene presentato come un grande viaggiatore, che visitò soprattutto l'Oriente e che conobbe bene le culture ed i costumi esotici sia come soldato sia come amico di personaggi di alto rango e come esperto e traduttore di lingue esotiche. Nel momento però in cui noi lettori lo conosciamo quale editore della *Frusta* ci appare come ritirato dal mondo e vive una vita semplice in provincia, a qualche distanza dalle metropoli. La *moda orientale*, molto in vigore all'epoca, s'esprime nel suo modo di vestirsi: "[...] s'avvezzò [...] a indossare una lunga zimarraccia [...]" (Baretti I, 24⁶). Ricordiamo che anche il protagonista nella cornice della rivista *Il Caffè*, *Demetrio*, proprietario della bottega di caffè, ha addosso la zimarra. Mentre per *Demetrio* quello è il vestito tradizionale del "levantino", per il

⁶ Tutte le citazioni dalla *Frusta Letteraria* appaiono secondo l'edizione Milano: SA Notari, 1929.

protagonista barettiano rappresenta invece un segnale di abito diverso – nel doppio significato della parola. E, in conseguenza:

“[...] le donne del villaggio non si curano troppo di trattar familiarmente con Aristarco, e gli uomini anch' essi di rado s'arrischiano a parlargli, tanto più che alcuni lo hanno anche in qualche leggier sospetto di negromante, o, come dicono essi, di stregone [...]” (Baretti, I, 37)

Così come la tematica della *diversité*, che appare in queste righe, altrettanto erano molto presenti nelle conversazioni dei salotti le riflessioni sulla *fisiognomica*, che si sarebbero condensate infine nell'opera di grande successo dello svizzero Lavater⁷, e quelle su una *nuova relazione fra fisico e intelletto* e sulla *teoria del clima*, specialmente su *la chaleur*, promosse da Montesquieu⁸ (Richter 2009, 129). Di tutto questo si trovano tracce nella descrizione della ‘creazione’ di *Aristarco*:

“La vita di quella mansueta ed innocua gente, che noi volgarmente chiamiamo letterati, non è, e non può essere, gran fatto piena di strani accidenti, né troppo feconda di maravigliose varietà, perché è per lo più una vita vissuta tutta in un paese solo, e tutta limitata in un ristretto cerchio d'amici, la maggior parte ignoranti affatto o appena iniziati negli elementi del sapere. Ma la vita del nostro Aristarco Scannabue è stata una cosa assai diversa, ve l'assicuro. Quando alla Madre Natura venne in capriccio di formare il suo individuo, parve proprio si proponesse di fare una singolar cosa, poiché gli è certo che si stette di molte settimane rimescolando assai ignee materie, che infuse quindi nella sua corporea sostanza. E quando l'ebbe tutto formato in guisa da farlo poi riuscire, come riuscì di fatto, un uomo di statura poco meno che gigantesca, quella buona Madre Natura lo produsse al mondo in uno de' più ardenti giorni della canicola; onde non è da stupirsi se Aristarco non potette poscia stare per un lungo tempo fisso in un luogo, e se de' quindici lustri già da esso vissuti ne passò dieci intieri intieri sempre avvolgendosi come una fiamma per diverse regioni del mondo.” (Baretti, I, 33)

Già la “buona Madre Natura” in sé è motivo interessante perché potrebbe far riferimento al cambiamento di un paradigma socio-filosofico intorno al concetto di *natura* che piglia forza nel contesto dell'illuminismo⁹. Anche i passatempi preferiti di *Aristarco*, siano quelli della sua gioventù siano quelli dell'età già avanzata, a parte dei loro significati metaforici, richiamano il contesto storico e socio-culturale: sono degli “istruuttivi giochi scientifici” che “erano una pratica per la vita perché rappresentavano quell'arte affascinante dell'esperimento considerata così importante sia nei laboratori sia nella vita” (Stafford 1998, 75 [trad. U. R.-M.]). Così vediamo che il giovane *Aristarco*

“[...] faceva molte e molte giornate in un giardino di casa, diligentemente cercando scorpioni pe' fessi de' muri, e di sottovia de' vasi di creta e di legno, e schiacciando quegli scorpioni se li trovava piccini, o riponendoli vivi in un fiasco d'olio se s'ab-

⁷ Johann Caspar Lavater: *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe*, 4 Bde., 1775–78.

⁸ Inclusa ne *L'esprit des loix*, 1748.

⁹ Suggestito da: Merchant, Carolyn: *Death of Nature*, New York: 1980. (Il primo ed importante cenno è dovuto a Waltraud Pulz, Università di Monaco/Germania).

battevano ad esser grandi, pigliandoli sempre su colle sue proprie dita, senza punto di paura delle loro velenose code.” (Baretti, I, 33)

E vediamo il vecchio come trova un grande interesse nella *relazione fra uomo ed animali*:

“La sua giornaliera compagnia e divertimento sono alcuni cani d’Irlanda, e del Canadà, alcuni gatti d’Angola e del Malabar, e alcuni uccelli e scimmiotti di varie parti d’America, tutti nati da altri cani, gatti, uccelli e scimmiotti recati con sè quando tornò da quelle regioni. [...] A ognuno di quei scimmiotti [...], egli ha capricciosamente posto un nome di poeta o di prosatore moderno, secondo il carattere ch’egli crede scorgere in questo o in quell’altro scimmiotto [...]” (Baretti, I, 35)

Infatti fu nel primo Settecento che arrivarono in Europa i primi scimpanzé ed orangotanghi vivi (Watson 2005, 860), oggetto di un vivo e diffuso interesse scientifico per esempio da parte di Carl von Linné o di Edward Tyson; quest’ultimo stabilì le somiglianze e le differenze in uomo e scimmia e pubblicò *Orang-outang, sive, Homo sylvestris: or, The anatomy of a pygmie compared with that of a monkey, an ape, and a man* (1699).

Accenti forti della assai diffusa *moda inglese* si trovano nel corrispondente *Onesto Lovangelo* [sic!] e nella “dama inglese intendentissima della nostra lingua” o come viene chiamata anche, la “bella Lady”. La corrispondenza dei due personaggi viene pubblicata di *Aristarco* nella *Frusta* come esempio della modernità del pubblico letterario inglese – oggetto delle loro lettere è uno dei testi più discussi dell’epoca, la *Letter on Enthusiasm* di Shaftesbury (1708). Quanto alla settecentesca *moda del caffè*, ampiamente diffusa in tutta Europa, è già stata profondamente considerata dalla critica riguardo alla sua potenza metaforica.

“[...] quella bottega del Caffè linda e odorosa in cui si incontrano illuminati e uomini qualunque - absit iniuria verbo -, torpidi benpensanti e sensibili progressisti in una lieve trama scenica di ingenua efficacia, con signori sconosciuti che di colpo rivelano le loro brillanti qualità e lasciano a bocca aperta i rappresentanti dei luoghi comuni, con il levantino Demetrio, generoso e impeccabile, che trascina la sua zimarra da *Lettres persanes* e la sua autorizzata originalità di orientale in un milieu di dormienti ai quali il caffè porta la sua eccitazione di facile simbolo settecentesco di modernità attiva e disinvolta nelle volute del suo profumo di moda esotica [...]” (Binni 1969, 41)¹⁰

Baretti però oppone alla rivelazione delle “brillanti qualità” e “l’attiva modernità” una scena di privatezza, una scena che può essere letta come contra-disegno a quella pubblicità sveglia e spiritosa dei caffè, e che potrebbe nello stesso momento evocare già certi momenti in cui nella letteratura romantica le figure oltrepasseranno il confine fra realtà e fantastico, a volte bevendo i liquidi-liquori a volte favellando e spesso al crepuscolo o durante le ore notturne come lo fanno per esempio quegli eroi bizzarro-romantici di E. T. A. Hoffmann. Baretti narra così le veglie di *Aristarco* insieme al suo amico *Don Petronio Zamberluccho*,

¹⁰ Sull’aspetto dello spazio pubblico del Caffè si veda anche Hoeges, 1978.

“[...] il quale è curato del luogo dov’egli [Aristarco] dimora. Questo dabben religioso si compiace di passare qualche sera di domenica con Aristarco, fumando seco un paio di pipe, aiutandolo con assai modestia a vuotare qualche fiasco e stendendo con molto grave taciturnità gli orecchi quand’egli ciancia de’ suoi viaggi, de’ suoi tanti pericoli passati, delle mode e costumanze de’ lontani paesi, delle varie favelle e della varia letteratura di varie nazioni.” (Baretti, I, 37)

Anche con le sue scelte letterarie Baretti ricorre ai modelli *en vogue* nel mondo letterario europeo del Settecento: La forma della ‘nuova’ rivista come tante altre dell’epoca segue il modello dei famosi *moral weeklies* inglesi come per esempio *The Spectator*. L’ambito delle riviste inglesi era molto familiare a Baretti specialmente tramite l’amicizia coltivata durante il suo lungo soggiorno a Londra con uno dei suoi protagonisti più famosi, Samuel Johnson¹¹, lui stesso editore. Dai *moral weeklies* vengono adottati i nomi parlanti, esprimenti cioè le caratteristiche del personaggio, ed il modello narrativo della cornice – come lo faranno i Verri per il famoso *Caffè* fino al Borsieri per il *Conciliatore*. Interpretare queste scelte poetiche di Baretti in una mono-prospettiva sarebbe però inadeguato. Senz’altro per Baretti è anche un ricorrere al repertorio della grande tradizione novellistica italiana con il suo elemento narrativo quasi costitutivo della cornice.¹² È per esempio anche la scelta di Carlo Gozzi, stimatissimo da Baretti come letterario e come amico¹³, con cui condivide quella “preferenza [...] per linee laterali e risentite della tradizione letteraria italiana” (Ricorda 2001, 17): Gozzi riprende il genere sempre in cerca di una letteratura moderna e nondimeno radicata nella tradizione e collega le sue novelle¹⁴ se non con una cornice, con “altri fili unificanti” (Ricorda 2001, 21). Il fatto che la *Frusta* si rivolga ad un nuovo pubblico è visibile nell’uso di ‘moderni’ elementi pragmatico-testuali come annotazioni esplicative o traduzioni, elementi che nascono proprio nel momento in cui il pubblico diventava più eterogeneo e meno erudito. Le condizioni di un nuovo mercato letterario si mostrano bene, nella *Frusta*; nei diversi richiami di carattere economico. Come in un *tableau* Baretti fa vedere nella sua rivista il *discorso letterario* – reale ed ideale – dei suoi tempi, discorso del quale saranno menzionati almeno due lati: i suoi protagonisti, ovvero *l’autore, il critico, il pubblico*, specialmente quello femminile, e i suoi registri stilistici, per esempio *la polemica* nella cui forma vengono effettuate le controversie letterarie più famose dell’epoca, o *la corrispondenza*, specchio non solo delle relazioni ma anche delle letture private e soggettive, solitarie o fra amici. Sempre nella costruzione del suo protagonista, *Aristarco*, Baretti gioca su alcuni elementi tipici letterari che corrispondono perfettamente al gusto del pubblico in Europa, siano essi elementi del *romanzo* – *picaresco, avventuroso e epistolare* – o dell’*autobiografia*, genere in cui si presenta l’individuo come oggetto d’interesse e di cui furono scritti esempi straordi-

¹¹ *The Rambler* 1750-1752, *The Adventurer* 1752-1754, *The Idler* 1758-1760.

¹² Elemento narrativo che, seguendo René Wellek (Wellek/Warren 1995, 240), rimanda direttamente al romanzo moderno.

¹³ I rapporti e la stima cambiano col tempo, definitivamente intorno al 1784, si veda la lettera di Baretti a Francesco Carcano del 12 maggio 1784.

¹⁴ Pubblicate come raccolta intera nell’edizione Colombani, “Ed. Ultima”, 1774, della quale Gozzi manda qualche esemplare a Baretti a Londra non senza la speranza di vederle presentate da lui al pubblico inglese o anche tradotte, si veda la lettera di Gozzi a Baretti del 12 aprile 1777 e di Baretti a Gozzi del 9 maggio, per esempio in: Gozzi 2004.

nari all'epoca, non solo da Rousseau o Casanova, ma, fra altri, anche da Carlo Gozzi e Goldoni. Certamente notevole è quell'elemento picaresco presente nella figura e nella vita di *Aristarco*, che va anche oltre il suo significato metaforico e funzionale¹⁵. Ricordiamo che in seguito al *Don Quichote* (1605/06) i romanzi della tradizione picaresca ebbero un grande successo e trovarono rinnovamento ancora all'inizio del Settecento specialmente in Francia col *Gil Blas* e con *Le Diable boiteux* de Alain-René Lesages (Keilhauer 2002, 25).

Al concetto fondamentale del Settecento, in definitiva, alla *critica*, Baretti risponde con la proposta di una *critica letteraria poetica*, cioè con l'intera creazione della sua *Frusta letteraria*. La soluzione poetica gli offriva la possibilità di giocare sui modelli letterari più ricercati nel mondo europeo contemporaneo e dava alla sua critica quel sapore di attualità e di cosmopolitismo che per lui era – ed è rimasto fino ad oggi – caratteristico di una critica letteraria moderna, indipendentemente dai giudizi letterari espressivi. L'*autore moderno*, che Baretti cercava di essere, lo ritroviamo nella sua invenzione poetica-letteraria, nell'allegoria di quel vecchio protagonista nuovo, *Aristarco*, un 'io' isolato, un individuo solo e contraddittorio, vuol dire tutto moderno¹⁶: *il critico*.

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¹⁵ Su questo aspetto si vedano specialmente Crotti 1992, 179 e Fido 1988.

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THE EXPLOITATION OF HEROIC CONVENTIONS IN THE OE POEM *ANDREAS*: AN ARTISTIC MISCONDUCT OR A CONVINCING BLEND OF TRADITIONAL LITERARY CONCEPTS AND NEW CHRISTIAN IDEAS?

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Abstract

This paper examines the function of traditional heroic concepts, typical of the traditional military Germanic society, in the Christian environment of the Old English poem *Andreas*, whose indebtedness to the traditional heroic poetry has been generally recognised. The paper juxtaposes four examples of traditional heroic ethos from *Beowulf*, the most detailed example of heroic poetry, and the text to which *Andreas* is verbally and stylistically very close, with the relevant parallels from *Andreas*, in order to determine to what extent the traditional images relating to the life of traditional heroic society still retain in *Andreas* their traditional connotations and to what extent they are imbued with the new Christian meaning.

Key words: the *saint's life*, traditional military endeavours versus spiritual heroism, the concept of exile, the *comitatus* relationship, hall-life, conversion

I. INTRODUCTION

St Andrew, the first apostle to be summoned by Jesus, has always been regarded as one of the most influential saints in Western and Eastern Christendom alike. His cult occupied an important position in Anglo-Saxon England as well, as evidenced in the number of churches dedicated to him, Latin calendars and martyrologies, hymns, and homilies (Walsh, 101), while his popularity among the laity is attested by the Old English poem *Andreas*, and two shorter prose texts, *Blicking Homily* 19 and Ælfric's *Catholic Homily* I. 38. *Andreas* is an account of the saint's missionary activity in the pagan land of Mermedonia, *Blicking Homily* 19 recounts the same event as *Andreas*, and Ælfric's *Catholic Homily* I. 38 records Andrew's martyr's death in Patras, Greece. Of these vernacular accounts, *Andreas* has been most widely discussed, receiving a significant amount of scholarly attention since its first publication in 1840 by Jacob Grimm.¹

¹ Other editions of *Andreas* were published in the following order: in 1843 by John Kemble, in 1883 by Richard Wülker, in 1885 by William Baskerville, in 1906 and 1932 by George Krapp, and in 1961 by Kenneth Brooks.

A considerable portion of St Andrew's fame is based on his reputation as a far-traveller as he is believed to have travelled to Asia Minor and Scythia, Georgia, Romania, along the Black Sea, up to the river Dnieper until he reached the site of future Kiev, which led to his reputation of being a patron saint of Russia, Ukraine and Romania. The scope of *Andreas*, however, is far more restricted, focusing on St Andrew's adventures in Mermedonia, the country of Man-Eaters. According to the poem, St Andrew is commanded by God to rescue St Matthew from captivity in Mermedonia into which he fell while trying to convert its heathen inhabitants. After some initial reluctance Andrew sails to the country on the ship manned by Jesus himself, whom Andrew recognises only after waking up on the shores of Mermedonia. On arriving in this country, he rescues St Matthew and other captives languishing in the Mermedonian prison and suffers the tortures inflicted on him by the frustrated and starved Mermedonians who are exhorted by the devil to murder him. The devil's attempt fails and numerous miracles performed by the saint, for example, the release of enormous quantities of water from a pillar in the Mermedonian prison which floods the city, the erection of a fire wall which prevents the Mermedonians from leaving the flooded place and their miraculous revival after their collective death in the flood, eventually convince the Mermedonians to reject paganism and accept Christianity.

II. HEROIC CONCEPTS AND IDIOMS IN *ANDREAS*

Andreas owes much of its scientific visibility to its juxtaposition of Germanic heroism and Christian martyrdom (Kiser, 65), its application of traditional poetic idioms to Christian topics, and its ability to adapt Germanic poetic heritage to the new world of Christianity, which leads us to the central purpose of this paper: to examine the function of a restricted number of traditional heroic concepts in the hagiographic context of the poem. *Andreas* in reality contains many elements typical of traditional heroic poetry which had existed among the Anglo-Saxons long before they adopted Christianity and whose prevailing themes had been war, warfare, weapons, the birds of prey, generous leaders, faithful retainers, the life in a lord's hall and distribution of gifts. The poetic vocabulary was full of terms describing such subjects (Toller, 109), as attested by surviving examples of Old English heroic poetry, such as *Beowulf*, *The Finnsburg Fragment*, *The Battle of Brunnaburh* and *The Battle of Maldon*. *Beowulf*, in particular, is regarded as the most valuable and detailed example of Old English heroic poetry. Early scholars were so struck by the wealth of topics relating to the life of Germanic heroic society that they declared the poem to be "in its subject matter so independent of Christianity that it might be taken as a fair representative of the old native poetry" (Toller, 110).

Later scholarship, by contrast, has pointed out that *Beowulf* was composed by a Christian writer well trained in classical and Christian literary traditions, and this predominantly Christian orientation left such a distinguishing mark on the poem (Wrenn, Bolton, 51; Burrow, 10) that *Beowulf* can be seen as a Christian reconstruction of pre-Christian Germanic society (Donahue, 56). It can be argued, however, that in spite of its considerable foreign Christian element and its prevailing Christian perspective, the

poem definitely focuses on a society which was dominated by traditional heroic values, such as the so-called *comitatus* relationship or the bond between the lord and his retainers, heroism, loyalty and physical endurance. In order to word properly such concepts, traditional heroic poetry created a number of conventional poetic idioms, poetic formulas and formulaic expressions which took such firm roots in the Old English poetic tradition that they were later retained and reused by the new Old English Christian poetry when recounting the deeds of saints, apostles and heroes from the Old and the New Testament (Toller, 109; Riedinger, 284; Bolton, Wrenn, 26). As a result, due to a significant impact of traditional heroic concepts and poetic idioms on Christian poetry, many Old English Christian poems reveal a higher or a lower degree of interaction between the worlds of traditional heroic society and Christianity.

Andreas is therefore hardly unique in its tendency to exploit traditional heroic concepts and imagery. The issue which causes so much scholarly dissension, however, is the nature of the poem's indebtedness to the Old English traditional poetic vocabulary. In other words, the scholars disagree on the question to what degree *Andreas* owes its traditional poetic diction to the common Old English poetic tradition and to what extent it is indebted for its traditional diction to one particular traditional heroic poem, *Beowulf*, which is in reality verbally and stylistically very close to *Andreas*.² In fact, it is the existence of close verbal and stylistic parallels between both poems which has provoked most scholarly responses, both negative and positive. The first group of Anglo-Saxonists, mostly early critics as well as some contemporary scholars, have argued that *Andreas* is not a very successful imitation of *Beowulf*, *Andreas's* evocation of a substantial set of images from *Beowulf* being in their opinion incongruous and misplaced³, while another group of scholars is more inclined to view the parallels and verbal similarities between both poems as an asset rather than liability. According to this positive scholarly opinion, the *Andreas*-poet reused *Beowulf's* images and verbal echoes relating to the life of traditional secular society in a creative and original way (Friesen, 239-240) as, by transferring them from their original environment of secular epic into a hagiographic context of his own poem, he managed to juxtapose the worlds of the ancient pagan society and Christianity, enabling thus his audience to compare the mentality of their pagan ancestry with their own Christian values.

Even though this paper also juxtaposes traditional images and heroic concepts occurring in both poems, this is never done with the purpose of taking part in the aforementioned debates concerning the nature of *Andreas's* reliance on traditional heroic diction which could be, according to the scholarship, obtained either via common poetic tradition or via *Beowulf*. The paper's only purpose is to discuss the function of a very restricted number of heroic concepts and related poetic vocabulary in *Andreas*: a) martial imagery relating to Andrew and his apostles, b) the concept of exile, c) the *comitatus* relationship and d) the hall-life, and comment on how far the poet succeeded in reusing the conventional secular topics and traditional poetic idioms in the context of hagiography. In order to determine the degree of *Andreas's* reliance on traditional heroic

² For a survey of scholarly opinions on this issue, see, for example, Cherniss, 173-174, Riedinger, 285-288, Friesen, 107-123.

³ For a further survey of these earlier views on *Andreas*, see Simpkins, 4-6, for the survey of contemporary scholarly opinions, see again Simpkins, 7-9.

concepts and vocabulary, *Beowulf* as the most detailed example of preserved heroic poetry is simply too precious to be ignored as a point of departure for further comparisons in this direction even if there were no attested parallels between both poems.

A. Martial imagery

Beowulf abounds in the traditional poetic imagery relating to various aspects of life in traditional heroic society, with the martial images naturally occupying a central position in the narrative. The poem in its introductory lines glorifies the ancient kings of Denmark and their martial reputation:

HWÆT, WĒ GĀR-DENA in gēardagum,
þōodcýninga þrym gefrūnon,
hū ða æðelingas ellen fremedon!⁴ (ed. Klaeber, ll. 1-3)

Their strength, however, during the reign of Hrothgar no longer suffices to repel cannibal monsters disrupting Heorot, Hrothgar's royal hall, which stimulates Beowulf and his companions, the Geats, to sail across the sea and restore order in the palace. They are depicted as: *cempan þāra þe hē [Beowulf] cēnoste findan mihte* (206-207b) – the boldest warriors he [Beowulf] could find, *searo-haebbendra* (237b) – the ones having armours, *lind haebbende* (245a) – shield bearers, *gūð-fremmendra* (246a) – battle-doers, *fyrðhwate* – brave in war (1641), to mention only a handful of examples. In the hagiographic context of *Andreas* the poet recalls in the opening lines the fame of the apostles in a similar martial manner: *tireadige hæleð* (glorious heroes), *þeodnes þegnas* (the thanes of a prince), *frome folctogan* (bold chieftains), *fyrðhwate* (those bold in battle), *rofe rincas* (brave heroes):

HWÆT, we gefrunan on fyrndagum
twelwe under tunglum tireadige hæleð
þeodnes ðegnas. No hira þrym alæg
cam[þ]rædenne, þonne cumbol hneotan
syððan hie gedældon swa him dryhten sylf,
heofona heahcýning, [h]lyt getæhte.

Þæt wæron mære men ofer eorðan,
frome folctogan ond fyrðhwate,
rofe rincas þonne rond ond hand
on herefelda helm ealgodon,
on meotudwange; (ed. Brooks, ll. 7-11).⁵

⁴ All the quotations are taken from F. Klaeber, ed., *Beowulf and The Fight at Finnsburg*, third edn. (Boston, 1950). All the translations are taken from: Benjamin Slade, BEOWULF. diacritically-marked text and facing translation, <http://www.heorot.dk/beo-intro-rede.html>.

Translation: Listen! We of the Spear-Danes in the days of yore, of those clan-kings heard of their glory, how those nobles performed courageous deeds!

⁵ All the translations of the passages from *Andreas* are taken from: Charles W. Kennedy, *Andreas*, Old English Series, Cambridge, Ontario, 2000; http://www.yorku.ca/inpar/Andreas_Kennedy.pdf.

Translation: Lo! We heard of twelve glorious men in olden days under the stars, the thanes of God; nor

Apart from that, Matthew the Evangelist, though a man of learning and no military man at all, is also seen as a warrior who must often undergo suffering on the battlefield, and the poet says that “oft him bonena hand // on herefelda / hearde gesceode” (ll. 17b-18).⁶

Both *Beowulf* and *Andreas* therefore exploit the same stock of heroic idioms and concepts: glory, brave warriors, famous in the days of yore, loyal and disciplined - the concepts with unmistakably positive heroic connotations in both poems. Nevertheless, a close reading reveals that their heroism is based on different principles. *Beowulf* and his companions are primarily motivated by secular considerations: a sincere wish to assist the elderly king is combined with their love of glory, while Andrew's mind is bent on more spiritual concerns: the liberation of St Matthew and other captives, and the conversion of pagan Mermedonians. In order to achieve this objective, however, he is, unlike *Beowulf*, not expected to wield military weapons on a battlefield, being intent on using other, spiritual devices instead: patience, fortitude, stoicism with which he endures tortures inflicted on him, prayer and miracles, all of which can be classified as spiritual weapons.⁷ In other words, *Beowulf* and his companions are secular heroes engaged in armed conflicts, while Andrew and his apostles are spiritual soldiers, saints, missionaries, soldiers of Christ, *milites Christi*, and it is their Christianity and saintly mission which make them superior to any secular hero of the pagan Germanic past. The traditional military terminology used to denote their spiritual endeavours must be therefore understood metaphorically, serving as a visual presentation of their spiritual struggle.⁸

The pagans whom Andrew is commanded to convert are also depicted as soldiers: “Duguð samnade, // hæðne hildfreca / heapum þrungeon // guðsearo gullon / garas hrysedon bolgenmode // under bordhreoðan.” (ll. 125a-128)⁹, but in reality their military activities are limited to guarding prisoners who are destined to be slaughtered after their captivity of thirty days. This discrepancy between traditional heroic images used in their traditional heroic and secular environment of *Beowulf* and their reuse in *Andreas* is even more apparent if we juxtapose the actions of Mermedonians on one side:

did their glory fail them in the fray when standards massed together, what time they were divided according as the Lord Himself, the high king of heaven, revealed to them their lot! And they were mighty men over the earth, brave leaders of the folk, bold in battle, stout of heart, when hand and buckler shielded the helm on the plain of war, on the field of fate.

⁶ Translation: often the hand of murderous men smote him heavily upon the battlefield.

⁷ For a view that the so-called Christian heroism could be exceptionally aggressive and, for example, ‘equally concerned with the capture of territory as it is with the capture of souls’ see Joy, 5-6.

⁸ In fact, this mixture of spiritual and military heroism in *Andreas* is in line with the tendencies of early Christian writers who “often used the language of warfare to describe the continuous conflict between virtue and vice. Examples abound not only in the discourse of the Fathers of the early Church, but in the Scripture itself. The Benedictine Rule also capitalised on this concept, urging monks in the best martial tradition to behave as warriors participating in armed combat. Service and obedience to God were construed as weapons and the entire membership of the monastic movement was metaphorically conscripted into a “holy army”. Even martyrdom, the ultimate expression of non-violence, was regarded as a “conquest of the devil”, and thus took a central place in God’s arsenal” (Simpkins, 28-29). For an additional view, see also Irving Jr.: “...so long as the two central virtues of courage and obedience are what is stressed, it is not hard to accept attribution of these virtues to both warriors and missionaries [in *Andreas*], with helmets, banners and spears merely the symbols of militant dedication in the face of death” (216).

⁹ Translation: The host assembled, heathen battle-wolves gathered in throngs, armour rang, spears shook, and under the shelter of shields the hearts were wrath.

Ða gesamnedon side herigeas,
 folces frumgaras; to þam fæstenne
 wærleasra werod wæpnum comon,
 hæðne hildfreca, to þæs þa hæftas ær
 under hlinscuwan hearm þrowedon. (ll. 1067-1071)¹⁰

and Beowulf and his companions on the other: “/byrnan hringdon, // gupsearo gumena; / garas stodon, // sāmanna searo samod ætgaedere, // æscholt ufan græg / wæs se irenþreat // wæpnum gewurþad (*Beowulf*, 327b-31a).¹¹ Both passages are reminiscent of the armed men gathering to discuss a plan of attack (Simpkins, 54), but there is a striking difference between Beowulf and his companions, who are getting ready to meet Hrothgar, and the Mermedonians, who are getting ready to slaughter their captives in the prison.

The impression that the traditional poetic diction used to denote Mermedonians as warriors no longer retains its traditional heroic meaning is further confirmed, for example, by the following image: “... beornas common, // wiggendra þreat, / wicgum gengan, // on mearum modige, / mæðelhegende, // æscum dealle” (1094b-1097a).¹² One would expect these fine Mermedonian warriors to rush into the battle, but all their activities are limited to casting lots to decide whom of the Mermedonians to consume instead of their prisoners rescued by the saint. Their actions are so vile and pseudo-heroic that the military imagery applied in this context functions as a gruesome parody and it can be argued that the *Andreas*-poet consciously manipulates the traditional heroic imagery in such a way as to underline a grotesque and bizarre nature of the Mermedonian inhabitants,¹³ making the difficulties of Andrew’s missionary task all the more apparent.

B. Exile

Andrew’s initial reluctance to travel to Mermedonia and obey his Lord unconditionally seems incredible at first sight.¹⁴ But Andrew’s reaction is perfectly explainable in the eyes of the poet’s Anglo-Saxon audience as Andrew’s mission is described as a kind of exile, the departure to a foreign land, an event feared by any Germanic hero

¹⁰ Translation: And mighty multitudes assembled, leaders of the folk, unto the prison came a horde of faithless men with weapons, heathen heroes, to where their prisoners suffered woe afore time, within the darkness.

¹¹ Translation: corslets rang, the war-clothes of warriors; spears stood, seamen’s weapons, all together silvery above a grove of ash, the iron-clad troop was honoured in weapons.

¹² Translation: Heroes came, a throng of warriors on their chargers, upon their steeds, men stout of heart, and counsellors strong with the spear.

¹³ See again Irving Jr.: “Travesty and parody must again be drawn in to relate the Mermedonians’ strange actions to the heroic atmosphere of the poem. What they did is necessarily depicted as mock-heroic. Only the term ‘mock-heroic’ could describe what follows, an account of frenzied military preparation by the entire army for the butchery of the defenceless boy, whose plight is presented affectingly” (229-230). See also Simpkins, p. 54: “Indeed, the poet implies that the Mermedon version of heroic aggression is almost comic.”

¹⁴ Andrew is in reality a rather reluctant saint, the fact which had been noticed already in the past and which had caused a considerable amount of uneasiness among early medieval hagiographers (DeGregorio, 454-455).

because exile meant the abandonment of a native land, separation from relatives, social degradation, poverty and hardship (Cherniss, 185), this suffering being in most cases the result of a tribe's defeat after the death of their lord and protector. Thus in *Beowulf* it is pointed out that after Beowulf's death his tribe of the Geats faces a disaster, the disintegration of their social life and the abandonment of their native land:

nē mægð scyne
 habban on healse hring-weorðunge,
 ac sceal geðmor-mōd, holdne berēafod,
 oft, nalles æne, eland tredan (ll. 3016b-3019).¹⁵

It is therefore understandable that Andrew, even though commanded by God himself to travel to Mermedonia and rescue St Matthew, is not exactly keen on obeying this command, suggesting instead that the Lord's angel might be a better man for the job:

Hu mæg ic, dryhten min, ofer deop gelad
 fore gefremman on feorne weg
 swa hrædlice, heofona scyppend,
 wuldres waldend, swa ðu worde becwist?
 Ðæt mæg engel þin eað geferan,
 <halig> of heofenum; con him holma begang,
 sealte sæstreamas ond swanrade,
 waroðfaruða gewinn ond wæterbrogan,
 wegas ofer widland. Ne synt me winas cuðe,
 eorlas elpeodige, ne þær æniges wat
 hæleða gehygdo, ne me herestræta
 ofer cald wæter cuðe syndon (ll. 190-201).¹⁶

The sea separating Andrew's present abode from the land of cannibals is marked by a number of conventional formulaic expressions, such as *holma begang* (circuit of oceans), *sealte streamas* (salty ocean-streams), *swanrad* (swan-road), *waroðfaruða gewinn* (tumult of the surf), *wæterbrogan* (terrible waters) and most importantly, *cald wæter* (cold sea-water) which further confirm a frightening nature of his projected voyage.¹⁷ Later Andrew is provided with some further information concerning his duties in Mermedonia where the emphasis is again on a risk-taking mission described in heroic terms. Thus he must expect a battle: *guðgewinn* (conflict), *hæðenra hildewoman* (heathens' tumult of war), *beorna beaducræft* (battle-craft of followers), the martial images symbolizing his spiritual fight:

¹⁵ Translation: no pretty girl shall have on her neck ring adornment, but must, sad-hearted, bereft of gold, often, not once, tread in alien land.

¹⁶ Translation: How may I journey on so distant way, over the deep sea-path thus speedily, O my God, Thou Lord of Heaven, Wielder of glory, as Thou dost say? That may Thine angel from heaven easily attain. For he knoweth the compass of the seas, the salty ocean-streams, the swan-road and the tumbling surges, the tumult of water floods, and ways across wide lands. No friends are known to me among those alien earls, neither do I know the heart of any man, nor are the ways across the cold sea-water known to me a whit.

¹⁷ For a survey of nautical images in Old English poetry, Christian and heroic, see Orchard, 298-302, who at the same time lists a number of Latin authors using the image of a dangerous sea journey as a broader metaphor for human life which must be, like a ship, brought into a safe harbour (303).

Du scealt þa fore geferan ond þin feorh beran
 in gramra gripe, ðær þe guðgewinn
 þurh hæðenra hildewoman,
 beorna beaducræft, geboden wyrðeð.
 Scealtu æninga mid ærdæge,
 emne to morgene, æt meres ende
 ceol gestigan, ond on cald wæter
 breacan ofer bæðweg (ll. 216-223a).¹⁸

Apart from this vision of Mermedonia as a land of heroic exile,¹⁹ there are two other interpretations which further demonstrate the poet's ability to use traditional and concrete terms in such a way as to make them increasingly more suggestive of their abstract and allegorical meaning (Hamilton, 150-151): Mermedonia as a land of spiritual exile and Mermedonia as an image of hell. According to the first interpretation, Andrew and Matthew can be seen as exiles, literally and spiritually, "as actual missionary peregrini and loyal followers of Jesus, they sojourn in a foreign land where their stay is characterized by social isolation and religious persecution" (Simpkins, p. 22). At the same time, their exile can be viewed from a broader perspective of the transience of human life: our life in this temporal world must be understood as a kind of exile until we eventually find our true home in heaven. As noted by numerous scholars, Mermedonians also live in a state of exile being isolated from the rest of mankind, the servants of Satan, whose paganism brings them nothing but misery and their barren land which fails to bear any fruit symbolizes their material and spiritual wretchedness (Hamilton, 151).

According to the other interpretation, supported in particular by Constance Hieatt, Mermedonia is even a more sinister place, symbolizing hell and Andrew's travel there is to be understood as the descent into hell, and the sea denoted by so many traditional synonyms and formulaic expressions is the road to hell. The idea that Andrew's journey to Mermedonia can be interpreted as the descent into hell is based on narrative typology and figural history, the early medieval doctrine which interpreted the actions of saints as the imitation of Christ, and the more faithfully their deeds resembled those of Christ, saints and biblical heroes the higher position they held in the family of saints (Rollason, 5). Andrew's suffering and tortures inflicted on him for three days in the prison, which is metaphorically a grave, and his release from it are, according to narrative typology, reminiscent of the Passion of Christ and his Resurrection (Hieatt, 52-53).

C. The *comitatus* relationship

The loyalty to one's lord was regarded as the main virtue in heroic society and the heroes who broke this bond were held in general contempt. It is therefore not surprising that the followers are determined not to part with Andrew even though they find the

¹⁸ Translation: Thou shalt fare forth and bear thy life unto the clutch of cruel men, when strife of contest will be offered, with shout of heathen warriors and battle-craft of heroes. Straight with early day, just at the dawn, at the sea's strand, thou shalt ascend thy ship and on the chill floods plunge o'er the ocean path.

¹⁹ According to Brady, Mermedonia in *Andreas* is modelled on the fens in Anglo-Saxon England settled by the British population which was in classical geographies associated with ritual cannibalism (682-683).

sea voyage so hard to endure that they fall sick during the journey and they are given a chance to be taken ashore. Their refusal to abandon their lord is worded in traditional terms of the *comitatus* relationship, the bond between the lord and his retainers based on mutual trust and respect (Irving Jr., 223; Cherniss: 187-188):

Hwider hweorfað we hlafordlease,
geomormode, gode orfeorme,
synnum wunde, gif we swicað þe?
We bioð laðe on landa gehwam,
folcum fracode, þonne fira bearn,
ellenrofe, æht besittap,
hwylc hira selost symle gelæste
hlaforde æt hilde, þonne hand ond rond
on beaduwange billum forgrunden
æt niðplegan nearu þrowedon (ll. 405-414).²⁰

The *Andreas*-poet's ability to manipulate heroic conventions in such a way as to make abstract Christian concepts easier to understand becomes even more apparent when this scene is juxtaposed with a similar passage in *Beowulf*, in which Wiglaf, Beowulf's most loyal retainer, expresses his contempt at Beowulf's retainers who deserted their lord during his fight with the dragon:

Hū sceal sinc-þego ond swyrd-gifu,
eall ēðel-wyn ēowrum cynne,
lufen ālicgean; lond-rihtes mōt
þære mæg-burge monna æghwylc
īdel hweorfan, syððan æðelingas
feorran gefricgean flēam ēowerne,
dōm-lēasan dæd. Dēað bið sēlla
eorla gehwylcum þonne edwīt-līf! (ll. 2880-2891)²¹

Both *Beowulf* and *Andreas* cherish the concept of loyalty which is in both poems embedded in traditional poetic expressions, although with two essential differences. First, in *Beowulf*, Wiglaf and his companions obey a secular master, while Andrew and his retainers serve the highest lord of heaven and earth, and second, if in *Beowulf* the retainers fail their lord, in *Andreas* they remain loyal, which additionally stresses the superiority of Christ's soldiers to any secular *comitatus*.

At a literal level Andrew is characterized as a traditional military leader surrounded by devoted followers. At a metaphoric level, however, *Andreas* can be regarded as a tale of discipleship, the bond between Andrew and his companions being reminiscent of the relationship between Christ, often depicted as a teacher, and his apostles. In fact, in the

²⁰ Translation: Whither may we turn without a lord, soul-sorrowful, empty of good, wounded with sin, if we depart from thee? For we are hated in every land, of any fold abhorred when stalwart sons of men hold counsel, which of them hath ever best upholden thir lord in battle, when hand and shield upon the plain of war, hacked with swords, in the sport of strife, suffered heavy hardship.

²¹ Translation: How must treasure-receipt and sword-giving, all native joy for your kin, delight cease! Of land-rights must of your clan every man become deprived, when nobles from afar learn of your flight, gloryless deed: death is better for all men than life of dishonour!

poem, Andrew's teaching activity is referred to several times: first in Achaia where he preaches before his departure to Mermedonia, then on board with Jesus and angels, and finally in Mermedonia when the inhabitants are eventually willing to respond positively to Andrew's missionary endeavours (Kiser, 66-67). The sea journey can be interpreted as a kind of intellectual testing where Andrew must answer correctly Christ's questions relating to various aspects of Christianity – in other words, he must prove his orthodoxy and his ability to preach – and only then he is allowed to start teaching in Mermedonia (Kiser, 68; Cherniss, 187; Hamilton, 154-155). To sum up, in *Andreas* the traditional concept of the *comitatus* relationship has been modified to obtain a new, Christian association, that of a spiritual bond between a prophet and his disciples, serving as another example of Andrew's imitation of Christ.

D. The hall-life

The hall-life was one of central motifs in Old English traditional poetry, the hall being a symbol of prosperity, security, friendship, royal splendour and dignity where the generosity in the distribution of gifts occupies a central position:

heal-æ, rna mæst; scōp him Heort naman,
 sē þe his wordes geweald wīde hæfde.
 Hē bēot ne ālēh, bēagas dælde,
 sinc æt symle. Sele hlīfade
 hēah ond horn-gēap, heaðo-wylma bād,
 lāðan līges; ne wæs hit lenge þā gēn,
 þæt se ecg-hete āþum-sweoran
 after wæl-nīðe wæcnan scolde (ll. 78-85).²²

In *Beowulf*, the destruction of Heorot is explained as a consequence of a family feud and another passage from *Beowulf* – even though not referring to Heorot – is also suggestive of the violence and destruction which were a common lot of each military society:

Næs hearpan wyn,
 gomen glēo-bēames, nē gōd hafoc
 geond sæl swingeð, nē se swifta mearh
 burh-stede bēateð. Bealo-cwealm hafað
 fela feorh-cynna forð onsended! (ll. 2262b-2266)²³

Nevertheless, even though the hall-life in *Beowulf* is presented as fragile and temporary, the halls of ancient kings stand for everything that is dignified, courtly and

²² Translation: the best of royal halls, he named it Heorot, he whose words weight had everywhere, he did not lie when he boasted; rings he dealt out, riches at his feast. The hall towered, high and horn-gabled, it awaited the cruel surges of hateful flames, nor was the time yet nigh, that the furious edge-malice of the son-in-law and father-in-law, arising from deadly enmity would inevitably awaken.

²³ Translation: there was no harp's joy, delight of glee-wood, nor good hawk soaring through the hall, nor swift horse trampling the courtyard; baleful death has many of the living kin sent forth.

positive in the world of heroic society (Hume, 66-67). The halls in Mermedonia, by contrast, are no longer seen as places of dignified enjoyment. The frustrated and starving Mermedonians are so obsessed with the thought of food that they lose all their interest in the hall-life nor do they care for their treasures any longer: ‘næs him to maðme wynn, // hyht to hordgestreonum.’ (ll. 1113-1114) – they had no joy in treasure, no delight in precious things – and as a result of famine, their halls are left deserted (Cherniss, 184; Irving Jr., 230):

Þa wæs wop hæfen in wera burgum,
hlud heriges cyrm; hreopon friccan,
mændon meteleaste, meðe stodon
hungre gehæfte. Hornsalu wunedon
weste, winræced; welan ne benohton
beornas to brucane on þa bitran tid (ll. 1155-1160).²⁴

The abandoned halls symbolise social disintegration of the Mermedonian society which must pay the price for its paganism and obedience to Satan by being struck by famine which nearly forces the Mermedonians to resort to the most abominable kind of cannibalism: eating their own children. According to the Old Testament, cannibalism is a curse placed on a nation for having turned its back on God, who punishes them with such severe famine that they are turned into cannibals eating their own children (Ezekiel 5:10, Jeremiah 19:9, Lamentations 4:9-10), the crime, which would have been committed in Mermedonia as well if St Andrew had not intervened in time (ll. 1108-1116a). The Mermedonians’ cannibalism can be explained as a kind of punishment for their paganism which they must abandon and accept Christianity before they are eventually forgiven (Casteen, 77-78; Godlove, 142-143; Bolintineanu, 162).

The halls, even though magnificent and finely built, cannot be a source of pleasure in the society ruled by Satan and it is only at the end of the poem when St Andrew succeeds in converting the inhabitants that the Mermedonians and their halls are allowed to be seen in a positive light, as a symbol of the reformed Mermedonian society:

Sægde his fusne hige,
þæt he þa goldburg ofgifan wolde,
secga seledream ond sincgestreon,
beorht beagsealu, ond him brimpisan
æt sæs faroðe secan wolde (ll. 1654b-1658).²⁵

The vocabulary employed in this passage to praise the reformed Christian Mermedonia could be used without any reluctance in the context of an ideal heroic society where halls are depicted as centres of well-regulated social life (Garner, 61). The lines also suggest that Andrew’s task has been successfully accomplished and that he is finally free to return to Achaia leaving behind a peaceful and Christian country.

²⁴ Translation: Wailing was lifted up in the cities of men, loud lamentation of the host. Heralds cried aloud, men meatless mourned, and sad of heart stood round about, fast in the bonds of hunger. Empty abode the gabled dwelling, wine-halls. Nor any weal had men to joy in at that bitter hour.

²⁵ Translation: He spake his mind to leave them, that he would fain quit that gold-burg, the revelry of men and store of treasure, and bright song-halls, and on the sea-strand seek a ship.

III. CONCLUSION

This paper discusses four examples of the interaction between the world of traditional Germanic society on one hand and the world of Christianity on the other. As a result, it would be unwise to make too general conclusions on the basis of such a small sample. Nevertheless, it is safe to argue that the selected examples of traditional heroic concepts are in *Andreas* reused in a new Christian context in an artistically convincing way and that the traditional diction is successfully subjected to the poem's Christian theme. It can also be pointed out that in the four examples discussed in this paper the *Andreas*-poet has successfully managed to juxtapose the Christian and heroic worlds, express metaphorical Christian concepts in the traditional form of heroic verse and make abstract Christian ideas comprehensible by using a number of concrete traditional poetic images.

Novo mesto, Slovenia

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SUMMARIES IN SLOVENE – POVZETKI V SLOVENŠČINI

UDK 929Stanonik J.

Mirko Jurak

JANEZ STANONIK – DEVETDESETLETNIK

Redni univerzitetni profesor za angleško in ameriško književnost dr. Janez STANONIK je 2. januarja letos slavil devetdesetletnico svojega bogatega življenja. Je še vedno čil in poln zamisli za bodoče delo, o čemer pričata tudi dva članka, ki ju je pripravil za objavo letos. Zanimivo je, da ga oba prispevka o treh slovenskih rekah (Mislinji, Hudinji in Voglajni), povezujeta s Celjem, kjer je Janez Stanonik preživel svojo mladost ter tudi z etimološkimi vprašanji o katerih je pisal tudi na začetku svoje znanstvene poti. Še posebej je za njegovo delo pomembno dejstvo, da je leta 1968 ustanovil revijo *Acta Neophilologica*. V pričujočem članku omenjam še nekatere najpomembnejše dolžnosti, ki jih je imel na Filozofski fakulteti in na rektoratu Univerze v Ljubljani. V imenu številnih generacij študentov angleštike, ki jih je vzgojil, v imenu sodelavcev in prijateljev ter v svojem imenu, želim profesorju Janezu Stanoniku še mnogo zdravih in ustvarjalnih let.

UDK 821.111(73)–31.09Laric P.:908(497.4Maribor)

Jerneja Petrič

UMETNIŠKOST IN POPULARNOST V ROMANU PAULA LARICA *MARIBOR REMEMBERED*

Izhajajoč iz predpostavke, da sta visoka in popularna književnost v današnjem času tako prepleteni, da je nemogoče potegniti jasno ločnico med njima, avtorica predstavlja delo Paula Larica *Maribor Remembered* (1989) kot hibrid v žanrskem in umetniškem smislu. Roman, ki ima jasne avtobiografske poteze, posebej odlikuje

napeta kriminalna zgodba, ki poskrbi za potrebno ravnotežje z nostalgijo prežetim spominom iz preteklosti. Ena od izrazitejših kvalitete dela je humor, ki razbremeni stalno naraščajočo pripovedno napetost in mestoma prehaja v satiro. Opazne so slogovne kvalitete dela, saj Laric pripovedni slog spretno prilagaja vsebini in pa etnična komponenta, kjer se je Laric spretno izognil stereotipni pripovedi o vrnitvi v stari kraj. Vse omenjeno *Maribor Remembered* uvršča med dobro napisane, berljive popularne romane.

UDK 316.74:276.2(73)

Maja Štekovič

PRESTOPANJE KULTURNIH MEJA: REPREZENTACIJE AMIŠEV V AMERIŠKI KULTURI

Članek obravnava tipologijo amiškega leposlovja, reprezentacije Amišev v ameriški literaturi, ter vlogo avtorjev, založnikov in bralcev. Posebna pozornost je posvečena vlogi, ki jo imajo filmski režiserji kot kulturni popotniki, pri prestopanju kulturnih meja s čimer vstopajo v amiško kulturno okolje. Članek zagovarja bolj kritično obravnavo amiškega načina življenja s prikazom spreminjanja percepcije amiške skupnosti skozi čas – od časov, ko so bili Amiši žrtve verskega preganjanja v lastni domovini do takrat, ko so postali s pomočjo literature in filma izredno romantizirani ljudje v obljubljeni deželi.

UDK 821.111–2.03=112.2:792(436–89Ljubljana)

Margarete Rubik

ANGLEŠKA DRAMATIKA V NEMŠKEM GLEDALIŠČU V LJUBLJANI V ZADNJIH DESETLETJIH HABSBURŠKE MONARHIJE

Avtorica v prispevku raziskuje repertoar angleških iger v nemškem gledališču v Ljubljani v zadnjem obdobju monarhije in njihov sprejem v lokalnem časopisu v nemščini, v *Laibacher Zeitung*. Obravnava le dramatiko, ne pa tudi oper in operete. Angleška dramatika je bila seveda uprizorjena v nemških prevodih, za razliko od iger uprizorjenih v slovenskem jeziku vse od 18. stoletja naprej, zlasti še posebej v okviru kroga Dramatičnega društva ustanovljenega leta 1867. Izbor iger vseeno daje zanimiv vpogled nemške gledališke kritike ob koncu 19. in v začetku 20. stoletja do angleške kulture kot tudi do samopodobe, ki jo je želelo ustvariti Nemško gledališče v Ljubljani.

Polona Vičič

ETNIČNA PROBLEMATIKA V DELIH JOHNA STEINBECKA

John Steinbeck je avtor, katerega dela so tako pri širši javnosti kakor tudi pri literarnih kritikih izzvala nasprotujoče si odzive, vse od popolnega navdušenja do zavrnitve. Tako razdvojen odziv vsaj deloma lahko pripišemo dejstvu, da je Steinbeck v svojih delih veliko pozornosti namenil perečim družbenim vprašanjem v svoji domovini, med drugim tudi etnični problematiki, katera bo obravnavana v tem članku.

UDK 821.111(73:520)–32.09Jones Nakanishi W.

Nataša Potočnik

WENDY JONES NAKANISHI - AMERIČANKA, ŽIVEČA NA JAPONSKEM

Wendy Jones Nakanishi je profesorica angleškega jezika in primerjalnih kultur na univerzi Shikoku Gakuin University na otoku Shikoku na jugu Japonske. Svoje otroštvo je Wendy Jones preživela v majhnem mestu v Indiani (ZDA) in prejela mednarodno univerzitetno izobrazbo v Indiani, v Angliji in na Škotskem. Nakanishijeva je poleg svojih strokovnih del in člankov s področja angleške literature iz 18. stoletja, analize sodobnih japonskih in britanskih avtorjev (kritične monografije, kritike knjig) v zadnjih letih izdala tudi več kratkih zgodb, ki temeljijo na njenih lastnih izkušnjah o življenju na Japonskem v zadnjih sedemindvajsetih letih. Tako kot Američanka, univerzitetna profesorica in žena Japonca ter mati treh sinov, v svojih kratkih zgodbah, ki so bile izdane v številnih literarnih revijah na Japonskem in v tujini, izraža pogled tujke na raznolikost in velik pomen tujih kultur (predvsem Japonske), običajev in sprejemanju le- teh.

UDK 821.112.2'04–131.09:159.942

*Marija Javor Briški*STRAH – ŽALOVANJE – SRD. ‚EMOCIJE‘ V *PESMI O NIBELUNGIIH*

Prispevek se osredotoči na prevladujoče emocije v *Pesmi o Nibelungih*: na strah, žalovanje in srd. Pričujoče upodobitve emocij so med drugim vedenjski vzorci, ki so podvrženi določenim konvencijam in katerim se pripisuje določen pomen v socialni interakciji. Avtorica jih v glavnem obravnava z vidika specifičnosti spola, v njihovem odnosu do racionalnosti in kot simbolno dejanje, odgovarja pa tudi na vprašanje, ali je

žalovanje vedno reakcija na popravljivo zlo oziroma ali se poraja srd dejansko le takrat, ko se zdi, da je zlo reverzibilno.

UDK 81'255.4:821.112.2(494)–31.09Rakusa I.

Barbara Jesenovec

POETIČNA AVTOBIOGRAFIJA *MEHR MEER* ILME RAKUSA

Namen prispevka je analizirati knjigo *Mehr Meer* švicarske avtorice Ilme Rakusa iz perspektive žanrskega poimenovanja. Besedilo vsebuje številne avtobiografske elemente in aluzije, vendar je delo hkrati izrazito literarno oblikovano in se stilsko gledano pravzaprav ne razlikuje od drugih besedil avtorice. Ker je knjiga *Mehr Meer* napisana na izrazito poetičen način, ki je značilen za avtorico, in ker je oblikovana s pomočjo različnih literarnih strategij, se zdi, da delo najbolje opisuje izraz literarizirana ali poetična avtobiografija.

UDK 821.131.1–97.09Panigarola F.:27–475.5«16«

Fabio Giunta

FRANCESCO PANIGAROLA: IL PREDICATORE

V 17. stoletju je pridiga književna oblika tako v Italiji kakor v Evropi. Francesco Panigarola (1548-1598), s katerim se ukvarja pričujoči prispevek, je v razvoju te literarne zvrsti igral pomembno vlogo. Njegovo delo *Il Predicatore* (»Pridigar«, 1609), ki je izšlo posmrtno, je lep primer tedanje retorike, ki se sicer sklicuje na klasične vzore, dejansko pa uporablja protireformacijske prijeme.

UDK 821.131.1–992.09:908(497.5):908(495)«17«

Ricciardo Ricorda

POTOPISA ALBERTA FORTISA IN SAVERIA SCROFANIJA

V času razsvetljenstva je bilo potopisje še posebej bogato. Pričujoči prispevek se ukvarja z dvema potopisoma: *Viaggio in Dalmazia* Alberta Fortisa in *Viaggio in Grecia* Saveria Scrofanijsa. Oba avtorja opisujeta »lokalno« prebivalstvo in zanju je to način, kako se približati drugemu.

Ursula Reuter-Mayring

GIUSEPPE BARETTI: LA FRUSTA LETTERARIA

Avtorica piše o literarnem dnevniku G. Barettija, *La Frusta Letteraria* (1763–65), ki je v celoti zaprta pesniška fikcija in literarni konstrukt v skladu s pesniškimi principi svoje dobe.

UDK 821.111'02–131.09

Alenka Divjak

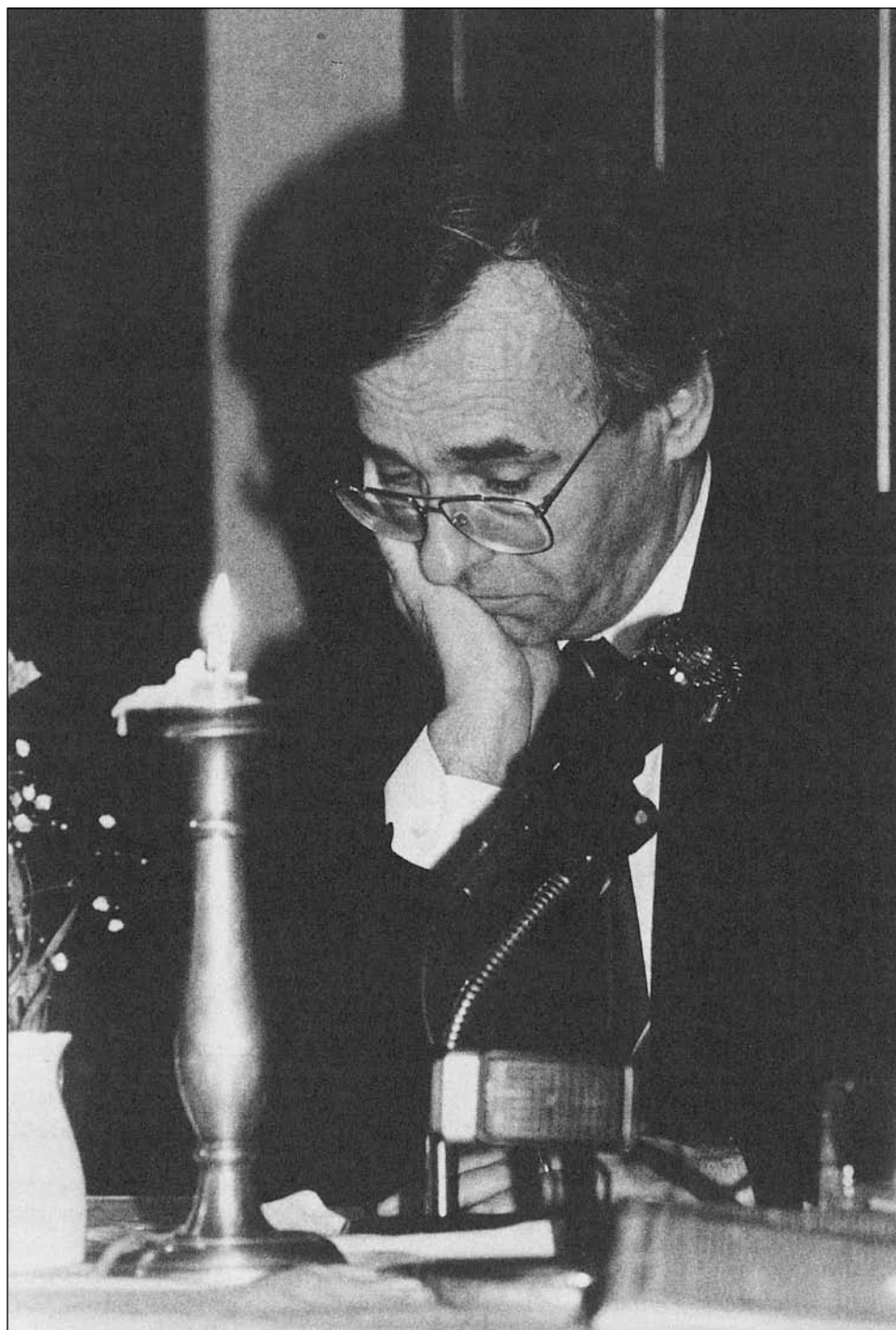
UPORABA TRADICIONALNE JUNAŠKE ETIKE IN PESNIŠKIH IDIOMOV V
ANDREASU: UMETNIŠKO NEPRIMERNO RAVNANJE ALI PREPRIČLJIVO
PREPLETANJE TRADICIONALNIH POSVETNIH IN NOVIH KRŠČANSKIH
IDEJ?

Članek se ukvarja s staroangleško krščansko pesnitvijo *Andreas*, ki se osredotoča na misionarsko dejavnost sv. Andreja v poganski deželi Mermedoniji. *Andreas*, čeprav pesnitev z izrazito krščansko tematiko, klasificirana kot *življenje svetnika*, izstopa po številu konvencionalnih pesniških idiomov, fraz in formul, prevladujočih v tradicionalni staroangleški junaški poeziji. Tradicionalni pesniški material so uporabljale tudi druge staroangleške krščanske pesnitve, vendar ne tako intenzivno in dosledno kot *Andreas*. Področje tega članka je izrazito ozko, ker se osredotoča na štiri primere uporabe tradicionalnih posvetnih idej v hagiografskem kontekstu *Andreas*a. Da bi bile razlike med tradicionalnimi posvetnimi idejami in krščanskimi vrednotami bolje razvidne, se članek naslanja tudi na najobsežnejšo staroangleško junaško pesnitev *Beowulf*, ki ji po mnenju znanstvenikov *Andreas* dolguje veliko slogovnih vzporednic in pesniških podob. Članek ugotavlja, da je v teh štirih primerih, ki so obravnavani v članku: opis sv. Andreja kot tradicionalnega germanskega bojevnika, motiv izgnanstva, zvestoba svojemu gospodu in življenje v palači, ki so podrobno obravnavani v članku, prišlo do pomembnega vsebinskega premika. Ti štirje obravnavani primeri interakcije med svetom poganske vojaške družbe na eni in svetom krščanstva na drugi strani pridobe v *Andreasu* novo krščansko vsebino, kar samo dodatno potrjuje mnenje anglosaksonistov, da se je bila tradicionalna poezija sposobna prilagoditi spremenjenim družbenim razmeram in da so ji pokristjanjeni Anglosasi vdihnili novo življenje, poskrbeli za njen zapis in s tem za njeno ohranitev do današnjih dni.

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**À MONSIEUR LE PROFESSEUR ANDREJ CAPUDER -
À L'OCCASION DE SON SOIXANTE-DIXIÈME
ANNIVERSAIRE**



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Les auteurs des études publiées en 2012 dans le *supplementum* de la revue scientifique *Acta neophilologica* dédient leurs écrits à M. Andrej Capuder, professeur à la Faculté des Lettres de Ljubljana, capitale de la Slovénie. En effet, son œuvre rayonnante et pluriforme a honoré les cercles académiques, à Ljubljana et ailleurs, lui permettant d'entrer dans l'Académie européenne des sciences et beaux arts en mars 2010 sans se contenter du cadre étroit qu'impose le travail strictement académique, il a aussi enrichi le roman, la poésie et le théâtre slovènes, en reprenant des sources antiques (*Médée*, *Sonnets de Rome*) et l'actualité du XXe siècle (le cycle romanesque). Il a contribué visiblement à la traduction slovène moderne (*La Divine Comédie*, Charles Baudelaire, Francesco Petrarca). Ne pouvant éviter les défis lancés par le processus de démocratisation de la Slovénie, il est devenu le témoin des événements du siècle auxquels il avait activement participé. Désormais son œuvre occupe une place importante dans l'histoire littéraire et politique slovène.

Ad multos annos!

Boštjan Marko Turk, rédacteur du recueil.

HENRI BERGSON - LE MAÎTRE À PENSER DE L'ŒUVRE ROMANESQUE D'ANDREJ CAPUDER

Boštjan Marko Turk

Résumé

La présente étude se donne pour objectif de porter un regard critique sur les éléments du bergsonisme présents dans l'ensemble de l'œuvre romanesque d'Andrej Capuder. En effet, ses romans sont ancrés dans l'expérience de la durée vécue ou la subjectivité, basée sur la négation du temps objectif que présente la coexistence de tous les termes bergsoniens impliqués dans l'œuvre. Le bergsonisme permet aux protagonistes de prendre, en s'appuyant sur l'élan vital, la conscience des aspects multi-formes de leur propre personnalité face à l'Histoire.

Mot clefs : Henri Bergson, durée, élan vital, mémoire, roman, histoire, libération, amour, guerre, mort, système totalitaire

Le chemin d'Andrej Capuder, qui s'ouvre sur les premiers essais poétiques dans les années 1960, se poursuit avec de nombreuses traductions, dont celle de *La Divine Comédie*,¹ couronné par le plus prestigieux prix de traduction slovène,² témoigne à l'aube de son soixante-dixième anniversaire de la grande vitalité de l'auteur. La vigueur est le soubassement inhérent et inévitable de cette intensité subversive qui marque l'essentiel dans l'itinéraire de celui que le public slovène considère volontiers comme le plus grand connaisseur de la philosophie et de la littérature françaises au sein de l'Université de Ljubljana.

Le coup d'envoi initial de cette œuvre qui ne s'est jamais laissée assigner à demeure, on pourrait le chercher dans l'appréhension du bond épistémologique reposant sur l'opposition du temps, spatialisé par la gamme des outils que la commodité humaine peut imaginer, et la conscience de l'individu dans son sentiment de durer. Cette force étant tellement coextensive de la vie même qu'elle se présente comme un *apriori* de toutes les démarches de la pensée. À vrai dire, l'impulsion initiale n'a pas pu éviter l'ontologie en mouvement : les pages qui l'ont suivie cernent ses étapes et agissent comme un mot de passe guidant infailliblement à la destination.

¹ Dante Alighieri, *Božanska komedija*, Obzorja, Maribor, 1972.

² Le prix Sovre (Sovretova nagrada) décerné en 1973.

Il a fallu le XXe siècle pour que Henri Bergson découvre l'écart entre la durée vécue et le temps réduit en espace. Ainsi l'œuvre romanesque d'Andrej Capuder - le poursuivant - ne tarde pas : elle en est imprégné littéralement dès ses premiers pages. En prenant en compte le genre modulable de sa trilogie dont le titre définitif ne sera jamais là, grâce au fait que « *La réalité donnée, ce n'est pas être, c'est la durée pure, c'est le pur devenir* », ³ on voit se dresser, sur cette ligne d'action proposée en vue épistémologique, avec les retombés bien au-delà de la philosophie, presque érigée en maxime la mise en regard métaphorique de la pensée bergsonienne, surprise *in situ* : « *Les traces de la passion qui soutenait l'organisme vivant, faisant battre son cœur, palpiter l'arbre artériel et agiter les muscles et la chair, ne disparaissent pas soudainement du visage de la dépouille mortelle, semant, en quelques instants, à tout vent l'horreur, la destruction et la mort; pourtant petit à petit les rides s'aplatissent irréversiblement : la chaleur disparaît et pas à pas le bruit lointain du poumon vidé fait preuve définitive que nous assistons désormais à un corps privé des derniers signes de la vie – l'impression de la sorte remplissait les Italiens qui poursuivaient, avec précaution et non sans soucis l'exode massif des troupes Austro-hongroises. Pourtant, leur peur, cette fois-ci, était inutile. Le fauve a péri pour jamais* ». ⁴

Les traits de la passion vitale qu'on décèle sur le visage d'un défunt, comme dernier signe de la vie disparaissant, est l'image qui illustre les passages focaux de *L'Évolution créatrice*. En fait, l'œuvre majeure d'Henri Bergson explique les postulats fondamentaux de sa philosophie, à commencer par les idées générales du processus évolutif, continuant par l'intelligence et l'instinct, terminant par la vie et la conscience et surtout la place de l'homme en face de soi et en face de l'espace qui l'entoure. ⁵ Au milieu nous retrouvons le passage parabolique : « *Et notre plus ardent enthousiasme, quand il s'extériorise en action, se fige parfois si naturellement en froid calcul d'intérêt ou de vanité, l'un adopte si aisément la forme de l'autre, que nous pourrions les confondre ensemble, douter de notre propre sincérité, nier la bonté et l'amour; si nous ne savions que le mort garde encore quelques temps les traits du vivant* ». ⁶

L'identité de l'image parabolique inaugurant la trame de *Rapsodija 20* et le passage explicatif de *L'Évolution créatrice* est loin d'être une coïncidence. L'œuvre romanesque d'Andrej Capuder est en fait la confrontation de la durée vécue et le temps réduit en espace, celui-ci étant représenté par la rigueur mécanique, ce qui est la force que ses protagonistes ne peuvent pas peser dans la balance. Elle se manifeste en dernière instance comme la marque distinctive des êtres humains se traduisant par la conscience de périr et les contours palpables de l'anéantissement, la mort. Dans sa forme perpétuelle, elle englobe les héros des romans, poursuivant leur chemin à travers la diachronie la plus immédiate de l'espace, situé au niveau de l'individualité de l'autrui, c'est-à-dire, l'histoire. Le contact de l'individu et l'espace vital de son existence pourrait être désigné par le mot « endosmose ». Ainsi : « *Or, entre cette succession sans extériorité et cette extériorité sans succession une espèce d'échange se produit, assez analogue à ce*

³ Cresson André, *Bergson*. Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1961, p. 41.

⁴ Andrej Capuder, *Rapsodija 20*, Slovenska matica, Ljubljana, 1982, p. 9.

⁵ Henri Bergson, « *L'Évolution créatrice* ». *Œuvres*. Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1970, pp. 578-650.

⁶ Henri Bergson, *Œuvres*, p. 603.

que les physiciens appellent un phénomène de l'endosmose ».⁷ La phénoménologie de l'être humain, pris dans le cycle romanesque d'Andrej Capuder, repose sur la pulsation constante que constitue l'écart entre l'action extérieure englobant les circonstances dans lesquelles se trouve impliquée une destinée particulière dans un temps (successions des moments extérieurs) et le recul dans la simultanéité que présentent les moments infinis et innombrables de la conscience humaine. La lutte est désormais sans merci : « *Notre entité profonde se situe à un niveau différent, au niveau de la durée qu'il nous faudra davantage extraire des entraves de l'espace* ». ⁸

En effet, l'extraction « des entraves de l'espace » est un socle sur lequel s'érigent les vastes fresques dans l'œuvre, les portraits des personnes, des relations et des conflits qui sont dès le début compris dans un titre qui indique nettement la limitation du temps par l'étendue indéfinie. En fait, le syntagme *Rapsodija 20* que l'on rencontre dès le frontispice, loin d'être un cryptogramme ou un intitulé qui rendrait le contenu des livres plus compréhensible en le simplifiant, juxtapose deux éléments qui sont les moteurs puissant de la dialectique bergsonienne. Le nombre « 20 » traduit les limites exactes de *l'exitus et redditus* dans lesquelles apparaissent les protagonistes de la première partie du cycle. En réalité l'image du fauve ayant péri, déjà évoqué, indique la fin de l'époque monarchique et le début du XXe siècle, à la fois. Il porte encore les « traces du vivant » puisque, dorénavant les souvenirs et les empreintes que la période a laissés sur les générations qu'elle a consommée, continueront à subsister sous une forme plus épurée, se présentant comme une suite divergente des simultanités, c'est-à-dire, la durée. L'autre bout de ce temps prismatique sera à deux décennies du premier, à la fin du long cycle qui sépare l'armistice de 1918 et le 1 septembre 1939, un des moments culminant du siècle passé.

En ce qui concerne le substantif compris dans le syntagme, la rhapsodie, il faut d'abord rappeler qu'il désigne une suite de phrases musicales libres et une inspiration pouvant englober aussi bien des sujets populaires que des sujet plus épiques, modernes et sophistiqués. Cette pièce instrumentale illustre brillamment la sensibilité bergsonienne. En effet, la mélodie est l'image favorite, par laquelle le philosophe exprime son terme majeur. Andrej Capuder insiste sur ce point. « *La mélodie ou la phrase musicale est pour Henri Bergson une des images favorites de la durée, puisque tout dépend, chez elle, de l'état de notre vigilance : si nous voulons, c'est un organisme, si nous ne le voulons pas, ce n'est que la suite des notes clairsemées. En plus, la mélodie est un évocateur excellent, capable de rappeler intégralement les tréfonds de notre passé* ». ⁹

Dans le passage cité, on voit la prédilection de l'auteur pour l'appréhension du temps vécu par la conscience, phénomène par lequel se distingue infailliblement tout le dynamisme de la réalité humaine. Bergson revient continuellement sur le flux ininterrompu qui s'écoule entre les bornes du temps linéaire. Il peut être reconstruit par l'homme grâce à l'analogie avec une phrase musicale qui devient une mélodie. Voici un des extraits les plus significatifs : « *La durée toute pure est la forme que prend la succession de nos états de conscience quand notre moi se laisse vivre, quand il s'abstient*

⁷ Henri Bergson, *Œuvres*. p. 73.

⁸ Andrej Capuder : « Henri Bergson ali osmišljena materija ». *Esej o smehu*, Slovenska matica Ljubljana, Ljubljana, 1977, p. 197.

⁹ Andrej Capuder : « Henri Begson ali osmišljena materija », p. 200.

*d'établir une séparation entre l'état présent et les états antérieurs. Il n'a pas besoin pour cela, de s'absorber tout entier dans la sensation ou l'idée qui passe, car alors, au contraire, il cesserait de durer. Il n'a pas besoin, non plus d'oublier les états intérieurs : il suffit qu'en se rappelant ces états il ne les juxtapose pas à l'état actuel comme un point à un autre point, mais les organise avec lui, comme il arrive quand nous nous rappelons, fondues pour ainsi dire ensemble, les notes d'une mélodie ».*¹⁰

On s'aperçoit que, dans le roman, l'idée du titre intervient, dans sa fraîcheur toujours renouvelée, lorsque l'auteur propose la synthèse des événements passés. Ces moments de l'œuvre fonctionnent à la fois comme une prise de repères sur lesquels s'organise l'évolution du texte révolu, et comme une sorte de phare jetant la lumière sur ce que le lecteur va encore découvrir. *Rapsodija 20* est une œuvre organisée de façon ingénieuse, pourvue de structures qui ne pourraient pas exister sans la pensée bergsonienne. On les retrouve aux pivots focaux, à la fin ou au début de l'un ou l'autre chapitre qui, eux aussi, traduisent formellement la même idée de reprise et de contemplation. Le roman s'ouvre notamment sur une fresque savamment reprise dans l'image du dénombrement homérique déjà évoquée précédemment, pour avancer vers la scène, à la fin du chapitre VI, où le vieux France Neubauer, l'ancien et le futur maire de la capitale slovène, dresse le bilan de la période, de sa vie et de la nation entière. L'instant est finalement venu pour le petit peuple slovène, coincé entre trois grandes nations européennes, de fêter son indépendance relative ; les cris dans les rues suscitent chez l'écrivain des impressions qu'il résume succinctement : « *Ils buvaient et chantaient, se réjouissaient et pleuraient. Entre le vin répandu sur les tables et les tessons des bouteilles prenait la fin l'époque de l'asservissement millénaire* ». ¹¹

L'endosmose est l'espace du temps objectif mesuré pour les besoins du roman par les débris de l'empire et des bouteilles, ce qui constitue une image, un rapprochement, et non l'expression exacte. De l'autre côté, il y a le temps subjectif du héros France Neubauer qui se traduit par l'idée de la phrase musicale, soigneusement introduite par la rencontre du vieil homme et l'instrument préféré de sa femme, le piano. Le maire de Ljubljana a perdu son épouse durant l'été 1914, pendant la saison qui marque le commencement des deux décennies et du XXe siècle, comme nous l'avons déjà dit précédemment. De ce décor homogène, il descend en soi pour retrouver l'objet de son adoration ou, mieux, pour lui exprimer ses sentiments : « *Son intérieur a été fracassé suite à la quête ... de la parole qui pourrait en même temps excuser, expliquer, accuser, se plaindre et apporter du réconfort mais surtout boucler le cercle: mémoire et actualité, trépas et occurrence, faute et absolution, enfin, lui et la défunte. Il avait le pressentiment de ce qu'il était en train de dire, mais soudainement la honte l'envahit. En face de tant de tombeaux, de tenaillement et de saleté, au-dessus de la tranchée, à travers les barreaux des cellules, de cette maison dévastée, une attrition descendait sur lui. Il avait honte à proférer ce qu'il voudrait, de tout son cœur et de toute son âme. Sa main est retombée sur le clavier. Le ton nouveau qui naissait renforcé était comme une écluse qui relâchait l'amas des quantités d'eau jusqu'alors inimaginables. Les souvenirs obnubilés par les années réapparaissaient, lui montrant l'image des cheveux noirs sur une épaule blanche, de la poitrine et de sa taille élégante. Tout d'un coup, il a décidé*

¹⁰ Herni Bergson, *Œuvres*, p. 67.

¹¹ Andrej Capuder, *Rapsodija 20*, p. 32.

de l'appeler. Avec un effort visible il a desserré la mâchoire pour articuler ce qu'il ne lui avait jamais dit de son vivant : « Amour ».¹²

L'endosmose de la philosophie de la durée, appuyée sur le fécond appareil des notions, parmi lesquelles une place prestigieuse est vouée à la « mélodie », n'est pas toujours explicitement présente dans le roman. Elle peut, au contraire, être aisément déduite du contexte ; pourtant aux points incontournables, là où la trame du texte se cristallise de façon à laisser entrevoir le futur arrangement des événements aussi bien qu'à récapituler ce qui s'est passé jusqu'à ce moment-là, l'apperception immédiate des termes bergsoniens ne tarde pas à apparaître dans sa brillante splendeur. Notamment, il existe un passage au milieu du livre, à la fin du chapitre intitulé « L'homme du Conseil de Trente »,¹³ où les idées de l'écrivain prennent corps sans équivoque, enrichissant ce qu'on a découvert jusque là en introduisant le concept suprême de la philosophie bergsonienne, c'est-à-dire l'image. « *Corpus est mens momentanea sed carens recordatione* »¹⁴, note Albert Thibaudet, l'un des plus profonds connaisseurs de cette philosophie. Cela signifie qu'il manque au corps, celui-ci étant équivoque d'un objet, quelque chose comme une ancre pour s'engager dans la simultanéité d'un temps non spatialisé. Cet outil, c'est l'image dotée d'un rôle ontologique : « *Les images, c'est l'être même, tel que l'intuition de la durée pure nous le révèle en nous et tel que la sympathie divinatrice nous le révèle partout* ».¹⁵ L'image désigne en extension ce qui est au-delà de la limite d'être dénoté ou conceptualisé : « *L'image est ainsi un symbole non conceptuel le symbole de ce qui ne peut pas être symbolisé : tout symbolisme a sa validité tant qu'il expose une vue sur les choses : appliqué au moi, il devient image et l'image sera rendue à son vrai sens si on la délivre du symbolisme pour lui rendre sa fonction propre : être la manifestation de l'activité symbolique fondamentale du moi qui dure* ».¹⁶ L'image, appliquée au moi est l'indice de l'égalité vérifiée pour toutes les valeurs que sous-entendent les signifiants qui la constituent. Les mots-clefs de *Rapsodija 20* peuvent sans encombre se ramener à la spatialisation du temps linéaire qui engloutit les personnages, c'est-à-dire à l'histoire. Il est vrai que les deux décennies (1918 – 1939) sont l'espace où règne la paix. Pourtant, celle-ci n'est que provisoire : le roman commence par la fin d'un carnage et est comme un pont jeté jusqu'à un autre massacre sanglant. La parabole homérique de l'armée dissoute d'un côté et le suicide de France Neubar à la fin de l'autre se tiennent la main : à l'intérieur de la paume, il y a de la souffrance, de la violence et de la mort charnelle. « *Toute perception est conscience d'images, dont pour chacun, l'image privilégiée de son corps* ».¹⁷ De ce point de vue, l'image appliquée au moi, ne surprend pas. C'est la citadelle¹⁸ qu'on assiège. Dans les batailles qui se déroulent à l'infini, si on prend comme mesure temporelle la durée de l'existence humaine, pendant des siècles. On n'en entrevoit pas la fin, puisqu'elle n'est pas concevable et là commence à s'esquisser

¹² Andrej Capuder, *Rapsodija 20*, p. 37. .

¹³ Andrej Capuder, *Rapsodija 20*, p. 131.

¹⁴ Albert Thibaudet, *Le Bergsonisme*, Paris, Nouvelle Revue Française, 1924, p. 88

¹⁵ André Cresson, *Bergson*, Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1961, p. 35. .

¹⁶ Pierre Trotignon, *L'Idée de vie chez Bergson et la critique de la métaphysique*, Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1986, p. 610.

¹⁷ Bernard Gilson, *L'Individualité dans la philosophie de Bergson*, Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, Paris, 1985, p. 21.

¹⁸ Le terme dont se sert l'auteur est « trdnjava ».

l'analogie avec l'identité foncière du héros principal. C'est une image qui est à la fois le souvenir vivace des événements vécu et la promesse de tout ce qui viendra encore, bref, l'image de la durée : « *C'était lui, l'attaquant esseulé d'une citadelle imprenable qui lui avait été confié comme une sorte de destin : l'assiéger et l'enlever d'assaut : elle était à la fois son but et sa mémoire, à vrai dire, sa propre personnalité, lui seul. Il a mis longtemps à parvenir à cette connaissance. Les siècles devaient passer jusqu'à ce que la grêle des projectiles eût rempli sa chair afin de s'y reposer finalement. Il en fallait autant pour que ses murs fortifiés et garnis de ferrures fondent sous l'effet de son désir brûlant, visant le but. Il en fallait autant afin que la lueur rouge, associée au son perçant des trompettes et d'autres instruments de musique militaires se fût désobjectivée*¹⁹ dans sa présence triomphante. Son cœur battait, lorsque sa main s'étendait jusqu' à l'avenir infini, pour cueillir le laurier de victoire. Qui ou quoi verra-t-il sur la passerelle de commandement, la haut, d'où on menait la défense et l'assaut, la démolition et l'assemblage, la victoire et la défaite de celle qui était sa vie même ».²⁰ Le passage décèle l'épistémologie entitative du narrateur ; il est de prime importance,²¹ puisque il permet d'entrevoir la nature secrète de l'organisateur de l'œuvre : à travers les siècles son individualité, basée sur l'expérience du corps, c'est-à-dire les sensations, se dilate, échappant aux lois du temps homogène. Son regard réflexif se porte sur les mouvements immédiats de la durée et emprunte le chemin reliant la perception passive à la représentation active, comme une nébulosité qui se condense de plus en plus pour passer à l'état actif afin de remporter la victoire. Il s'agit du « *mouvement par lequel le passé s'épanouit en image présente, émergeant des ténèbres au grand jour* ».²² En fait, c'est « *l'attention à la vie* »²³ qui est la puissance motrice de l'image où le narrateur et le héros principal sont réunis dans une même entité²⁴ témoignent bien que « *le symbolisme naît de la spatialisation du vécu de la conscience* », ²⁵ dans le temps sériel, car l'espace homogène est le symbole des symboles surtout quand on l'applique à des couches de plus en plus intimes d'un moi.

La ligne d'inspiration qu'a exercée Henri Bergson sur la créativité romanesque d'Andrej Capuder continue à être présente dans les autres romans. Si nous abordons l'œuvre suivante, *Iskanje drugega* (*La Quête de l'autre*), nous voyons que le paradigme des images qui sont la réfraction du moi profond à travers ses épiphénomènes superficiels, persiste en prenant encore plus de consistance. Notamment, l'ossature du texte est basée sur l'attente et finalement sur l'avènement de *tertia aetas*, le temps à la fois

¹⁹ Le terme employé dans le texte est « *razpredmetenje* ».

²⁰ Andrej Capuder, *Rapsodija* 20, p. 143.

²¹ C'est un jugement de valeur qui porte sur l'ensemble du livre.

²² Henri Bergson, *Œuvres*, p. 179.

²³ Henri Bergson, *Œuvres*, p. 166, les corrélatifs slovènes de ce paradigme intentionnel sont : « *cilj* », « *vroče poželenje* », « *zmagovitá vseprisotnost* ».

²⁴ Concernant le mécanisme de l'unification auquel se réfère principalement le texte, voir : « *Mais nous arrivons naturellement à cette représentation symbolique par ce seul fait que, dans une série de termes identiques, chaque terme prend pour notre conscience un double aspect : l'un toujours identique à lui-même, puisque nous songeons à l'identité de l'objet extérieur, l'autre spécifique, parce que l'addition de ce terme provoque une nouvelle organisation de l'ensemble. De la possibilité de déployer dans l'espace, sous forme de multiplicité numérique, ce que nous avons appelé une multiplicité qualitative, et de considérer l'une comme l'équivalent de l'autre* », Henri Bergson, *Œuvres*, p. 82.

²⁵ Pierre Trotignon. *L'Idée de vie chez Bergson*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France. 1968. P. 607.

eschatologique et entitatif, représenté par le symbole de la porte qui s'ouvre au héros principal à la fin du roman. La fin du texte, c'est la réalisation de son commencement dont l'espace ne pourrait conserver aucune trace, la volonté de l'artiste étant de remplacer l'idée de succession par la durée sérielle. Cette démarche dénote l'identité du livre entier, ne laissant pas de doute sur la source de l'inspiration. Henri Bergson l'a énoncé dans l'image anthologique de ses réflexions constituée par l'oscillation. « *Je les apercevrai* (les oscillations, remarque, B.M.T.) *l'une dans l'autre, se pénétrant et s'organisant entre elles comme les notes d'une mélodie, de manière à former ce que nous appellerons une multiplicité indistincte ou qualificative, sans aucune ressemblance avec le nombre : j'obtiendrai ainsi l'image de la durée pure, mais je me serai entièrement dégagé de l'idée d'un milieu homogène ou d'une quantité mesurable* ». ²⁶

Le temps n'est pas la mesure d'une répétition dans l'espace puisque, à ce moment-là, il n'y avait ni la conscience de ce qui s'est passé autrefois, ni celle de l'avenir inévitable, ni celle du présent dans lequel plonge le roman.²⁷ Ainsi, à l'image de la citadelle évoquée plus haut se joint l'idée du temps qui est essentiellement bâti sur la perception sans cesse actualisée de l'existence. Dans *Iskanje drugega*, la démarche bergsonienne permet de revenir régulièrement en arrière, au point initial où tout a commencé. « *Il avait peur de ne pas forniquer lorsqu'il se penchait, dans une sorte de volupté aveugle, sur sa mémoire, voulant en extraire et par conséquent aussi sauvegarder dans la durée tous les sentiments relatifs au passage de l'état de péché à celui de grâce. De l'autre côté, un instinct irrésistible lui suggérait qu'il fallait revenir au commencement même, à la croisée initiale des chemins où il s'était, pour la première fois, posé la question quod iter sectabor vitae ? C'était le point de départ où l'âme a premièrement flambé dans la liberté de pouvoir choisir, ce qui a constitué son acte de naissance* ». ²⁸ En fait, le passage cité, extrait du chapitre central intitulé « Quod iter sectabor vitae », ²⁹ est mis dans un rapport compréhensif avec le professeur du Collège de France par Andrej Capuder lui-même. La délibération sur laquelle insiste tant Marko Neubauer, le personnage principal du récit (lui, par ailleurs, joue un rôle prépondérant dans toute la série des œuvres qui se succèdent dans l'épiphénoménologie de la durée) a été savamment explorée dans le cours sur le classicisme et sur l'évolution du sentiment romantique en France que l'auteur a publiée à la Faculté des lettres de Ljubljana afin d'expliquer au public universitaire slovène les principes de la philosophie des données immédiates de la conscience tels que l'exploitait la littérature du temps de Bergson et même antérieure. ³⁰ Le problème du verbe latin dont la forme est passive et le sens actif (*sector*) permet d'approcher au mieux le dilemme de l'autonomie dans le choix, compte tenu de l'hésitation entre deux actions possibles où le héros persévère dans l'illusion que le retour à la croisée initiale du chemin serait toujours possible. C'est l'erreur de perception que provoque l'apparence trompeuse de l'acte accompli qui se substitue, dans une sorte de mensonge caché, à l'action s'accomplissant, faisant vider la question

²⁶ Henri Bergson. *Œuvres*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France. 1970. P. 70.

²⁷ « *Iskanje drugega* commence et fini dans le présent », Andrej Capuder. *Rapsodija 20*, couverture.

²⁸ Andrej Capuder. *Iskanje drugega*. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica. 1991. P. 233.

²⁹ Ibidem.

³⁰ Andrej Capuder. *Du Classique au romantique*. Ljubljana: Filozofska fakulteta Univerze v Ljubljani. 2000.

du sens et permettant au problème de la liberté de sortir intact de la discussion. Ainsi : « *La réponse de Bergson est paradoxale. Nous sommes libres quand nos choix dérivent de notre moi profond, d'une décision personnelle qui engage tout notre être. Savoir se placer dans la durée personnelle – et universelle – qu'est ce que c'est ? C'est savoir demeurer dans la disposition de choisir, dans une ouverture de l'être où nous sommes plutôt choisis* ». ³¹

On dit que Marko Neubauer a choisi la chartreuse : en fait, il n'a délibéré qu'en apparence, puisque il a été déjà choisi par un apriori auquel son moi profond avait acquiescé sans réfléchir, c'est-à-dire la durée. Il a fui la forme la plus cruelle de l'espace bergsonien, l'histoire, mieux, sa configuration particulière, le communisme et ses crimes. De même, Jernej, le protagoniste du roman *Mali cvet (La Petite Fleur)*, se retire dans la musique, la forme favorite de la conscience extratemporelle du vécu, cette constance pérenne, privée de l'espace. *Le moi profond choisi en étant le mieux choisi* : cela, nous le devons aux données immédiates de la conscience. Andrej Capuder a effectué le même choix dans les conditions historiques d'un système totalitaire auquel il a été livré sans merci.

Cependant, le sacrifice n'a pas été vain. La rencontre inoubliable avec le bergsonisme n'a pas seulement élevé l'auteur, mais également la littérature slovène. En effet, celle-ci peut désormais se reconnaître dans l'inscription gravée sur l'un des piliers du Panthéon à Paris: « *À Henri Bergson, le philosophe dont l'œuvre et la vie ont honoré la France et la pensée humaine* ».

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³¹ Andrej Capuder. *Du Classique au romantique*. P. 36.

ET LE POUCE, OÙ EST-IL, QUI MONTRERA VERS LE CIEL? (SONNET XXXII)

Miha Pintarič

Résumé

L'article soumet à une brève analyse les *Sonnets romains* d'Andrej Capuder, homme de politique, diplomate, professeur d'université, écrivain, traducteur et poète. Le passé et le souvenir mélancolique de l'amour de jeunesse, l'avenir et la rencontre prochaine avec Dieu, entre l'un et l'autre, tant de choses si terrestres, tantôt jugées avec sévérité, tantôt tolérées et tantôt même rendues complices.

Mots-clés: sonnet, tradition, Cantique des cantiques, ruines, Rome, temps, Dieu, maison

On considère Andrej Capuder premièrement comme homme de politique et diplomate, ancien Ministre de Culture et Ambassadeur de Slovénie à Paris et à Rome, puis comme professeur de littérature française à la Faculté de Lettres à Ljubljana, ensuite comme traducteur et écrivain, à la fin peut-être, on pense au poète. Il était cependant poète tout le temps, non uniquement traducteur de la poésie et de la prose à l'œuvre importante, et même si sa voie de poète se déployait à l'ombre de tout le reste. Ses *Rimski soneti*³² («Sonnets romains») l'ont finalement mis sur la carte de la poésie slovène, d'un geste décidé caractéristique de son personnage et qui a d'un coup découvert une histoire poétique méconnue, la sienne.

<i>Lahko bi te opeval, večno mesto,</i>	Je pourrais te chanter, la ville éternelle,
<i>kot marsikdo slovitejših pred mano,</i>	comme tant de plus fameux que moi,
<i>a rajši sedem v sonce pred fontano,</i>	mais je préfère le soleil à la fontaine
<i>in čakam kot mladenič na nevesto.</i>	où j'attends comme un jeune homme sa bien aimée.
<i>In gledam s kamni tlakovano cesto,</i>	En regardant la rue pavée de pierres,
<i>kot ta, ki se napotil je v neznano,</i>	je suis comme celui qui s'est rendu vers l'inconnu,
<i>kot tisti, ki zakriva srčno rano,</i>	comme celui qui cache un cœur blessé,
<i>kot oni, ki svoj križ prenaša zvesto.</i>	comme celui qui fidèlement porte sa croix.

³² Il n'y a d'autre pagination dans le recueil que les chiffres romains de la numérotation des sonnets qui ont du coup la valeur de la pagination.

<i>Iz množice bi rad dobil človeka,</i>	Je voudrais voir un homme tiré de la presse,
<i>ne kakor del, iztrgan iz celote,</i>	non une partie, arrachée du tout,
<i>ne kot pospešek, ki za sabo teka</i>	non comme une hâte se poursuivant elle-même
<i>in v sebi poteptal je klic lepote:</i>	ayant foulé l'appel de la beauté:
<i>a kamor zrem, me draži preobleka</i>	où que tourne mon regard, m'agaçant, accoutrés,
<i>teles, ki ven ne morejo iz gmote. (VII)</i>	les corps trop faibles pour quitter la masse.

Ce poème, et il n'est pas le seul, présente son identité poétique. Il se place ou replace dans la tradition (*kot marsikdo*); le *Cantique des cantiques* est un thème très chère au poète et très fréquent dans sa poésie (*kot mladenič na nevesto*; cf. XXVI etc.); la fuite, mystique, comme celle de Tristan (*v neznano*) ou celle de Prešeren, »impossible« (*srčno rano*); ou encore l'acceptation de sa croix et de son destin; parallèle de la multitude et de l'individu au détriment de la première (où se fait sentir l'influence de la pensée bergsonienne), sans oublier la beauté omniprésente, capturée dans les corps à la manière platonicienne et qui sont peut-être ceux-là mêmes qui s'enchevêtrent dans le nœud infernal dantesque. *Lahko bi ... a rajši* («Je pourrais ... mais je préfère») est, avec ses variantes, une structure chère au poète qui compare, non la multitude mentionnée sinon une pluralité, celle des poètes qui chantent le centre du monde chrétien depuis l'antiquité tardive ou le moyen âge naissant. Andrej Capuder n'étant pas de cette pluralité, sans doute a-t-il eu des expériences comme autrefois J. Du Bellay, il refuse cette tradition cependant à la manière de – Montaigne. Le temps est venu où il n'y a que l'expérience personnelle qui compte. Non ce que quelqu'un, gracieusement, nous donne, mais telle exactement que nous possédons *hic et nunc*, sans interventions venant d'ailleurs, qu'elles soient socialement consensuelles, (provenant) des institutions médiatrices, ou métaphysiques en apparence. Dans l'œuvre de Monaigne, on tombe fréquemment sur un refus de suivre la voie commune, »les autres font comme cela, moi, à rebours ...).

Du Bellay, présent sans être mentionné puisque ses thèmes étaient devenus, depuis le 16^e siècle, éternels, généraux, appartenant à chacun. Les ruines de Rome, tout d'abord simples ruines, ensuite symbolisant le temps qui mange tout sans laisser de traces. Ni les romantiques, amoureux des ruines encore plus que de l'»éternel féminin« (qui peut être une »ruine« aussi), ni les modernes, amoureux d'un je ne sais quoi, ne pouvait rien ajouter d'essentiel à ce thème. Ce qui reste de Rome »où toute ruine/ rappelle les générations qui ne sont plus« (XIV), possède la valeur dans la mesure où cela représente les dernières et, en elles-mêmes passagères traces d'une ancienne gloire. Celles-ci sont d'autant plus importantes puisqu'elles pourvoient l'individu d'une aune pour mesurer sa vie en la comparant à l'éternité. *Au bout de l'aune faut le drap*, dit un proverbe médiéval, et peu importe si l'homme s'imagine l'aune immense. Aujourd'hui, cinq siècles après ces poètes humanistes et leur admiration de la ville éternelle, cela tient plus que jamais, et c'est peut-être la raison même de la perte d'intérêt dans la ville et dans ce qu'elle représente.

<i>Ostala sva in zrla v ruševine,</i>	En demeurant, nous contemplions les ruines
<i>ki v njih preživel se je vek Avgusta,</i>	où s'est survécu l'âge d'Auguste,
<i>nekoč bel marmor, zdaj opeka pusta,</i>	le marbre blanc d'alors, changé en briques secs
<i>ki divje jo prepredajo rastline. (VIII)</i>	sauvagement enchevêtrés par les plantes.

Le stoïcisme chrétien a également laissé des traces dans la poésie d'Andrej Capuder, tout comme il a été caractéristique de la poésie de la renaissance, et encore plus de la prose, chrétienne peu ou prou. Du Bellay, Érasme, Montaigne ... *Ne jokati, ne tarnati, ne kleti ... Ne vem, kako naj siromak se brani ... Edino Bog lahko nas potolaži ...* («Ne pas pleurer ou geindre ou blasphémer ... Je ne sais comment se défendra le pauvre ... Dieu seul saura nous soulager ...»). Dans ces trois premiers vers des trois strophes du neuvième sonnet, le poète accepte le défi chrétien, avec quelque résignation, il est vrai, pour lui soumettre son attitude face au monde qui demeure quelque peu stoïque sans être »stoïcienne«. De l'autre côté du diapason existentiel, il y a le printemps, »doba ljubezniva« (X), celle des troubadours ou du *dolce stil nuovo*, et qui est supposée par la forme même de sonnet. Les rues sont pleines, il n'y a que »pesnik, [ki] v sobi sanja nad soneti« (dans sa chambre, le poète rêve à ses sonnets) (X). Les autres font comme cela, le poète, 'à rebours' ... Les thèmes et les sujets s'enchevêtrent dans la poésie d'Andrej Capuder comme dans la vie. La satire n'en est pas absente, et faut-il répéter que c'est Du Bellay qui, le premier, a utilisé le sonnet pour traduire sa verve satirique? C'est dans cette tradition qu'Andrej Capuder écrit dans le trézième sonnet (cf. XXXVI etc.)³³:

*Med njimi, ki se drenjajo v ogradi,
na daleč tam zagledam siromaka,
ki ne spuste naprej ga močeradi.*

Parmi ceux qui se pressent dans l'enclos,
de loin, je vois une pauvre hère,
retenue par les salamandres.

*Pred helebardami stoji in čaka,
pred njimi, ki pozabijo preradi,
de Kristus za na križ ni rabil fraka.*

Debout devant les hallebardes, il attend
devant ceux qui oublient trop vite
que le Christ n'a pas porté la cravate à la croix.

La métaphore désignant la garde suisse est très aimable en comparaison de celle, satirique, ironique, mordante où la connaissance de quelques détails est indispensable si l'on veut éviter d'être relegué dans le coin sourd du triangle ironique. Ce qui ne vaut pas uniquement pour celui qui ne sait pas, cela s'applique aussi, et surtout, à celui qui a oublié, sans doute aux hommes en couleurs »violette et rouge« sinon même à celui »qui se couvre du blanc« (XIII). Le quinzième sonnet est une actualisation raffinée d'un thème antique à la pointe ironique, le marbre sous lequel il y a du sang à flots et où le cas correct sauve le rapprochement: » ... da videza sijajnega ne umaže, / ki v njem ječi demon cesarja Tita« (... *pour ne pas souiller l'apparence brillante/ où gît et geint le démon de l'empereur Titus/ Tito*). Cela est assez explicite, *sapienti sat*, et cela rappelle la »prédiction«, *Prerokba* de Drago Jančar. Dans la poésie de Capuder, les temps ne se mélangent pas uniquement de façon thématique – ironique ou non –, ils le font parfois de façon explicite et analytique, comme par exemple dans le sonnet seize, où l'on revient à l'approfondissement bergsonien d'ailleurs assez obscurci à l'œil du non-initié pour que l'on puisse lire le poème comme de la première main, ce qu'elle est, sans doute, du poin de vue de l'expérience. Dans la rue, devant le poète, le son du saxophone réveille en lui les temps et les lieux qui en dansant se confondent avec les différentes odeurs des souvenirs et entraînent le poète dans un monde parallèle, celui

³³ Ailleurs, le poète est parfois explicitement défavorable à l'ironie et à la moquerie. (cf. LXV).

de la mémoire (dans son jeune âge, Andrej Capuder jouait lui-même cet instrument), tout en le laissant d'un pied, fermement, dans la réalité du monde qui est le nôtre, où il réfléchit sur ce qui lui arrive. La beauté vient de la mémoire, »proustienne« plutôt que mathématique, du moment que l'on pense à la beauté intérieure, qui est lumière avant tout le reste. Cette beauté nous fascine et remplit d'un rayonnement irrésistible qui s'avérera peut-être celui de Dieu, à la fin, et nous aura entraîné là où nous ne voulions initialement même pas aller, Il s'agit peut-être d'un seul instant qui dure dans l'âme plus longtemps que la vie elle-même, du moins cette intervalle est ressentie comme telle, c'est-à-dire qu'il s'agit d'une »éternité subjective«, qui termine avec la fin de la musique et la main tendu vers le poète, Monsieur, c'est pas gratuit, l'éternité. L'éternité, certes; cependant, il y a des images déformées de l'éternité, telle dans le sonnet XX, où il cherche, dans la Fontaine de Trevi, la trace de la monnaie qu'il y a jetée autrefois, »ko se prihodnost zdela je velika« (*quand l'avenir semblait encore grand*). L'avenir, la meilleure image de l'éternité que l'homme a à sa disposition, cette pensée kierkegaardienne pourrait être complétée d'une réserve, à savoir, que c'est pour cela qu'elle s'avère la plus trompeuse face à l'homme, y compris celle, peut-être hérétique, de Joachim de Flore, divisant le temps terrestre en trois âges, celui du Père, celui du Fils et celui du Saint-Esprit, et qui sont traversés par l'esprit de l'homme, où se cherche sa pensée sans s'y trouver, c'est pourquoi, constate le poète dans son sonnet XXIII, elle revient comme »colère et contrition«. Elle ne saurait se trouver, d'ailleurs, puisqu'elle est en quête du mammon, de l'argent et du pouvoir. Le temps, image mouvante de l'éternité d'après Platon, est l'histoire, certes, tout en étant bien plus que cela (XXXVII-XXXVIII). *Fides quaerens intellectum*, oui, toutefois, l'inverse n'est pas moins vrai, »la pensée en quête du sens« et de la fin, cette fin qui est en partie dans l'histoire tandis qu'en partie, elle la transcende puisque »iz božjega prihaja vera,/ ki nam poveže misli in dejanja« (Dieu nous donne la foi qui relie nos pensées et nos actes) (LXXXV).

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La science, sûrement, est païenne et impitoyable dans l'impassibilité de son déterminisme, tandis que la pitié et le sentiment humain appartiennent au christianisme et à Dieu lui-même (LXIV). *Dies irae*, toutefois, que le poète n'accepte que difficilement comme une donnée fondamentale et sans doute la plus générale, n'est pas de ce monde-ci et encore moins de la science (LXV). Car »je Bog, ki te pokliče, kadar hoče« (il y a Dieu qui t'appelle quand Il veut) (L).

<i>Zato prihajam k vam, o ruševine:</i>	Ainsi, je viens à vous, oh, ruines:
<i>ob starem zidu naj se človek vadi,</i>	que le vieux mûr soit notre polygone
<i>kako bo stal ob uri, ko premine,</i>	pour apprendre notre posture à l'heure du trépas,
<i>ko pride zima in ne bo pomladi,</i>	quand l'hiver remplacera le printemps
<i>ko se zapre nam knjiga zgodovine</i>	et le livre de l'histoire se fermera sur nous
<i>na strani, ki jo beremo neradi.</i> (LVI)	à la page que personne ne lit que contre son gré.

Vraiment, le soin principal du poète est le moment de sa rencontre future avec Dieu, »kjer padejo kulise,/ in Bog človeka milostno odveže« (*où les coulisses tombent*

et la grâce de Dieu descend sur l'homme pour l'absoudre) (LVIII)³⁴, ce qui est un thème fréquent dans la poésie de Capuder et le choix de cette citation a pu être faite par hasard. Ceci est l'essentiel de l'avenir du poète, tout comme l'essentiel de son passé sont les amours de jeunesse dont le cœur a toujours soif. L'amour et la mort, *eros thanatos*, la beauté et le temps. Conçu avec l'amour et dans l'amour, la beauté s'écoule dans la mort, et dans le meilleur des cas, le fruit de sa durée dans le temps est aussi son abri le plus haut et le plus sûr, la poésie, »žar resnice« (*le rayonnement de la vérité*) (LXXV) que, du moins, elle devrait être. Une telle lumière, rayonnant du centre comme un soleil, éclaire le planètes plus petites qui plus ou moins misérablement existent sur la circonférence comme une multitude de »vérités«, nommées de la sorte »ko Bog se nam izbrisa iz ekrana« (*lorsqu'on a perdu Dieu de notre écran*) (LXXVII). Et le poète d'écrire, »v telesu staremu bodi duša mlada,/ ki večje vidi sonce, ko zahaja« (*dans un corps vieux, soit jeune, âme, qui verras le soleil plus grand au coucher*) (LXXXI). On revient à Du Bellay, nostalgique de son pays à ce point qu'aucun soleil ne lui luisait comme celui d'Anjou que même le crachin le plus persistant ne lave jamais. »Gnezdo milo«, écrit Capuder, fort probablement pensant à sa chère vallée de Vreme, et qu'il supporte par l'un des vers les plus émouvants de la littérature française, le vers que Villon met dans la bouche de sa simple mère qui ne sait ni lire ni écrire, (»tako v ta kraj prihaja moja duša/) v njem hotel bi živeti in umreti,/ kot reka, ki je ne pobere suša« (*c'est dans ce lieu que rentre mon âme/ dans ce lieu je veux vivre et mourir/ comme un fleuve qui sous la sécheresse ne se pâme*) (LXXXII; cf. LXXXVII, XCIX, C).

La fin du recueil aussi fait penser à Du Bellay puisque le plus grand nombre de derniers dix sonnets présentent une satire au compte des circonstances politiques dans la patrie, et que, par la suite de notre incompetence, nous n'aborderons pas ici. La situation est critique, cela vaut pour Rome et pour l'Église romaine, surtout, mais fort probablement ce sentiment possède une valeur générale. Il y a des choses qui, dans un demi millénaire, n'ont pas changé. Certaines ont changé, non, malheureusement, pour s'améliorer. Il y a cinq cent ans, le pape était le seul maître de Rome. Aujourd'hui, la ville est italienne. *Genius loci*, le même. De Du Bellay à Capuder, rien n'a changé, ni même l'illusion de la patrie, la »douceur angevine« ou »gnezdo milo«, qui est en fait digne de Rome. La France de la renaissance et la jeune Slovénie grandie trop vite, mais laissons tomber.

Les Sonnets romains sont un recueil exceptionnel d'Andrej Capuder, poète depuis longtemps, et méconnu, où abondent les vers qui commandent une citation. Il y a, là, qu'on le veuille ou non, un parallèle avec Joachim Du Bellay et ses deux recueils, *Les Antiquités de Rome* et *Les Regrets* puisque la thématique (les ruines et leur sens, histoire, temps, individu et ses questions existentielles, Dieu et la foi et, à la fin, la politique) et, en partie, le style (ironie) rappellent ce poète du 16^e siècle. Chez Du Bellay, l'amour fait pratiquement défaut, ce qui est une exception intéressante. Dans le poèmes de Capuder, on retrouve de temps en temps quelque référence ou influence bergsonienne

³⁴ Cf. s. LXVI: »Zato naj človek zbira, ne raztresi,/ saj rojen je na svet, da moleduje,/ ne za svobodo, temveč za nebesa.« Sonet LXXI: » ... kdaj mož zares poljubil boš razpelo?/ Odgovor da, kdor dal ti je vprašanje,/ in v tebi pustil je priprta vrata,/ki se odpró, ko boš potrkal nanje.«

ou kierkegaardienne, moins, d'ailleurs, de ce à quoi l'on aurait pu s'attendre, ce qui naturellement accroît la valeur des sonnets et leur authenticité. Tout homme porte en lui entière humaine condition, disait Montaigne. Là s'esquisse une affinité avec Capuder, même si Montaigne n'a jamais écrit de la poésie. C'est cela, chez Capuder, l'aperçu le plus profond, et que le poète tourne et retourne des manières variées, et à juste titre. L'homme est un hologramme de Dieu. Qui va le défaire, qui peut le désunir? Ni le *diabolos* ni lui-même. Toujours, même dans la plus profonde perversité, il restera être humain et même si son âme se contempera dans les milliers de miroitantes images du monde, elle demeurera une et entière puisque c'est telle qu'elle est sortie des mains de Dieu, dont le doigt, l'index levée d'avertissement, deviendra le pouce qui montre vers le haut.

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LA CÈNE D'OUVERTURE DU *SOULIER DE SATIN* (I, 1)

James Dauphiné

Résumé

La critique claudélienne, de façon récurrente, au fil des générations, a multiplié commentaires et remarques touchant les aspects religieux du théâtre de Claudel, avec une prédilection logique pour son oeuvre majeure, *Le Soulier de satin*. Toutefois, cette production critique semble fournir davantage de perspectives à portée générale que des explications précises et déterminantes. Il conviendrait en somme de recourir à un point de vue résolument théologique. Maintes fois, Claudel a d'ailleurs pris soin de mentionner combien la lecture chrétienne et spirituelle de son oeuvre était de nature à expliquer autant qu'à révéler le sens et la vertu de sa démarche créatrice.

Mots clefs: Paul Claudel, Soulier de satin, Cène, eucharistie, sacrements, immolation, consécration, rachat, ultime finalité de l'homme

La critique claudélienne, de façon récurrente, au fil des générations, a multiplié commentaires et remarques touchant les aspects religieux du théâtre de Claudel, avec une prédilection logique pour son opus majeur, *Le Soulier de satin*. Toutefois, cette production critique semble fournir davantage de perspectives à portée générale que des explications précises et déterminantes. Il conviendrait en somme de recourir à un *point de vue résolument théologique*. Maintes fois, Claudel a d'ailleurs pris soin de mentionner combien la lecture chrétienne et spirituelle de son oeuvre était de nature à expliquer autant qu'à révéler le sens et la *vertu* de sa démarche créatrice.

Or, dès l'ouverture du *Soulier de satin*³⁵, le dramaturge remet clairement au lecteur les fils de sa pensée par un signe reconnaissable entre tous, à savoir que sur scène est célébrée une cène, « cette messe »³⁶, à la fois sacrement et sacrifice³⁷, qui

³⁵ Les références au *Soulier de satin* renvoient à l'édition Folio (n° 774), laquelle suit l'édition Gallimard, version intégrale, Paris, Gallimard, 1929, renouvelée en 1957.

³⁶ *Le Soulier de satin*, I, 1, p. 19. Consulter G. Durand, *Le sens spirituel de la liturgie* (trad. D. Millet-Gérard) et les travaux de l'abbé Barthe (en particulier *Une forêt de symboles*).

³⁷ La messe est à la fois sacrement et sacrifice. Aujourd'hui, l'aspect sacrificiel est quelquefois singulièrement peu présent. Pourtant, le concile de Vatican II a rappelé cette « définition ». En outre, Jean-Paul II (notamment à San Giovanni Rotondo, le 23 mai 1987, pour y célébrer Padre Pio et le sacerdoce) et Benoît XVI (*Gesù di Nazaret*, Rome, Libreria editrice vaticana, 2011, tome 2) ont régulièrement souligné ce double aspect de la messe. Revenir aussi aux considérations d'H. Guitton à propos de Marthe Robin (*Ritratto*

conditionne et éclaire tout le déroulement et la signification de l'œuvre. D'une manière lumineuse, la cène d'ouverture est l'image, l'emblème du *Soulier de satin*. Aussi peut-il être intéressant, dans l'ordre de l'analyse, de revenir au singulier spectacle de cette ouverture qui illustre magistralement les conséquences de la doctrine « della soddisfazione vicaria »³⁸.

* * *

Après les propos de l'Annoncier, suivis de sa sortie de scène, la parole est portée par le Père Jésuite, frère de Rodrigue. La sortie de l'Annoncier qui, pourtant, a mis les spectateurs en condition de bien recevoir et comprendre le spectacle à venir, tend à prouver que Claudel, tout en gardant les voies conventionnelles d'une introduction, choisit, par le recours au Père Jésuite, d'inscrire et de rendre physiquement visible la veine sacrée de son opus mirandum. L'héritage du *siècle d'or* et en particulier celui des autos sacramentales, que la critique a bien étudiés, l'ont incontestablement influencé, inspiré, guidé. L'Annoncier s'efface ; le Père Jésuite s'impose.

Tel un metteur en scène, l'Annoncier a révélé néanmoins comment ne pas se tromper (« Fixons, je vous prie, *mes frères*, les yeux sur ce *point* de l'Océan Atlantique... »)³⁹ ni sur ce que nous sommes, des frères, ni sur ce que nous devons voir, un « point » au milieu des deux mondes, unissant aussi le macrocosme et le microcosme. Il n'est pas habituel de procéder ainsi. Claudel sait – il s'en est expliqué plusieurs fois – que le théâtre a cependant toujours manifesté la « possibilité originelle » d'être une paraphrase, voire un commentaire de la situation de l'homme tant dans l'histoire que dans l'univers.

Le Père Jésuite, dans cette approche, s'inscrit dans la représentation, ô combien signifiante, de la passion christique où « tout a été consommé »⁴⁰ ! Et, pareil au Christ il offre sa passion. Là où le spectateur était prêt à rencontrer une certaine emphase, Claudel opte pour la discrétion si bien que le « sacrifice » présenté est semblable à « ce mouvement presque imperceptible comme de la main »⁴¹. La passion est exposée ; et pour le dramaturge, cette exposition fait en soi, comme dans les cinq Mystères Douloureux, sens complet.

Quant à la « dernière oraison de cette messe »⁴², elle revient à l'introduction traditionnelle notamment par toutes les amorces dramatiques qu'elle annonce et renferme. Avec une ampleur inattendue se déploie alors le cœur de l'introduction relative au couple (Rodrigue-Prouhèze) sur lequel la pièce et l'histoire reposent. Il n'est pas impossible

di *Marthe Robin*) et à celles d'A. Socci concernant Padre Pio (*Il Segreto di Padre Pio*, Milan, Rizzoli, 2007, pp. 210-219). En outre, nombre de Jésuites espagnols, à l'aube du XVII^{ème} siècle, comme Jeronimo Nadal († 1580), Diego Alvarez de Paz († 1620) ou Luis de La Puente († 1624), dans la ligne et à la suite d'Ignace de Loyola, ont dans leurs écrits et sermons, toujours insisté sur ces deux aspects fondamentaux de la messe, aspects que sur scène le Père Jésuite illustre et exalte.

³⁸ La « soddisfazione vicaria » développée par Saint Anselme continue à être exposée. Certes, le concile de Vatican II en a peu traité. Revenir à A. Socci : *Il Segreto di Padre Pio*, éd. cit, pp. 295-297. À propos d'un fait divers sicilien célèbre, A. Camilleri a dévoilé le rôle de la « soddisfazione vicaria » et de ses conséquences (*Le pecore e il pastore*, Palerme, Sellerio, 2007).

³⁹ *Le Soulier de satin*, I, 1, p. 17.

⁴⁰ *Le Soulier de satin*, I, 1, p. 18.

⁴¹ *Le Soulier de satin*, I, 1, p. 19.

⁴² *Le Soulier de satin*, I, 1, p. 19.

que Claudel, dans ces lignes, ait retrouvé quelque peu les accents des prières que la liturgie conseillait de réciter en fin de messe⁴³.

Le spectacle théâtral de portée classique ne saurait aller au-delà. C'est bien la volonté du dramaturge qui, en privilégiant la dimension spirituelle de la cène, peut apporter une densité supérieure d'émotions et de significations. L'assemblée qui assiste à la messe, y participe et sait que par la cène il est question du règne des fins. Le théâtre, et là Claudel s'est plu à le cultiver, est aussi un mystère où une assemblée participe, réagit, se laisse entraîner et convaincre.

*

La perspective chrétienne de cette scène correspond certes aux temps rituels de la messe (offertoire, consécration, communion, oraison), mais également ne cesse de renvoyer par des parallèles discrets ou appuyés aux saintes Écritures. L'enjeu n'est pas alors une unique quête du sens, il est plutôt celui de revitaliser et de rendre éternellement présent le sens de la Passion⁴⁴.

Pour y parvenir, la prouesse de Claudel est d'avoir imaginé sur « cet étroit autel »⁴⁵, sur ce point perdu dans l'Océan Atlantique, le don du sang et du corps du Christ-Jésuite par « le moyen de (lui-)même »⁴⁶. En même temps, le Père Jésuite illustre parfaitement par son attitude et ses propos ce que Saint Paul affirmait quant à son parcours (2 *Tm* 4, 7) et à la fonction de l'amour (*Ro*, 13, 9-10 et 1 *Co* 13, 1-2). Impossible (et l'Annoncier nous y préparait) d'oublier la puissance de ce « spectacle » si parlant aux frères chrétiens.

Il serait facile et un peu vain de multiplier les rapprochements que cette scène 1 entretient avec les Évangiles, les Psaumes, les écrits de Saint Paul. Il est plus stimulant d'observer ce que Claudel entend proposer. Par la Passion et les Écritures, il cherche essentiellement à orchestrer la problématique du salut tant dans l'histoire de l'humanité (bénir le Nouveau Monde) que dans celle relative à chaque individu, notamment à Rodrigue « et à cette multitude avec lui qu'il implique obscurément »⁴⁷.

Évidemment, pour mieux entraîner les spectateurs, rien ne vaut mieux que l'emploi des ressorts de l'émotion et de la séduction ; et là, Claudel pour y parvenir choisit ceux attachés à la prière. Reprenant les Psaumes, les Hymnes, la souplesse du verset biblique, et fort probablement quelques illuminations mystiques⁴⁸, Claudel dote son personnage d'une authentique parole poétique, celle présente chez les prophètes, celle des *Cinq grandes odes*, celle qui conduit du signe à la chose signifiée, celle qui a le

⁴³ Par exemple, la vision survenue à Léon XIII, le 13 octobre 1884, vision de Saint Pierre de Rome attaquée par les démons, qui immédiatement fit que Léon XIII imposa désormais à la fin de la messe une prière de protection destinée à Dieu et à l'archange Michel. Cette prière fut supprimée par Vatican II.

⁴⁴ Benoît XVI, *Gesù di Nazaret (...)*, éd. cit., t. 2, pp. 119-164, « l'ultima cena ». Tout repose sur les paroles de la consécration du pain et du vin (*Haec quotiescúmque feceritis, in mei **memórium** faciétis*).

⁴⁵ *Le Soulier de satin*, I, 1, p. 18.

⁴⁶ *Le Soulier de satin*, I, 1, p. 19.

⁴⁷ *Le Soulier de satin*, I, 1, p. 20.

⁴⁸ Claudel était parfaitement au courant de la souffrance et de l'immolation des mystiques du passé et de ceux de son temps. Sur ce point, voir R. Schwob : *La légende dorée au-delà des mers*, Paris, 1930, en particulier pp. 243-277, « Vie de sœur Marie de Jésus crucifié » décédée en 1878 et proclamée Bienheureuse le 13/11/1983 par Jean-Paul II.

pouvoir –comme chez Dante qu’il a toujours admiré⁴⁹ – de faire comprendre, vivre et goûter combien le surnaturel est réel, omniprésent de par les manifestations et signes qu’il propose.

Inoubliable est donc une telle Passion parce que celle du Jésuite – vécue sur un Golgotha maritime – débouche à la fois sur le « réjouissement » un peu anecdotique, quoique fondé, celui propre au martyr⁵⁰, et sur l’intercession qui demeure source possible de tout salut ou de toute grâce miséricordieuse. Le frère de Rodrigue est d’abord « là pour traduire dans le Ciel »⁵¹ c’est-à-dire intercéder ; il n’est pas là pour être en aucun cas juge. Mais parce qu’il offre sa croix avec humilité, s’offre lui-même avec pureté, et surtout accepte avec piété et joie le sacrifice, il s’inscrit dans la démarche si efficace du salut accordé à autrui par le biais de ses propres souffrances voulues, souhaitées et acceptées. Le Père Jésuite, à bon escient, emploie l’arme féconde de l’intercession.

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La règle conventionnelle que la scène d’exposition « annonce » est donc observée. Claudel toutefois avance, semble-t-il, dans cette scène I, 1, une démonstration théologique très précise qui met en jeu par la messe, comprise comme sacrement et sacrifice, la doctrine de la « *soddisfazione vicaria* » chère à Saint Anselme d’Aoste⁵². Et c’est là un point majeur de l’enjeu de cette scène-cène.

De fait, tout repose sur l’immolation volontaire qui consiste à expier, souffrir, mourir à la place d’autrui. Le modèle parfait, c’est évidemment le Christ qui meurt pour le rachat de l’humanité. Le supplice de la croix, réservé aux esclaves, devient glorieux. La croix du Père Jésuite est également glorieuse parce qu’elle est acceptée. Impossible de l’ignorer même si les propos tenus obligent à fixer l’attention ailleurs que sur l’exposition bien concrète du Jésuite « attaché à la croix »⁵³.

Dès lors, la ligne théologique que Claudel emprunte à Saint Anselme et à l’Église lui permet de montrer (et démontrer ensuite par la pièce) que le sacrifice est indispensable à l’accomplissement du salut. En effet, les paroles du Père Jésuite correspondent à l’esprit et à la lettre des développements de Saint Paul, notamment dans la *lettre aux Colossiens*, I, 24 – II, 3 (« Frères, je trouve la joie dans les souffrances que je supporte pour vous, car ce qu’il reste à souffrir des épreuves du Christ, je l’accomplis dans ma propre chair, pour son corps qui est l’Église »). Le Père Jésuite, par son martyr et son immolation, infléchit la destinée terrestre et surtout céleste de son frère Rodrigue, c’est-à-dire aussi celle de « la multitude » « car il et de ceux-là qui ne peuvent se sauver qu’en sauvant toute cette masse qui prend leur forme derrière eux »⁵⁴. La consécration

⁴⁹ Nombreuses sont les études comparatistes parlant de Dante et Claudel. P. Brune et D. Millet-Gérard sont revenus plusieurs fois sur ce rapprochement. Faisant le compte rendu de sa conversion (25/12/1886), Claudel parmi les livres qui l’ont alors aidé à cette époque mentionne, à côté des *Pensées* de Pascal et des *Méditations sur les Évangiles* de Bossuet, « le Poème de Dante et les admirables récits de la Sœur Emmerich ». Il précise qu’il fit sa « seconde communion » le 25 juin 1890.

⁵⁰ *Le Soulier de satin*, I, 1, pp. 18-19.

⁵¹ *Le Soulier de satin*, I, 1, p. 21.

⁵² Supra notes 3 et 4.

⁵³ *Le Soulier de satin*, I, 1, p. 18.

⁵⁴ *Le Soulier de satin*, I, 1, p. 20.

de Rodrigue, que par son intercession provoque le Père Jésuite, témoigne combien est efficace l'arme de l'expiation en faveur d'autrui. Pour n'évoquer que son usage au XX^{ème} siècle, de Padre Pio à Jean-Paul II, les actes d'expiation et de consécration n'ont cessé d'influencer les hommes et l'histoire du monde⁵⁵. Claudel a tiré sa juste mesure du développement fécond et riche de cette problématique théologique. Rodrigue sauvera les Amériques et le bienheureux Jean-Paul II, Antonio Socci et Renzo Allegri l'ont magistralement analysé, a enclenché, par l'acte de consécration de la Russie à la Vierge Marie (Saint Pierre de Rome, le 25 mars 1984)⁵⁶, l'élément dynamique (au sens fort et premier du terme) d'un changement capital de l'histoire contemporaine. Il y a dans le personnage de Rodrigue une aventure qui semble le dépasser, mais qu'il peut conduire parce que son frère a d'abord accepté le sacrifice initial du martyr⁵⁷.

Une telle donnée conforte, en le rappelant, l'ordinaire extraordinaire de ce qu'est la messe et son pouvoir. Mémoire du sacrifice du Fils de Dieu par amour envers l'homme, la cène est également témoignage de la rencontre entre le monde terrestre et le monde céleste. Le cardinal Siri⁵⁸ s'est longuement attardé à développer cette problématique, et Padre Pio, quant à lui, n'a cessé dans ses multiples écrits de magnifier le rôle majeur de la Cène et d'affirmer avec foi que « il mondo potrebbe stare anche senza sole, ma non può stare senza la Santa Messa »⁵⁹.

Il est donc normal que la thématique d'ouverture du *Soulier de satin* irradie et rayonne sur l'ensemble de ce drame où l'enjeu, au-delà de l'histoire des hommes et des sociétés, demeure au premier chef le salut des âmes.

* * *

Le Soulier de satin repose, peu ou prou, de façon constante, sur la célébration de l'eucharistie, célébration quelquefois contestée, voire refusée au cours de l'histoire. D'aucuns ont étudié « le renversement de l'autel » et le rejet de la Cène⁶⁰ ; d'autres ont exposé comment, plus récemment, dans la foulée du dernier concile souhaité par Jean XXIII, il a été proposé de réduire essentiellement la messe à un sacrement, prenant peu

⁵⁵ A Socci a traité régulièrement ce point dans différents ouvrages : *Il quarto segreto di Fatima*, 2006, chap. 5, pp. 179-238, *Indagine su Gesù*, 2008 et récemment encore dans *I segreti di Karol Wojtyla*, 2009. Voir aussi R. Allegri, *Il Papa di Fatima*, Milan, Mondadori, 2006, éd. 2008, pp. 238-332.

⁵⁶ Supra note 21 ; R. Allegri, *op. cit.*, pp. 289-309, « la consacrazione della Russia » et pp. 310-323, « una luce colma di speranza ».

⁵⁷ Les conséquences heureuses et bénéfiques de l'acceptation du martyr, et plus largement de la souffrance, sont innombrables. Le Musée franciscain de Cimiez, à Nice, en rappelle quelques-unes liées à la conquête des Amériques. Les traités de théologie accordent une place majeure aux conséquences glorieuses de la Passion. Consulter, par exemple, *l'Introduzione al simbolo della fede*, parti quattro, du Rev. P. F. Luigi Granata, dominicain, traduit du castillan en italien par F. Pigafetta, Venise, imprimerie Baglioni, édition de 1753, où sont exposés et détaillés les bienfaits de la Passion : « Li veri frutti, che si cavano dalla sua considerazione sono ammirazione, amore, gratitudine, imitazione della virtù, e desiderio di patire », « Bontà grande che si dimostra Cristo nella passione », « sette particolarità, che dichiarano questa gran bontà nella passione », « Ci dimostra la bontà divina più la passione, che tutte le opere della creazione ». Voir aussi dans ce traité fameux les entrées de « croce » et « martiri » et dans le texte, même si Saint Anselme n'est pas cité, les variations nombreuses sur la « soddisfazione ». Et, dans une autre perspective, revenir au sacrifice de Saint Maximilien Kolbe, à Auschwitz en 1941.

⁵⁸ Plusieurs fois mentionné ou cité par A. Socci, *Il segreto di Padre Pio*, éd. cit., p. 215, 216.

⁵⁹ Cité par A. Socci, *Il segreto di Padre Pio*, éd. cit., p. 215.

⁶⁰ C. Grosse, *Les rituels de la Cène. Le culte réformé à Genève (XVI^{ème} et XVII^{ème} siècles)*, Genève, Droz, 2008, ch. 1, pp. 43-113 : « le renversement de l'autel ».

en compte son fondement sacrificiel⁶¹. Claudel, parce qu'il retournait à l'acte fondateur et à l'origine (la Passion), avait conscience des conséquences exceptionnelles liées à une telle célébration. *Le Soulier de satin* donne toutes ses harmoniques justement parce que son ouverture (I, 1) est d'emblée une vérité et un message que la représentation a charge de faire vivre autant que d'illustrer. Signe supplémentaire que celui fourni par la Quatrième journée, journée du dénouement où tout « se passe sur la mer »⁶². Le Père Jésuite a été exaucé ; la mer qui ouvre *Le Soulier de satin* apporte, pour conclure, la certitude du salut. Et, Rodrigue sauvé, d'employer alors sensiblement les mêmes termes que ceux de son frère puisque l'un et l'autre, semblables à ceux « qui respire[nt] à pleine poitrine l'air de Dieu », « surmonte[nt] joyeusement cette grosse vague magnifique et qui ne nous veut aucun mal ! »⁶³. Le « réjouissement » de l'ouverture s'accomplit « joyeusement » ; le calvaire est la Cène, mais la Cène où la joie baigne la souffrance.

Le Soulier de satin reste profondément représentatif, voire emblématique, de la conception d'une souffrance qui régénère l'homme et le conduit à sa finalité originelle. C'est d'ailleurs dans la pièce ce que Saint Jacques et l'Ange Gardien⁶⁴, personnages qui nous guident, laissent entendre. Il est donc logique que dans le « grande negozio dell'umana salvezza », la formule est de Padre Pio⁶⁵, Claudel conçoit son œuvre majeure au service de la glorification de Dieu, comme une démonstration⁶⁶. Le drame s'est déroulé, la vertu de la souffrance est, une fois de plus, exaltée, et Frère Léon, à bon droit, peut conclure : « Délivrance aux âmes captives ! »⁶⁷.

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⁶¹ Parmi d'autres, consulter R. Kraemer-Badoni (*Rivoluzione nella Chiesa*, Una Voce, 1980), F. Spadafora (*La Tradizione contro il Concilio*, Volpe, 1989) ou L. Bianchi (*Liturgia : memoria o istruzioni per l'uso ?*, Piemme, 2002).

⁶² *Le Soulier de satin*, p. 341, didascalie de la Quatrième Journée.

⁶³ *Le Soulier de satin*, IV, 11, p. 492.

⁶⁴ *Le Soulier de satin*, II, 6 ; I, 12 et III, 8 (surtout).

⁶⁵ Rapporté par A. Socci, *Il segreto di Padre Pio*, éd. cit., p. 65. Padre Pio, en accord avec une longue tradition chrétienne, a toujours rappelé qu'il lui fallait « conquérir » les âmes par ses prières et par ses souffrances. C'est aussi l'une des leçons majeures formulées par le Christ de la Miséricorde auprès de Sainte Faustine (13 et 14 septembre 1935) ; il convient de prier Dieu par l'intercession de la Passion de Son Fils.

⁶⁶ Claudel qui a lu et relu Lope de Vega et Calderón, s'est beaucoup inspiré de ce dernier qui, au dénouement de son *Grand théâtre du monde* « exalte » l'eucharistie. Il connaissait également *le Recueil ternaire du Saint Sacrement* (1575) et force *comedias de santos* célébrant la croix et les mystères divins.

⁶⁷ *Le Soulier de satin*, IV, 11, p. 501. Lire la revue *Christus*, n° 202, H.S., mai 2004, numéro consacré à *La mystique ignatienne (...)*, en particulier pp. 40-102 : « Le XVI^{ème} siècle : contemplatif dans l'action ».

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CONTACTS LITTÉRAIRES FRANCO-SLOVÈNES DURANT L'ENTRE-DEUX-GUERRES. *HILARIJ PERNAT* DE VLADIMIR LEVSTIK ET *LE COUSIN PONS* DE BALZAC

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Résumé

La présente contribution a pour objectif de montrer en quoi le roman *Hilarij Pernat* de Vladimir Levstik, à la fois écrivain slovène et grand traducteur de la prose française du XIX^e siècle, semble avoir été largement inspiré par *Le Cousin Pons* de Balzac. Après avoir dégagé les éléments thématiques (au sens large) rapprochant les deux œuvres (structure de l'intrigue, thèmes et motifs, personnages, ...), il convient de mettre en évidence ce que Vladimir Levstik a retenu de l'esthétique balzacienne dans sa propre esthétique (discours des personnages, incipit/clôture du récit, veine satirique ...).

Mots clefs: contacts littéraires, Vladimir Levstik, Honoré Balzac, réalisme, veine satirique, études de réception

Si l'hypothèse d'une influence esthétique et technique de Balzac sur la genèse de *La Comète bleue* de Vladimir Levstik, peut paraître un peu spéculative,⁶⁸ l'influence exercée par le romancier français sur *Hilarij Pernat*, roman paru quelques années plus tard, est plus immédiatement visible du fait qu'il s'agit, du moins en partie, d'une influence thématique exercée par une œuvre clairement identifiée sur une autre et non uniquement d'une influence diffuse, plus difficilement identifiable.

Hilarij Pernat est paru pour la première fois en 1926-1927, en feuilleton dans la revue littéraire *Ljubljanski zvon*. Comme il n'a été publié pour la première fois en volume qu'en 1966, nous ne disposons d'aucun document critique susceptible d'éclairer sa réception par le public slovène durant l'entre-deux-guerres. L'édition de 1966 a passé presque inaperçu. De même, aucun chercheur en littérature slovène ou comparée ne s'est intéressé sérieusement à cette œuvre.⁶⁹

Avant d'analyser les similitudes entre les romans français et slovène, il convient de s'interroger sur la connaissance que Vladimir Levstik, futur traducteur d'*Illusions*

⁶⁸ Nous avons développée cette hypothèse dans un précédent article paru en slovène en 2005 dans la revue *Primerjalna književnost*.

⁶⁹ La bibliographie antérieure à nos travaux est donc uniquement composée d'une étude historique éclairant le cadre dans lequel s'inscrit le roman (Grdina 1995).

perdues, de *Splendeur et misère des courtisanes* et des *Paysans*, avait de Balzac avant la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Bien qu'il nous soit impossible d'affirmer que l'écrivain slovène avait lu *Le Cousin Pons* avant 1926, nous pouvons tout de même affirmer que cette hypothèse est plausible et qu'il avait sans aucun doute lu plusieurs romans de Balzac. C'est du moins ce que semble affirmer Albert André Algoud, grand ami français de Vladimir Levstik, qui, relatant leur première rencontre en 1911, nous fournit le renseignement suivant : « Et puis, inhabile à l'éloquence, je dérivai sans transition vers Balzac, et notre entretien prit soudain un tour si enjoué que nous nous fîmes quasiment chasser de la place, la nuit étant venue sans que nous en eussions conscience » (Algoud 1978 : XIV). Ce « rapport de faits » est confirmé par les autres membres de la famille Algoud encore susceptibles d'apporter leur témoignage, ce qui nous amène à conclure que Vladimir Levstik avait bien lu aux moins quelques romans de Balzac avant 1926, et même avant 1911.

1 UNE HISTOIRE DE COLLECTIONNEUR CÉLIBATAIRE ET D'HÉRITAGE

Dès la première lecture, la parenté entre *Hilarij Pernat* et *Le Cousin Pons* apparaît avant tout dans les similitudes entre l'intrigue et les personnages principaux des deux romans. En revanche, cette impression tend à se dissiper au fil des pages en raison des divergences entre les thèmes secondaires abordés par les deux auteurs.

Dans *Hilarij Pernat*, Vladimir Levstik propose une histoire très semblable à celle du *Cousin Pons*, celle d'un sexagénaire célibataire sans héritier direct dont les héritiers effectifs sont des parents éloignés très antipathiques. À partir de cette trame, les deux romanciers développent une intrigue dont les grandes lignes peuvent être considérées comme similaires, même si la fin du roman slovène est radicalement opposée à celle choisie par Balzac.

En dépit de différences significatives, l'histoire développée par les deux romanciers est très proche : le sexagénaire se brouille avec ses héritiers naturels avec qui il n'a aucune affinité véritable, tombe malade et écrit un testament en faveur d'un tiers (la personne de confiance avec qui il vit). Les différences viennent du fait que Balzac a multiplié le nombre des rapaces au chevet de Pons mourant et compliqué l'intrigue autour du testament (le « vrai » testament en faveur de Schmucke est précédé d'un faux testament en faveur de l'État), tandis que Vladimir Levstik a introduit l'existence d'un fils illégitime, véritable héritier naturel de Pernat, et le suspense concernant son retour du front. Par ailleurs, un fait capital induit un déroulement différent de l'intrigue : dans le roman de Vladimir Levstik, le personnage éponyme est dès le début considéré comme riche, ce qui induit de la part des parents une attitude intéressée dès le début du roman et rend inutiles toutes les intrigues concernant l'évaluation de sa fortune.

De même, contrairement aux apparences, le cadre dans lequel s'inscrit la majeure partie de l'histoire est semblable. Certes, le roman de Balzac se déroule à Paris, mais dans un quartier bien particulier où l'on en vient à oublier que l'on vit dans la capitale : « La rue de Normandie est une de ces rues au milieu desquelles on peut se croire en

province : l'herbe y fleurit, un passant y fait un événement, et tout le monde s'y connaît » (Balzac 1950: 560). Balzac a donc choisi un cadre étroit, limité, où Pons va se retrouver comme prisonnier des machinations de quelques particuliers. L'histoire d'*Hilarij Pernat* se déroule dans une petite ville de province (Celje, selon toute vraisemblance), plus particulièrement dans la « rue du jardin » où Blanka Nagerth possède une petite maison resserrée « comme si elle manquait d'espace en haut et sur les côtés » (Levstik 1926: 325). Il s'agit donc, ici aussi, d'un cadre très circonscrit.

On trouve dans *Hilarij Pernat* certaines scènes qui rappellent *Le Cousin Pons*.

Dans les premières pages du roman de Balzac et au début du chapitre II de *Hilarij Pernat*, le lecteur fait la connaissance du personnage éponyme par le moyen d'une scène où le sexagénaire marche dans la rue sous les regards des passants. Chez Balzac, ces derniers se moquent du caractère démodé de son habillement, tandis que, chez Levstik, ils s'étonnent de la rapidité avec laquelle le professeur a vieilli depuis peu. Les deux scènes aboutissent à une biographie du personnage depuis ses origines familiales jusqu'à sa vie au moment de l'histoire centrale du roman.

Plus loin, dans les deux cas, la brouille entre les parents intervient à la suite d'accusations mensongères (Mme Camusot de Marville reproche à Pons d'avoir voulu lui nuire en présentant Brunner à sa famille et Blanka insinue que Pernat défend Stana parce qu'il nourrit à son égard des sentiments coupables) ; la différence est que, chez Balzac, ce sont les Camusot de Marville qui chassent leur cousin, tandis que c'est le héros de Levstik qui jette sa cousine Blanka dehors.

La chasse à l'héritage est également très semblable. L'atmosphère qui entoure le lit du malade est aussi étouffante chez Levstik que chez Balzac. Dans les deux cas, le malade est pris d'un malaise, qui apparaît à son entourage comme une sorte de « fausse » mort, de mort « ratée » (Balzac 1950: 722-723). En particulier, la scène où Stana surprend les parents en train de provoquer un dangereux courant d'air dans la chambre rappelle plus d'une scène macabre du *Cousin Pons*. Dans les deux romans, l'une des personnes intéressées par l'héritage va même jusqu'à voler le testament dans le but de le détruire s'il s'avère en sa défaveur ; Blanka réussit même là où la Cibot a échoué, puisqu'elle parvient à brûler le testament de Pernat. Notons que c'est cet acte qui permet de démasquer la Cibot et Blanka.

Enfin, il convient de mentionner les nombreux dialogues entre le personnage principal et son allié (Pons et Schmucke dans le roman français, Pernat et Stana dans le roman slovène) qui ponctuent de la même manière chacun des deux romans.

Il est également intéressant d'examiner la clôture du roman de Levstik. Tandis que le roman de Balzac s'achève par la mort du cousin Pons et de son ami Schmucke (l'un meurt de maladie, l'autre des suites de la machination mise en œuvre contre lui) et sur la vente de la collection, un avenir heureux se dessine pour le personnage slovène et son allié dans le chapitre XVI qui clôt le roman de Vladimir Levstik.

En effet, sans ce dernier chapitre, le roman s'achèverait sur une réplique identique des héritiers naturels assurant le triomphe de l'hypocrisie :

Il dînait trois ou quatre fois par semaine chez moi, reprit-elle, il nous aimait tant !
Nous savions l'apprécier, les artistes aiment ceux qui goûtent leur esprit. Mon mari

était d'ailleurs son seul parent. Et quand cette succession est arrivée à Monsieur de Marville, qui ne s'y attendait nullement, monsieur le comte a préféré acheter tout en bloc plutôt que de voir vendre cette collection à la criée; et nous aussi nous avons mieux aimé la vendre ainsi, car il est si affreux de voir disperser de belles choses qui avaient tant amusé ce cher cousin (Balzac 1950: 802).

Les deux dames Nákrť, Jean Bellé et son épouse se concertèrent à voix basse ; ensuite, ils déclinerent unanimement la proposition du docteur. Leur sensibilité et leur amour pour leur bon oncle Hilarius ne leur permettaient pas de l'importuner au milieu des tourments de la mort avec des affaires profanes (Levstik 1927: 590).

Dans les deux cas, les héritiers naturels feignent d'éprouver de la tendresse pour leur parent (le cher cousin, le bon oncle), omettant de rappeler qu'ils se sont fâchés avec lui et ne se sont jamais réconciliés. Mieux encore, ils cachent les vrais raisons de leurs actes (dans les deux cas l'intérêt) sous des airs de compassion : si les de Marville ont vendu toute la collection d'un bloc au comte, ce n'est pas par égards pour leur défunt cousin, mais parce qu'il s'agissait là d'une bonne affaire ; de même, les parents de Hilarij Pernat ne souhaitent pas que l'on fasse venir un notaire parce que, en l'absence de tout testament, ce sont eux qui héritent des biens du défunt.

Or, contre toute attente, la situation se renverse : Hilarij Pernat guérit, Milan Kantor rentre de la guerre sain et sauf, retrouvant ainsi son père et Stana qu'il épouse peu après. Par ailleurs, la cousine Blanka se trahit et est jetée dehors par l'oncle en colère... Un vrai conte de fée qui contraste fortement avec la fin sombre et tragique des deux « casse-noisettes » parisiens. Ici, Vladimir Levstik fait preuve d'un grand conservatisme formel. En effet, aux retrouvailles de Hilarij Pernat et son fils Milan Kantor (solution à l'enjeu que constitue le devenir de l'héritage) Vladimir Levstik ajoute deux pages séparées du reste du texte par un astérisque. Cette fin comporte des caractéristiques identiques à celles des clôtures classiques des romans européens antérieurs au naturalisme. Commenant par une phrase exprimant un saut temporel (« Six mois avaient passé. »), la fin de *Hilarij Pernat* propose un bref résumé de ce qu'il est advenu des différents personnages du roman avant de s'achever sur un très conventionnel consentement de mariage.

En réalité, cette fin met en évidence un autre aspect de Vladimir Levstik dont nous avons déjà eu l'occasion de parler concernant *La Comète bleue* : le sens de la progression dramatique de l'intrigue hérité non seulement d'Alexandre Dumas, mais aussi des grands auteurs dramatiques. L'écrivain slovène est réaliste dans la mesure où il propose dans son œuvre un tableau critique de la société dans laquelle il vit, cependant il n'a pas renoncé à l'intrigue dans le sens classique du terme. La fin de *Hilarij Pernat* ressemble à la fin d'une comédie de Molière : les « méchants » hypocrites sont démasqués et chassés comme à la fin du *Malade imaginaire* ; quant au héros, il retrouve son fils qu'il marie, cela va sans dire, avec la jeune fille qu'il a élevée comme une fille adoptive. Par cette fin aussi rapide qu'idyllique et caricaturale, Vladimir Levstik termine son étude de mœurs par une note positive croquée en quelques pages. Il convient donc plutôt de considérer cette fin comme une coda optimiste formelle, une sorte de revanche de Pons.

La parenté entre *Hilarij Pernat* et *Le Cousin Pons* est également visible dans l'opposition entre deux clans formés, d'un côté, par le personnage titre accom-

pagné de son allié et, de l'autre, des héritiers soutenus par quelques personnages secondaires.

La parenté entre Pons et Pernat, les personnages éponymes des romans français et slovène, est évidente. Ils sont tous deux sexagénaires et célibataires. Tandis que Pons n'est jamais parvenu à plaire aux femmes, Pernat a opté pour le célibat à la suite d'un amour malheureux.⁷⁰ Amateurs d'art, les deux personnages possèdent une collection qui constitue l'héritage tant convoité. Certes, leurs traits de caractère sont très distincts (le dynamisme et le tempérament sanguin de Pernat contrastent avec le caractère pondéré, presque effacé de Pons), néanmoins il existe un point commun entre eux : la fragilité de leurs nerfs. Tandis que Balzac montre comment Pons tombe malade à la suite d'une brouille familiale, Vladimir Levstik note que Pernat « est un homme aux nerfs plus sensibles que ceux du commun des mortels » (Levstik 1926: 334). Les deux personnages présentent donc un certain déséquilibre émotionnel. Petit détail amusant concernant l'enfance de Pernat : fils d'une harpiste, il était destiné à devenir musicien, mais son père a finalement choisi de faire de lui un professeur « parce qu'il n'avait pas assez de talent pour devenir musicien » (Levstik 1926: 335). En un sens, le personnage slovène est une sorte de Pons raté... Il convient ici de mentionner un autre collectionneur célibataire de la littérature française ayant pu influencer sur la genèse de Pernat : Des Esseintes, le héros d'*À Rebours* de Huysmans. En effet, comme Huysmans, le romancier slovène remonte à plusieurs générations pour expliquer le tempérament de son personnage, constatant que ce dernier « était le descendant de la lignée Pernath dans lequel le vieux sang patricien avait connu sa dernière infidélité par rapport au passé » (Levstik 1926: 334). De manière générale, le passage où Vladimir Levstik revient sur les origines familiales de son personnage présente de fortes similitudes avec la « notice » d'*À Rebours*.

Pons et Pernat sont tous deux accompagnés d'un personnage que l'on peut – en raison de sa fonction – appeler un adjuvant ou un allié : une personne de confiance avec qui ils vivent. Certes, en apparence, Schmucke et Stana sont très dissemblables, pourtant la fonction de la jeune fille dans l'histoire est très similaire à celle du musicien allemand. Héritière potentielle sans être du même sang que le personnage éponyme, elle est l'objet de toutes les haines. Étant la seule attachée à Pernat par une affection sincère et désintéressée, elle veille ce dernier durant toute sa maladie. Comme Schmucke, elle est amenée à un certain moment de l'histoire à dissimuler au vieil homme un document qui l'aurait affligé (une lettre laissant penser que son fils est décédé), action qui est dévoilée par l'un des personnages cherchant à la discréditer.

Les héritiers naturels de Pernat sont au nombre de trois : Blanka von Nagerth, Jean Bellé et Mimi Plešivec. Autant Jean et Mimi (un profiteuse de guerre et une mère de famille, pilier de son foyer) sont des types originaux, autant le personnage de Blanka semble devoir beaucoup à deux personnages du *Cousin Pons* pourtant très différents : madame Camusot de Marville (la présidente) et la Cibot.

⁷⁰ La biographie détaillée qu'Anton Šepetavec donne de Vladimir Levstik dans son mémoire de DEA laisse à penser que l'amour malheureux du héros pour une jeune fille qui finit par épouser son meilleur ami est un motif d'origine autobiographique.

Le personnage slovène partage avec la présidente la conviction de ne pas posséder une fortune suffisante non seulement eu égard à ses origines et à son statut social, mais aussi par rapport aux autres membres de sa famille :

Les yeux, encore vifs et caustiques, exprimaient une morgue judiciaire chargée d'une envie contenue. [...] Son caractère, déjà cassant, s'était aigri. Plus vieillie que vieille, elle se faisait âpre et sèche comme une brosse pour obtenir, par la crainte, tout ce que le monde se sentait disposé à lui refuser (Balzac 1950: 551).

Quand <Hilarij Pernat> avait disparu, le visage de Blanka redevenait laid et vieux, plein de tristesse et de déception, plissé dans un masque d'envie inconsolable et de colère inapaisable à l'encontre du monde entier (Levstik 1926: 621).

La colère et l'envie déforment et enlaidissent les deux femmes.

Comme corollaire de cette situation financière, la présidente et Blanka doivent faire face à une autre préoccupation, celle de « caser » au mieux une fille largement en âge de se marier. Mais, tandis que dans le cas de Cécile (âgée de 23 ans) tous les espoirs sont encore permis (à la fin du roman, nous la retrouvons jeune mariée), de son côté Alisa Nagerth est déjà une vieille fille d'une trentaine d'années. Par ailleurs, sa chasse au mari est entravée par un élément extérieur déterminant : la guerre, qui a vidé la ville de sa population masculine.

Une fois dans la course à l'héritage, les intérêts de Blanka, tout comme ceux de madame de Malville, sont défendus également par les notables de la ville. La différence réside dans le fait que les personnages de Balzac agissent par intérêt personnel, tandis que ceux de Levstik suivent à la lettre les us et coutumes ancestraux qui veulent que l'on se range systématiquement du côté des héritiers « légitimes » ou considérés comme tels.

On retrouve également dans le personnage de Blanka Nagerth certaines caractéristiques de la Cibot. En effet, ruinée par son défunt mari, Blanka mène une existence de petite commerçante, de buraliste, qui n'a rien à envier à celle de la Cibot dans sa loge.

Plus tard, le personnage slovène joue dans l'intrigue un rôle identique à celui de la concierge de Balzac : elle assiège le domicile du malade et subtilise le testament, éléments importants dans la mesure où ils contribuent à créer une atmosphère particulière dans les pages du roman relatant la maladie du sexagénaire et la chasse à l'héritage.

Notons que les deux auteurs utilisent pour désigner les personnages se pressant autour de l'héritage un « bestiaire » métaphorique similaire. Chez Balzac, le regard de la Cibot est « un regard de tigre » (Balzac 1950: 619), Fraisier et ses complices sont des « corbeaux flairant leur cadavre » (Balzac 1950: 719) et, pour Schmucke, toute lutte est vaine car « <c>es homes ond des fizaches de digre » (Balzac 1950: 787) ; dans le roman slovène, Hilarij Pernat compare ses parents accourant à son chevet à des hyènes (« hijene ») et, effectivement, quelques lignes plus loin le narrateur remarque que le bruit que font ces derniers est « semblable au piétinement d'un fauve s'élançant sans réfléchir après sa proie » (Levstik 1927: 585). Quant à Blanka, « elle attendait dans son bureau de tabac comme une araignée dans sa toile et guettait sur le seuil » (Levstik 1926: 621).

Les similitudes des grandes lignes de l'intrigue, de certaines scènes et des personnages de *Hilarij Pernat* et du *Cousin Pons* sont donc suffisamment nombreuses pour

que l'on puisse songer à un lien génétique entre les deux œuvres. Toutefois, il convient de ne pas négliger la présence d'un autre fil conducteur du roman absent du roman de Balzac : la recherche du fils héritier, qui se développe parallèlement à la chasse à l'héritage. Cette partie de l'intrigue éloigne considérablement le roman slovène non seulement du *Cousin Pons*, mais également du réalisme en général : tandis que Balzac s'attarde surtout sur la psychologie des différents personnages concourant à la perte des deux musiciens, Vladimir Levstik consacre davantage d'espace aux doutes et tourments qu'endure le personnage principal à la recherche de son fils.

2. HILARIJ PERNAT ET LA POÉTIQUE BALZACIENNE

Mais la parenté thématique avec *Le Cousin Pons* n'est pas le seul lien rattachant *Hilarij Pernat* au réalisme balzacien. D'autres éléments plus techniques soulignent également l'influence du romancier français sur Vladimir Levstik. Parmi les aspects les plus flagrants, mentionnons l'incipit du roman slovène, la conception du narrateur et surtout l'importance accordée aux particularismes linguistiques des personnages.

Hilarij Pernat commence par un incipit statique descriptif⁷¹ qui peut être rapproché de celui de nombreux romans de Balzac, en particulier celui du *Père Goriot* :

À l'angle de la place Mestni trg et de la rue Samostanska, une maison de petite taille, couverte de lichen gris, se serre entre ses voisines, comme si elle manquait de place en haut et sur les côtés. L'entrée sombre donne sur la rue ; le premier étage comporte deux fenêtres exigües, bordées de vert, donnant sur la place et trois donnant sur la rue ; le rez-de-chaussée avance sur la rue avec deux ouvertures tout aussi tristes dont l'une s'ouvre à l'aide d'un loquet et est décorée de cartes postales jaunies et de journaux datant toujours de plusieurs semaines.

En pleine canicule de l'année de guerre 1917, tous les braves habitants du voisinage admiraient l'aigle impérial qui surmontait cette éminente fenêtre et la planche noire et jaune sur laquelle on pouvait lire l'inscription »K. k. Tabaktrafik'. En effet, rares étaient ceux qui déambulaient dans le bourg sans être attirés par cette enseigne; si on n'y trouvait pas de cigares et de cigarettes, on avait au moins l'occasion de faire la connaissance de madame von Nagerth ou Nákrť, selon la prononciation des gens simples, et de sa fille Alisa qui distribuaient les merveilles que proposait le monopole du tabac, la presse patriotique du jour et les nouvelles mondaines récentes dans leur version corrigée et dupliquée (Levstik 1926: 325).

L'écrivain campe un lieu et une atmosphère en décrivant une maison, puis évoque la vie quotidienne dans la ville, ce qui lui donne l'occasion de présenter brièvement l'un des personnages principaux du roman.

Comme dans *Višnjeva repatica*, le narrateur de *Hilarij Pernat* est absent de l'histoire mais omniscient. Comme chez Balzac, le récit est caractérisé par une focalisation zéro : l'information fournie au lecteur est complète, de sorte que ce dernier connaît tout, même les pensées les plus intimes des personnages. Les passages focalisés du point de vue de l'un des personnages ne sont pas inexistants, mais sont très rares. Pourtant, dans

⁷¹ Nous utilisons ici la terminologie proposée par Andrea Del Lungo dans son article de 1993.

le cadre de cette narration à la troisième personne non focalisée, nous rencontrons la première personne (du pluriel, puis du singulier) semblant vouloir indiquer au début du roman que le narrateur est l'un des habitants de la petite ville où se déroule l'histoire. Ce procédé a pour effet d'installer l'illusion référentielle.

Le Cousin Pons est un roman intéressant également du point de vue linguistique. En effet, dans les passages en style direct, certains personnages parlent un idiome qui leur est propre. Le fort accent allemand de Schmucke et la prononciation chuintante de Rémonencq sont rendus par Balzac à l'aide d'une écriture phonétique (d'une lecture parfois astreignante) ; quant à la langue de la Cibot, elle est proposée au lecteur dans toute sa familiarité, avec ses images pittoresques, ses constructions fautives, son surplus de « n » :

Soyez tranquille, vous n'avez près de vous n'un bon ami, et, sans me vanter, n'une femme qui vous soignera comme n'une mère soigne son premier enfant. J'ai tiré Cibot d'une maladie que monsieur Poulain l'avait condamné, qu'il lui n'avait jeté, comme on dit, le drap sur le nez, qu'il n'était abandonné comme mort... (Balzac 1950: 619)

Les autres personnages parlent un français standard, exempt de marques régionales ou sociales.

On trouve la même tendance – dans une variante moins appuyée – dans *Hilarij Pernat* : le personnage éponyme et, dans une moindre mesure, la jeune Stana, parlent un slovène truffé d'expressions françaises et latines, tandis que Blanka von Nagerth et sa fille utilisent un nombre important d'expressions allemandes (non traduites), comme : « Pleurer un fils qui, en comptant sur les doigts de la main, pourrait lui-même constater qu'il n'était pas de lui ... *Wie komisch !...* » (Levstik 1927: 87). La différence entre l'authenticité linguistique accrue des dialogues dans les deux romans réside dans la signification que revêtent les particularismes des personnages. En effet, chez Levstik, l'opposition linguistique entre le latin et le français d'un côté et l'allemand de l'autre n'a pas uniquement pour but d'accroître l'effet de réel, mais contribue à renforcer l'opposition entre les deux clans en présence et, par ailleurs, revêt une signification idéologique et nationale absente du roman de Balzac. C'est ainsi que les conservateurs pangermanistes s'opposent aux intellectuels partisans d'un état yougoslave indépendant de l'Autriche-Hongrie. Même linguistiquement parlant, Hilarij Pernat et ses proches parents ne partagent pas les mêmes valeurs.

Certains traits stylistiques et narratologiques de *Hilarij Pernat* marquent donc une parenté réelle entre l'écriture de Balzac et celle de Vladimir Levstik. À ces traits plus aisément saisissables, il convient d'ajouter une tendance générale de l'écrivain slovène à la satire. En effet, même s'il ne porte pas le sous-titre de « roman satirique » comme *Višnjeva repatica*, *Hilarij Pernat* relève réellement de la caricature, ce qui, là encore, le rapproche de l'univers romanesque balzacien.

Toutefois, les similitudes étudiées ici ne doivent naturellement pas cacher les éléments qui éloignent *Hilarij Pernat* du *Cousin Pons* : du point de vue thématique, l'importance accordée à la lutte de certains Slovénes pour la création d'un état slave et l'absence de ces descriptions et de ces pauses réflexives si caractéristiques de l'écriture

balzacienne. En dépit de ces divergences, nous pouvons conclure que le roman de Balzac a vraisemblablement joué un rôle essentiel dans la genèse du roman de Vladimir Levstik.

Après la Première Guerre mondiale, le roman français du XIX^e siècle n'a donc pas fini d'exercer une influence sur le roman slovène. Celle-ci se poursuivra durant les années trente jusqu'au cataclysme de la Seconde Guerre mondiale.

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LES ONIRIQUES *FLEURS BLEUES* DE RAYMOND QUENEAU

Primož Vitez

Résumé

Dans *Les fleurs bleues* (1965) de Raymond Queneau, le narrateur fait couler deux histoires parallèles qui se terminent dans l'unité du présent énonciatif. L'effet contrastant de ce double récit, habité d'un côté par le Duc d'Auge et de l'autre par un certain Cidrolin, deux facettes d'un seul personnage, se fonde sur un principe onirique, déclenché au moment quand le Duc d'Auge s'endort; dans son rêve se déploie l'histoire de Cidrolin qui finit par s'endormir à son tour – et voilà le lecteur replongé dans les aventures du Duc. Ce que l'auteur développe par ses astuces narratives, c'est la pluralité du réel, ce sont les parallélismes invisibles, c'est la promesse d'une perspective existentielle, c'est la fécondité de l'ironie. À travers la variation de ce qui apparemment est ordinaire, Queneau démontre une dimension extraordinaire de l'invention littéraire.

Mots-clés : Raymond Queneau, *Les fleurs bleues*, récit onirique, fiction, réalité littéraire, variation

*Figurez-vous que tout à l'heure,
en dormant, j'ai fait un rêve étrange.
J'étais un papillon voltigeant,
ivre de lumière et du parfum des fleurs.
Et maintenant, je ne sais plus si je suis Tchouang-tseu
ayant rêvé qu'il était un papillon
ou un papillon qui rêve qu'il est Tchouang-tseu !*

(Le rêve du papillon, Contes et histoires zen)

La dramaturgie⁷² du meilleur roman (1965) de Queneau, dans ses éléments, est simple : de chapitre en chapitre, ils sont au nombre de vingt-et-un, on poursuit l'écoulement de deux histoires parallèles qui finissent par confluer en une seule. L'effet contrastant de ce double récit, habité d'un côté par le Duc d'Auge et de l'autre par un certain Cidrolin, se fonde sur un principe onirique, annoncé par l'exergue, tiré du *Théétète* de Platon : ὄναρ ἀντὶ ὀνειράτος, *un rêve pour un rêve*. Le principe est déclenché au moment quand le Duc d'Auge, pour la première fois du roman, s'endort; dans son

⁷² On dira bien dramaturgie, car Queneau, ici encore, est filmique.

rêve se déploie l'histoire de Cidrolin qui finit par s'endormir à son tour – et nous voilà replongés dans les aventures du Duc. Le hameçon narratif est lancé et peu à peu on perd la trace de savoir qui dort et qui fait l'apparition onirique; qui rêve et qui est rêvé; qui est le créateur du rêve et qui en est la créature; qui est l'auteur ensommeillé et qui est le personnage de son imagination.

Ce double récit réalise une dialectique du monde, s'élaborant dans un dialogue entre le présent universel et les époques historiques particulières; entre les deux côtés d'une même histoire personnelle, celle du héros principal, appelé tour à tour Duc d'Auge ou Cidrolin. C'est une construction ingénieuse d'un personnage en tant qu'amalgame de son histoire actuelle et de son fond historique et traditionnel. La structure de l'ouvrage rappelle le potentiel associatif et unificateur des deux grandes séries des Écritures chrétiennes où l'Ancien Testament n'est pas seulement la précurseur de ce qu'apportera le Nouveau, mais son vrai pendant historique. Le principe que l'exégèse biblique définit en termes de *Concordia veteris et novi Testamenti* se trouve reformulé dans le roman de Queneau comme une élaboration raffinée d'une personne fêlée et de son histoire fourvoyée, comme une certaine *Concordia historiae et personnae praesentis*. Que le Duc d'Auge et Cidrolin se rêvent, est une allusion singulière à l'onirisme en tant qu'écran audiovisuel de l'inconscient, qui détermine – plus que toutes les actions conscientes – la condition humaine : que l'homme est une ambiguïté, un paradoxe sur ses deux jambes qui ne saurait comprendre qui il est, d'où il vient, comment il s'en sortira et pourquoi il fait ce qu'il lui arrive de faire. Plus il semble s'approprier le sentiment de comprendre la vie et de pouvoir faire passer sa connaissance ailleurs, vers les autres, plus il se trouve délaissé par la certitude, moins il ressent de stabilité dans son savoir, plus il devient suspicieux et rongé par le doute.

À quoi bon ici cette incursion dialectique, cette vieille histoire de la nature humaine, inévitablement double, rappel de la célèbre fresque baudelairienne de la plaie qui en même temps est un couteau, du bourreau et sa victime, réunis dans un seul être ? Cidrolin habite sur l'eau, sur une péniche accostée au rivage de la Seine – comme on en trouve encore aujourd'hui à Saint-Ouen – et protégée par une haie en bois où chaque nuit, depuis des années, un anonyme vient écrire des *graffiti* insultants à son sujet. Son seule constante activité quotidienne, à part la consommation de l'essence de fenouil, c'est de recouvrir de couleur fraîche ces insultes nocturnes. Dans le dénouement dramatique du roman on apprend que l'auteur de ces injures peintes n'est autre que Cidrolin lui-même, qu'il vient s'insulter sur son propre *wall*, pour se sentir ensuite obligé de le repeindre et de diminuer la honte. Il ne reste plus rien de cet anonymat commode qui lui permettait pourtant de muscler du jour au jour sa douleur. Il est particulièrement gênant pour lui de voir que c'est son pendant historique, son alter ego, le Duc d'Auge qui dans une action éclatante révèle son mystère et démasque l'auteur non moins honteux que ses inscriptions. Il n'y a pas lieu ici de s'appuyer excessivement, en interprétant cette métaphore bizarre, aux notions psychanalytiques, telles que scission, manque, fêlure et ainsi de suite – mais il n'en reste pas moins vrai que c'est plus ou moins de cela qu'il s'agit. Il faut constater que le pinceau de quelqu'un qui la nuit s'insulte graphiquement pour s'excuser le jour, dessine un tableau tant soit peu romantique de l'être créatif réunissant l'essentiel de toutes les oppositions, voire contradictions morales. Comme sa vie se présente comme un dilemme, il ne se permettra pas de se conformer aux parti-pris trop

prévisibles, il ne défend ni l'un ni l'autre côté de sa controverse intime, mais essaiera plutôt d'orienter sa foi, comme la raison d'ailleurs, vers le dilemme tout court. L'image de l'artiste qui, aux moments critiques du processus créatif, est capable de s'adresser du mépris, de s'anéantir en se dévalorisant douloureusement, de se cracher au visage et de s'inonder compulsivement au pastis – tout cela pour s'affermir à long terme, pour densifier la longue attente de l'occasion transcendante qui lui permette, tel oiseau ressuscité des cendres, de remonter sa frustration et de croire moins nerveusement en l'avènement du jour de son ascension vers l'éternité.

L'ironie clairvoyante, l'intelligence que l'auteur établit vis-à-vis de son héros para(illé)lysé, et, indirectement bien sûr, vis-à-vis de soi-même, c'est ce qui enveloppe cette histoire onirique dans tout son éclat narratif. Car le rêve permet les combinaisons les plus astucieuses de tout ce qui, pendant les années de sa vie, s'est accumulé dans la mémoire accessible et encryptée du rêveur; voilà pourquoi le récit, à un moment donné, se trouve agrémenté par une idée singulière, d'après laquelle qu'il y a de l'indécence à vouloir raconter ses rêves à autrui. Dans le rêve il n'y a pas d'incertitude, tout ce qui s'y passe est dépourvu de doute, mais non d'ambiguïté : c'est pourquoi, depuis toujours, on ne voit dans le rêve que des images allusives; des images qui se racontent, certes, mais qui en même temps racontent autre chose. Les rêves s'ouvrent donc immédiatement sur l'interprétation, démystifiant en détail les couches psychologiques et caractérielles du rêveur. Le risque qu'on court de dire ses rêves, c'est le risque que court l'écrivain en publiant ses textes. Mais si le sommeil, apportant le rêve, dévoile la condition émotive du rêveur et ses obsessions, il existe un autre état qui, lui, intensifie les processus intellectuels. C'est la phase intermittente entre l'éveil et le sommeil, le temps d'assoupissement, quand les pensées d'une conscience intéressée restent en vigueur, mais se trouvent graduellement envahies par la haute-marée d'une paix rassurante qu'apporte l'emprise de l'inconscient. Dans cette confluence d'avant-sommeil, dans ces minutes bénies quand le fleuve de la conscience s'unit à la mer des mémoires oubliées, on dresse des plans, on voit remonter des structures, on jette des projections; les schémas s'assemblent, les chiffres s'agitent. La lucidité de cet état révélateur conserve au roseau pensant le potentiel de sa connaissance et devient la source d'une cohérence originale, réaffirmant la prémonition des structures sur lesquelles se fonde la conviction de toute oeuvre d'art bien énoncée.

Il semble que dans la conception des *Fleurs bleues*, ce sont encore les chiffres qui se sont le plus agités, et parmi eux le *sept* qui s'avère particulièrement prodigieux. Queneau se servait abondamment du chiffre sept dans ses ouvrages de jeunesse; c'est d'ailleurs le nombre de lettres que comportent son nom et son prénom. Le parallèle historique de l'histoire de Cidrolin, le récit onirique du Duc d'Auge, s'étend sur sept siècles de l'histoire française, de 1264 jusqu'à l'an 1964, temps actuel de la création du roman. Ces sept cents ans s'écoulaient fictivement en vingt-et-un chapitres (ce qui est divisible par sept), et dans la structure narrative de cette double histoire toute la longue époque est partagée entre quatre intervalles de 175 ans. Au début de la septième décennie de sa vie (il a 61 ans en 1964), Queneau fait le geste de se rappeler sa jeunesse créatrice : à chaque époque historique, du temps du roi Saint-Louis (1264) à l'actuel (1964), en passant par la Renaissance (1439), par le classicisme naissant (1614) et par la Révolution (1789), il s'écoule sept fois vingt-cinq ans ce qui chez l'homme pourrait

ressembler à un âge qu'on appelle jeunesse. Ces astuces arithmétiques finissent donc par se transformer en une réflexion du passage et de la finitude, en un examen de la temporalité et – pourquoi non – de la durée. Il s'agit pour Queneau de se demander, comment coule le temps dans une histoire personnelle, dans l'histoire d'un héros littéraire, comment coule le temps du monde, le temps de «*l'histoire universelle en général et de l'histoire générale en particulier*», mais surtout – quel est le cours du temps dans un récit littéraire : comment l'auteur peut saisir le temps pour lui donner une forme et comment le lecteur peut le vivre sans qu'il soit saisi au cou. Queneau formule le temps en formulant son écriture : il n'attribue pas aux choses fatales une fatalité *a priori*, il prend son propre temps à les énoncer dans des gestes consécutifs d'esprit, permettant au lecteur de sourire et de relâcher *de temps en temps* ses muscles faciaux en un rire libérateur. Le rire intervient surtout quand l'auteur réfléchit directement, à travers l'écriture, sa propre méthode narrative. On rit quand l'écriture, pour ainsi dire, se joue de soi-même pour devenir élégamment métagraphique. Parmi les passages qui exercent à merveille la capture du temps, en voilà un qui nous semble particulièrement réussi :

L'abbé saisit la corde et emboîte le pas au duc qui tient la lanterne à la main. Ils avancent en silence.

Dans le silence obscur, ils avancent.

Dans l'obscurité silencieuse, ils continuent d'avancer.

Sans cadence, ils avancent, la corde se balance et la lanterne aussi, c'est toujours le silence.

Ce n'est pas tout à fait le silence, car il y a le bruit des pas, ce n'est pas tout à fait l'obscurité, car il y a cette petite lumière au bout du bras du conducteur.

Ils avancent en silence.

Soudain :

– Monsieur le duc...

– Ne craignez rien, l'abbé, vous voyez bien que je suis toujours là.

C'est un geste réflexif de l'auteur s'aventurant dans une fusion de son énonciation avec l'énoncé, reproduisant en même temps le cheminement du temps et le dynamisme des événements écrits, unissant la description au décrit : pour Queneau, ici, avancer dans le silence, c'est exécuter cette démarche obscure et silencieuse qui est celle d'écrire. À cette brillante analyse simultanée du temps réel, fictif, narratif et perceptif se joint la finesse d'une harmonie phonique (*avancent–silence–balance*), un mouvement poétique dans l'esprit de l'écart comique et intelligent qu'effectue l'auteur par rapport aux prosations stéréotypées. Mais où qu'on se décide de mettre l'oeil, quelle que soit l'astuce observée de l'écrivain : ses imaginations orthographiques, ses néologismes et inventions néo-babéliennes, ses structures polyphoniques, produisant des effets tropiques (on est presque tenté de dire *poésiques*) qui augmentent la tension hospitalière de la lecture – il y a au-dessous de toutes ces perles narratives la *langue*. Et pas n'importe laquelle : c'est la poésie exceptionnelle de Queneau, inimitable, foncièrement originale. C'est le français quenélien, un idiolecte littéraire inépuisable, monté sur le fond de toutes les pratiques langagières vécues et imaginées. La surface fascinante du texte recèle la vraie fascination de l'auteur : le goût millénaire de la langue française, celui de la *variation*, toujours et partout, dans le scintillement de la parole, dans les pièces canonisées et in-

connues de l'impressionnante histoire de la littérature française. De Rabelais aux maîtres du théâtre classique, en passant par les fous littéraires dont Queneau s'établissait une spécialisation. Ils ont tous en commun d'avoir essayé de (se) comprendre. Ils se sont tous donné cette peine, il se sont tous affligé cet effort prestigieux, ils ont tous entamé ce labeur presque surhumain – ils ont *pensé*.

Le plaisir que ressent Queneau pour la variation constitue le noyau de son écriture et de son engagement artistique. La variation se présente comme un procédé de composition,⁷³ dessinant le véritable fil conducteur de sa création originale. Ce penchant variationnel est à la source d'une autre joie quenélienne, celle de l'érudition débridée, mêlée à la construction des labyrinthes de l'intertextualité où seuls les lecteurs bien avisés sont invités à errer. Quand il était question tout à l'heure de parallélismes de la structure narrative et de la dialectique des éléments littéraires, il s'agissait en effet de la variation d'une même chose : Cidrolin et le Duc d'Auge ne sont que variation du même héros, deux figures d'un seul personnage. Le principe variationnel s'imbrique naturellement dans les fondements du roman : les lieux d'embranchement narratif, de passage d'événement en événement, d'histoire en histoire, et puis d'Histoire au Présent, il y a incessamment retour au même – le personnage, à un moment crucial, doit s'endormir pour que son alter ego puisse revivre. Disons au hasard que Cidrolin et son pendant historique s'assoupissent dans le roman vingt-huit ou trente-cinq fois, pour ne pas abandonner la logique structurelle de la multiplication par sept. L'auteur s'est donc délégué une tâche formelle, celle de varier sensiblement la formulation d'un même événement banal. Ce procédé variationnel, on le sait, a été développé avec beaucoup d'esprit dans les *Exercices de style* – et Queneau ne semble pas y avoir renoncé depuis. L'action fondamentale de la variation, c'est d'ouvrir la potentialité formelle, de *s'ouvrir* sur l'invention des formes et c'est ce qui représente le motif intemporel de l'art : chercher et finir par trouver le moyen de renouveler, par le regard écrit, les choses qui existent depuis toujours. La vérité abstraite, objectif tacite de toute aventure artistique, ne se confond pas avec *la chose* elle-même, elle est le chemin véridique, plus ou moins convaincant et reconnu, qui mène vers cette chose, chemin qu'il faut faire en passant par la raison, mais aussi, comme on dit parfois, par le cœur. L'histoire de l'art, c'est l'histoire des formes artistiques.

Le titre du roman, quelque peu intraduisible vers d'autres langues, *Les fleurs bleues*, est un syntagme conventionnel, mais plutôt rare en français. C'est une expression métaphorique pour un animé, quelqu'un de trop sensible, excessivement sentimental, presque pleurnichard et certainement crédule qui (parfois sous l'influence de l'alcool) s'enthousiasme jusqu'à l'euphorie pour les choses auxquelles il n'oserait pas trop penser en état de sobriété psychologique et physiologique. Le choix du titre est sans motif prévisible ou confirmable par la cohérence de surface textuelle : il n'y apparaît que deux fois, au début et tout à la fin, dans la dernière phrase. On a encore affaire au goût que Queneau éprouve à faire allusion aux fleurs de la littérature française qui ont su inspirer sa création. Du côté sémantique, il y a, certes, la ressemblance avec *Les fleurs du mal* (1857), célèbre recueil de Baudelaire; en revanche, du point de vue de la pragmatique du

⁷³ D'une part on comprendra la variation comme un retour incessant à «toujours la même chose», de l'autre, c'est la construction de rapports entre les divers éléments d'une oeuvre d'art, un trait compositif contribuant à l'établissement des dimensions esthétiques du texte.

texte, ce titre fonctionne comme un geste ludique et arbitraire, rappelant *La Cantatrice chauve* (1950) de Ionesco, l'antidrame du langage perdu, où le titre ne surgit qu'une seule fois, sans lien directement cohésif à l'action, dans une réplique du Pompier. En cherchant les relations sémantiques du titre avec l'univers romanesque de Queneau, on n'aura peut-être pas trop tort d'insister sur la qualification explicative «parfois sous l'influence de l'alcool». Il est vrai qu'une certaine boisson alcoolique sert de carburant principal au personnage flottant sur l'Arche – et qu'on reproche un peu souvent à Cidrolin qu'il boit trop – et qu'il dort mieux s'il a bu «*un tantinet soit peu*». Mais il n'en est pas moins vrai que, plus généralement, dans la caractérisation de la *fleur bleue* l'alcool est l'un des moyens principaux permettant la fugue, l'évasion, la fuite, l'absentéisme, le «foutre le camp» devant la réalité qui, elle, implique la présence souvent inopportune de soi à tout instant. Pour comprendre cette réalité, il ne suffit pas de dire qu'elle n'est pas toujours agréable ou qu'elle risque parfois d'être opprimante; il faut surtout dire que cette réalité ne peut nullement être la seule réalité dans la vie d'un individu. En cherchant l'abri devant cette réalité oppressive, une *fleur bleue*, effectivement, peut s'exiler impunément dans le rêve que le poète sublime, Gérard de Nerval, qualifie d'une «*seconde vie*». Dans le rêve, il est permis au rêveur de s'enthousiasmer sans freins pour les variations supra-intellectuelles du bien et du mal, du beau et du laid, du vrai et du soi-disant faux. Il est permis de se poser dans les sphères oniriques du second monde des questions indécentes, telle la question sur l'existence des préadamites, les gens qui existeraient avant Adam et dont on croit, avec pas mal d'humour, retrouver l'image dans les grottes de Montignac, de Lascaux et d'Altamire. En d'autres termes : quel profit pourrait-on tirer de la réconciliation éventuelle de se rapport douteux entre la théologie et la théorie ? Le transfuge vers l'euphorie, dans son imagination onirique, ne s'arrête pas là. Il s'offre le luxe de poser une autre question, non moins pieuse et bien plus éruptive que la première : ne serait-il pas franchement plus profitable pour tous si les plus grands savants (Galileo Galilei) de l'histoire humaine se contentaient tout simplement d'être alchimistes auréogènes (Timoleo Timolei), indépendamment du résultat de l'entreprise scientifique ? La promesse d'une telle liberté, arrivée au bord d'un sombre précipice sans fond, ne laisse d'ouverte que la question de technique : comment s'endormir ? Comme s'endormir pour que la pensée soit transparente ?

Que les sept cents ans de rêve historique dans *Les fleurs bleues* se joignent au moment actuel (1964) de l'histoire narrée, c'est tout de même une conclusion optimiste par rapport à l'ordinaire réaliste, voire pessimiste des perspectives existentielles. Il semble que la sagesse de l'auteur s'apprête à lever le doigt sur la coexistence de diverses réalités (soient-elles parallèles), d'univers pluriels dans ce que l'on perçoit habituellement – et par erreur – comme la seule réalité, comme le seul (et du coup le meilleur) monde possible, comme la seule combinaison concevable des coordonnées spatio-temporelles. Si on s'abandonne à ne regarder notre présent que sous ce pauvre angle, si c'est par là que l'on se construit notre «point zéro» en tant que catégorie temporelle exclusive (qui, disons-le en passant, n'existe pas), cela signifie qu'on se défend d'être entiers. On renonce par là à la possibilité d'une auto-révélation dans la gloire de notre histoire intime et culturelle. On se prive de tout ce que l'on pourrait nommer *salut quotidien de l'imagination*, ainsi que de toute chance de consommer jusqu'au fond la puissance de notre langage. Dans son roman, Queneau offre au lecteur cette possibilité

d'identification oubliée : se construire un panorama des sphères invisibles que l'on a pris l'habitude d'ignorer.

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SUMMARIES IN SLOVENE – POVZETKI V SLOVENŠČINI

UDK 821.163.6–31.09.09Capuder A.:1(091)Bergson H.

Boštjan Marko Turk

HENRI BERGSON : PRVA POSTAVA ROMANESKNEGA OPUSA ANDREJA CAPUDRA

Razprava se sooča z vprašanjem o mestu bergsonizma, življenjske filozofije, kot jo je na prelomu prejšnjega stoletja zasnoval francoski mislec in Nobelov nagrajenec, Henri Bergson, v romanesknem opusu Andreja Capudra. Dejstvo je, da je bil prav Henri Bergson tisti mislec, ki je delo Andreja Capudra najgloblje določil. To se vidi v dveh segmentih. Prvi je teoretično ukvarjanje in premišljanje bergsonistične materije skozi desetletja. Njen nasledek je sintetična raziskovalna študija *Henri Bergson, intuicija in misel*, ki je izšla nedavno. Drugi, pomembnejši pa je sprotno vgrajevanje postulatov bergsonizma v romaneskni opus. V resnici pokaže globlja analiza romanov Andreja Capudra, da so na najpomembnejša mesta vloženi eksplisitni elementi bergsonistične filozofije. Tako sledimo definicijam čistega trajanja, kontrastiranega s homogenim prostorom ali linearnim prostoročassjem, v katerem človek biva na površen način, statično in pokvečeno. Nespregledljiva v tej smeri je tudi evokacija glasbene fraze, melodije, za kar pričata celo dva naslova romanov, *Rapsodija 20* in *Mali cvet*, ki je v celoti posvečen občutku trajanja, kot ga v človeško zavest priklicuje glasba.

Romaneskno delo Andreja Capudra je globoka refleksija bergsonizma, kar mu daje specifično težo in širšo pomembnost z njim pa tudi moderni književnosti v domovini.

*Miha Pintarič**ET LE POUCE, OÙ EST-IL, QUI MONTRERA VERS LE CIEL? (SONNET XXXII)*

Članek kratko analizira *Rimske sonete* Andreja Capudra, politika, diplomata, univerzitetnega profesorja, pisatelja, prevajalca in pesnika, pri tem pa ugotavlja, kaj je pesniku v življenju pomembno, torej njegov vrednostni sistem. Preteklost, obarvana nostalgичno, v kateri prevladuje spomin na mladostno ljubezen, prihodnost, s katero se bliža trenutek srečanja s Stvarnikom, vmes pa še toliko drugih reči, tako zemeljskih, na katere pesnik bodisi gleda z asketsko strogostjo bodisi jih dopušča in je do njih strpen, ali pa iz njih celo naredi nepogrešljive življenjske sopotnike.

*James Dauphiné**LA CÈNE D'OUVERTURE V SATENASTEM ČEVELJCU (I, 1)*

Kritika in eksegeza, ki sta se lotevali opredeljevanja mnogostranega opusa pesnika, dramatika, esejista in preučevalca Biblije, Paula Claudela, še posebej njegovega središčnega dela, *Satenastega čeveljca*, sta velikokrat ostali pred vrati dejanske strukture umetnine. To se je večidel dogajalo zato, ker ne ena ne druga nista bili zmožni videti njene geneze v tipičnem teološkem kontekstu konca časov, trpljenja, predvsem pa zakramentalnega delovanja. V tem smislu študija opozarja na evharistično lastnost zadnje večerje v prvem prizoru prvega dejanja drame. Šele ob pritegnitvi eshatološkega aparata in pomembnih ekleziološko-eksegetskih prvin (učenja patra Pia, npr.) se začne pravilno razodevati metafizični ustroj Claudelove stvaritve, pač v luči *quantum ad statum viae pertinet*.

*Florence Gacoin-Marks*FRANCOSKO-SLOVENSKI LITERARNI STIKI MED VOJNAMA. *HILARIJ
PERNAT* VLADIMIRJA LEVSTIKA IN BALZACOV *STRIČEK PONS*

Avtorica članka poskuša pokazati, zakaj lahko utemeljeno domnevamo, da se je slovenski pisatelj in veliki prevajalec francoske proze 19. stoletja Vladimir Levstik v svojem romanu *Hilarij Pernat* zgledoval po francoskem pisatelju Honoréju de Balzacu,

natančneje po *Stričku Ponsu*. Prvi del analize podobnosti med romanoma zadeva zgradbo zgodbe, motiviko in literarne osebe. Drugi je posvečen poetiki obeh romanopiscev oz. vplivu Balzacove poetike na Levstikovo.

UDK 821.131.1–31.09Queneau R.

Primož Vitez

QUENEAUJEVE SANJSKE MODRE CVETKE

V romanu *Les fleurs bleues* (1965, slovenski prevod *Modre cvetke*, prev. Ana Barič Moder, Sanje, 2012) se iz poglavja v poglavje razvijata vzporedni zgodbi, ki se proti koncu stečeta v enotnost pripovedne sedanjosti. Kontrastivni učinek te dvojne pripovedi, eno naseljuje Vojvoda Avgijski, drugo pa posebněž Cidrolin, dve plati iste osebe, je utemeljen na sanjskem principu, ki se sproži v trenutku, ko Vojvoda Avgijski v romanu prvič zaspi. V njegovih sanjah se razgrne Cidrolinova zgodba, v kateri junak prav tako zaspi – in bralec je spet potopljen v Vojvodove prigode. S takimi pripovednimi prijemi avtor razvije mnogoterost resničnosti, nevidne vzporednice, obet eksistencialne perspektive, rodovitnost ironije. V postopku variacije tega, kar je navidez vsakdanje, Queneau izgraja vrstolomne dimenzije literarne invencije.

