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HARRY POTTER – TRIVIAL OR NOT?

Brigita Pavšič

Abstract

The article explores the extent to which the features of trivial literature appear in the *Harry Potter* series by J. K. Rowling. This is done in comparison with another popular children's series, *The Famous Five* by Enid Blyton, which was analysed by Igor Saksida. The main focus of the analysis is on the schematic representation of plot, characters and the exotic nature of the setting and time of the stories.

The *Harry Potter* books have been widely discussed in the past few years. Critical response was mainly fuelled by the unprecedented success of the series and too often the books themselves were considered marginal to the whole phenomenon. But when they were at the centre of critical assessment, one of the main issues was their triviality or non-triviality. I will try to establish whether they have the features of the former or the latter. To achieve this I will compare them to another series, *The Famous Five* by Enid Blyton, which Igor Saksida analysed and clearly established it as trivial in the layout of individual books as well as in their contents.

Critics have expressed a very wide range of assessments in regards to *Harry Potter*. Among those which are negative are such opinions as Anthony Holden's, "Disney cartoons written in words, no more" (Holden in Cowell), or William Safire's who believes that these books lead to "infantilization" of those adults that read them and that the result of it is not just "dumbing down; it is growing down" (Safire). Michael Winerip has a considerably more positive opinion, "[t]hroughout most of the book, the characters are impressively three-dimensional (occasionally four-dimensional!) and move along seamlessly through the narrative" (Winerip). Then there are those that acknowledge Rowling's talent for writing mediocre stories, "in terms of plot, the books do nothing very new, but they do it brilliantly" (Maguire).

A considerable amount has been written not just about *Harry Potter* but also about trivial literature but noticeably less about trivial children's literature. The phrase 'trivial literature' was first used by a Germanist Marianne Thalmann in 1923 (Saksida 212). Since children's literature is understood as a sub-type of literature in general and therefore has the same features as adult literature, we can suppose that trivial children's literature has the same or at least similar characteristics as its adult counter-

part. It does, however, have its specific features: i.e. the main character is usually a child, certain genres are not represented etc.

The understanding of trivial literature is very diverse. Opinions range from absolutely negative to the view that trivial literature is needed just as much as classic literature or even that the two are equal in their value. The main deficiency of trivial literature is its stylistic discrepancy which prevents it from achieving a level of classic literature (*ibid*. 214).

Aleš Debeljak sees a positive side in trivial literature: "The only step forward that metafiction actually managed to do, i.e. not only in principles and the apology of theoreticians, must be recognized in the activation of the inter-genre potentials of mass culture" (Debeljak 109)[1]. In post-modern understanding trivial literature can even be a way to express classic literature. Evaluation of trivial texts can therefore be questionable because we would need a criterion of quality to evaluate their value but there is no such measure. To frame and evaluate trivial literature we therefore need a different criterion.

Some critics see the main difference between classic and trivial literature in the fact that the latter offers the reader an escape from everyday life because no great effort is required for the understanding of this type of texts. Furthermore, the readers, through identification with the literary characters, experience things they could not experience otherwise (Kordigel 37). This explanation has been driven to such an extreme that some perceive trivial literature as a tool of the dominant ideology to simultaneously stimulate, satisfy and therefore pre-orientate consumer's need of the imaginative (Jauss in Saksida 217). And even though the elements of ideological indoctrination are present in children's trivial literature, it is nonsensical to claim that that is its primary purpose for "[i]dentification is only one of the phases in child's development" (Saksida 217).[2]

The most characteristic feature of trivial literature is allegedly the schematic presentation of the characters and plot (Saksida 218). While reading, the reader knows in advance how the plot will develop, what will happen to the characters and what the ending will be. Because the story does not tell anything 'new' such books are redundant. This schematic representation is extended also to the level of motifs and themes. Trivial texts are therefore unlikely to contain allegorical themes, i.e. on the level of motifs the text is not a verbalization of a philosophical idea (*ibid*. 220). The expectedness that is characteristic of the development of the story is also characteristic of the themes. Škreb develops the typology of the themes in trivial literature: in an adventure story the omnipotent hero always wins and overcomes all obstacles; in a detective novel the theme is a hymn to the omnipotent human intellect which is able to return the world from apparent chaos back to order; and the theme of scientific and pseudo-scientific discoveries (Škreb in Saksida 188). This is not always valid, or at least not valid to the same degree, in the case of *Harry Potter*. I will try to show this with a comparison with the books from *The Famous Five* series by Enid Blyton which Igor Saksida used to illustrate the features of children's trivial literature.

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[1] Translated by the author of the article.
[2] Translated by the author of the article.

I will analyse all six published books from the *Harry Potter* series, and five books randomly chosen by Saksida from *The Famous Five* series[3] : *Five on a Treasure Island (FTI)*, *Five go Adventuring Again (FAA)*, *Five go down to the Sea (FDS)*, *Five go to Mystery Moor (FMM)* and *Five on a Secret Trail (FST)*. The books have a suitable quality of language and a rich layout of the books (Saksida 223), but are otherwise trivial at first sight: the illustrations on the covers show key events or locations from each individual story and on each book cover there is an announcement of the next book that sets the right measure of suspense with an unfinished sentence, an exclamation or a question[4]: "Everything becomes even scarier because of the unexpected fog!" (*FDS*); "Did the two pilots betray their country? It all points to that but …" (*FST*); "George's friends immediately set out on a 'chase' …" (*FMM*).

In *Harry Potter* the most obvious elements of trivial literature are the titles of the books and the book covers (Alton 142). All titles start with *Harry Potter and …* and then continue with more or less catchy phrases. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix* and *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* each in its own way stimulates children's imagination. Especially, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* and *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* provide allusions to adventures and detective novels, while the others conceal a mystery which Harry will have to solve.

The book covers are different in American and British editions[5], however all are colourful and have interesting images which mainly allude to adventures and exciting experiences. The American covers show Harry on a flying broom as he is trying to catch the snitch (*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*); Harry clinging to a phoenix's tail and flying past the Chamber of Secrets (*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*); Harry and Hermione riding a hypogriff (*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*); Harry trying to get past a dragon to the golden egg on a flying broom (*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*); Harry in the company of older magicians who are watching something in candle-light (*Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix*); and Harry and Dumbledore staring into a goblet (*Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*). The British versions show Harry on the platform nine and three quarters in front of the Hogwarts Express; Harry and Ron in a flying car following the Hogwart's Express on the ground; Harry and Hermione riding a hypogriff but with happier expressions than on the American version; Harry holding a golden egg and a wand with three teenagers in the background; a phoenix rising from the ashes; and Harry and Dumbledore caught in the midst of flames.

Even contents-wise the two series have some features of trivial literature: "the course of events, characters, space and time are formed on the basis of an evident cliché" (Saksida 223)[6]. The course of events in *The Famous Five* is divided into four arches:

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[3] The series altogether includes twenty-one books.

[4] This statement is only applicable to the Slovene editions and the sentences are translated by the author of the article.

[5] The Slovene editions have American covers, except for the fourth book which has the British covers.

[6] Translated by the author of the article.

1. first chapter (introduction),
2. second to fifth chapter (the location of the adventure is mentioned for the first time),
3. sixth to thirteenth chapter (describe the first adventures connected with the mysterious location),
4. climax (the solution of the mystery) and (a happy) ending. (*ibid*. 223)

The narration of the book always starts by one of the four friends (*FTI*: Julian, *FAA*: George, *FDS*: Dick, *FST*: George, *FMM*: George) and they either announce the start of an adventure or relate how bored they are. The second arch for the first time alludes to a possible adventure: a location can be mentioned (*FTI*: Kirrin island, *FST*: the archaeological site, *FMM*: Mystery Moor), an event (*FAA*: the bells that announce the escape of a prisoner, *FDS*: travelling group of actors) or a phenomenon which develops later on in the third arch. The third arch develops from the hints mentioned in the second arch and then continues into an adventure (*FTI*: discovery of an old shipwreck and a map, *FAA*: Dick gets an unusual message, discovery of the ruins, *FDS*: unusual light signals, *FST*: lights at night, people in the house, *FMM*: the gypsies and the story about the Bartle family). In the fourth arch the story reaches its climax and then descends into dénouement; in this part there are no retardations (longer descriptions of the surroundings, stories from the past). In the climax the plot is resolved (*FTI*: defeat of the impostors and discovery of the ingots, *FAA*: defeat of the thieves, discovery of the jewels, *FDS*: disclosure of the smugglers, *FST*: discovery of important maps, *FMM*: forged dollars).

Into the stories several retrospective tales are inserted and they function as explanations of the background (*FAA*: story about the escaped prisoner, *FDS*: Yan's great grandfather tells about the light signals and the looting of the ships, *FMM*: Ben tells about the moor and the Bartles, *FST*: Harry explains the secret about his identical twin Guy, *FTI*: George tells about the poverty of her family and about Tim). The closing sentences have a similar role as they comment on the finished adventure or announce a new one ("'We'll have more fun together, the five of us – won't we?' They will – but that's another story!" (*FTI* 58); "Well, it wouldn't be surprising if he did wink. He's really had a most exciting time!" (*FDS* 181)).

Among the retardations are also detailed descriptions of food which appear only up until the second arch ("They had brought bread, cake, tins of fish, eggs, fresh fruit, tea, bottles of water and sweet drinks" (*FTI* 35); "So, after the children had had a dinner of cold boiled beef and carrots, with a dumpling each, and 'lashings' of peas and new potatoes, followed by a truly magnificent fruit salad and cream, …" (*FDS* 51)) and the descriptions of nature which are excessively terrifying ("Dark clouds were flying low across the sky. The thunder came again. It sounded like a big dog in the sky" (*FTI* 19); "Thunder clouds had moved up from the west, gathering together silently, frowning and sinister. Then, from far off, came the first rumble of thunder" (*FDS* 66)). These descriptions appear mainly at the beginning of the third arch when the events start to lead into the beginning of an adventure and the stormy, dark weather and mysterious locations create a suitable atmosphere for the events.

I made a similar analysis for the *Harry Potter* series and the results showed that the structure is not so simple as it is in *The Famous Five* series. There is a big differ-

ence already in the size of individual books – the first three are considerably shorter than the last three, therefore the chapters cannot be divided into arches as simply as *The Famous Five* books. The story of the first two books starts with Mr. and Mrs. Dursely, only then is attention focused on Harry. In the fourth book the beginning is slightly different: the narration starts with Frank Bryce who is then killed by Lord Voldemort. The narration in the fifth book starts with Harry and in the sixth with the British Prime Minister and the Minister of Magic. The first arch consists of the first chapter in all books – they offer a sort of an introduction: in the first book the story starts ten years ago when Harry had lost his parents; in the second Harry is bored and can't wait till school starts again; in the fifth book the first chapter already foreshadows the later adventure because the story starts with an attack by the dementors, the creatures that can suck one's happiness out of them; in the sixth book the new Minister of Magic is introduced when he pays a visit to the British Prime Minister. The second arch consists of a varying number of chapters in each individual book. In the first book it extends from the second to the ninth chapter where Harry realizes who he is, and what Hogwarts is; he meets new friends and new professors. In the second book, the second arch also extends over a number of chapters. Dobby warns Harry not to go to Hogwarts but in spite of this Harry and Ron fly to the school in a flying car, beginning an adventure which is foretold by the use of insults targeting the young wizards and witches from muggle, i.e. non-magical, families.

In the fifth book the arches extend over a greater number of chapters because the book is bulkier than the others. Additionally, such division into arches may not be very suitable because the book does not relate one main adventure, instead the story includes several secondary stories that could be considered as retardations but when we consider the fact that there is no main story they actually form the essence of the novel. The three friends in this book do not have a task or a mystery to solve; it also seems that they are not as in control of the situation as they were in the previous four books; someone (i.e. Umbridge, Lord Voldemort) constantly manipulates them and directs them towards deeds that lead to the climax of the plot. The tale can nevertheless be divided according to the level of connectedness of the events to the climax of the plot: the third arch starts with the sixteenth and ends with the thirty-fourth chapter; in this part the students form Dumbledore's Army, Harry has a vision of an attack on Arthur Weasley, the Army is discovered and Dumbledore escapes, Harry has a vision about Sirius and the children go to the Ministry of Magic. The climax appears in the thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth chapters where the final battle takes place. The dénouement follows in the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth chapters.

There is a very similar division for the sixth book. The second arch consists of chapters from the second to the ninth – they describe several events that will be important later on in the book: for example Snape's oath to the Malfoys, Harry meets the new professor, Harry, Hermione and Ron find out that Draco is planning something, Harry gets the book with the Half Blood Prince's commentaries at their first potions class. In the following chapters the plot thickens. With Dumbledore's help, Harry looks into the past and gets to know Lord Voldemort's beginnings and at the same time he follows Draco in the present and tries to discover what he is planning.

The plot reaches its climax in the twenty-seventh chapter which is followed by a denouement but without a happy ending.

The main retardations in the fifth book are Hagrid's tale of his trip to see the giants; the story of how Hermione convinces Rita Skeeter to write an interview with Harry; the piece of Snape's memory that partially explains the reason why Snape hates Sirius, Remus, and James Potter, and the vocational guidance which is offered to the students before their final exams. Similar retardations appear also in the other five books. Mostly they include descriptions of celebrations and feasts (food is just as important as in *The Famous Five* series), the five hundredth deathday of Nearlyheadless Nick, the history of the Chamber of Secrets, quidditch, the magical sport, the story about Harry's parents, Harry and Ron's problems with girls, Bill and Fleur's story, and other shorter stories that are abundant in *Harry Potter* because the books are also very detailed – the magical world is presented down to the smallest element.

The second element that Saksida analyzes in *The Famous Five* series is the characters. He divides them into passive and active characters and then adds several subgroups (Saksida 225).

In this series there are four main characters: George, Dick, Anne, Julian, and dog Tim to which are often ascribed human characteristics. The children are very resourceful and brave (except for Anne), even the dog seems to understand them when they talk to him. Saksida, further on, explains that the secondary child characters are not equal to them which is already shown in their physical appearance: Yan (*FDS*) and Sniffer (*FMM*) are dirty and disorderly and only the four friends manage to 're-educate' them (*ibid*. 227). The only active grown-ups are the children's adversaries who are characterized by rudeness and brutality and their physical appearance is somewhat eccentric (*ibid*. 228). All other grown-ups are passive because they don't hinder the children in their adventures but they do not help them either (their parents allow them to go camping (*FAA*, *FMM*), the police do not believe them (*FAA*)). We can conclude from this that characters are presented schematically, too, but we have to point out that the characterization is not black and white any longer but slightly more complex (*ibid.* 228).

The analysis of characters in *Harry Potter* is not so simple as in *The Famous Five*; in the six published books there are over one hundred characters presented altogether. Exclusively passive characters are few, the majority of them are active, the only difference is that in some books they are more active and in others less. Among the main active characters are children: Harry, Ron, Hermione, Malfoy as an adversary, in the fifth book we also find Neville, Ginny, and Loona. Among the grown-up active characters are not only adversaries as in *The Famous Five* but they also include Dumbledore, Sirius, Remus, Snape (he is shown as an antagonist only in the sixth book), and Hagrid. Additionally, this category also includes Lord Voldemort as the main foe and all his helpers: Quirrell, the Death eaters, Wormtail, Crouch jr. Also in this group are Umbridge, Slughorn, and Minister Fudge who are not real adversaries but they are not Harry's helpers, either. However, they are of major importance to the story because they influence the plot with their actions (i.e. Umbridge hinders Harry and his friends; Fudge refuses to believe that Lord Voldemort is back; Slughorn gives

Harry a fundamental memory for the understanding of Voldemort's plans and actions etc.).

The passive characters include mainly classmates and professors who are marginal to the plot development. Among children these are: Fred and George Weasley, Seamus Finnigan, Parvati and Padma Patil, Lavender Brown, Cedric Diggory, Cho Chang, Fleur Delacour, Viktor Krum and others. Among grown-ups these are Molly, Arthur, Bill, Percy and Charlie Weasley, prof. Sprout, prof. Flitwick, prof. McGonagall, prof. Binns and others.

From this division it is obvious that the arrangement and roles of the characters in *Harry Potter* are considerably more complex. And if Saksida says for the characterisation in *The Famous Five* that it is not anymore simply black and white, my analysis suggests that many characters in *Harry Potter* are three-dimensional and do not only represent types of characters. Among the three-dimensional characters are Harry, Ron, Hermione, Dumbledore, Sirius, Hagrid, Ginny, Neville, Remus and Snape. The others are not represented in black and white, either since we learn a lot about the reasons behind their actions (i.e. Draco Malfoy and Lord Voldemort).

In *Harry Potter* the characters are therefore not schematic, they are elaborate, very realistically characterized and they develop and mature through individual stories which is especially valid for child protagonists.

The third element analysed is the time and setting of the stories which is supposed to be very exotic and unusual but with a homely atmosphere. The settings in *The Famous Five* are just like that: the ruins on Kirrin Island (*FTI*), the camp in the ruins (*FAA*), the abandoned lighthouse (*FDS*), the archaeological site and the ruins of a house (*FST*), and the camp on the Mystery Moor (*FMM*). Time is exotic from the point of view of the tales about the past: tale about the looting of the ships (*FDS*) and about the history of the Mystery Moor (*FMM*). However, Saksida believes the time of the main story is also "exotic" since it takes place during the school holidays (Saksida 229).

The setting in *Harry Potter* is significantly more static, the majority of books take place at Hogwarts, partly on Privet Drive and in the Burrow. More exotic is their fantastic nature: platform nine and three quarters, the Forbidden forest, Diagonal Alley, the moving stairs at Hogwarts, subterranean corridors and dungeons, Chamber of secrets, Ministry of Magic, Shrieking Shack, Hogsmeade, Little Hangleton, the scene of the world championship in quidditch etc. If we consider that fantasy is not a genre of trivial but of classic children's literature we can generalize this also on fantastic features of the settings in *Harry Potter* which means that in comparison to *The Famous Five* the locations do not have trivial features. Something similar could be said about the time of the stories: if we regard the time of holidays in *The Famous Five* as exotic then we can infer from this that the time of a school year is un-exotic. We can reach the same conclusion if we bear in mind that a school story does not belong among trivial genres, therefore the time of a school year as one of its fundamental characteristics cannot be considered a feature of trivial literature. *Harry Potter* differs from *The Famous Five* in the category of time and setting of the story in that it does not belong to trivial literature in regards to these two categories.

The *Harry Potter* series contains, with regard to the above analysis, only some of the elements of trivial children's literature. The most obvious are the book covers and the catchy titles of the books. But the series cannot be classified as trivial since it surpasses this label in several respects, among the most remarkable are the well-rounded main characters who develop over time and the fantastic nature of the setting of the stories.

Slap ob Idrijci, Slovenia

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THE EARLIEST TRANSLATIONS OF EMILY DICKINSON'S POETRY IN SLOVENE

Jerneja Petrič

Abstract

The article addresses the issue of the earliest translations of Dickinson's poetry in Slovene. Only 6 of the total number of 19 poems, translated into Slovene by Vatro Grill, were published in his 1979 memoir *Med dvema svetovoma* (Between Two Worlds). The other 13 poems included in Grill's manuscripts were never published. In the first part of her article, the author briefly surveys the translations of Dickinson's poetry into Slovene by Mart Ogen, Aleš Debeljak, Ivo Svetina and Miklavž Komelj. In the second part, the focus is on Grill's translation of two poems by Emily Dickinson whereby the translator's ability to capture the meaning of Dickinson's verse is measured against Mart Ogen's translation of the same poems.

In the late 1970s I received a call from Mrs Mila Šenk, the editor-in-chief of Slovene language yearly almanac for Slovene emigrants, the *Slovenski koledar*. She was searching for someone knowledgeable in Slovene-American cultural history in order to prepare for publication a 1,000-page-long manuscript, a memoir, written by Vatroslav (Vatro) Grill[1]. Grill was a Slovene-born lawyer who had been living "between" the U.S. and Slovenia[2]; besides holding a government job in Cleveland, Ohio, he had spent many years serving as editor-in-chief of the Slovene language newspapers *Enakopravnost* (1919-36 and 1943-57)*, Napredek* (1946-51), and *Nova Doba*. He was also active in the Cleveland-based Slovene language theatrical group *Ivan Cankar,* both acting and directing. When he retired from his positions, he visited his homeland several times. In 1963 he and his wife Anne spent almost the whole year in Slovenia. Upon their return to the United States, they bid farewell to Cleveland and moved southward, to California to be closer to their sons' growing families as well as to enjoy the benefits of a warm climate. And so it turned out that Grill, in his advanced age, "began to court the muses" (Manuscript 640). He began to read extensively and play the violin, he resumed drawing after years of abstinence, as well as devoted himself to poetry in an attempt "to comprehend its secrets" (Ibid.). Emily Dickinson

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[1] The book was published under the title *Med dvema svetovoma* (Between Two Worlds) by Mladinska knjiga in Ljubljana in 1979.

2 Grill was born in 1899 in Soteska near Moravče (Slovenia) and died in 1976 in Santa Clara (California).

had been his favorite poet for years and although he had toyed with the idea of translating some of her poems into Slovene, he never found the time to do so. At the time, Dickinson's poetry had not yet been translated into Slovene (641). No wonder, for this 19th century poet who "looked inward at her own experience" (Koloski in Lewicki 78) to compose her enigmatic, fragmented, epigrammatic poetry remains a serious challenge to translators worldwide. Her poetry that breaks the rules of traditional poetics pointing towards more modern trends of the 20th century, has puzzled the readers as well as prospective translators who realize that any translation of a Dickinson poem depends in the first place on the translator's interpretation of it. Multi-layered and ambivalent as her texts are, they are frequently seen as a test of the translator's abilities. If we speculate on why Grill chose to translate some of Dickinson's verse, the above may well be the case.

EMILY DICKINSON IN SLOVENE TRANSLATION

Aside from Grill, other Slovene translators shunned Dickinson's verse.[3] Relatively little has been translated so far. The first translations were published almost 100 years after the original: in 1988 Mart Ogen published a selection of 96 Dickinson poems titled simply *Emily Dickinson*. Ogen chose to follow Dickinson's example of not titling her verse. In the "Contents", he arranged the translated poems by using the Johnson number "as given by Thomas H. Johnson's 1955 edition of Dickinson's complete poems" (http://en.wilkipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Emily_Dickinson_poems) adding in brackets his Slovene translation of the first line. In the book, however, the poems are only numbered.[4] This is followed by Ogen's 33-page-essay on Emily Dickinson and her work that also includes Ogen's translation of poem 306. The essay itself is divided in three parts. In Part I, titled "*Uganka Emily Dickinson*" (The Enigma of Emily Dickinson), Ogen speaks about the genesis and subsequent fate of Dickinson's poetry, mentioning some details concerning Emily's habit of binding her books in tiny notebooks as well as sending some of them by mail to her best friends. In Part II of his essay, titled "*Puritanska upornica*" (The Puritan Rebel), Ogen proceeds by focusing on Emily's Puritan heritage, reminding the reader of her predecessors' tendency to keep a spiritual (or written) diary in order to evaluate their chances of redemption in a given moment. According to Ogen, this represents Emily's major inheritance: "…this constant, terrifying awareness of the position of one's soul, that oscillation of disposition between cheerful certainty and the anguish of dark despair" (Ogen 107, my translation). This lengthy chapter reviews Emily's life including the

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[3] Reception of Dickinson's poetry in Slovenia has been researched by Polona Godina in her 2004 M.A. thesis *Romantic elements in the poetry of Emily Dickinson*. An excerpt of the thesis was published in the *Acta Neophilologica* 37. 1-2 (2004):25-38, under the title "Selected American and Slovene critical response to the work of Emily Dickinson".

[4] 8, 67, 99, 106, 165, 169, 207, 211, 214, 216, 237, 239, 250, 252, 255, 262, 271, 275, 277, 280, 287, 290, 293, 314, 315, 322, 341, 365, 378, 398, 410, 419, 452, 461, 465, 496, 501, 508, 510, 511, 512, 520, 528, 539, 550, 556, 599, 612, 615, 657, 633, 664, 670, 673, 686, 700, 709, 712, 721, 724, 744, 747, 754, 767, 789, 812, 822, 856, 872, 875, 883, 906, 915, 928, 943, 945, 1084, 1099, 1100, 1129, 1150, 1162, 1175, 1219, 1261, 1281, 1322, 1323, 1453, 1543, 1581, 1599, 1617, 1677, 1712, 1732.

lives of her closest family and friends, both male and female. Ogen concludes with the difficult birth of Emily's first posthumous collection of verse published in 1890, the one that went through 11 printings in two years. In Part III, "*Pesnica*" (The Poet), Ogen exposes Dickinson's use of language as the element that most of her admirers find unique (117). However, according to Ogen, it is Dickinson's attitude towards the English language that distinguishes her from the other poets (118). Ogen compares Dickinson's relationship towards language with her attitude towards Puritanism – in both cases it is respectful towards its "vivacity of meaning" but disrespectful and even revolutionary towards the emptiness of overused words and ways of expression (Ibid.). Ogen stresses Dickinson's originality and creativity vis-à-vis the English language, providing examples from her poems. He further on speaks about Emily's revolutionary use of punctuation that has often been misinterpreted and/or underestimated by various editors. In terms of form, most of Dickinson's verse take up the form of religious hymns and religious verse in general. Dickinson's poems are predominantly four-line stanzas composed of eight- and six-foot lines respectively, in iambic and trochaic meter. Ogen particularly stresses the difference in length of words between English (short) and Slovene (long); consequently Slovene religious verse tends to be longer – alternately eleven- to fifteen- and seven- to nine-foot stanzas. The above, says Ogen, was his principal guideline in the translation process (121).

Ten years later Niko Grafenauer published three poems by Emily Dickinson in his anthology *Orfejev spev* (1998). The translators included Aleš Debeljak, who translated poem No. 915, "Faith is the pierless bridge" (*Vera – je brezbrežen most*), Ivo Svetina (290, "Of bronze- and blaze" – "*Iz brona – in žarenja*") and Miklavž Komelj (67, "Success is counted sweetest" – "*Uspeh se zdi najslajši njim*"). The mode of selection of poems to be published in the above anthology was as interesting as it was innovative: Grafenauer contacted 32 contemporary Slovene poets asking them each to select 10 favorite poems in any language. Each poet was further asked to write a short explanatory essay concerning the difficulty (or ease, for that matter) of choice to be published along with the translations. In his piece, the poet Milan Jesih said the following:

> *Izbral sem samo med pesmimi, ki jih lahko, čeprav z izdatno pomočjo prevoda, ali prevodov, in slovarjev, preberem v izvirniku/…/ Naj omenim, da sta mi bili za prevajanje pesmi Emily Dickinson z začetnim verzom* I died for Beauty, *numerirana s 449, in Dylana Thomasa* And Death Shall Have No Dominion *pretrda oreha, prva zaradi neposnemljive eliptičnosti, druga pa zaradi silne nežnosti izraza.* (Jesih in Grafenauer 383-4)

> I selected exclusively from among the poems that I can, albeit with extensive help of the translation or translations and dictionaries, read in the original /…/ Let me mention two poems, one by Emily Dickinson – beginning with *I Died for Beauty*, Number 449, and Dylan Thomas's *Death Shall Have No Dominion*, as being overly hard nuts to crack, the former due to its inimitable elliptical nature, the latter on account of its mighty tenderness of expression (*My translation*).

Jesih's self-critical words echo the sentiment of a number of his fellow poets mentioned beforehand. Dickinson's poetry was far from being everybody's choice. Poets-translators were puzzled by her ambiguous, multi-layered verse that had, over time, been analyzed and interpreted every which way. I believe one of the greatest stumbling blocks for the translators was the poet's manner of composition whereby the contents determines the form and not vice versa. Dickinson's is no traditional poetry in terms of figurative elements. In her M.A. thesis Polona Godina analyzed the formal characteristics of Dickinson's poetry pointing out the relative absence of rhyme and, consequently, her use of "substitutes" – such as various rhetorical, syntactic and semantic devices. Dickinson's fondness for neologisms, her use of well-known words in "inappropriate" positions, her grammatical experimentation along with the use of archaic expressions, has become proverbial. Godina also stressed Dickinson's repeated use of parallelism that has been much used in Slovene folk poetry as well (96) - "a structural arrangement of parts of a sentence, sentences, paragraphs, and larger units of composition by which one element of equal importance with another is similarly developed and phrased" (Holman 318).

VATRO GRILL'S TRANSLATIONS OF DICKINSON

The manuscript of Vatro Grill's memoir contained 19 poems by Emily Dickinson in Grill's translation. My task as the editor and reader of Grill's memoir back in 1978 was to eliminate repetitions, create a temporal sequence of events, select photographic material, eliminate parts that might be legally questionable, correct Grill's Slovene – in short, make a readable book out of a mass of relatively unsorted material. At the time I thought 19 Dickinson poems too many to illustrate Grill's ability as translator therefore I selected six poems to be included in the following order[5]:

82, "*Zimski so popoldnevi*" (There's a certain slant of light)
1322, "*Svilna nit te ne reši*" (Floss won't save you from an abyss)
449, „*Za lépo sem umrla*" (I died for beauty)
288, "*Jaz sem nihče*" (I'm nobody)
1409, "*Zloga tovor*" (Could mortal lip divine)
441, "*Pismo svetu*" (This is my letter to the world)

The translations were published without being modified except for one poem, viz. "I'm nobody", where Grill originally used a double negation translating the first line (and the title) as "*jaz* ni*sem nihče*" (my emphasis). The above poems were the first Slovene translations of Dickinson' verse to be published ever.

In an extensive footnote, Grill adds some information about Emily Dickinson's life in Amherst. He refers to it as "relatively uneventful" (513) pointing out Emily's predisposition to isolation and "weirdness" (Ibid.) "*Skrivnost njenega samotarstva se je pojasnila šele po njeni smrti, ko je sestra v njeni sobi odkrila skrbno sešite zvezke njenih pesmi.*" (The mystery of her seclusion was cleared up only after her death when

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[5] Grill used the first lines as titles and I follow his example.

her sister detected carefully sewn notebooks in Emily's room containing her poems) (Ibid., my transl.). Grill mentions the 1955 complete edition of Emily's poetic works, without mentioning Johnson's name, as the one that was made possible with the Harvard University's purchase of Dickinson's complete literary opus. Grill further says that none of the poems are titled or dated but "/…/*proučevalci njenega dela so po vsebini in po pisavi s precejšnjo gotovostjo dognali časovno zaporedje nastanka*" (with relative certainty researchers of her work have been able to reconstruct, on the basis of the contents and Emily's handwriting, the temporal sequence of her work) (Ibid.). Grill also mentions Emily's letters that shed light on her poetic work as well as reveal her dislike of the Puritan environment (Ibid.). He concludes by saying that no final verdict on Dickinson has been pronounced yet and adds that according to some (!) critics Dickinson represents the greatest American poet of the 19th century. Among her qualities Grill underlines Dickinson's originality of imagination as well as her surprisingly condensed poetic expression. "She was without any doubt a good half of the century ahead of her time" (514, my transl.).

Grill translated the following poems by Emily Dickinson:

82, *"Zimski so popoldnevi"* (There's a certain slant of light)

254, *"Up mala stvarca"* (Hope is the thing with feathers)

1322, *"Svilna nit te ne reši"* (Floss won't save you from an abyss)

1624, „*Ne malo presenečeno cvetlico"* (Apparently with no surprise)

245, *"Držala sem dragulj"* (I held a jewel in my fingers)

162, *"Spe k tebi reka moja"* (My river runs to thee)

249, *"Divje noči"* (Wild nights! Wild nights!)

211, *"Počasi, raj!"* (Come slowly, Eden)

1099, *"Zapredek stiska"* (My cocoon tightens, colors tease)

764, *"Slutnja"* (Presentiment is that long shadow on the lawn)

——*"Kdo je oropal gozd"* (Who robbed the woods)[6]

1732, *"Življenja vrata"* (My life closed twice before its close)

449, *"Za lépo sem umrla"* (I died for beauty, but was scarce)

——*"Vihar strahovito mel je zrak"* (An awful tempest meshed the air)[7]

111, *"Ni mar čebeli"* (The bee is not afraid of me)

288, *"Jaz nisem nihče"* (I'm nobody! Who are you?)

476, *"Le zadovoljnost in nebo"* (I meant to have but modest)

1409, *"Zloga tovor"* (Could mortal lip divine)

441, *"Pismo svetu"* (This is my letter to the world)

I will follow up with a comparison of Vatro Grill's translation of Dickinson poems # 1099 and #1322, "My cocoon tightens"[8] and "Floss won't save you from an abyss"[9] with Mart Ogen's version. Unfortunately, no other poems translated by Grill have also been translated by Ogen, Debeljak, Svetina, or Komelj.

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[6] The poem is printed on p. 34 of the collection mentioned below that was originally in Grill's possession. It is *not* listed in the Internet version of Johnson's list (Wilkipedia)

[7] Printed on p.66 of Linscott's selection but not listed in the Internet.

[8] For the English version I used Robert N.Linscott, ed. *Selected Poems and Letters of Emily Dickinson*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959.

[9] This poem was not included in the above selection. I took it from the Internet: (http://www.repeatafterus.com/print.php?i=1616&PHPSESSID=bacba19ce4e466697471…).

1099	1099 (Mart Ogen's translation)

My cocoon tightens, colors tease
I'm feeling for the air;
A dim capacity for wings
Degrades the dress I wear.

A power of butterfly must be
The aptitude to fly,
Meadows of majesty concedes
And easy sweeps of sky.

So I must baffle at the hint
And cipher at the sign,
And make much blunder, if at last
I take the clew divine.

Zapredek moj se zateguje – Barve dražijo -
*   Tipaje se za Zrakom trudim -*
Nedoločljiva možnost, da mi zrasejo Peruti,
V nič daje Obleko, ki jo nosim –

Metulja Moč in predanost je
V Sposobnosti letenja -
Kraljevskost Travnikov vsebuje
In prek Neba drsenja -

A prej naj bi še razvozlavala Namige,
Ugibala pomene Znamenja,
Se mnogokrat zmotila, če naj prejela bi nazadnje
*   Ključ božanskega-*

1099 (Vatro Grill's translation)

Zapredek stiska, barv namig
Me sili kvišku nekam;
Skrivnostni neki čut za krila,
prezira to obleko.

Metulja sila mora biti
Do léta rodna želja,
Iz veličastnosti livad,
Se léta v nebu sklepa.

Namig na čelu gube terja,
ob nakazilu znaka,
pomot veliko se obeta
kjerkoli sled božanska.

The above poem is allegorical, one of the many records of "Dickinson's pilgrim's progress of the soul" (Williams in Blake, Wells 258). Dickinson employs the metaphor of the cocoon's evolution in the process of becoming a butterfly to speak about the transformation, the growth of her soul. The image of the inflated cocoon along with the vision of the new butterfly's future power and freedom serves the speaker as the formula to express her yearning "for freedom and for the power to survey nature and feel at home with it" (Marcus 78). The poet's last stanza however, cuts short the optimism of the previous two stanzas revealing the poet's well-known tendency "to see herself as small and lost and doubtless doomed" (Sewall 158). Her belief in God's immanence leads her towards the contemplation of nature, as well as her own self, to find a hint of how to achieve the best possible transformation of her soul. But the hints are vague, the signs unclear and her soul has once again been taken to the verge of the incomprehensible. It is the Puritan tendency to dwell on spiritual life that presents the main topic of this poem, (a theme not unknown to some of Dickinson's contemporaries, particularly Hawthorne).

Formally, the poem displays some of Dickinson's well-known poetic devices that characterize her poetry in general: elliptical, epigrammatic diction, irregularities of rhythm (although the conventional iambic tetrameter alternating with iambic trimeter is clearly discernible) and irregular rhyme.

A comparison of Dickinson's original poem with Ogen's translation reveals differences visible upon first sight: the mere count of syllables in Ogen's translation is higher as already foreshadowed by Ogen in his essay on Dickinson. Furthermore Ogen chose to capitalize all nouns (unlike Dickinson) thus visibly exposing the key words of the poem. Putting the particularities of form aside, it is obvious that Ogen's rendering of Dickinson's poem 1099 captures the meaning well. The basic difference between the two poems, however, lies in Ogen's inability to duplicate Dickinson's ambiguity, particularly in the last two verses of the second stanza. Of the two poems, Ogen's is much easier to understand and his choice of dashes, otherwise so characteristic of Dickinson's poetry but not used in this particular one – is, in my opinion rather superfluous.

In comparison with Ogen, who strived toward clarity of expression as well as the resulting clarity of meaning, Vatro Grill's rendering of poem 1099 captures one element of Dickinson's poetry well, viz. the ambiguity. The count of syllables reveals Grill's attempt not to spoil the tetrameter/trimeter iambic scheme used by Dickinson. In this way Grill stood before an insoluble problem as the length of Slovene words exceeds the length of English counterparts. In order to overcome these self-imposing limitations, Grill had to search for short words. This explains his choice of the word *"čut"* for "capacity" (adequately translated as *sposobnost* by Ogen) in the third line of the first stanza, as well as reducing "the dress I wear" (4/I) into *"to obleko"* (this dress - well translated as *Obleko ki jo nosim* by Ogen). Grill's understanding of the first two lines of the second stanza differs from Ogen's, for he implies that the power of the butterfly must be (or perhaps **may be?**) its **inborn wish** to fly; Ogen, on the other hand speaks about the butterfly's power and **surrender** (added by Ogen) as contained in its **ability** to fly. The last two lines of the second stanza represented a challenge for both translators, the most problematic aspect being the verb "concedes". My understanding is that the verb "concedes" refers to "the aptitude to fly" thus "the aptitude to fly" **conceding** "the meadows of majesty". Grill's understanding of the two lines is ambiguous for I cannot decipher the meaning of the verb *"sklepa"* used in his translation of line four. Ogen, however, translated "concedes" as "contains" (*vsebuje*) linking the meaning to the second line, viz. "the aptitude to fly".

Grill's desire not to spoil the form led him to depersonalize the last stanza. The first-person speaker completely disappears; the cold, impersonal third person singular speaker struggles to capture the poet's meaning in terse, clipped language but, in my opinion, sadly fails to do so. Dickinson's first line is thus rendered as, roughly translated, 'the hint requiring the forehead to wrinkle at the sign of the omen'. The closest to Dickinson's meaning is Grill's rendering of the third line where he speaks about a number of mistakes that will probably be made. His translation of Dickinson's last line, "if at last / I take the clew divine" as *"kjerkoli sled božanska"* (wherever trace divine) is suggestive of Dickinson's elliptical language but does not capture the mean-

ing of Dickinson's verse. Ogen's translation of the last stanza, on the other hand, is precise in terms of meaning, leaving the reader no doubt whatsoever.

1322	*1322* (Mart Ogen's version)
Floss won't save you from an Abyss	*Svila nas ne reši iz prepada,*
But a Rope will—	*Vrv pa—*
Notwithstanding a Rope for a Souvenir	*Čeprav, seveda, Vrv kot Spominek*
Is not beautiful—	*Ni nič posebnega.—*
But I tell you every step is a Trough—	*Povem vam pa, da vsaka je stopinja*
And every stop a Well –	*Brezno—*
Now will you have the Rope or the Floss?	*In vsak postanek je Vodnjak —*
Prices reasonable-	*Kaj boste torej vzeli, Vrv ali Svilo?*
	Poceni dam –

1322 (Vatro Grill's version)

Svilna nit te ne reši iz globin,
ampak vrv te bo,
čeprav vrv kakor nekaj za spomin
zgleda manj lepo.

Toda rečem ti – vsak korak je slepilo,
in vrtinec vsak oddih.
Boš mar volil vrv ali svilo?
Cene zmerne obeh.

The above poem demonstrates the poet's use of imagery (floss, rope) that is seemingly unrelated to the idea she wants to express: far from being the center of the universe, human existence is vulnerable. Dickinson ironically suggests two approaches to the predicament, one *aesthetic* and the other *practical* but none perfect. Her irony reaches the climax in the last stanza with her direct address challenging the reader to take his/her choice.

Dickinson's highly irregular meter in a way absolved the translators, especially Grill, from counting the feet too much. Ogen's translation follows the original closely whereby Ogen uses both capital letters in places where Dickinson uses them – to expose all nouns - as well as the dashes to indicate inconclusive thought. In the last verse of the poem, Ogen manages to convey Dickinson's meaning although he uses a different Slovene phrase for "Prices reasonable", changing Dickinson's impersonal statement into a personal one *("Poceni dam"* – roughly translated as 'I am selling cheaply'). In the second stanza, Ogen had to decide between the formal and informal address ('you' as second person singular (*ti*) or third person plural (*vi*) in Slovene), which is otherwise nonexistent in English. Whereas he chose the more detached formal *vi*, Grill selected the more intimate *ti*. Grill's translation of Dickinson's first stanza captures the meaning well in spite of his decision to replace "abyss" (*prepad*) with a somewhat less fearful synonym *"globina"* (depth). In the second stanza, however, the meaning is obscured by Grill's choice of Slovene equivalents for "Trough"

(*slepilo*= illusion) and "Well" (*vrtinec*= whirlpool). His translation of the final two lines is adequate in terms of meaning although he adds *"obeh"* (of/for both).

CONCLUSION

Do Grill's translations of the Dickinson poems examined successfully reveal the meaning of the original? My interpretation, which deliberately bypassed a close analysis of the poetic devices used by the two translators, discloses Ogen as a far more successful translator than Grill. The result is not a surprising one: Grill was an amateur who after having enjoyed reading Dickinson's verse so much hoped his translations would enable his fellow Slovene Americans (whose English was not as good as his) to become acquainted with the poet. His intentions were of a purely practical nature. The value of his versification is thus mostly historical for he *was* the first Slovene translator of Dickinson's verse ever. Mart Ogen, on the other hand, is a poet who performed his task of translating Dickinson's verse professionally, following the nuances of Dickinson's fine poetic craft with the precision and know-how of a poet.

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CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POETRY IN SLOVENIAN CRITICISM AND TRANSLATION: 1945 - 2005

Igor Divjak

Abstract

The article presents the Slovenian reception of five major groups in American post-war poetry - the Formalists, the Confessionals, the Beats, the Black Mountain poets, and the New York School poets - as well as the reception of those prominent authors who cannot be classified in any of these groups. The analysis reveals which groups have attracted most interest of the Slovenian critics and translators, when was the peak of their reception, which methods of interpretation have been used by the Slovenian critics, and to what extent has their judgement about certain contemporary American authors gradually changed.

INTRODUCTION

This survey of the Slovenian reception of American poetry written after World War II takes into consideration all the relevant articles and publications about contemporary American poetry published in Slovenia between May 9th, 1945 and the end of June, 2005. In these six decades a great deal of Slovenian critical attention was devoted to different periods and genres of American literature, and a great number of American authors were translated into Slovenian. In the second half of the 20th century and the first years of the new millennium no other national literature attracted so much interest of both Slovenian scholars and readers, and probably no other literature has had so much influence on the contemporary Slovenian authors. The topic of this article, however, is limited only to the reception of those contemporary American poets whose work is not always familiar to the wider Slovenian public, but who nevertheless created a great deal of excitement, provoked vigorous debates, and proved very influential in Slovenian literary circles. The survey does not include those American poets who belonged to the main literary movements in the period between the two world wars and who continued to publish after 1945. Instead, it focuses only on the Slovenian response to the representatives of the major post-war movements and groups in American poetry - the Formalists, the Confessionals, the Beats, the New York School, and the Black Mountain poets, as well as to those poets who cannot be classified in any of these groups, but are nevertheless considered central figures in the development of American poetry in this period.

The survey will try to establish which American poetic movements and poets attracted the greatest interest of Slovenian critics and translators in this period, and when interest in a certain poetic movement reached its peak. Another point of interest will be the methods of interpretation used by Slovenian critics and the conclusions that they reached, which will enable a critical observation of how their judgement changed. In this respect it is important to know to what extent Slovenian interpreters considered the specific historical and cultural circumstances in American society after World War II, and how well they were acquainted with contemporaneous American cultural trends and aesthetic movements, as well as how much their judgement was influenced by the socio-historical and cultural circumstances in Slovenia. And finally, the survey will enable us to answer which chapters in post-war American poetry have still not been represented thoroughly enough in Slovenia, and which American poets from this period still have to be translated into Slovenian.

THE SLOVENIAN RECEPTION OF AMERICAN AUTONOMOUS POST-WAR POETRY: THE FORMALISTS AND THE CONFESSIONALS

Although the United States and Yugoslavia were allies during WWII, from which they both emerged as winners, the two countries took different political paths after the end of the war in May, 1945. Relations between the United States and Yugoslavia - and thus also Slovenia - in the first fifteen years after the war were mainly characterised by huge differences in their political, social and economic systems, which resulted in very poor communication in the cultural field. For the United States this was the beginning of a new era, in which it became a global economic and military superpower. To the rest of the world it presented itself as an economic miracle and the promoter of the ideals of the American style of capitalism, individualism and the free market. However, at the same time it also perceived a new threat in the spread of international socialism, and soon engaged in a struggle for global supremacy, or the Cold War, with the Soviet Union and its allies. On the other hand, Yugoslavia, under the leadership of President Tito and the Communist Party, at first followed the Soviet model of collectivism and a planned economy. Although Tito's alliance with Stalin ended in 1948 after a resolution of the ComInform, and Yugoslavia later developed its own model of socialism based on self-management, it was the United States with its apparent ideal of a free-market economy that was perceived as the major threat and the biggest enemy of the Yugoslav socialist model in the first fifteen years after the war.

The first Slovenian reports of contemporary American poetry and literature in general after the war reflected these political tensions. On March 3rd, 1949, the main Slovenian daily *Slovenski poročevalec* published an article "Književnost v ZDA" ('Literature in the USA'), which was marked by a hostile propagandistic tone and was, characteristically, unsigned. Most probably that meant that the author was aware of the controversial nature of its content. He did not refer to any specific group of American poets or writers, but alluded to them as a whole, accusing them of servitude

to reactionary capitalist ideals. "American authors would like to present themselves as independent servants of pure art. But in reality their books are put at the direct service of the interests of reactionaries and imperialists." (*Slovenski poročevalec*, 1949, 3) From his point of view, the only exceptions to this reactionary doctrine were Howard Fast, Albert Maltz, Upton Sinclair and Sinclair Lewis.

Although in the following years such an extreme propagandistic tone was avoided in articles about contemporary American literature, caution and reserve due to unfavourable political circumstances were still noticeable. In his article "Nekaj misli o sodobni ameriški književnosti" ('Some Thoughts on Contemporary American Literature'), published on September 9th, 1951, in the newspaper *Primorski dnevnik*, Vlado Habjan stressed the importance of younger American authors who wrote so-called proletarian literature. Regrettably, he mentioned only a few writers, and did not refer to American poets at all. Peter Kosem, Jože Dolenc and N. Smith, on the other hand, preferred to focus on the financial success of American authors. In the articles "Pregled ameriškega knjižnega trga v letu 1952" ('A Survey of the American Book Market in 1953') and "Kaj bero Američani?" ('What Do Americans Read?'), published in *Novi svet* in 1953, Kosem presented some literary bestsellers of the previous year; Dolenc did the same in his article "Z ameriškega knjižnega trga" ('From the American Book-Market'), which was published a year later in the magazine *Knjiga*. As can be deduced from the title "Poplava cenenih broširanih knjig na časopisnem papirju" ('A Flood of Cheap Paperback Editions'), N. Smith presented the new economic medium through which literature could become more accessible to the broader public in his report published in *Primorski dnevnik* in 1954.

The only exception who tried to present American literature, including poetry, in more objective terms in that period was Janez Gradišnik. Between 1950 and 1955 he published a few articles in the magazines *Novi svet* and *Nova obzorja* (Gradišnik, 1950-1955), which represented an isolated attempt to evaluate the contemporary American writers, dramatists and poets purely on the basis of aesthetic criteria, without any political judgement. His view of American poetry of the time was slightly conservative, however, since he claimed that the most important publications of the period were reprints of authors who had won recognition before WWII, such as Wallace Stevens, Carl Sandburg, W. C. Williams, John Crow Ransom, and e. e. cummings. He also complained that the American literary public had become apathetic and did not understand contemporary poetry.

In the 1960s and 1970s the political climate changed and Yugoslavia, including Slovenia, although still under socialist rule, opened itself up to the West. Suddenly it became possible to write more freely about the new western cultural and artistic movements, and consequently the number of articles about contemporary American literature, including poetry, significantly increased. This was the period when the magazines *Perspektive*, *Sodobnost*, *Tribuna* and others reported extensively on the poetry of the Beats, the Black Mountain Poets and the New York School, and published a number of Slovenian translations of their poems. However, for a long time nothing was written about the representatives of the two major movements of American poetry in the first two decades after the war: the Formalists and the Confessionals.

It was only in the mid-1980s that Slovenians received the first information about their work.

Both the Formalists and the Confessionals regarded poetry principally as an autonomous object whose value was purely aesthetic, rather than understanding it as a means of communication. In this respect they can be categorised as subgroups of the larger modernist movement, which entered into its darker phase after the experience of World War II and the beginning of the atomic era. The Formalists tried to create a new version of American myths, and employed various technical devices and strategies for this purpose: from laconic, realistic description to parody and parabolic fantasy. Elizabeth Bishop, for example, was renowned for the dreamlike surrealist atmosphere of her poems, which she created through the description of seemingly banal everyday details; while Richard Wilbur believed that the purpose of poetry was to present and connect the discrepancies of the modern world, while rearranging them in an accomplished poetic form. Other important names of the Formalist movement were Louis Simpson, Karl Shapiro, Randall Jarrell, W. S. Merwin, Stanley Kunitz, Howard Nemerov, Reed Whittemore, Weldon Kees, Donald Justice, Edgar Bowers, X. J. Kennedy and Anthony Hecht.

Slovenians first became acquainted with American Formalist poetry in 1984 and 1985, when Veno Taufer published his translations of eight poems by Stanley Kunitz in the progressive cultural magazine *Nova revija* and the newspaper *Dnevnik* (Kunitz, 1984, 1985). A more thorough presentation of Formalist poetry followed in 1986 with the publication of *Antologija ameriške poezije 20. stoletja* ('Anthology of 20th Century American Poetry'). The editor, Miha Avanzo, included seven Formalist poets in it: Stanley Kunitz, Elizabeth Bishop, Randall Jarrell, Howard Nemerov, Richard Wilbur, Donald Justice and W. S. Merwin. The translations of their poems were provided by different authors, and each poet was presented with a brief biographical note. Unfortunately, the inclusion of these authors in Avanzo's anthology did not arouse much interest in American Formalist poetry in Slovenia. The only other occasion when we could read of their achievements was in 1992, when Jure Potokar included one poem by W. S. Merwin and one by Richard Wilbur in a selection published under the heading "Sodobna ameriška poezija in narava" ('Contemporary American Poetry and Nature') in the 126th-127th issue of *Nova revija*.

However, the Slovenian reception of the Confessional poets, who in the 1950s and 1960s shifted the interest of the American literary public from social themes to personal and even pre-personal mythology, was more intense. The most important names of this movement were Theodore Roethke, who found the main subject of his poetry in his own history, pre-history and the archetypal subconscious, Robert Lowell, who obsessively tried to transform the story of his life into art, and Sylvia Plath, who rewrote her neurotic personal experience into a larger myth, with psychological and historical allusions. The movement included such authors as John Berryman, Anne Sexton, Robert Kelly, Galway Kinnel, James Wright, and to some extent Richard Hugo, John Logan, and W. D. Snodgrass.

The first translator to draw the attention of the Slovenian public to the Confessionals was Veno Taufer. In 1984 he published his translations of Sylvia Plath's dramatic poem *Tri ženske* ('Three Women') in the magazine *Dialogi* (Plath, 1984), and

seven of Theodore Roethke's poems in the magazine *Problemi* (Roethke, 1984). Two years later, several poems by Sylvia Plath, translated by Ifigenija Zagoričnik, Miha Avanzo and Alenka Zor-Simoniti, were published in *Nova revija* and in the rather conservative magazine *Sodobnost* (Plath, 1986). In the same year, Avanzo's 'Anthology of 20th Century American Poetry' came out, which included seven Confessional poets: Theodore Roethke, John Berryman, Robert Lowell, Robert Bly, James Wright, Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath. Among these, the editor gave most space to Plath and Lowell, which reveals that he regarded them as the most important authors of the group, although each of the seven poets was duly presented in biographical notes.

The most important event in the Slovenian reception of American Confessional poetry occurred in 1992, when a translation of Sylvia Plath's selected poems was published in *Lirika*, the prestigious edition of *Mladinska knjiga* publishing house. (Plath, 1992) The translator was again Miha Avanzo, who also contributed a brief informative essay about the poet's work and a few notes about her life. He used the poet's life story as a framework for his essay "Ariel ali božja levinja - Sylvia Plath kot pesnica roba" ('Ariel or God's Lioness - Sylvia Plath as a Poet of the Edge'); however, his method of research was not strictly positivistic and biographical. Instead, he focused on the issue of the poet's repressed eroticism, and explained her poetic development through its liberation. He also considered the historical and aesthetic context of the Confessional movement, and interpreted its achievements as an attempt "to reject the Eliot-like assessment and evaluation of the world as objective, and to put the author again at the centre of his or her creative focus." (Avanzo, 1992, 93)

Another contribution to the Slovenian reception of American Confessional poetry was provided by Veno Taufer, who in 1998 presented the poet John Berryman in the 83rd-84th issue of one of the main Slovenian cultural magazines of the time *Literatura* with translations of several of his *Dream Songs*. More important for our literary criticism, however, was the essay "Robert Lowell, pesnik okrutne izpovednosti" ('Robert Lowell, the Poet of Merciless Confession'), published by Boris A. Novak in the first issue of the student magazine *Preplet* in 1999. Novak saw the origins of the Confessional movement in the traumatic experience of World War II and in the reaction to the false, *petit bourgeois* values of American society. According to him, the main characteristic of this movement was "the tendency of a number of American poets in the 1940s and 1950s to write about their unique personal existential experience." (Novak, 1999, 13) Within this historical framework, he then focused on the more specific formal and thematic content of several of Lowell's poems, which he combined with an analysis of the most important events in poet's life.

A survey of the Slovenian reception of American autonomous post-war poetry reveals that, although relatively late, our literary critics and translators nevertheless demonstrated some interest in Formalist and Confessional poetry. If it is understandable that, due to political reasons and lack of information, it was not possible to write about it at the time when it won recognition in the USA, it comes as a surprise that it did not attract more attention at the peak of Slovenian modernism in the 1960s and 1970s, when poets like Dane Zajc and Gregor Strniša became popular. At first sight it seems that American Formalists and Confessionals and Slovenian modernists had many common characteristics, since they all wrote autonomous poetry, full of archetypal

and mythological references. Yet it has to be presumed that the aesthetic differences between them were too great. First of all, the American Confessionals liked to use the first person voice, which the Slovenian modernists programmatically avoided, considering it a sentimental remnant of Romanticism. And second, Slovenian modernism was much darker and desperate in its content, while the American poets, even though only implicitly, often preserved some features of their zealous Protestant tradition. However, with the spread of Slovenian post-modernism in the 1980s and 1990s, which propagated openness to different traditions and aesthetics, the right conditions for the reception of American Formalist and Confessional poets were finally met. Their achievements were presented largely due to the enthusiasm of a few individuals like Miha Avanzo, Veno Taufer, and Boris A. Novak, and therefore many important American poets from the first two decades after the war have still not received a Slovenian edition of their poems. Among them are such names as Elizabeth Bishop, Richard Wilbur, Robert Lowell, and Theodore Roethke.

THE SLOVENIAN RECEPTION OF AMERICAN POST-WAR POETRY OF OPEN FORM: THE BEATS, THE BLACK MOUNTAIN POETS, THE NEW YORK SCHOOL

The 1960s and 1970s was a much more turbulent period in American society than the first fifteen years after the war. At the beginning, with the election of the young John F. Kennedy as president and the rapid spread of the Civil Rights movement, it seemed that a new era, full of optimism and imminent social change, was beginning. However, with the assassination of Kennedy in 1963, and Dr. Martin Luther King in 1968, it soon turned out that social reality was much harsher. The Vietnam War against the alleged communist threat became the central political issue of the period, and as a response to all the political and social injustices, a vigorous counter-culture developed. The late 1960s and the early 1970s witnessed the formation of many new political and social groups and movements, and some of them, e.g. the ecological and the feminist movements, which were alternative at first, were later institutionalised and became important elements of American civil society.

The major poetic groups of the early 1960s, the Beats, the Black Mountain poets and the New York School, propagated a new kind of poetry, which reflected the dynamic changes in contemporary society. They rejected the autonomous poetics of the Formalists and the Confessionals, and sought new means of expression in the poetics of open form, which focused on communication and tried to incorporate different linguistic levels and idioms of post-industrial culture: the hustle and bustle of the urban environment, colloquial language and slang, and also the language of politics, philosophy, religion, movies, and pop-cultural phenomena. Even though these poets rebelled against the work of their immediate predecessors, they still kept in touch with tradition, drawing inspiration for their creations from the poetic techniques used by the European avant-garde poets of the early 20th century and to a large extent also from the poetry of Walt Whitman.

The first group to attract wider public attention both in the States and internationally were the Beats. Allen Ginsberg wrote poetry in the tone of a prophet of modern America, and organised the rhythm of his long visionary lines according to his breath, similarly to the way a jazz musician blows a musical phrase. Another characteristic of his poetry, which strongly influenced other Beat poets, was composition through a strategy of association and juxtaposition. Lawrence Ferlinghetti also tried to liberate poetry from academic constrictions by creating and performing so-called street poetry. Similar strategies were employed by Gregory Corso, who tried to present the fluidity of the real world in his poems, and Gary Snyder, who was strongly influenced by Zen Buddhism. The broader Beat circle included William Everson, Jack Spicer, Philip Lamantia, Philip Whalen, Michael McClure, and Charles Bukowski.

In the Slovenian reception of Beat poetry, two intensive phases can be detected. The first was in the 1960s, when the climate of liberalisation, social change and student revolt also emerged in Slovenia. Many young Slovenian protesters found expression for their discontent in the lines of Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, and other Beat poets; moreover their work also proved to be very influential in the formation of the Slovenian neo-avant-garde movement led by Tomaž Šalamun and Franci Zagoričnik. The first reports of the Beats, however, came from two literary critics: Darka Kos and Ljudmila Šemrl. Already in 1960, in the first issue of the new magazine *Perspektive*, Darka Kos published an article "Ameriška beat-generation" ('The American Beat Generation'), in which she presented the main Beat authors and their nonconformist poetics. Only a year later, a similar presentation of the Beats was published by Ljudmila Šemrl in *Naša sodobnost* under the title "Beat-generation - moralni anarhisti" ('The Beat Generation - Moral Anarchists'). Although these two articles were important, since they presented the achievements of a new generation of American poets to Slovenians for the first time, they were mainly informative, and marred by prejudices. Kos and Šemrl did not base their judgements of the Beat authors on aesthetic criteria, but proceeded from rather conservative ethical principles, accusing them of being moral anarchists and destroyers of American tradition and mythology.

Due to two poets, critics and translators, Miro Boštjančič, better known under the pseudonym Mart Ogen, and Niko Grafenauer, the first half of the 1960s was the most prolific period in the Slovenian reception of Beat poetry. As young poetry enthusiasts, they both wanted to expand Slovenian knowledge of contemporary poetic movements, but they proceeded from differing aesthetic standpoints. As a believer in an autonomous and hermetic modernist tradition, Niko Grafenauer showed some restraint in his reflections on the Beats, which were published along with his translations of Allen Ginsberg and Lawrence Ferlinghetti in a student newspaper *Tribuna*, the magazine *Perspektive* and the fortnightly review for intellectuals *Naši razgledi* (Ginsberg, 1962, 1964, Ferlinghetti, 1962, 1963), denoting them as nihilists who rejected religion and law. Mart Ogen, on the other hand, was a zealous supporter of the Beat movement, and defended the Beats as fighters against the corruption and decadence of modern society. In *Perspektive* and *Sodobnost* he published a number of translations of Jack Kerouac, Stuart Z. Perkoff, and Allen Ginsberg (Kerouac, 1961/62, 1963/64, Perkoff 1961/62, Ginsberg, 1964, 1965). In 1965 he also published an essay "Beat generacija in njeno mesto v ameriški sednajosti in literaturi" ('The Beat

Generation and Its Role in American Culture and Literature'), in which he presented the main characteristics, development and influence of Beat poetry in American society, and complained about the inadequate reception of the Beats and the lack of understanding of their poetry in Slovenia. He was especially reproachful towards Niko Grafenauer, who he said had unjustly diminished the value of Ginsberg's poetry and made numerous errors in his translations.

With the spread of the Slovenian neo-avant-garde movement, experimental poetry became more familiar to Slovenian readers, and the critical response to Beat poetry became more impartial and less prejudiced. In the 1970 *Mohorjeva založba Calendar,* Peter Komac published an essay "Slepa ulica ali o poeziji beat" ('The Dead End Street of Beat Poetry') in which he presented the Beats as typical American products, who differed from the European literary movements in their lack of political engagement. An even more objective presentation of the role and influence of the Beat movement was delivered in the same year by Mirko Jurak in his essay "Beat v ameriški književnosti" ('Beats in American Literature'), published in an independent literary magazine *Prostor in čas*. Apart from determining the socio-historical and aesthetic origins of Beat literature, Jurak also provided the first semantic analysis of the word 'Beat' in Slovenian criticism, which included the different meanings that it had acquired through time. According to Jurak, the word, which at the beginning had only denoted the condition of being beaten down, and also beat out (as in a rhythm), had gradually acquired such connotations that it became synonymous with "the urgent need for revolutionary change in the American way of life and a belief in the prospect of human beatitude". (Jurak 1970, 265)

In the 1970s and 1980s, Slovenian interest in Beat poetry gradually diminished, partly because of changed social circumstances and partly because new aesthetic tendencies prevailed. The student movements lost their initial impetus, and since this was a period of relative social and economic stability and freedom, the poetry of revolt lost its revolutionary appeal for the broader reading public. As in other world literatures, post-modernism, with its fascination with mythology, reflexivity, and meta-textuality, became the predominant aesthetic doctrine in Slovenia. Nevertheless, in that period Beat poetry and Beat literature in general acquired the status of a classic movement, which any scholar researching contemporary American literature had to consider. Two events attested to this: first was the publication of Majda Stanovnik's book *Angloameriške smeri v 20. stoletju* ('Anglo-American Literary Movements in the 20th Century') in 1980, and secondly, the inclusion of five Beat authors in Miha Avanzo's 'Anthology of the 20th Century American Poetry' in 1986. In her extensive research of contemporary Anglo-American literary movements, Majda Stanovnik devoted a large chapter to Beat literature, in which she systematically presented the meaning of the term "Beat", the historical development of Beat literature and its origins, its main characteristics and its influence in Slovenia. Her survey of the main stages in the development of the Beat movement was exhaustive and she proved to be well acquainted with the theoretical background of Beat poetics. According to Stanovnik, the basis for the creative technique of both Beat writers and poets was Jack Kerouac's principle of "spontaneous prose", based on improvisation and the rhythm of breathing, in which she recognised "a simplified variation of the surrealist princi-

ple of automatic writing". (Stanovnik, 1980, 66) As far as the Slovenian reception of Beat literature was concerned, Stanovnik determined that it had begun relatively early, and that the Beats had aroused considerable interest, but nonetheless their writing had also been accepted with some reserve, since it had "summoned ideas and techniques which had been known in European literary circles already in the first decades of the 20th century". (Stanovnik, 1980, 75)

In 1986, when Miha Avanzo included Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Charles Bukowski, Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso and Gary Snyder in his 'Anthology of 20th Century American Poetry', and presented Ginsberg as the guru of the Beat movement in the 1950s and 1960s in the accompanying notes, it seemed that the Beats had become subjects of academic discussion and scholarly research, but no longer held any real interest for translators and critics. Literary and cultural magazines began to publish articles about other, more recent groups and movements which were closer to the poetry written by the leading Slovenian poets of that time. Nevertheless, somewhat surprisingly perhaps, in the last years of the previous century, another intensive phase in the Slovenian reception of Beat poetry began. One reason for the renewed appeal of the Beats may be found in the social and economic changes which took place in Slovenia in the 1990s. With the introduction of a 'free market' economy and capitalist system many artistic endeavours became marginalized from the public sphere, and as a response a kind of counter-culture developed, especially in youth centres like Metelkova in Ljubljana, which in many respects resembled the alternative movements of the 1960s. Another reason may be that towards the end of the millennium, post-modernist aesthetics, which had characterised the previous two decades, had become exhausted, and at least some poets of the young generation began to search for inspiration in the tradition of the neo-avant-garde.

In 1990 Tone Škrjanec and Janez Saksida published the selected poems of Charles Bukowski in Slovenian translation under the simple title *Pesmi* ('Poems'), and due to great interest the book was reprinted in a slightly expanded and revised edition in 1997, this time under the title *Angeli so na dnu mojega kozarca* ('There Are Angels at the Bottom of My Glass'). While the popularity of Bukowski's poems could still be explained with the success of his prose works, it became obvious that interest in Beat poetry was increasing when Primož Kuštrin published his translations of Allen Ginsberg's poems - at first only a few of them in the fortnightly magazine *Razgledi* on May 27th, 1994, and finally a selection from his entire output in book form under the title *Blebetanje neskončnosti* ('The Babble of Infinity') in 1997. This publication was especially important, since it included an extensive essay on Ginsberg's writing "Spreminjajoče se oko-ki vse-spreminja" ('The Altering Eye Alters All'), subtitled "Vizija in poezija Allena Ginsberga in beatniške generacije" ('The Vision and Poetry of Allen Ginsberg and the Beat Generation') by Uroš Mozetič.

Being aware that the main characteristics of Ginsberg's work and the Beat movement had already been presented to the Slovenian public in Majda Stanovnik's study, Mozetič concentrated on those aspects of Ginsberg's creativity which had hitherto been relatively unknown. His analysis of the history of the American critical reception of Ginsberg's poetry revealed that, even though critics had initially rejected his work, their opinion had gradually become more favourable. Mozetič also provided an

informative insight into Ginsberg's biography, which showed how certain fundamental experiences in his youth had shaped his life. From the critical perspective, however, the most revealing part was Mozetič's detailed analysis of the development and formation of Ginsberg's style through the influence of William Blake, W. C. Williams, and Walt Whitman. Mozetič successfully combined the positivist method of research with an analysis of the form and content of his poems, to which he also added his own original interpretation, describing him as a poet "who had always striven to reach the very end of creative imagination, but unlike many other poets, had never seen it as a new beginning. Above all, for him the end meant merely the end." (Mozetič, 1997, 22)

The introduction of Beat poetry to the Slovenian public continued into the first years of the new millennium. In 2001, in the 48th-50th issue of the cultural magazine *Apokalipsa*, Tone Škrjanec published a number of translations of Gary Snyder's poems, to which he added a brief presentation of the author's life and work. Two years later, a selection of Snyder's poems in Škrjanec's translation were published in book form. The publication *Pesmi z želvjega otoka* ('Poems from Turtle Island') included the translator's after-word, in which he explained that "each poem and the entire opus of Gary Snyder has been strongly influenced by the Eastern-Asian perception of life and the world." (Škrjanec, 2003, 80)

Much less Slovenian attention was devoted to another group of poets who significantly shaped American culture in the first decades after World War II: the Black Mountain poets. The group, which gathered around Charles Olson in the period between 1951-1956, when he taught at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, and published their work in the magazines *Origin* and *Black Mountain*, included Robert Creeley, Denise Levertov, and Robert Duncan, and strongly influenced such poets as Jonathan Williams, Paul Blackburn, and John Wieners. The basis of their poetics were the principles which Charles Olson presented in his essay 'Projective Verse', demanding that open poetry and composition by field should replace traditional closed verse.

The first to introduce the work of the Black Mountain poets to Slovenia was Mart Ogen. In the first part of the 1960s he translated and published some poems by John Wiener (Wieners, 1961/62) and Charles Olson, along with an extract from 'Projective Verse', in the magazine *Perspektive* (Olson, 1964). Ogen's translation of the whole of Olson's essay was published in 1973 in the 1st-2nd issue of the magazine *Prostor in čas*, along with some newly translated poems. Unfortunately, no study, or at least a brief informative note about the importance and influence of Olson's poetic principles in contemporary American writing, was added to it.

In the 1980s, translations of Black Mountain poets were published on three occasions. Veno Taufer published his translations of Denise Levertov in the fortnightly *Naši razgledi* (Levertov, 1980), and Rade Krstić presented some translated poems of Robert Creeley in *Problemi* (Creeley, 1985). The most comprehensive presentation of Black Mountain creativity came with the publication of Avanzo's 'Anthology of 20th Century American Poetry', which included the work of four poets from this group: Charles Olson, Robert Duncan, Denise Levertov, and Robert Creeley. Since Creeley was presented with the most poems, such a decision could be understood as

the editor's assessment that he was the most relevant. Charles Olson, on the other hand, was awarded the most extensive accompanying note, in which he was described as the ideological leader of the movement. Thereafter, Black Mountain poetry was translated into Slovenian only one more time, in 2003, when Veronika Ditinjana published her translations of a considerable number of Denise Levertov's poems in *Apokalipsa* and also briefly presented the author. (Levertov, 2003)

While the reason for such poor response to the work of the Black Mountain poets in comparison to the prolific reception of the Beatniks may be traced to the perhaps overly intellectual and socially disengaged attitude of the former, it was another group that managed to attract almost as much attention as the Beats, with experimental poetics which cleverly and wittily combined highbrow aspirations with the banal trivia of everyday urban existence. The New York School poets, who wrote their best poems in the late 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, were inspired by the main American visual artists and composers. They all favoured the aesthetics of immediacy and presence over the traditional aesthetics of transcendence, and tried to capture the excitement of living in New York City, which to them represented a model of urban simultaneity, in their work. Frank O'Hara, one of the main authors of the group, designed the outlines of such poetics in his half-jocular manifesto 'Personism', in which he stressed the communicative value of poetry, demanding that a poem should primarily exist between two persons and not between two pages. John Ashbery, another celebrated New York poet, was particularly interested in the way experience filtered through his perception, claiming that his poems were not about the experience, but about the experience of experience. Ashbery and O'Hara influenced other New York poets: Kenneth Koch, James Schuyler, Ted Berrigan, Barbara Guest and, to some extent, James Merrill.

Although the first information about the New York School had already reached Slovenians in 1964, when Mart Ogen published a translation of one O'Hara's poem and an extract from Schuyler's theoretical writings on contemporary American painting in the 36th-37th issue of *Perspektive*, and then again in 1986, when Miha Avanzo presented Kenneth Koch, Frank O'Hara and John Ashbery with a few translations and notes in his 'Anthology of 20th Century American Poetry', the period of intensive reception of New York School poetry began in the mid-1990s, reaching its peak in the first years of the new millennium. The number of articles about the New York poets and translations of their poems can be compared to that of the Beats, while it has to be observed that in contrast to some negative reactions to the work of the Beats, Slovenian critical opinion was always in favour of the achievements of the New York School.

In 1995 Aleš Debeljak published his translations of John Ashbery - first a few poems in the 13th issue of the fortnightly *Razgledi*, and later that year a collection of Ashbery's selected poems (Ashbery, 1995). This edition included comprehensive bibliographic information and an extensive essay on Ashbery's work, entitled "Hlapljiva identiteta jaza v pesništvu Johna Ashberyja" ('The Volatile Identity of the Speaker in John Ashbery's Poetry'). For Debeljak, Ashbery was primarily a poet of critical scepticism, "who did not possess that basic certainty which had previously enabled the metaphysical unity of author, namely the certainty in continuity of language and external reality." (Debeljak, 1995, 94) In his interpretation of Ashbery's work, Debeljak

combined different methods: the positivistic framework served for him only as a basis for a subject and form analysis of certain of Ashbery's poems, upon which he expanded in broader reflections on the aesthetic and social premises of post-modern society. In Debeljak's opinion, the crucial categories in approaching Ashbery's poetics were "the responsibility of style" and "the ethics of indeterminacy", which he substantiated with interpretations of the most relevant American critics. Only a year later, Uroš Zupan decided to approach the complicated subject of Ashbery's poetics in a more relaxed and informal manner. In his essay "Svetloba znotraj pomaranče" ('Light Inside an Orange'), published in the magazine *Literatura*, he avoided any scholarly methods of interpretation, and instead simply described and analysed his own experience of reading Ashbery's poems "Pohajkovanje" ('Just Walking Around') and "Približevanje dežja" ('Expecting Rain'). Through these two poems, Ashbery's poetic world, which he had found alien and strange before, suddenly opened up to him. In Zupan's interpretation, the poem "Pohajkovanje" was "a poem about a process, a poem about dreams, and perhaps also about illusions and mistakes." (Zupan, 1996, 85) Zupan compared Ashbery's method of using words to the method with which an abstract painter uses colours, and explained that the reader had to break through different abstract layers before creating their own experience of a specific poem. But in the end, Zupan asserted, the reader was rewarded for the effort, since they could finally understand that behind the complex surface one could still find a love poem.

Frank O'Hara was thoroughly presented a few years later, in 2001, when Tone Škrjanec published quite a few translations of his poems in the 118th issue of *Literatura*, to which he added a translation of O'Hara's manifesto 'Personism' and an informative portrait of the author. A year later, in 2002, a selection of O'Hara's poems was published under the title *Srce v žepu* ('Heart in My Pocket'). Apart from the poems translated by Tone Škrjanec, Primož Čučnik and Miha Avanzo, the publication included translations of two of O'Hara's essays and a critical study of his work by Primož Čučnik, and could be set as a model of a good and comprehensive presentation of an American author to the Slovenian public. In the study "Tvoja posameznost" ('Your Singularity') Primož Čučnik gathered observations of various American critics on the New York poets, and managed to depict a vivid image of the creative fervour pervading various artistic spheres in New York in the 1950s and 1960s. In Čučnik's opinion the essence of O'Hara's poetic process was in the use of techniques familiar to most avant-garde painters of the period. O'Hara tried to vivify the surface of a poem by "swift changes of perspective, leaps in time and space, and unexpected changes of voice, combining technical effects with the principle of coincidence." (Čučnik, 2002, 101) Another aspect of O'Hara's poetry which Čučnik stressed was its communicative nature, its striving to establish contact with the reader.

The new millennium also provided some new translations of John Ashbery's poems. In 2003 Veno Taufer's translation of Ashbery's long poem "Avtoportret v konveksnem ogledalu" ('Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror') was published in the 139th-140th issue of *Literatura*; more Ashbery translations were contributed a year later for the 155th-156th issue of the same magazine by Uroš Zupan. In 2004, when *Avtoportret v konveksnem ogledalu* was published, John Ashbery became the first post-war American poet with two collections of poetry in Slovenian. Apart from

'Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror' the publication included translations of several other poems, by Veno Taufer, Uroš Zupan and Primož Čučnik. Regrettably, no essay or study of Ashbery's work was added to them this time.

Although the Beats and poets of the New York School both wrote poetry with open forms, and did their best work at about the same time, their reception in Slovenia was very different. While the first information about the Beat movement came to Slovenia relatively early, the New York poets became familiar after more than three decades of delay; and while the former were accepted with scepticism, prejudice and misunderstandings, the critics who wrote about the latter in the 1990s and in the first years of the new millennium revealed a great deal of expertise, and welcomed them as one of the most interesting artistic movements of the second half of the 20th century. It seems that in the 1960s and 1970s Slovenian literary taste was still not ready for the avant-garde experiments of the New York School, and it took some time for the postmodernist doctrine of openness towards different aesthetic approaches to become pervasive and the right conditions for understanding such poetry to be met. This happened with the development of post-industrial society and the spread of the market economy, which introduced to Slovenian urban areas many new phenomena similar to those described by the New York poets three decades earlier. A great deal of credit for their intensive reception goes to the young generation of Slovenian poets like Uroš Zupan, Primož Čučnik and Tone Škrjanec, who have found a source of inspiration for their own work in the achievements of the New York School and have been denoted by some critics as Slovenian urban poets.

In conclusion, despite the increasing number of translations and Slovenian publications of American poets of open form, there are quite a few important names from this group who have not been properly and thoroughly presented to Slovenians. Among the Beats, Lawrence Ferlinghetti is still awaiting his first Slovenian collection; the most important Black Mountain poets, Charles Olson, Robert Creeley and Denise Levertov, are all relatively unknown in Slovenia, and among the New York poets at least Kenneth Koch and James Schuyler deserve more popular recognition.

OTHER POST-WAR AMERICAN POETS IN SLOVENIAN CRITICISM AND TRANSLATION

Many other poets who cannot be classified in the foregoing groups and movements were very influential in the development of post-war American poetics, and some of them are today regarded as contemporary classics. Among the most prominent names in the second half of the 20th century are Adrienne Rich, who focused on her personal experience as a Jew and a lesbian; Louise Glück, who managed to achieve a dreamlike ritual effect in her poems through a seemingly distanced and uncomplicated style; Imamu Amiri Baraka with his socially engaged and uncompromisingly provocative poetry; Audre Lorde, celebrating the identity of Black people in Africa and the United States; Rita Dove, exploring the history of African-Americans; Mark Strand, whose poems have been compared to the paintings of Magritte because of their eerie, mysterious atmosphere; and Charles Simic, who developed an original

surrealist style of writing, in which the sublime merges with the profane, and tragic elements with comic. In his essay "American Poetry in Slovene Translations" delivered in 1977 at the Seminar on Contemporary American Poetry and Criticism in Ohrid, Macedonia, Mirko Jurak observed that "the development of American literature, poetry included, had been more or less closely followed and evaluated during the past three decades by a number of Slovene critics, translators, and essay writers." (Jurak, 1977, 75) That was the case also in the following decades. From 1979 on, when Mirko Jurak published a few translations of Mark Strand's poems in *Naši Razgledi* (Strand, 1979) and presented him as a poet of individual experience whose work was replete with melancholy and irony, the Slovenian reception of those American poets who cannot be classified in any of the major groups continued regularly and even considerably increased after the year 2000. Eighteen such authors were presented in Avanzo's 'Anthology of 20th Century American Poetry' in 1986, namely Delmore Schwartz, Gwendolyne Brooks, James Dickey, A. R. Ammons, Adrienne Rich, Mark Strand, Imamu Amiri Baraka, Michael Benedict, Marvin Bell, Charles Simic, Tom Clark, Robert Hass, Ron Padget, Erica Jong, Louise Glück, James Tate, Ai, and Susan Feldman. The volume included brief biographical and bibliographic notes, but unfortunately, no critical comments on their poetics. Nevertheless, this publication still serves as a relevant starting point for any researcher of contemporary American poetry.

Only three years later Aleš Debeljak prepared a presentation of nine more American poets for the magazine *Literatura* under the title "Sodobna ameriška poezija" ('Contemporary American Poetry'). His survey included David Halpern, Richard Jackson, Edward Hirsch, Stephen Dobyns, Jorie Graham, Richard Katrovas, Phillis Levin, Lary Lewis, and David St. John. In the accompanying essay, he explained that he had selected only such authors who had not already been presented in Avanzo's anthology and who had been born after 1940. In his characteristic style, combining an analysis of various poetics with broader social and historical implications, Debeljak tried to define the essential characteristics of the new generation of American poets. He found it in their lack of social involvement, since "all of them proceeded from the experience of defeat which the counter-cultural America suffered at the end of the 1960s." (Debeljak, 1989, 42) Therefore, he opines, their creation of individual mythologies and imaginary worlds was a reaction to the extrovert social protests of the neo-avant-garde literary scene in the 1960s.

In the second half of the 1990s Ciril Bergles and Uroš Zupan published their translations of contemporary American poetry in various literary magazines. Bergles prepared a presentation of Adrienne Rich for *Razgledi* (Rich, 1996) and *Apokalipsa* (Rich, 1999), while Zupan presented Mark Strand in *Nova revija* (Strand, 1997) and Charles Simic in *Literatura* (Simic, 1998). A year later, Iztok Osojnik translated a few poems of Richard Jackson, known also as an enthusiastic promoter of Slovenian poetry in the United States, for *Literatura* (Jackson, 1999). With the year 2000 a period of publications of individual poetry collections of authors from this group began. First the *Mondena Publishing House* brought out Janko Lozar's translation of Brian Henry's collection *Astronavt* ('Astronaut'*)* with an after-word by Tomaž Šalamun, in which he described the author as "probably the most published poet, essayist and

critic of his generation in the USA" (Šalamun, 2000, 69). And in 2001 the first Slovenian collection of Richard Jackson, entitled *Svetovi narazen* ('Worlds Apart') was published; the translations were contributed by Jure Potokar, Iztok Osojnik and Uroš Zupan.

More important, however, was the publication of selected poems of one of the most acclaimed post-war American poets, Charles Simic, in the same year. The collection *Razgaljanje tišine* ('Dismantling the Silence'), which apart from Simic's poems included some of his essays, translated by Tomaž Šalamun, and at the end a detailed and comprehensive critical study "Anonimne usode med bogovi in hudiči: pesništvo Charlesa Simica" ('Anonymous Fates Amidst Gods and Devils: the Poetry of Charles Simic') by Aleš Debeljak was added to it. Through the analysis of Simic's poetic technique, Debeljak managed to create a very persuasive interpretation of the existential position of the individual in the modern world. Debeljak recognised the main premises of Simic's poetics in the feeling of displacement, which derived from his experience of being an immigrant, and in the need to reinvent his own identity. A special quality, which distinguished Debeljak's analyses from the studies of numerous American interpreters, lies in his ability to recognise political undertones in Simic's fantastic and grotesque imagery. Debeljak understands Simic as a socially and politically engaged author, and for him, even humour as one of the most recognisable features of Simic's work "was in the service of the author's broader cosmic vision, which revealed his existential engagement in present-day reality." (Debeljak, 2001, 227)

Another central figure on the contemporary American poetic scene received a Slovenian edition of selected poems in 2002. This was Adrienne Rich, whose publication *Raziskovanje razvalin* ('Exploring the Ruins') was prepared and translated by Ciril Bergles, who also wrote an extensive accompanying essay "Iskanje izgubljene identitete" ('The Search for Lost Identitiy') about her work. Bergles approached Rich's poetry with a positivistic method, focusing primarily on her life and experience as a lesbian and a Jew, which seems an appropriate choice, since Rich has often included autobiographical elements and reflections upon current political events in her poems. Bergles combined this method with an analysis of the gradual change in Rich's poetics from fairly traditional themes and styles to an engaged female writing which strives to reinvent language and make a revision of history through a critical reflection upon the role of archetypes created by men. But for Bergles, the greatest value of her poetry is not in its feminist implications, but simply in the fact that "for her, love between women, physical and ethical, has served as an open possibility of imagining a new America, a new social order, a different language." (Bergles, 2002, 135)

In the same year, Uroš Zupan's translations of a few of Charles Wright's poems were published in the 237th-238th issue of Nova Revija, along with Ana Jelnikar's translation of Wright's essay "Improvizacije" ('Improvisations'). Yet another author from the youngest generation of American poets was published in Slovenian in 2003: Joshua Beckman, whose *Zapusti New York* ('Leave New York') was translated by Janko Lozar and Primož Čučnik; however, no comprehensive critical presentation of the author was included in this edition. In 2004 a broad selection of Louise Glück's poems in Ciril Bergles's translation was presented in *Nova Revija* (Glück, 2004), to

which the translator added a brief introduction of the poet, entitled "Divja perunika Louise Glück" ('The Wild Iris of Louise Glück'), in which he described her poetry as "a riddle, whose mental and aesthetic essence has to be unravelled by the reader through their own interpretation". (Bergles, 2004, 177) And finally, in 2005, at the end of the period presented in this survey, a small paperback volume of James Tate's poetry was published under the title *Izgubljeni pilot* ('The Lost Pilot'). The translation was by Tomaž Šalamun, and the author was presented in a few informative lines.

All these publications show that the Slovenian reception of those American authors who cannot be classified into any of the leading movements reached its peak after the year 2000, and towards the end of the period in question Slovenian interest in American poetry in general was increasing, and even more publications of contemporary American poets and critical studies of their work can be expected in the future. It seems that with the establishment of democratic society and global post-industrial culture, with all its positive and negative connotations, and after familiarisation with the post-modernist doctrine of openness towards different aesthetic approaches and new urban trends among our writers and poets, Slovenian readers and critics have considerably fewer problems accepting contemporary American poetry than forty years ago, when the first publications of the Beats provoked vigorous polemics about the moral aspects of their aesthetics. Contemporary Slovenian critics reveal a good deal of expertise regarding recent trends in American poetry, and even those Slovenian readers who are not well acquainted with literary theory can understand contemporary American poetry as the artistic expression of people living in an environment which is not radically different from their own. While it is true that some essential authors from this group, like Audre Lorde, Imamu Amiri Baraka, Louise Glück and Rita Dove, still do not have a Slovenian edition of their poems, a new trend of publishing works of very young authors has been observed in recent years - such are the cases of Brian Henry and Joshua Beckman - which raises the hope that in the next few years the most interesting new American poets will be received more regularly and without too much delay.

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KURT VONNEGUT'S *SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE*:
A FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR PERSPECTIVE

Monika Kavalir

Abstract

The paper tries to analyse the style of Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* with the tool of Hallidayan systemic-functional grammar. Its aim is to explore in what way the syntactic and thematic structure helps construct the sentiment of fatalism and simplicity, and how it reinforces the novel's concept of time.

Trask defines functional grammar as "/a/ny approach to grammatical description which lays particular emphasis on the communicative and social aspects of language use and which consequently attempts to interpret grammatical forms largely in terms of these factors; a prominent example is *Systemic Grammar*" (1993: 110-111). It is for its own virtues as well as for its standing in opposition to traditional and generative grammars (cf. Halliday 1998: xxviii-xxix) that this particular theory is interesting in today's context. "The single most influential exponent of systemic functional grammar is Michael Halliday" (Gerot and Wignell 2000: iv). His *Introduction to Functional Grammar* was first published in 1985 and has gone through numerous reprintings.

Halliday redefines the sentence as the clause complex (1998: 216). Since the three functional components of meaning are realised throughout the grammar of a language, a clause is made of three distinct structures combined into one: transitivity structure (ideational component: clause as representation), modal structure (interpersonal component: clause as exchange), and thematic structure (textual component: clause as message). Only the latter is dealt with here.

The clause is organised as a message "by having a special status assigned to one part of it" (Halliday 1998: 37), this element is the Theme and is in English indicated by its position in the clause. The Theme is the element which serves as the point of departure of the message; it is what the clause is concerned with. The remainder of the message, in which the Theme is developed, is called the Rheme. Here Halliday follows the terminology of the Prague school of linguists.

41

GRAMMAR AND LITERARY ANALYSIS

The idea of joining linguistic description and interpretation of literature is by no means unusual. It has often been fruitfully employed and has given rise to much of what is known as literary stylistics. As Catano points out, a great part of pre-twentieth-century discussions of style appear as secondary components of rhetorical and grammatical analyses, and the modern development of linguistics has provided an all too important boost to stylistics. The coupling of linguistics and stylistics follows from the fact that "the desire to begin with a set of well-defined terms and procedures lies at the core of the initial formation of stylistics as a discipline" (Catano 1997: 1).

According to Catano, the roots of modern stylistics can be found in the work of Charles Bally and Leo Spitzer, but it was only transformational-generative grammar which provided the crucial impetus (1997: 2-6). While linguistic formalism applied to literary language remains influential, the present day sees a large variety of possible stylistic approaches and their linguistic bases. A not insignificant amount of this kind of literary analysis has been carried out within the framework of Halliday's systemic-functional grammar (cf. Halliday *et al*. 1997), and Catano explicitly mentions "the union between linguistics and literary criticism that appears in the work of M. A. K. Halliday" (1997: 6). One of the reasons for this is that this particular grammar "has also been designed to be relatively easy to apply to texts" (Martin *et al*. 1997: 2), and another one is the modern orientation of stylistics, which sees the function of linguistic elements in texts as "central" (Wales 1989: 197). Halliday's approach is "a semantically driven grammar", which "seeks to consider and identify the role of various linguistic items in any text in terms of their function in building meaning" (Hasan 1989: ix).

In spite of its modern recognition, literary stylistics itself does not go undisputed. An argument which is difficult to refute is that there is "no way to link the empirically defined features of the text with the rest of the critical analysis except through the subjective, interpretive framework of the critic" (Catano 1997: 7), and worse, even the stylistic features described in the analysis are, according to this view, subject to the interpretive choices of the reader/critic. The position adopted here is a pragmatic cost and benefit analysis: a simple belief that the insights gained more than compensate the risks taken.

KURT VONNEGUT AND *SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE*

Kurt Vonnegut Jr. (born in 1922) is an American author who began with science fiction and then wrote his "famous book about Dresden" (SF 1991: 3). *Slaughterhouse-Five* was published in 1969 and made Vonnegut an extensively discussed writer, the centre of a cult almost, and secured him financially for the rest of his life. For him it represented even more. He had filled five thousand pages and thrown them away before he finally managed to write this book – after almost 25 years. On this subject he said, "I always thought, if I could ever get something down about Dresden, that

would be *it*. After *Slaughterhouse-Five* I'd already done much more than I ever expected to do with my life" (in Amis 1990: 137).

The critics seem to agree, calling it a "masterly novel" (Tanner 1971: 200). The success of this book is nevertheless inextricably tied to the Zeitgeist. Amis explains: "Although the Vietnam war changed the mood of America, it produced no fiction to articulate that change. As a result the protest movements seized on and adopted two Second World War novels as their own, novels that expressed the absurdist tenor of the modern revulsion. Those novels were *Catch 22* and *Slaughterhouse-Five*: they became articles of faith as well as milestones of fiction" (1990: 135). Critical acclaim was much more difficult to achieve as the critics at first tried to discard Vonnegut as just another science-fiction writer and the awareness of the seriousness of Vonnegut's inquiries took a long time to grow (cf. Tanner 1971: 181)[1].

Slaughterhouse-Five or The Children's Crusade is based on Vonnegut's experience in the Second World War, when he was a prisoner of war in Dresden and saw its destruction – the bombing by the Allies.[2] Still this is not an autobiographic work, the hero is Billy Pilgrim. Billy is unstuck in time and moves spasmodically from event to event through his life in random sequence. As a disoriented American soldier he is captured and forced to live in a makeshift German prison in Dresden; he is kidnapped by aliens from the planet Tralfamadore, who exhibit him in a zoo with an erotic film star; other parts of the book describe his married life in America after the war, the death of his wife and his own death. The central line of the novel is his war experience, which culminates in the bombing of Dresden and is interrupted by other events in his life.

Possibly the main characteristic of the novel, which also bothered the critics tremendously, is its seeming simplicity. It appears that the author wanted to get the message across so badly that he had to spell it out, and did so more than once. Such prominent topics are fatalism and the structure of time. Billy's prayer is for God to grant him the serenity to accept the things he cannot change, courage to change the things he can, and wisdom always to tell the difference – accompanied by Vonnegut's commentary: "Among the things Billy Pilgrim could not change were the past, the present, and the future" (SF 1991: 44). This does not leave much room for free will and action (cf. SF 1991: 119), and is connected to the powerful idea of the structure of time – we are all "bugs in amber" (SF 1991: 62), any moment is structured, has always been and always will be (cf. SF 1991: 84).

The critics, however, disagree. Is this really fatalism or is it anti-fatalism? Vonnegut scholars split into two opposite camps, many of them speaking against the above understanding of the book (cf. Broer 1994, Tanner 1971). To this issue is linked the question of the alleged anti-war sentiment of the novel, which in fact juxtaposes pacifistic statements with the belief there will always be wars.

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[1] Vonnegut is supposedly also "our era's most frequently banned author" (Klinkowitz 1998: 2).

[2] The "success" of the air raid was kept secret for a long time, and when it was revealed, it was presented as probably the greatest massacre of the Second World War. The number of estimated victims was 135,000, by far surpassing Hiroshima. The work of David Irving, who published this information, was later discredited, and today the estimates range from 25,000 to 35,000 victims (Bombing of Dresden in World War Two, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bombing_of_Dresden_in_World_War_II).

THE ANALYSIS

An attempt at a partial functional grammar analysis is carried out on Chapter 8 of the novel, which comprises 4,533 words. Additionally some more extracts are analysed, e.g. the first three parts of Chapter 2, to gain insight into some specific topics, and a comparison with Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* is made to the same purpose.

The aim of the analysis is to investigate the contribution of grammar to the style of the novel, its interpretation and effect. The issues involved include the extent to which the grammatical analysis supports the claim of simplicity; how this simplicity is achieved; what the linguistic analysis undertaken can indicate as to the novel's paramount themes such as fatalism and determinism, and what the grammar reveals about the problem of time. The question at stake is what the grammatical analysis leads to, and which interpretations it warrants.

Does a justification for tying intention to structure need to be sought for? One could rely on the author, who has spoken repeatedly of his many efforts "to get it right" (cf. Allan 1988), but it suffices to reverberate the crucial belief that structure is essential to interpretation. Indeed, it is doubtful whether an interpretative process which disregards structure is at all possible. Such theoretical questions greatly exceed the scope of this paper, but it may nonetheless be useful to define style – here it is understood as "a web of relations between the elements of the text itself" (Catano 1997: 7) and is not necessarily linked to markedness.

In analysing the text, several problems arise. On the one hand, an attempt to apply it in practice necessarily means a moment of truth for any theory and more often than not results in its reconsideration. Any linguistic theory is bound to encounter problems sooner or later, and language remains a slippery thing. In any such cases the merits of competing solutions are considered on an individual basis, despite the general striving for principled operation.

GRAMMATICAL COMPLEXITY

In Halliday (1998), the sentence is reinterpreted as the clause complex, but it is difficult to give a clear-cut definition of where a clause complex begins or ends. Martin *et al*. (1997: 174-177) suggest a principled choice is needed between two general approaches, "minimal" and "maximal". It is taken here as a rule that a clause complex does not exceed the limits of the orthographic sentence, which is closer to the minimal approach, but a tendency to treat the recognised complexes with utmost delicacy has been reinforced.

The analysis shows that Chapter 8 contains 615 separate clauses (embedded clauses not included[3]), representing 394 clause complexes, which means that the average clause complex consists of 1.6 clauses. The number of clause complexes involving

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[3] "Embedded (i.e. rankshifted or downranked) clauses do not enter into relations of hypotaxis or parataxis with other clauses and should be ignored" (Martin *et al*. 1997: 177). Given the modest contribution of embedded clauses to meaning in general, they are not analysed on any level.

more than two clauses is 44, i.e. 11%. The longest clause complex contains 7 clauses, and there are three complexes with 5 clauses. Of the 44 complexes with more than two clauses, 9 are built exclusively on parataxis[4], 9 on hypotaxis only, and in the remaining 26 the two are combined.

The simplicity of style with regard to clause complexes seems obvious, but becomes even more evident when *Slaughterhouse-Five* is compared to a randomly chosen extract from Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* (1994: 119). The analysis of 30 clauses reveals 8 clause complexes, the average length of a clause complex is 3.8 clauses. The number of clause complexes involving more than two clauses is 5, i.e. 63%. Despite the significant shortness of the extract, the longest clause complex includes the same number of clauses as in *Slaughterhouse-Five*, seven, and there are two complexes with 5 clauses. Of the 5 complexes with more than two clauses, 1 is based solely on parataxis, and one on hypotaxis, while 3 complexes are combined.

Oliver Twist is known for its complexity of style, and thus represents an interesting benchmark for this analysis. The results are intriguing: the length of the average clause complex in *Slaughterhouse-Five* is only 1.6 clauses, compared to 3.8 in Dickens' classic. The disparity in the number of clause complexes involving more than two clauses is shown in the ratio – 11% in *Slaughterhouse-Five*, and 63% in *Oliver Twist*. Because of the modest sample it is difficult to generalise, but the difference in taxis seems to be almost non-existent. Thus Vonnegut's clause complexes do not, at least in comparison with Dickens, deviate in the hierarchical relationships within the complex, but mainly in its length.

On the basis of such data it is much easier to define simplicity in *Slaughterhouse-Five* and its contribution to the meaning of the text. As far as syntactic complexity is concerned, Vonnegut's language is in no way impoverished. It uses the whole range of possibilities when it comes to expansion and projection[5]. The figures show that he does not stay with parataxis, which is supposed to be a simpler relation (cf. Hasan 1989: 32-33), but also uses hypotaxis and the most complex possibility, a mixture of the two. Vonnegut's main characteristic in this respect is shortness, which produces simplicity, or as he would prefer to call it, clarity.

A mundane reason for this, which constitutes part of the grounds for criticism and recurs throughout the analysis, is Vonnegut's didactic aim when writing. Confronted with the question of "surface simplicity" in his books, he answers: "They have a real simplicity, I think, because I have always been aware of the reader and his difficulties /…/ I avoid sentences where the reader could get lost. /…/ I have made my books easy to read, punctuated carefully, with lots of white space. /…/ I don't think that /…/ I have skimped on /my/ language /…/ What /I/ have done is write shorter sentences and /I/ could easily mask what /I/'ve done and substitute semi-colons and dashes for periods and get wonderfully intricate sentences and also pages that would

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[4] Parataxis is "the relation between two like elements of equal status" and hypotaxis is "the relation between a dependent element and its dominant, the element on which it is dependent" (Halliday 1998: 218).

[5] For Halliday (1998: 219*ff*), expansion means that the secondary clause expands the primary clause by elaborating, extending or enhancing it, and projection means that the secondary clause is projected through the primary clause, which instates it as a locution or an idea.

be much more tiring to the eye" (Allan 1988: 48). Another aspect he mentions is his education and journalistic experience (Allan 1988: 196).

While the author's comments may be relevant to some extent, they do not reveal much about the import this particularity of style brings to the meaning of the text. To see this, one needs to relate it to "the big picture". This shortness, reduction, does not apply only to sentences but also to paragraphs and even larger units. *Slaughterhouse-five* contains only ten chapters, but they are not chapters in the usual meaning of the word, each of them being composed of clearly separated subparts (clusters of paragraphs); the analysed Chapter 8 contains 31 such subparts, the shortest of these has 4 and the longest 48 clauses. Together these structures contribute to two important ideas in the novel.

The first one is the Tralfamadorian concept of literature – their books resemble telegrams, "each clump of symbols is a brief, urgent message – describing a situation, a scene. /…/ There isn't any particular relationship between all the messages, except that the author has chosen them carefully, so that, when seen all at once, they produce an image of life that is beautiful and surprising and deep. There is no beginning, no middle, no end, no suspense, no moral, no causes, no effects" (SF 2000: 64). Vonnegut (inside cover of *Slaughterhouse-Five*) openly states: "This is a novel somewhat in the telegraphic schizophrenic manner of tales of the planet Tralfamadore …"

The choice to use short sentences entails a choice to avoid "particular relationships" between clauses. Syntactic relations are logical (cf. Halliday 1998: 219 – "logico-semantic relations"), and to renounce them is to renounce logic. Which leads to the second important point this simplicity helps to make: this book is "so short and jumbled and jangled, /…/ because there is nothing intelligent to say about a massacre" (SF 2000: 14). This strategy is repeated at the level of clusters of paragraphs, which do not constitute an orderly line of narration, and in fact carry the main burden of this pseudo-telegraphic style. As Klinkowitz (1998: 24) qualifies the novel, "the difficulty of articulating such unspeakableness /…/ determined its structure and generated its ideas …" Vonnegut's short sentences and subchapters are "compressed selections suspended in an encompassing silence" (Tanner 1971: 185), and they produce an almost impressionistic quality, the impression of moments arrested in time (cf. Tanner 1971: 197). In this way the simplicity of style acts also as a device for realising *Slaughterhouse-Five*'s specific concept of time. For Billy "/a/ll moments, past, present, and future, always have existed, always will exist" (SF 2000: 19) because he is "spastic in time" and "has no control over where he is going next" (SF 2000: 17). Billy discovers it is only an illusion that one moment follows another one, and that once a moment is gone, it is gone forever (cf. Harris 1971: 70).

It is interesting to see how a part of this numbness, muteness of the massacre can be seen in the structure of one of the central paragraphs, the actual bombing of Dresden. This extract contains 29 clauses and 23 clause complexes, there are 1.3 clauses per complex, which is even less than the average. Only two kinds of relations are used, extending and enhancing. Extending has the meaning of simply being "added to" (Halliday 1998: 219), not really producing a specific relationship. With the exception of one instance of purpose (*A guard would go to the head of the stairs every so often to see what it was like outside* …), all examples of enhancing only represent

temporal relations – again only putting one clause next to another one, in this case in time. The bombing simply is, we do not know anything about the place, manner, and most importantly, nothing about any cause or condition. This reminds us that the question of why is totally out of place. "Why *you*? Why *us* for that matter? Why *anything*? Because this moment simply *is*. /…/ here we are, /…/ trapped in the amber of this moment. There is no *why*" (SF 2000: 55), the Tralfamadorians tell Billy. The structure spells out the omnipresent idea of fatalism, determinism, resignation.

THEMATIC STRUCTURE

With 74 occurrences the main Theme in Chapter 8 is Billy Pilgrim, the hero of the novel. The second most frequent Theme is Kilgore Trout, the science-fiction writer whom Billy befriends. 60 occurrences bring him close to overshadowing the main character. Although Billy is the central figure of the book, he readily lets other characters take the floor. In Chapter 8, the Theme, which represents "the prominent element" (Halliday 1998: 67), shows the development of the text through different stages.

The beginning foregrounds Howard W. Campbell, Jr., an American who has become a Nazi and wants to convince the prisoners of war to join "The Free American Corps". Then the attention moves to Edgar Derby, the high school teacher who acts as the only "character" in the story. It is then time for Trout's appearance on stage and Trout takes the role of the Theme just as he takes control of Billy's wedding anniversary party. Through his violent reaction to the barbershop quartet, Billy is brought to the front, but the attention is split between Billy, Trout and Billy's wife Valencia. When Billy thinks about the bombing of Dresden, there is no main personage that would act as the Theme and also later on a variety of expressions exchange place as the Theme, not very many of them representing persons.

To get a better insight into what Billy Pilgrim's role is, it is useful to analyse the characterisation as he enters the happening at the beginning of Chapter 2 (Chapter 1 sets the autobiographical frame). The thematic structure of this extract shows that in the first subchapter Billy dominates the stage. Out of 13 Topical Themes, Billy is the Theme in 11 cases. It is worth mentioning that the other two examples occur at the end of this part. The second subchapter presents 8 Topical Themes, but Billy only accounts for half of these. In the third subchapter, Billy has lost his ground, occurring as only 2 Topical Themes out of 8. Everything else becomes more important: Ilium (the town where he lives), the General Forge and Foundry Company, frames for safety glasses …

As Everyman (cf. Klinkowitz 1998: 5), Billy is an insignificant wanderer through life, depicted as a puppet, "a powerless victim of forces he does not understand" (Holland 1995: 7). He is permanently out of place, everybody can push him around, from time to time he seems to act in the book more as glue than its main character. He appears as the Theme relatively rarely, and such a narrative disables him from developing as a character; as is characteristic of Vonnegut, he remains "rather 'flat' and two-dimensional" (Harris 1971: 73). This gives the novel a flavour of absurdity, stem-

ming from the conviction that "/t/he well-rounded character whose actions proceed from clearly stated causes /…/ represents a falsification" (Harris 1971: 74).

The central event of the novel, the bombing of Dresden, puts all sorts of items as Themes; the existential *there* is very frequent, but the meat locker, Dresden, the flame, the sky, the sun, the stones… also appear in this role. In war, individuals are not that important and can change nothing. "Everything that happens *must* happen. Nothing can be done to change it because each moment is structured in its own particular way – it always has been and always will be" (Holland 1995: 42). "The proper response to life, then, becomes resignation" (Harris 1971: 71) … and Billy later says about the bombing, "It was all right /…/ *Everything* is all right, and everybody has to do exactly what he does" (SF 2000: 145). The choice of Theme and Rheme thus again contributes to the idea of fatalism, determinism and futility of human endeavour.

In *Slaughterhouse-Five* there is a very strong pattern of unmarked Topical Themes, occasionally accompanied by Textual Themes and some Interpersonal Themes in dialogues. Marked Themes nevertheless occur, albeit in a very limited number. They are of three types. There are 14 examples of marked Topical Theme *said*, as in *said Billy*. Although originally this of course is a marked Theme, it loses its markedness in the context of story-telling, being a convention. The second common type of marked Topical Theme is the adverb *so*, which appears in two recurring comments. In Chapter 8, *And so on* appears 4 times, and *So it goes* 10 times. The latter appears 103 times in the novel (Allan 1988: 299). It seems clear that here too these items lose their markedness, become mannerisms (cf. Holland 1995: 42) and can – because of their frequent occurrence as pre-fabricated units – in fact be seen as having no thematic structure at all. What remains is some instances of Location, spatial (e.g. *down in the locker*, *somewhere*) and temporal (e.g. *now*, *on Judgment Day*), and other isolated examples, 12 marked Themes in all. They do not change the general impression.

OUT OF REACH

No pretensions are possible that such an analysis could reveal the whole story, and there are many more elements to *Slaughterhouse-Five* than have been presented here. The least that could be done in addition to the above analysis would be an examination of the novel's modal and transitivity structures, but even that kind of extended analysis would be far from exhaustive: "The way language is patterned /…/ involves attention to the organization of language beyond grammar, that is beyond such relatively small units of language as the sentence and towards larger units of organization" (Carter and Nash 1994: 2).

Nevertheless the method applied provides many interesting insights into how this particular novel functions, and how it builds up its unique style. Functional grammar proves a valuable tool exactly because it can show the workings of grammar on several levels and scrutinise the import of individual grammatical features; it is thus especially appropriate for the analysis of "Vonnegut's complex mixture of tones, techniques, genres, and cultural levels" (Bradbury 1994: 216).

The analysis has shown how grammar helps develop some of the topics in *Slaughterhouse-Five*, such as fatalism and the problem of time, simplicity, and the specific mosaic structure of the novel. The examination of the grammatical (non-) complexity of the novel exposes the great simplicity of style; the low number of long clause complexes becomes even more evident when compared to an excerpt from *Oliver Twist*. Vonnegut's complexes do not, however, deviate noticeably in the hierarchical relationships within the complex, but mainly in their length. The language is thus in no way impoverished, embodying instead the Tralfamadorian concept of literature, where sentences, paragraphs and subchapters imitate separate clusters of symbols to produce a mosaic effect; this is also in line with the novel's concept of time. The decision to renounce logical relations between clauses is especially manifest in the war scenes and entails the abandonment of logic, appropriate to the unspeakableness of the book's main event.

The study of the thematic structure of a part of the book shows its main character Billy Pilgrim to be rather insignificant, readily yielding his place as the Theme to others. A victim of outer forces, he does not develop but serves more to keep the novel together. The choice of the Theme when recounting the bombing of Dresden unmasks the book's fatalism: people are not very important and in any case cannot change anything because everything that happens must happen; this idea of determinism leaves room only for resignation.

All of these themes are so clearly expressed through structure that there seems to be a point to the criticism of exaggerated straightforwardness. Vonnegut did not need to say there were no characters in the story or that the novel was written in the telegraphic manner of Tralfamadorian tales – these meanings are quite visible as it is (cf. Hasan 1989: 30).

While further grammatical analyses (i.e. analyses of the novel's modal and transitivity structures, as well as those exceeding the level of the sentence) are called for, it is of course clear that a focus only on the grammar component of language cannot reveal all the secrets of Vonnegut's style, and even less all the meanings hidden – or laid out – in the book. The strong pacifistic impact of the novel is for example not produced by the style alone: it is the combination of Vonnegut's direct address and the tension between the detached fatalist style and the horrid content of the book that makes *Slaughterhouse-Five* an anti-war masterpiece. Nonetheless Halliday's approach to grammar proves a sophisticated tool and manages to extract meanings on several levels. Indeed, the analysis demonstrates how well the main themes of the novel are integrated into and constructed by the structure. The novel might well speak for itself also without the author's explicit renderings of the major topics, so strong is the message incorporated in the structure.

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PHILIP ROTH'S *THE HUMAN STAIN* AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

Miha Vrčko

Abstract

The paper dissects the notion of the American Dream in Philip Roth's *The Human Stain*. It looks at how individual tenets of the Dream are carved into the protagonist Coleman Silk, a black man who goes through life pretending to be white. The analysis shows how these same principles are questioned through various incidents in Silk's life and ultimately by his violent death. The result of Roth's scrutinizing is that, as all the underminings come together, the whole concept of the American Dream is symbolically crushed.

The Human Stain portrays the turmoil of post-WWII America, examines the question of race and can be read as an attack on political correctness. This paper will show how individual tenets of the American Dream are put forward and examined in the novel. The main character, Coleman Brutus Silk, believes deeply in the Dream. Not only does he believe in its individual tenets, such as hard work, egalitarianism, freedom, individualism and the tenet of the self-made man, he also does everything in his power to actualize them in his life. He represents the very epitome of these principles. Therefore Silk should – according to the logic of the Dream – live happily ever after or at least be worthy of glory and praise after his death. As Roth puts it, "North Hall, the college's landmark, [should] have been renamed in his honor […] and [Silk] officially glorified forever" (2001, 6). However, none of this happens – the Dream does not come true. Because the values Silk so firmly believes in, and is an embodiment of, are the best America has to offer, it appears that by Silk's tragic death these values are not only undermined, but also the whole concept of the American Dream is symbolically crushed. And for good measure, Silk's death is caused by a Vietnam vet who is suffering from the consequences of another tenet of the Dream: Manifest Destiny, namely the belief that America was chosen by God to spread liberty and democracy around the globe.

THE TENET OF HARD WORK

 Coleman Silk is the epitome of the hard-working man. He succeeds in everything he sets his mind to, not only because he is very smart but primarily because he

believes in hard work and acts accordingly. By rigorously training at sports and studying hard he becomes a champion both physically and academically as a youngster and as an adult.

Silk works hard all his life, which is visible already when he is a teenager. He is very successful both in school and outside it as an athlete and as a boxer. In school he is a straight-A student and the class valedictorian. That he was not simply the best in high school but that he really believed in hard work is seen from the facts that he "pursued the most demanding curriculum" (Roth 2001, 59) and that taking "Latin, taking advanced Latin, taking Greek" (ibid., 22) went without saying. Silk worked so hard that when Dr. Fensterman, a Jewish doctor, whose son Bertram was bound to finish second to Silk academically, came to his parents and wanted to bribe Silk into taking his two weakest subjects and thus finish as salutatorian rather than valedictorian, Silk replied "My two weakest subjects – which are those?" (ibid., 87). It could be argued that this is a sign of arrogance, though it is more an indicator of extreme belief in hard work and consequent self-confidence.

As an adolescent Silk also works extremely hard physically: he is a sportsman. First he takes up track and is for two years in a row "Essex County high school champ in low hurdles and run[s] second in the hundred-yard dash" (ibid., 88). In order to be a 'champ' at anything, a person must work hard, but from the following description we see that Silk works tremendously hard:

> Coleman [was] up and out doing his roadwork […] even as the milkman's horse, drawing the wagon, would arrive in the neighborhood with the morning delivery. Coleman would be out there at 5 A.M. in his gray hooded sweatshirt, in the cold, the snow, it made no difference, out there three and a half hours before the first school bell. No one else around, nobody running, long before anybody knew what running was, doing three quick miles, […] stopping only so as not to frighten that big, brown, limbering old beast when, tucked sinisterly within his monklike cowl, Coleman drew abreast of the milkman and sprinted ahead. He hated the boredom of the running – and he never missed a day. (ibid., 98)

Although he gets up at 5 a.m. to run and then heads for school, Silk does not go straight home after his lessons. In addition to running, he has another, even greater love: boxing. He starts training when he is a high school sophomore and labors as hard at it as he does at everything else:

> As often as three times a week Coleman […] would work out for two hours, loosen up, spar three rounds, hit the heavy bad, hit the speed bag, skip rope, do his exercises, and then head home to do his homework. (ibid., 89)

Through hard work he succeeds and by the time he is sixteen, he has "beaten three guys who were Golden Gloves champs" although he had never boxed professionally (ibid., 90-1). It is telling that Silk, a classics-professor-to-be, takes on running and boxing. These two disciplines formed, with some other ones, the iron reper-

toire of the Olympic Games in Ancient Greece (Grošelj 8). This symbolizes in the clearest possible manner how striving Silk is, even as a young man. He has tremendous willpower and steadfastness no matter what the circumstances or discipline.

Also in his adult life Silk maintains his belief in hard work and keeps faith with it. When he gets out of the army, he enrolls at New York University and winds up "getting A's, getting interested, and by the end of his first two years he [i]s on the track for Phi Beta Kappa and a summa cum laude degree in classics" (Roth 2001, 110). After his Ph.D. in classics and an invitation for an opening at Princeton, which he does not accept, Silk ends up Dean of Athena College. Here his belief in hard work really truly manifests itself, as he takes "an antiquated, backwater, Sleepy Hollowish college" (ibid., 5) and turns it into a respectable liberal arts college. What is more, with his belief in hard work he also changes the community surrounding the college. He brings in quality establishments where you can "buy a good bottle of wine and find a book about something other than the Berkshires"; in short, with his hard work he represents the "revolution of quality" (ibid., 83) and symbolically redeems the entire community – almost as if Roth were making him a Christ-like figure.

As an adult and also when he is retired, Silk trains a great deal. In his seventies, he is still in great shape and looks much younger than he really is. Throughout his adult life, as in high school, Silk manages to train hard alongside all his academic work. Roth writes that for thirty years Silk took his "swim at the Athena College pool at the end of the day or exercised on a mat at the Athena gym […] work[ed] out with the speed bag and […] hit the heavy bag" (ibid., 82-3). We see that Silk's belief in physical hard work never falters even in his old age and that he obviously enjoys it a lot.

The principle of hard work is a characteristic of the American Dream. Coleman Silk does not only believe in it but is also a perfect example of it. He works hard physically and intellectually when he is young as well as when he is old. We can clearly see how the tenet of hard work is carved into Coleman Silk.

Jason Blake in his article on *The Human Stain* writes that one of the main principles of the American Dream is that "if you work hard, you will succeed" (411); and Silk succeeds in everything – almost everything. The only thing that he does not manage to do, although he is basically an embodiment of hard work, is bring his life to a nice and peaceful conclusion. Here Roth very skillfully plays with the tenet of hard work. The first irony with this principle is how it is downplayed in Silk's life. At first it seems that he has to leave Athena College because of an alleged racial slur. He calls two perennially absent students 'spooks', not knowing that they are African-American; an accusation of racism follows. However, when this incident is looked at more closely, we learn that Silk is forced to leave the college, to which "he devoted his life's work […], as both teacher and esteemed dean" (Moore 2000), not because of being racist, but ironically because of lack of hard work on the side of these two never-attending students. At the questioning concerning his alleged racial slur, Silk says:

> The charge of racism is spurious. It is preposterous. My colleagues know it is preposterous and my students know it is preposterous. The issue, the

only issue, is the nonattendance of these students and their flagrant and inexcusable *neglect of work*. [my italics] (Roth 2001, 7)

What is more, Roth juxtaposes the two African-Americans against Silk – they are doing the exact opposite of what he did with his chance at education fifty years earlier.

The other irony that Roth presents is concerned with physical hard work. As mentioned, Silk works out regularly and is thus at 71 as healthy and energetic as any man half his age. We might expect that he would live a long life, free of disease and other health problems. And to a certain extent he does. However, instead of enjoying the fruits of his labors late into life, he is brutally murdered. What Roth seems to be implying is that no amount of work suffices, neither intellectual nor physical. You can never live out your dream to the end, because hard work is just not enough. In this way Roth symbolically shatters the tenet of hard work and delivers the first blow to the American Dream.

THE TENETS OF THE SELF-MADE MAN, INDIVIDUALISM AND FREEDOM

Roth also puts forward and examines other tenets of the America Dream. Thus he portrays the protagonist, Coleman Silk, as an example of the self-made man. Furthermore, Silk also firmly believes in individualism and freedom, and is willing to do anything to attain them.

Silk is a prototypical self-made man. A "success story who managed to rise from his lowly surroundings," he did indeed rise high (Blake 412). Through hard work he succeeded in getting a good education, a Ph.D., and became not only a college professor but also an esteemed dean; with this position he also achieves financial comfort. Although Silk may not be rich, he is able to buy his lover Faunia, a 34-year old member of the college custodial staff, such expensive gifts as an opal ring worth several hundred dollars.

Silk is also a self-made man in another sense. By choosing to pass as white, he leaves behind the social and racial bands that would obstruct him if he went through life as a black. He creates a new past for himself and by that a new self, if not a new identity. Igor Webb writes that outside America one's identity is "determined by place of birth, caste, class, religion, race", whereas in America it is determined by the "activity of *self*" [my italics] (235). Silk does exactly that; he goes across ethnic lines or, in other words, he "climbs over the ethnic fence" (Pinsker 2002) in order to break free of these determinants and create his own fate. As a self-made man he reinvents himself and makes it on his own, 'unburdened' by family, race or tradition.

Silk believes that individuals should have the right to make their own decisions. Up to his father's death, all the decisions affecting Silk are made by someone else, primarily by his father. He has to quit boxing when his father tells him to, he has to go to the all-black Howard University because his father has decided thus and above all, social expectations 'demand' that he go there. Silk hates this "oppressive we" of the

world that surrounds him and yearns instead for "the raw I" (Roth 2001, 108). The notion of individualism is present throughout the novel but it most strongly comes to the fore even before the protagonist decides to pass as white. After leaving Howard, the all-Negro college, Roth shares with us Silk's thoughts:

> …the tyranny of the we and its we-talk and everything that the we wants to pile on your head. Never for him the tyranny of the we that is dying to suck you in, the coercive, inclusive, historical, inescapable moral *we* with its insidious *E pluribus unum*. […] Instead the raw I with all its agility. […] Singularity. The passionate struggle for singularity. […] He was Coleman, the greatest of the great *pioneers* of the I. (ibid.)

We can see that Silk abhors the 'we' and all that it stands for. The society, which imposes on him the restraints of expectations, to go to Howard, to be ruled by conventions and to silently accept all that was ready-made and supposedly rigidly unalterable, irks him deeply. This notion of society vs. individual is emphasized by several critics. Sanford Pinsker (2002) even goes so far as to claim that the novel's "primary emphasis [is] on the Self as opposed to Society". Though I myself would not put it so reductively and decisively – there is, after all, much social criticism in this novel – Pinsker gets to the heart of the matter. Silk wants to be unrestrained by the society and its members, he wants to be an individual with the right to be the creator of his own fate, or as Silk puts it "his fate [was] to be determined, not by the ignorant, hate-filled intentions of a hostile world but, to whatever degree humanly possible, by *his own resolve*" [my italics] (Roth 2001, 121). Mark Shechner states that "claiming your unique 'I', unbounded by the demands and expectations of a 'we' is […] the great American myth" (194). And Silk believes in this notion extremely deeply. His desire to be an individual is so profound that not only is he willing to pass as white, but he also does not hesitate to tell his mother that she will never see him again and that she will never see her grandchildren. In fact, she will never even know if she has any. Here we can safely say that Silk's middle name, Brutus, suits him well. However, we can also safely conclude that by taking such a brutal decision – if not exactly because of it – he is the living quintessence of individualism.

Closely related to individualism is the notion of freedom. People who came to America in the past, as well as many who come nowadays, were (are) usually in search of religious or political freedom. Silk, however, wants something else; he wants to be free from the social obstructions of race. He cannot "allow his prospects to be unjustly limited by so arbitrary a designation as race" (Roth 2001, 120). We see that Silk is aware of the fact that his color makes him the object of prejudice, and therefore he decides to pass as white. However, we have to point out that Silk's ability to identify himself as white is most fortuitous because it lines up with his opportunism and view on life. Yes, he chooses his race and, yes, he chooses to be white, but what he really wants is freedom. "All he'd ever wanted, from earliest childhood on, was to be free: *not black, not even white* – just on his own and *free* [my italics] (ibid.). Here we see that Silk is not "staging some sort of protest against his race" (ibid.), but seizing the American principle of freedom. He wants to be free, that is, to have the freedom to choose freely.

It could be argued, though, that Silk was "closing the door to a past, to people, to a whole race that he wanted nothing intimate or official to do with" (ibid., 334). That was certainly the case. However, it must be pointed out that he sees himself as "merely being another American [...who] in the great frontier tradition accept[ed] the democratic invitation to throw your origins overboard" (ibid). Thus, in the light of the American principle of freedom he casts off the social and racial constraints and stretches the notion of freedom of choice to choosing one's own race. He wants "nothing more or less than that old-fashioned, all-purpose American word – freedom" (Pinsker 2002). That is what Silk hankers for and lives out to an almost farcical degree.

Hankering for freedom, the notions of the self-made man and individualism are core tenets of the American Dream. Silk is a self-made man who rose from his lowly status. He is a person who believes in individualism and freedom so strongly that he transcends race and in the process not only throws away his past but also "jettison[s] 'the whole ramified Negro thing', disown[s] his mother and [i]s accused by his brother of being a self-hating black" (Kakutani 2000). The day Silk informs his mother about his decision, his brother Walt says to him:

> Don't you ever come around her [mother]. Don't you even *try* to see her. No contact. No calls. Nothing. Never. Hear me? *Never*. Don't you dare ever show your lily-white face around that house again. (Roth 2001, 145)

Roth examines the tenets of the self-made man, of individualism and freedom and plays with them as he did with the tenet of hard work. He mostly focuses on freedom and individualism which are closely connected. There are two aspects of freedom which are dealt with in the novel. One is the aspect of freedom for which Silk so intensely yearns – the wish to be free from the impediments of race; the second is freedom of speech. Roth undermines the second one much more than the first one. He in fact deals mostly with the lack of freedom of speech. He uses the spooks incident to "put his claws into political correctness" (Blake 412), its excesses and the limitations on the individual. By this he points out two things: 1) his view that "political correctness abrogates the First Amendment" (Higgin 2000) and by that the notion of freedom as part of the American Dream is shaken to its very foundations, and 2) that political correctness has taken over the American academy and caused the death of individualism.

Political correctness was born out of the wish to right discrimination, but failed at that and became a serious threat to the First Amendment (Blake 415). By making Silk the victim of political correctness at such a routine event as checking attendance in a class, Roth shows how even the lowest level of freedom of speech has been curtailed. The absurdity is apparent, but Roth rubs it in by putting in Silk's mouth a word whose primary sense is not derogatory at all. 'Spook' as in 'black' is a dated meaning. Upon learning about the spooks incident, Silk's sister Ernestine poses the question:

> One has to be so terribly frightened of every word one uses? What ever happened to the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States? (Roth 2001, 329)

To answer Ernestine's question: no, one should not be so terribly frightened of every word one uses, but it seems that people are. Through Silk's story, Roth portraits the "hysteria and absurdity" which are "characteristic of political correctness" (Higgin 2000), especially in the late nineties when PC was at its height. Thus freedom of speech and consequently freedom as such, as a vital ingredient of the American Dream, is endangered.

Roth puts Silk with his racial slur into the environment of a college for a particular reason – namely, in order to draw attention to the way political correctness has banalized speech in the American academy. Shechner writes that in colleges the "most hideous collisions are known to take place over the most trivial provocations" (186). Roth goes even further, making Silk not only 'collide' with other faculty members but also making him leave the college. And to top it all off, Silk does not use a provocation per se, as his provocation is created by others taking the almost forgotten derogatory meaning of 'spook' out of formaldehyde. How the fever of political correctness and the subsequent labeling of people as racist has seized the institutions of higher learning, is described in the following quotation:

> Educated people with Ph.D.s, people he [Silk] had himself hired because he believed that they were capable of thinking reasonably and independently, had turned out to have no inclination to weigh the preposterous evidence against him and reach an appropriate conclusion. Racist: at Athena College, suddenly the most emotionally charged epithet you could be stuck with, and to that emotionalism […] his entire faculty had succumbed. (Roth 2001, 84)

Roth's point is that "political correctness has taken over American campuses" (Blake 412) to such an extent that even a ridiculous charge of alleged racism such as Silk's is taken seriously. What is more, people who do not take it seriously are unwilling to say anything because they themselves do not want to be labeled as racist and are thus in "fear for their personnel files and future promotions" (Roth 2001, 84).

Along the criticism Roth directs at the American academy, there is also a subtler but a more important implication that political correctness strangles individualism. Blake argues that with political correctness "America, in its quest to root out and repair historical inequalities of all sorts, has lost sight of individualism in favor of groups, of the herd mentality" (415). I agree here with Blake because through Silk's life story and his inglorious fall, Roth insinuates that individualism – with its belief in one being the creator of one's own fate, in making your own decisions, hard work, etc., – is pushed aside as soon as there is a member of a minority group in question. Favoritism is by definition at odds with individualism. Even Roth himself expressed his belief in an interview that political correctness has turned into opportunism (Roth 2000). While we may find Blake's conclusion that the novel is primarily about the "death of individualism at the hands of political machinations" (Blake 412) a tad too drastic – the novel in large part also examines issues like race, freedom and equality – we can say that political correctness does not contribute to the promotion of individualism.

Silk is portrayed as a true self-made man who exemplifies individualism and who craves for freedom from the restraints of race. Roth deals with all these three tenets of the American Dream. However, through the critique of political correctness he undermines individualism and the principle of freedom of speech, and thus the whole tenet of freedom. In this way Roth rocks the tenets of a self-made man, of individualism and freedom, and delivers the second blow to the American Dream.

THE TENET OF EGALITARIANISM

Roth presents Coleman Silk as an egalitarian who treats people equally and in an indiscriminatory way his whole life. However, by Silk's choice to pass as white and by the manner of his death, Roth clearly shows that in the American society racism is very much present and that the belief in equality of all people as one of the characteristics of the American Dream is far from reality.

Silk goes through life dealing with all people in the same manner, giving them equal opportunities, no matter what their race. In other words, he is a true egalitarian. This is most obvious when he as dean hires the first black professor:

> As dean I brought Herb Keble into the college. Did it only months after taking the job. Brought him in not just as the first black in the social sciences but as the first black in anything other than a custodial position. (Roth 2001, 16)

We see that not only is he an egalitarian but that at Athena College he breaks down the barrier of race and opens up positions previously reserved only for whites also to other races. In this sense Silk is also a promoter of egalitarianism.

Although Silk believes that all people should be equal and have equal rights, and despite the fact that he acts accordingly, he knows that in actual life, in the society that he lives in, the reality is quite different. One of the reasons that he chooses to go through life as a white man is explained by his sister Ernestine:

> …from the point of view simply of social advantage, of course it was advantageous in the well-spoken Negro middle class to do it Coleman's way. (ibid., 326)

From the wish for social advantage, we can safely conclude that Silk is aware of the problems of racism in society. He knows that it will be much harder, if not impossible, to achieve whatever goals he sets for him, if he goes through life as a black man. Thus his decision to leave his blackness behind and pass for a white Jew, is his "entry ticket to […] American success" (Blake 416).

The reason why it is advantageous for Silk to change his race is because racism or non-egalitarianism is so much present in American society, or to use Elaine Safer's words it is "something very deep-seated in our country" (245). That this is true is seen from many examples in the novel; I will single out and present one which is very telling. At one point in the novel, Silk's father reveals one of the alleged reasons for racial prejudice, i.e. intellectual inferiority:

> 'Anytime a white deals with you,' his [Silk's] father would tell the family, 'no matter how well intentioned he may be, there is the presumption of intellectual inferiority. Somehow or other, if not directly by his words then by the facial expression, by his tone of voice, by his impatience, even the opposite – by his forbearance, by his wonderful display of *humaneness* – he will always talk to you as though you are dumb, and then, if you're not, he will be astonished.' (ibid., 103)

Roth here masterly illustrates how very deep-rooted intolerance actually is. White people, it is argued, perceive non-whites as unequals because they believe that non-whites are stupid by nature. However, when such an absurd, preposterous and ridiculous belief is dismissed by an articulate visible minority, the deep-rootedness often surfaces in the form of shock and astonishment.

Throughout the novel Roth shows that the egalitarianism on which America prides itself and which is also one of the ingredients of the American Dream, is still very far from being the reality in the US. Moreover, Roth severely undermines egalitarianism by the manner of the protagonist's death. Silk, the advocate of equal rights, who changed his race in order to avoid racial prejudice, is killed by a Jew-hating Vietnam veteran. This is the high point of Roth's irony, as "he [Silk] left blackness because of racism and he left this earth because of another brand of hatred" (Blake 416). The point made is that there is no way escaping racial intolerance. Even if you change your race, you and your life are bound to be framed by racism. There simply is no room for egalitarianism. In this way Roth smashes the tenet of egalitarianism and delivers the third blow to the American Dream.

THE TENET OF MANIFEST DESTINY

Throughout the novel Roth explores different ingredients of the American Dream. In one way or another he projects them on the protagonist, Coleman Silk. However, the tenet of Manifest Destiny, the belief that America was chosen by God to spread liberty and democracy around the globe, is examined through one of the minor characters, Lester Farley.

The Vietnam War was according to Breidlid a military intervention in order to ensure freedom from the Communists and thus an extension of Manifest Destiny (350). Roth uses Lester Farley to explore the concept of Manifest Destiny. By taking us into Farley's mind, he shows the effects the Vietnam War had on soldiers and consequently also on society. Farley is portrayed as a crazed Vietnam vet who, after his mission of spreading 'peace and freedom', comes back to New England "all shattered nerves and tripwire aggression" (Shechner 189). He is unable to socialize, starts drinking heavily and goes ballistic at the sight of Asians. Vietnam also completely drains him emotionally. The ferocity of his aggression and emotional drainage is evident from the following lengthy quote, which describes how Farley feels when his two children die:

> 'Numb,' he said. 'Fuckin' numb. No emotions. Numb to the death of my own kids. My son's eyes are rolled in back of his head and he has no

pulse. He has no heartbeat. My son isn't fucking breathing. My son. Little Les. The only son I will ever have. But I did not feel anything. I was acting as if he was a stranger. Same with Rawley. She was a stranger. My little girl. That fucking Vietnam, you caused this! After all these years the war is over, and you caused this! All my feelings are all fucked up. I feel like I've been hit on the side of the head with a two-by-four when nothing is happening. Then something is happening, something fucking *huge*, I don't feel a fucking thing. Numbed out. My kids are dead, but my body is numb and my mind is blank. Vietnam. That's why! I never did cry for my kids. He was five and she was eight. I said to myself, 'Why can't I feel?' I said, 'Why didn't I save them? Why couldn't I save them? Payback. Payback! I kept thinking about Vietnam. About all the times I think I died. That's how I began to know that I can't die. Because I died already. Because I died already in Vietnam. Because I am a man who fucking *died*.' (Roth 2001, 73)

What Roth is implying is that the Vietnam War as a part of Manifest Destiny was not only a capital mistake but also that America now has to reap what it has sown. Thus Lester Farley, who is the embodiment of the after-effects of the war and consequently of Manifest Destiny, presents "America's bad conscience coming back to haunt it" (Higgin 2000). And Roth makes Farley haunt America(ns) on a personal and also on a wider, social level.

It is at this personal level that Roth indirectly poses the question whether it is worth, under the camouflage of Manifest Destiny, to destroy the lives of certain individuals, i.e. soldiers. On a wider, social level, he articulates something much more important and troubling. And Roth would not be Roth if he did not do that with supreme irony. Thus he has Coleman Silk, who believes deeply and firmly in the American Dream, and is the embodiment, if not of the Dream itself, then at least of some of its tenets, brutally murdered by Lester Farley, the embodiment of the after-effects of another tenet of the Dream, Manifest Destiny. Roth warns America that if it accepts its mission allotted by Providence, it also has to realize that that comes at a certain price. And the price may well be that the American Dream becomes unachievable, the reason being that the apparent 'washback effects' of Manifest Destiny, like racism and hatred, are in diametrical opposition to the values that constitute the very core of the Dream, i.e. egalitarianism and freedom. In this way Roth wobbles the tenet of Manifest Destiny and delivers the fourth and final blow to the American Dream.

CONCLUSION

In Philip Roth's novel *The Human Stain*, several principles of the American Dream are examined. Individual tenets like hard work, freedom, individualism, egalitarianism and the tenet of the self-made man are projected onto the protagonist Coleman Silk, who is thereby made an embodiment of these ideals. Roth plays with these no-

tions and undermines them mostly by Silk's death or with certain incidents in his life, like his forced leaving of Athena College under a cloud of disgrace. While the majority of the tenets of the American Dream are scrutinized through the lens of the protagonist, one tenet, Manifest Destiny, is analyzed through one of the minor characters, Lester Farley. Roth's undercutting of individual ingredients of the Dream is emphasized by Lester, who as the epitome of the after-effects of Manifest Destiny, murders Silk. In this way, all the sappings come together, symbolically crushing the American Dream.

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A COMPARATIVE READING OF JOHN STEINBECK'S AND FRANK HARDY'S WORKS

Danica Čerče

Abstract

Although belonging to literatures spatially and traditionally very remote from each other, John Steinbeck, an American Nobel Prize winner, and Frank Hardy, an Australian novelist and story-teller, share a number of common grounds. The fact that by the time Hardy wrote his first novel, in 1950, Steinbeck was already a popular writer with a long list of masterpieces does not justify the assumption that Hardy had Steinbeck at hand when writing his best-sellers, but it does exclude the opposite direction of inheritance. Hardy's creative impulses and appropriations may have been the unconscious results of his omnivorous reading after he realized that "the transition from short stories [in which he excelled] to the novel was an obstacle not easily surmounted" as he confessed in *The Hard Way: The Story Behind "Power Without Glory"* (109).[1] Furthermore, since both were highly regarded proletarian writers in communist Russia, Hardy might have become acquainted with Steinbeck's novels on one of his frequent visits to that country between 1951 and 1969.[2] Upon closer reading, inter-textual entanglements with Steinbeck's prose can be detected in several of his books, including *But the Dead Are Many* (1975), the Billy Borker material collected in *The Yarns of Billy Borker* (1965) and in *The Great Australian Lover and Other Stories* (1967), and in *Power Without Glory* (1950). My purpose in this essay is to briefly illuminate the most striking similarities between the two authors' narrative strategies in terms of their writing style, narrative technique, and subject matter, and link these textual affinities to the larger social and cultural milieu of each author. In the second part I will focus on the parallels between their central works, Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and Hardy's *Power Without Glory*.

Contemporary critics have succinctly discussed the value of studying literary parallels between different literatures either of the same or different epochs. Such study, Marian Galik asserts in 1999, not only "supplies us with new knowledge and leads to a deeper understanding in various areas of literature, its history, theory, and criticism," but it also means a "deeper penetration into the study of inter-literary process" (99). In light of Galik's view that it is "new knowledge within the frame-

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[1] In continuation *The Hard Way*.

[2] In 1969, Hardy wrote a series of hard-hitting newspaper articles "Stalin's Heirs," which were published in *The Bulletin* from January 11 through February 1, 1969, and regarded as "the most devastating reports on Stalinism yet written." As a result, Hardy lost substantial royalties from the Soviet Union and its satellites, and was proclaimed an anti-Soviet element.

work of literature outside the Euro-American cultural area [that] is needed now," this essay offers a comparative analysis of John Steinbeck's and Frank Hardy's literary worlds (ibid.).

When Frank Hardy burst onto the literary scene in 1950 with *Power Without Glory*, a political novel of dramatic sweep and great narrative strength, he differed in one important aspect from most Australian novelists of his generation: he was a declared communist. For this reason, in addition to his almost anarchic disrespect for manners and conventions and his contempt for bureaucracy, he is believed to be one of the most controversial voices in Australian literature. Even the episode in the late 1980s, when forty policemen were sent to arrest him for unpaid parking fines, and his brief spell in prison as a result, gave him further stature as a rebel against authority and a popular hero. Easy-going, laconic and unaffected by fame and media attention, a battler and punter who died with "racing form guides by his side," as he was depicted in numerous obituaries and articles about him written since his death in 1994, Frank Hardy at first glance seems to have had very little in common with John Steinbeck (Gray 12). For the latter was - in his biographer's words - "shy and very private," reluctant to be interviewed, and "steadfastly refusing to answer personal questions" (Benson ix). And although Steinbeck once was a believer in collective political struggle and equally put his pen at the service of a political cause, he was never a member of a communist party. Hardy, on the other hand, remained an official supporter of the system much longer than many other intellectuals. Yet, and putting aside Hardy's enduring political allegiance, a close examination of his personal and literary life suggests that many parallels may be drawn between the two writers. For example, they resemble each other in their sincere concern for the common man, desire for reform and readiness to take up causes. Just as Steinbeck denounced economic and social injustice and remained an artist with a refined sense for human rights and freedom, so Hardy engaged himself in the fight for an egalitarian society. In the 1960s, for example, he turned his attention to the labor struggles of Aboriginal workers in the Northern Territory and was the first to raise the issue of Aboriginal land rights. The miseries of unemployment and poverty in the Great Depression became the subject of both writers' first efforts at fiction and colored much of their later writing. Their hard-won knowledge of workers' lives (both were born into working-class families and grew up close to the grindstone of harsh economic realities) enabled them to write more tellingly, perhaps, than any other American or Australian writers, of the miseries and evils of the depressed 1930s. Hardy's description of himself in *The Hard Way,* which he wrote immediately after the publication of his controversial novel *Power Without Glory* (but published as late as 1961), as "a battler from the bush, who knew little about artistic history, literature or aesthetics, but understood working-class life, philosophy and politics" is in some respects reminiscent of Steinbeck's experience and of his emotional immersion in the migrant farm worker situation in California (36). In his accompanying *Working Days: The Journals of "The Grapes of Wrath"* about the novel's making, Steinbeck writes: "For the first time I am working on a real book that [...] will take every bit of experience and thought and feeling that I have" (26). Clearly, such a passionate involvement with the subject matter gave them a great advantage as writers: for both are at their best when portraying ordinary

people grappling with their environment, and in this process revealing unselfconsciously an abiding sense of humor, a philosophical acceptance of adversity, and the consolation of fellowship.

Nowhere is the writers' involvement with their fellow strugglers more sharply observed than in their use of dialogue, in their infallible knowledge of the working-class idiom, in their unerring ear for the nuances of the demotic speech. They have meticulously preserved its picturesque exaggerations and humorous tone. Their humor is rooted in character and dialogue, rather than in situation. "We don't want to keep the bookmakers waiting," says one of Hardy's racecourse characters, "they're all down to their last hundred thousand and need our money to feed their starving children;" whereas Steinbeck's sense of humor is perhaps the most efficient in his sharp remarks about women: "My wife is a wonderful women. […] Ought to of been a man. If she was a man, I wouldn't of married her" (*Cannery Row* 94). And although they are both best known for their proletarian narratives with progressive social thought, they did not remain limited only within the modes and methods of this literary tradition, but started to search for new kinds of discourse and turned to a complex modern structure.

Another line of comparison between the two writers could be drawn with respect to their conception of characters. Although Peter Lisca's opinion that Steinbeck's women were "overshadowed" by the more visible men has been succinctly argued, one can not overlook that in some of his works they indeed function merely as catalysts for male behavior and that the writer was often preoccupied mainly with their physical appearance (Lisca 206). Like Steinbeck's novels of the 1930s, Hardy's fiction is mainly peopled with male characters. This is hardly surprising, considering that their stories take place in typically male places or concern the world of men. But we may reasonably ask why Hardy's female protagonists (when he finds it necessary to write about women), contrary to Steinbeck's are limited to physical descriptions and never allowed "a life of their own" (*The Hard Way* 110).[3]

The discussion of the affinities with Steinbeck's characterization is perhaps most pertinent to Billy Borker's archetypal stories about typical representatives of the Australian "battler." Published in the mid-1960s, the two unusual collections (*The Yarns of Billy Borker* and *The Great Australian Lover and Other Stories*) reveal the side of Hardy who abandoned his commitment in favor of a literary form which allows him to relax from the restriction of social realism. The stories are narrated by an authentic Australian (Billy Borker), who can be found in any Australian pub, always ready to spin a yarn for a glass of beer. They are about gamblers, racecourse tipsters, urgers, bagmen, taxi-drivers, seamen, boozers, and others who live by their wits. Just like Steinbeck's *paisanos* in *Tortilla Flat* (1935), *Cannery Row* (1945), and *Sweet Thursday* (1954) they are rather specific characters, the outsiders, not hampered by the contrived restraints of "civilization," but true to their own interior laws. On a socio-economic level, they do not share in the construction of the state nor do they contribute to a market economy. Hardy's treatment of their foibles with gentle humor is comparable to Steinbeck's warm approach to his primitives, whereas the asperity is

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[3] In *The Hard Way*, Hardy quotes the entire list of requirements Elizabeth Bowen highlights in her *Notes on Writing a Novel*, which presumably helped him "master the technical difficulties" he encountered at writing his *Power Without Glory*.

in both cases kept for "them" – the Establishment and the acquisitive world around them. The exaggerated, mock-epic, satiric style, which achieves its major effect by contrasting the simplicity and authenticity of the non-conformist vagabonds with the materialism and alienation of the modern, utilitarian society, is another important element linking the prose of Hardy to that of Steinbeck. So is the writer's motif: this is not the glorification of primitivism, but a response to the perceived bankruptcy of moral values within modern, capitalist reality. Very often, as in "tall-tale" tradition, the reader of Hardy's stories is brought into areas of fantasy, which is again reminiscent of Steinbeck's stance. Although no evidence suggests that Hardy read the novels about *paisanos*, several other characteristics of Hardy's writing allude to his esteem for Steinbeck. For example, the battlers' unique and colorful names (such as Parrot, Not Guilty, Crooked Bed, What Do You Reckon, Don't Tell a Soul, Slice Simpson, and others), and unusual, parodic, moralizing, or educational titles of his stories ("Democracy Has to Work Both Ways," "A Friend of Today Is an Enemy of Tomorrow," "One Man's Damper Is Another Man's Soup," "Punishment Is Not the Way to Stop the Crime," "Golf Is Not a Game, It's a Disease," etc.), to say the least. Much more can be said about the links between the two writers' fiction, but let us turn instead to the similarities between their most well-known novels, *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Power Without Glory*.

"If one has to name the ten most significant books about the Australian community, one would invariably nominate *Power Without Glory* among the foremost," claims Rohan Rivett in his 1969 *Writing about Australia* (89). Written from the angle of the forces behind the scenes, *Power Without Glory* covers the period from the early 1890s to the late 1940s. While tracing the career of John West, a young man of great ambition, who ruthlessly rises from his poverty-stricken working-class origins to become a despotic capitalist, estranging friends and family in his brutal egotistic drive for wealth and political power, Hardy mercilessly exposes the widespread corruption and gangsterism within the Australian Labor Party from the early 1890s to the late 1940s. Following West into the boxing and wrestling worlds, and then into political scandals, Hardy uncovers the double-dealing role of social democrats, and pillories the hypocrisy with which the Roman Catholic Church attempted to conceal its political aims. Through the very expansion of West's interest Hardy deals with the feelings aroused by World War I and the great battle over the Conscription Bill, the emergence of the Communist Party and its confrontation with the Catholic Church, the onset of the Depression, and the growing faith of the working class in reformism. Aspects of West's personal life which occasionally interrupt the course of the novel and picture his split with his wife Nellie and difficulties with his growing daughters, Marjorie and Mary, are a preparation for the final disillusionment of the main character and the decline of his influence.

At first glance, *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Power Without Glory* seem to offer an excellent test case for the differences rather than similarities between the two texts. For the former delineates the American dispossessed migrant labor's desperate pilgrimage to the promised land in the 1930s, exposing the workers' deplorable living conditions and the inhuman capitalist practices of agribusiness, while the latter depicts the urban Australian scene, unveiling, in Hardy's own words, "the livid face of

corruption behind the so-called democratic State" (Morphett 17). One portrays the Oklahoma farming family, the Joads, in their struggle for survival; the other depicts a notoriously wealthy and powerful Melbourne entrepreneur, John West, in his insatiable lust for power. One has been assimilated into the canon of modern narrative, the other has only just begun to conquer its place in the literary history as "a work of striking originality, force and depth," as Jack Lindsay notes in 1991 "Introduction" to *Power Without Glory* (xxi). Rather than from the political commitment that gives narrative drive to *Power Without Glory,* the strength of *The Grapes of Wrath* derives from the author's humane sensitivity and his feeling of anger "at people who were doing injustices to other people" (*Working Days* xxxviii). Nonetheless, despite their apparent disparity, the two novels share a wide array of common traits. In addition to such easily recognizable parallels as the books' imposing volume (one 619 and the other 671 pages), their tripartite division, the writers' awareness of workers' language, their sympathetic understanding of the psychology of the downtrodden and the deprived, as well as the fact that they both follow a straightforward chronological track, the two novels are similar in their evocative power and the turmoil they provoked.

As Jack Lindsay, among other Australian critics, has recognized, many novelists have caused scandals or uproars by exposing various aspects of life which strong vested interests want to keep hidden, but hardly any other novel has had such a violent and tempestuous career at its writing, printing and initial publication as Hardy's *Power Without Glory.* The story of how the book was written and of the legal process which followed its publication is an epic in itself. This is hardly surprising, given that the main character is allegedly based on a notoriously wealthy and powerful political and business figure of that time, John Wren. It is the contention of this paper that in terms of the sensational uproar which erupted over Hardy's novel, it has a parallel in the reception of Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath.* Both books were highly acclaimed by the left for their documentary integrity and social necessity, and at the same time fiercely attacked by right-wing politicians as immoral and deceptive. "One source of courage is to belong, to be committed, to have friends and supporters. Much is made in modern literature of the courage of the solitary man […] overcoming his inner fear. But this is the courage of primitive, non-social man, or of the isolated man in individualist society. Social man can find courage within himself only if he unites with other men to recognize and overcome the tyranny of social necessity and compulsion," Hardy writes in *The Hard Way* (81). Little wonder that letters of support streamed in to join forces with the local campaign. Howard Fast, who wrote from New York, may have had Steinbeck's novel in mind when he wrote: "How familiar the whole story sounds in terms of our own scene! […] How they fear books in these times! How eager they are to destroy the few voices that still speak up with courage and integrity!" (*The Hard Way* 160). It should be noted that Steinbeck writes in *The Grapes of Wrath* "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lif' up his fellow, but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up. […] if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? […] An' I been wonderin' if all our folks got together an' yelled, like them fellas yelled […]" (570-1).

Among academic readers with a clear preference for aesthetic criteria in textual analysis, both books have been considered sentimental and unconvincing. Both have been repeatedly banned in schools and libraries, but widely read. "From the moment it was published, it has been less judged as a novel than as a sociological event, a celebrated political cause, or a factual case study," Robert DeMott asserts about Steinbeck's novel in his 1989 "Introduction" to the *Working Days* (xxiv). In *The Hard Way*, Frank Hardy observes "Politicians in the Victorian Parliament began to call their opponents by names in *Power Without Glory* instead of their real names, the Collingwood Football team was dubbed Carringbush by barrackers of the opposing teams. In public bars, cafés, trains and homes up and down the country, people began to speak of *the* book or *that* book according to the point of view" (141). "The story has become something of a legend," he comments further (144). Later in the book, he reveals that "Copies of the novel were smuggled into jails up and down the country and read illegally […]. Libraries had waiting lists months long. Stories, bawdy and unprintable, like those that appear mysteriously about all famous occurrences began to spread. Glossaries were issued purporting to equate real names with the fictitious ones in the book […]. The whole population seems to be talking about *Power Without Glory"* (172). The full force of the book's dramatic proportions is seen in this observation: "Of all possible consequences of writing *Power Without Glory* this was the strangest, to be the centre of an argument around what constitutes criminal libel" (182). One remembers, of course, that Steinbeck's book, too, passed out of the writer's possession: "*Grapes* got really out of hand, became a public hysteria and I became a public domain," Steinbeck complains in October 1939 (*Working Days* 105).

Interestingly, both writers conducted lengthy, in-depth research. As Hardy confessed in *The Hard Way*, after four years of gathering the background material, he could no longer master the numerous copies of documents, unsorted press cuttings, and plethora of notes from countless hours of talking to people connected to Wren and his family. With his wife, he worked day and night, fighting off sleep with coffee or wine and cigarettes, and transferring thousands of details on to six-by-four-inch cards to make his material readily available. There is no need to remind readers of this paper that Steinbeck wrote *The Grapes of Wrath* in one hundred days, but nearly four years of research preceded them. It is also worth mentioning that both writers received invaluable assistance from their wives: among many other things, they typed the manuscripts.[4]

Similarities between the two writers do not cease to amaze. Both Steinbeck and Hardy provided a fascinating first-hand account of their own work drive, aspirations, fears, self-doubts, and obstacles at the conception and after the launch of the novel. "There was no risk he wouldn't take, no hardship he wouldn't endure. The job became a thing in itself," reveals Hardy's third person narrator in *The Hard Way* (45), while in October 1938 Steinbeck reflects as follows: "Funny where the energy comes from. Now to work, only now it isn't work anymore" (*Working Days* 91). Despite his increased immersion in the intricacies of the Australian labor scene and a strong determination to accomplish his project - "He was obsessed with *Power Without Glory*,

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[4] There was even the rumor that Hardy had married his wife because she owned the typewriter.

gave no thought to anything else, even to how it could be published" - Hardy was becoming more and more aware of his lack of training as a writer (*The Hard Way* 121). On more occasions he laments "No one will want to read the book […] it is a queer mixture of biography, history and novel, and will appeal to no one" (*The Hard Way* 135). And when the book was eventually published, it was "the final proof that I was not a writer," Hardy confesses to Bruce Molloy in his 1973 *Australian Literary Studies* interview (371). Steinbeck, too, was inflamed by his topics, and fully dedicated to writing. In September 1938, for example, he wrote in his journal: "This book is my life. When it is done, then will be the time for another life" (*Working Days* 77). At the same time, he struggled with continuing doubts about his writing talent. "For no one else knows my lack of ability the way I do. I am pushing against it all the time," he reveals in mid-June 1938 (*Working Days* 30). And about two months later that year: "I'm not a writer. I've been fooling myself and other people." [ ] "I hope this book is some good, but I have less and less hope of it" (*Working Days* 56, 63).

Perhaps it was because of the writers' own doubts in their talent that many critics questioned the artistry of their texts and denied that they could be read from a geographical, historical, or cultural distance. Others quoted at length from both in order to suggest that they are unreliable historians. In the epigraph to his novel *Who Shot George Kirkland?* (1981), Hardy, for example, writes that "the truth resides in memory, and the memory is clouded with repression and the desire to embellish […]. To recall an event is to interpret," he continues, "so the truth is altered by the very act of remembering." This bears resemblance to Steinbeck's confession in *Travels with Charley* that he "was working from memory, and the memory is at best a faulty, warpy reservoir" (11); or to the following observation: "I feel there are too many realities. What I set down here is true until someone else passes that way and rearranges the world in his own style" (70). Although they admitted their own fallibility, both writers created a genuine twentieth century epic of what was then recent history, a myth which encouraged a nation's self-reflection and helped create a meaningful existence for deprived human beings. As such, each novel became an indispensable phase in the cultural and social formatting of the country; since both contain seeds for many new areas of investigation, they will continue to challenge and delight readers' imaginations.

The contemporary Australian writer Thomas Keneally is fond of saying that we learn the part of our history which becomes mythic to us from our soaps. He may be right, but neither Steinbeck nor Hardy, although makers of myths which comforted the masses, was a provider of material.

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REMEDIATING THE REMEDIATED:
PRINTED PROSE IN THE AGE OF HYPERTEXT

Mojca Krevel

Abstract

The article argues that with the spreading of computer hypertext into the social sphere, hypertext is no longer merely a writing technique or an organising principle; it becomes the logic implicit in the functioning of postmodern[1] societies. Its actualisation can be performed via any medium - TV, internet, radio or print. Based on instances from 1990s and early 2000s printed American fiction, the paper examines the ways in which print already is hypertextual, and attempts to provide an insight into the future of printed literature in an era no longer governed by the Modern Age principles and paradigms.

REMEDIATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS: HYPERTEXT TECHNIQUE VS. HYPERTEXTUAL LOGIC

It has been a while – at least in the fields of contemporary critical theory and new media – since the term "remediation" referred to its original meanings of administering medicine and removing pollutants from environmental media. Especially when appearing in the vicinity of term "hypertext" as in the title of this paper, the word automatically brings to mind the connotation introduced by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin in their seminal 1999 work on hypertextual theory *Remediation: Understanding New Media,* and further developed in Bolter's *Writing Space*, where he defines it as a shift in which "a newer medium takes the place of an older one, borrowing and reorganizing the characteristics of writing in the older medium and reforming its cultural space" (23).

The concept Bolter and Grusin are referring to is not new – the refashioning of existing writing spaces as a result of the emergence of new technologies and new media can be observed since the invention of the papyrus roll. What is new, however, is the nature of the medium that triggered the need to apply a primarily biological concept to the field of new media studies in the first place – namely electronic writing

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[1] I'm using terms postmodern and Postmodernity with the meaning of the epoch following the Modern Age, anticipating a Geistesgeschichte frame no longer describable with the Modern Age understanding of the basic paradigms: subject as the immanent transcendence, and the truth and reality of such situation (cf. Kos 1995 7, 11, and Krevel 2005 153).

and computer hypertext.[2] Grusin and Bolter develop their concept of remediation with regard to the relation between the old medium – print, and the new medium – hypertext, or, specifically, observing the imprinting of print in hypertext. As such hypertext is generally observed and studied as expression of print through the electronic medium, which could, in fact, be considered the prevailing view among the researchers in the field of hypertext from Robert Coover and Michael Joyce to Espen Aarseth, George Landow or Marie-Laure Ryan.

The main problem with such approach, however, is that the authors in question all too easily fall into the trap they are warning against, namely, reducing the phenomenon of hypertext to merely a writing technique, ignoring both the specifics of the medium as well as the governing mechanisms and characteristics of its social, political and cultural environment. When discussing its practical aspects, they are often lured into the more familiar critical discourse, which is still fundamentally defined by the intrinsically Cartesian linearity and hierarchical, cause-effect structuring. Thus when speculating on the merely theoretical level, Bolter, for example, typically claims that

> [i]t is not a question of seeing writing as an external technological force that influences or changes cultural practice; instead, writing is always a part of culture. It is probably best to understand all technologies in this way: technologies do not determine the course of culture or society, because they are not separate agents that can act on culture from the outside (19).

Nevertheless, when proceeding from the field of theory to the level of actual practice, he seems to overlook the implications of the statement with regard to the intrinsic *modus operandi* of hypertext[3], and – like Landow in *Hypertext 2.0* – discusses Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and Jorge Luis Borges' short story "Library of Babel" from *Ficciones* as early examples of hypertext. But if Landow cautiously suggests the works as examples of "quasi hypertextuality" (182), emphasising that such approach "uses hypertext as a lens, or a new agent of perception" (*ibid.*), employed predominantly to "make the medium seem less threatening to students of literature and literary theory" (*ibid.*), Bolter analyzes the narratives in terms of their flexibility, instability and interactivity. Thus he is explicitly treating hypertext as merely an organizing principle, the logic of which can be applied and exercised at random. Such attitude is, of course, in direct opposition to the realisation that I nevertheless consider central to both Bolter's overall message – leaving aside occasional slips into Cartesian logic like the one referred to above – as

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[2] As I will show on the following pages, especially when discussing the changes occurring in the field of metaphorics and style since the 1980s, the shift referred to was inevitable within the social, economic and cultural environment, the existence of which is essentially enabled by the media.

[3] In *Writing Space*, Bolter explains hypertext as a model for any type of electronic writing:

At present, electronic (or digital) writing describes a larger category than hypertext or hypermedia. Electronic writing includes word processing, e-mail, listservs, chat rooms, and MUDs and MOOs, none of which have the node and link structure of classic hypertext […]. [A]ll electronic writing shares important qualities with hypertext (flexibility, instability, interactivity), so that hypertext, once again in the form of the World Wide Web, serves a paradigm for our cultural experience with electronic writing (xiii, xiv).

well as to the very relevance of discussing the future of printed book in the age of hypertext at all: "The behaviour of the writing space becomes a metaphor for the human mind as well as for human social interaction" (13).

Implicit in this statement is namely the aim of this essay, which is to seemingly invert the standard direction of remediation and in turn consider print as the refashioning of hypertext in order to examine the possibility of a printed book of fiction in a social, cultural and economic environment defined by the electronic media. Such approach, of course, demands from the electronic writing to be no less than the defining cultural paradigm of Postmodernity, and not merely a writing technique, which is the initial point I hope to establish through a brief investigation of those critical approaches and theories of Postmodernity that have found their realisation in the practice of our every day existence.

HYPERREALITY AND HYPERTEXT

Since the days when television became the *sine qua non* piece of household equipment, a lot has been said about the profound and above all destructive effects of electronic technologies on the future of printed book, especially printed prose. The concerns only intensified with the emergence and spread of computer hypertext within the everyday social reality of individuals. Both the hypertext enthusiasts and its fiercest critics seem to share the opinion that hypertext will in some decisive way affect the notion of printed literature. The enthusiasts predict its extinction, stressing the multi-sensory and interactive appeal of electronic fiction,[4] while the traditionalists see the spreading of hypertext as a potentially fatal threat to the concept and institution of literature altogether,[5] and therefore to be protested and fought against at all cost.

The scenario that I would like to propose is, however, much less catastrophic. I believe that with the spreading of computer hypertext into the social sphere, hypertext ceases to be merely a writing technique or an organizing principle: it becomes the logic governing each and every sphere of our contemporary, postmodern society. As such, it is no longer limited to the computer; it turns into the mode of thinking, which is at work within any existing medium – printed literature being no exception.

From the point of view of printed tradition, the rise of hypertext and its rapid spread to the social and cultural spheres in the second half of the 1980s and especially in the 1990s may have seemed shocking, revolutionary and above all devastating to the

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[4] Raymond Kurzweil, like most electronic technology enthusiasts, predicts that printed books will not stand a chance against the electronic books of the 21st century, as the latter

> will have enormous advantages, with pictures that can move and interact with the user, increasingly intelligent search paradigms, simulated environments that the user can enter and explore, and vast quantities of accessible materials. Yet vital to its ability to truly make the paper book obsolete is that the essential qualities of paper and ink will have been fully matched. The book will enter obsolescence, although because of its long history and enormous installed base, it will linger for a couple of decades before reaching antiquity (qtd. in Bolter 2001 4).

[5] A typical example of such grim predictions is Swen Birkerts' mourning of traditional – printed – literary culture in his 1992 *Gutenberg Elegies*: "A change is upon us – nothing could be clearer. The printed word is part of the vestigial order that we are moving away from – by choice and by societal compulsion" (118).

existing notions of culture and – probably most acutely – literature. However, from the broader perspective of social, cultural and economic development after the Second World War, hypertext is hardly a surprising concept as the principle at its core seems to embody the mechanisms theoreticians from various fields of humanistic studies have been identifying as the defining paradigms of Postmodernity for at least the last thirty years. In this respect, I am primarily referring to the philosophical framework developed by Jean Baudrillard, which, as we will see, literally coincides with the very definition of hypertext; but the structural principle and functioning of hypertext are also implicit in the systems developed by such diverse theoreticians and thinkers as Jameson, Lyotard, Debord, McLuhan, Deleuze and Guattari,[6] and, as Landow shows in his study of hypertext from the point of view of existing – primarily poststructuralist – critical theories, even in Foucault, Bakhtin and particularly Derrida (33-35).

However, hypertext as a flexible, instable and interactive system that can "encompass, incorporate or supersede many other user interface paradigms like menus and command lines, and can be used to access both static collections of cross-referenced documents and interactive applications"[7] most literally corresponds to Jean Baudrillard's notion of hyperreality. Therefore it seems only logical to illustrate the point implicit in the previous paragraph – namely that hypertext and its structural logic provide an insight into the metaphysical structuring of Postmodernity – relying on the concepts and terminology he has developed.

Baudrillard defines hyperreality as reality created from third order simulacra, where the copy, the model, is before the original. From the point of view of our everyday lives such reality is simply the reality created from information – essentially copies – we receive via media. Our quotidian existence is namely so completely permeated with information, their rendering, mediation and manipulation that it is virtually impossible to verify them all, which is why we verify each new cluster of data against the systems of information that have already become part of hyperreality instead. Information thus functions as the building block of reality.

The situation is a consequence of the shift of production relations, increasingly coming to effect after the Second World War, with objects of consumption taking on their meaning "in their differential relation to other signs" (Baudrillard 1981 66), and functioning as signifiers. As such they acquire social meaning and ultimately serve as the basis of identity creation. With that all the aspects of reality and consequently subjectivity are essentially network systems of differential signs that can be arbitrarily

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[6] I'm referring to Jameson's concept of culturalisation of all the aspects of social life within postmodern situation (cf. Krevel 45-46), Lyotard's model of the self as a node in an information network, Debord's theory of society of spectacle, Deleuze's and Guattari's concept of rhizome, and above all the famous McLuhan's statement in his *The Medium is the Massage* that "[s]ocieties have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men communicate than by the content of the communication" (8).

[7] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypertext (6 June 2006). In quoting free online encyclopaedia Wikipedia, I'm fully aware of the general academic scepticism concerning its credibility. Nevertheless, a recent comparative study of entries in Wikipedia and in online edition of Encyclopaedia Britannica by *Nature* journal has shown that the reliability and accuracy of topics in Wikipedia are only slightly smaller than those of Encyclopaedia Britannica: »[T]he average science entry in Wikipedia contained around four inaccuracies; Britannica, around three« (Cauchi).

combined, dismantled and shifted according to one's preferences, which brings us back to the *modus operandi* of hypertext. In other words: creation, structuring and functioning of contemporary reality and subjectivity rely upon the same logic as our predominant writing technique.

Since our preferences are conditioned by the number of information received on the given aspect of reality, the more information one obtains on something and the more stable a system the latter create, the more real something is. The media are then crucial for the formation of reality. They are also subject to one's interests and preferences: we choose our favourite medium in much the same way and according to the same principles as our preferred brand of clothing, make of car or our favourite TV program. At this point it is already clear that hypertext fulfils a double function. On the one hand, it embodies the "cultural logic of late capitalism" or "hyperreality" or whatever we choose to call the social, economic and cultural reality of our every day existence, and as such provides the perfect medium for commenting on it. On the other hand, its omnipresence and ubiquitous usage further accelerate the logic of its functioning into the social sphere, truly determining our society in McLuhan's sense.

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With that we can finally articulate the central assumption of this study: namely, if the invention of print coincided with the dawning of the Modern Age, residing upon and endorsing the defining Cartesian paradigms of linearity and hierarchisation, hypertext seems to be coinciding with postmodern fragmentation, decentralisation, rhizomatous structuring and fluidity. Consequently, within such circumstances, printed book has a future only if it can adapt to as well as integrate the principles of absolute flexibility, instability and interactivity. In other words: printed literature has a future only if it can remediate hypertext.

The most obvious and practical method to establish whether and how such remediation is possible seems to be the application of the hypertextual logic to the traditional, print governed understanding of literature. In order to do that, let us first indicate those characteristics of the existing hypertextual electronic fiction, which seem the most at odds with the foundations upon which the institution of traditional literature resides. Then I will attempt to translate the latter to the printed medium, simultaneously examining whether the results can in fact be already observed in those instances of recent American printed fiction which literary criticism has found the most puzzling and ambiguous in terms of discussing it by means of the established critical apparatus.

A page of a hypertext novel is structured like any other web page. It consists of textual blocks, often appearing alongside visual and sometimes also audio materials. The page offers a certain number of links and by clicking on them the reader is taken to the page the link serves as the connection to. Generally the point of arrival is somehow, usually semantically, related to the point of departure. Such arrangement already signals some important differences between hypertextual and printed fiction. As it is essentially up to the reader, which links he or she chooses to follow, the "story"

in the classical sense is structured by the reader and his or her preferences. Often, the readers can also participate with their own contributions, textual or otherwise.

The traditional role of the author as the guarantee of meaning thus disappears, there is no fundamental difference between the author and the reader and they both merge into a new category of reader-author. Consequently, a hypertextual novel has as many meanings as there are readings, which would ultimately still amount to a finite number, if the very notion of the medium would not reside precisely upon cross-referencing. That means that anyone can link their own page to the novel, one can "fall" into the novel browsing for something else, perhaps not even realizing it is a work of art that they are reading. Thus, another important novelty of hypertext fiction is the blurring of textual and contextual boundaries; the novels are completely fluid and as such a part of the over-all virtual reality, shaping and co-creating it. To illustrate, by adding a single link within a prose work, the structure of the entire web – according to the laws of cybernetics – changes. Furthermore, there is also no distinction between a work of art or any other work, between literature or any other text, it is entirely up to the user whether to consider something literature or not.

Similar logic applies to the character creation – the notion of "subjectivity" and its creation correspond to the notion and creation of reality. Literary characters, too, correspond to the preferences of the reader-author, namely, which characteristics the latter chooses to follow. Thus, they are created in much the same way as any persona appearing on the net,[8] which means that there is absolutely no difference between a literary character and any other avatar: they are all just systems of signs acquired according to one's preferences.

FROM SILICON TO CARBON: PRINTED BOOK AS AN INFORMATION GENERATOR

I will use this last assertion as a bridge to take us from the electronic environments back to the experiential reality, as its formulation directly coincides with the theoretical framework introduced on the previous pages. That is, the concept of reality, subjectivity and meaning as rhizomatous, arbitrary, fluid and interactive systems of information that the users choose and manage in line with their preferences exactly corresponds to Baudrillard's model of hyperreality created according to the preferences of postmodern fractal subjects. One's preferences, as already indicated, are shaped according to the same logic: they are conditioned by the number of data on a given aspect of reality. The more information one receives on something and the more stable a system they create, the more "real" something is for that particular individual. For example, our favouring of one brand over the next depends solely on the information we receive on the desired product and how they fit into our existing systems of what Baudrillard calls hyperreality. Needless to say our actual technical knowledge of the product plays a negligible role when we are deciding for a purchase. It has to be

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[8] The creation of hypertextual literary characters is best illustrated by – or closest to – the creation of chat-room personae, structured according to one's momentary preferences and interests.

said, though, that for now the shaping of preferences is best used by the structures and institutions of economic power – we would not be too far from truth if we claimed that the whole structure of contemporary capitalism resides upon this logic. Yet the concept of shaping people's preferences via media applies to any given field of human activity, art and literature being no exception.

To summarize: within hypertextual logic, online and offline, the media – that which generates information – are crucial for the formation of reality. They are also chosen according to one's interests and preferences: one either prefers the internet, TV, newspaper, radio or a book. Quality wise, there is no difference between the information one receives from respective media, as before the actualisation in hyperreality all data have the same value. What is important, though, is if and how the information provided fit within the existing collective and individual systems of hyperreality.

At this point it is probably already clear that from the perspective of mediagenic reality we seem to have entered well over two decades ago, printed book is no more endangered than any other medium, provided, of course, that it abandons its traditional, elitist stance in order to successfully compete with other media. That is why I will proceed with transferring the novelties observed in hypertextual fiction to print by treating the latter as merely an information generator. As we will see, not only is such approach perfectly applicable to the medium of print, but there already is a comprehensive body of actual printed books of prose that seem to embody the hypertextual logic, although in a slightly different manner than suggested by Landow and Bolter at the beginning of this essay.

The most blatant consequence of the fact that all data have the same value before they are incorporated within hyperreality is that we can no longer operate with terms such as "real", "fictive", "abstract", "biographical" and "autobiographical". The data are there for the readers to verify against their systems of reality, and – if the simulacrisation process indeed takes place – to participate in the formation of hyperreal systems which also no longer rely on certainty but merely on greater or smaller amount of possibility. In other words: the more they coincide with the reader's systems of hyperreality, the more "real" they are.

The over-all tendency of both literary critics and literary public to discuss literature after postmodernism in terms of the return of realism (cf. Larry McCaffery, Kenneth Millard, Robert Rebein) is the most obvious and telling confirmation of my point. From the traditional point of view, most of recent American fiction gives the impression of realism, which is only logical if it provides the building blocks for hyperreality. And perhaps the most notorious practical example of the above claim is the controversy regarding the publication of Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, at the core of which were, typically, speculations on whether Brown built his story on the actual historical data or not. In the domain of what has traditionally been considered "serious" literature, similar approaches of refusing - or better failing - to differentiate between mediated faction and fiction have been most symptomatically undertaken by Don DeLillo in *Libra* and *Underworld*, in all Douglas Coupland's novels, in Ronald Sukenick's *Mosaic Man*, Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock*, or Jonathan Saffron Foer's

Everything is Illuminated, the works of the so called literary Generation X, Mark Leyner, etc.

Since the actualisation of information provided relies on the systems of reader's already existing hyperrealities, the meaning is, similarly as in hypertext fiction on the internet, conditioned by the reader, the category of which thus broadens into the familiar concept of reader-author. This tendency is namely implicitly at work already in postmodernist metafiction, the understanding of which relies upon and is conditioned by reader's knowledge of and attitude to prototexts. From the perspective of considering printed book as merely a generator of data, it is crucial that the information it provides is compatible with as many existing hyperreal systems as possible, if it is to have the same impact as other media.

That is why in literature transcending both postmodernism and its metaphysical frame, the function of prototexts is best carried out by the media enhanced artefacts of popular culture, which function as Baudrillard's third order simulacra – systems of information that had been already verified in hyperreality.[9] As such, these artefacts operate in much the same way as hypertextual links. They are points of recognition, broadening and reconfiguring reader's existing systems, and thus interfering with reality. From the perspective of recent American fiction, I recognize these characteristics already in the tendency first observed in cyberpunk fiction, namely that the notions from the fields of informatics and technology are used as metaphors for natural phenomena. However, with the spread of hypertextual logic into the social sphere and subsequent formation of a mediagenic reality, each event is *a priori* technological: technology ultimately becomes the warranty of nature's existence. And within such technology conditioned mediagenic reality, coming to full effect in the mid-1990s, cyberpunk's technological metaphors have expanded across the entire spectrum of media phenomena, forming the basis for creation and understanding of the more complex segments of everyday hyperreality.[10] Frequent usage of neologisms that rely upon artefacts of popular media culture – a characteristic that is hard to overlook in both mainstream and avant-garde American fiction of the last 20 years – serves much the same purpose like "mediagenic" metaphors since our understanding of them crucially defines how we follow and what we make of the story[11].

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[9] For instance, Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* with its complex reference system of brands, celebrities, 1980s pop music and other segments of popular culture is a wonderful example of how the reader's hyperreal environment conditions the understanding of the story, its protagonists, their environment and their motivations. To illustrate: a reader not familiar with the concept of Evian, for example, not only fails to understand what kind of substance the protagonist is drinking but, more importantly, also misses on the economic, social and cultural implications of drinking that specific brand of bottled water.

[10] Some random examples of using notions pertaining to the field of contemporary mediagenic consumerist reality to describe behaviour and places from Coupland's penultimate novel *Eleanor Rigby*: "Mother looked at Jeremy as if he'd been marked with a thirty percent discount" (96), "I suspect that Europe is now one big IKEA" (56), "I finally found a place in which I felt secure enough to disintegrate – across from this stubby Eurocratic man who looked like Václav Havel's cellmate (210)."

[11] Such usage of neologisms is best illustrated and even thematised by Coupland's system of footnotes in *Generation X*, which provide more or less random explanations of hip-terms and neologisms. However, when the reader comes across a concept that the neologism describes, he or she names it with the word provided, and so the neologism, thus far just a piece of information, starts functioning as third order simulacrum and becomes part of hyperreality (cf. Krevel 2003 138-139).

Another consequence of considering printed book as merely an information generator is that creation of fictional reality corresponds to the building of any given hyperreality. The underlying principle is that of verifying the data received against systems of information that have been already incorporated into the systems of hyperreality. Fictional reality is no less real as any other reality, which means that traditional boundaries between a literary work and its environment disappear. The claim may seem farfetched and hard to conceive, but the stir and controversy surrounding the already mentioned Brown's novel *The Da Vinci Code* are symptomatic of the blurring of boundaries between fiction and reality, literature and history, pulp and classics. What Brown offers is a system of information to be verified against the existing systems of individual and collective realities. Considering the aftermath of the book's publication, we must agree that the information he chose to launch fit within many various, more or less incompatible systems, thus providing a number of very stable hyperreal structures inviting further verifications. It is namely such maintaining of relevance of a work of art – triggering an eruption of related hyperreal systems – that might very well prove to be the foundation of postmodern literary evaluation.

Similarly, the construction of literary identities – or literary characters – is conditioned by how the data on them correspond to reader's already existing structures of hyperreality. The more mediagenic "links" they involve, the more stable, or real, they are for more readers. And since – as I have shown at the beginning of this essay – within postmodern condition the logic of creation of a literary character or any other identity is virtually the same, there is no essential difference between the formation of a literary or any other subjectivity. In other words: creation of a literary character in no way differs from the creation of a chat-room persona, and it is implicit in the fluid network structuring of postmodern fractal subjects, appropriating "personal" characteristics according to their preferences. From that point of view, the traditional notions of autobiography, biography, the past, narrative perspective, etc., are turned inside out, as the literary characters are technically the facets – transient personae – of both the reader and the author.[12]

The described mode of identity creation is in my opinion at the core of a relatively novel tendency gaining ground in recent American fiction, namely that main protagonists have the same name as the author. Mark Leyner is the most obvious example as playing with identities seems to be the central theme both of his fiction as well as his life[13]. The main protagonist of all of his novels and most short stories is writer "Mark Leyner", so we could assume that the works are autobiographical. Narration strikes us as realistic, events provide an impression of a consistent structuring of the world. However, the literary "Mark Leyner" constantly moves within the mediagenic reality, arbitrarily choosing elements from it to update or reconfigure his existing system of identity: he is a body builder, a surgeon, a forensic expert, a superstar, a multimillionaire, etc. Leyner's "autobiographical" identity is thus constructed

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[12] For a more thorough explanation see Krevel 2004.

[13] I am referring to the futility of my and my students' attempts to find any kind of biography on Mark Leyner, apart from the short story »About the Author« closing his 1990 *My Cousin, My Gastroenterologist*.

along the way, the reader places individual information on "Leyner" within systems of information, the probability and stability of which depend on their connectivity. The reader is, in short, reconstructing Leyner's construction of Leyner.

Similar "autobiographicality" and the notion of identity as a simulacrised simulation can also be found in Sukenick's short story collection *Doggy Bag* and in his novel *Mosaic Man*, in Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock*, Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*, or Jonathan Safran Foer's *Everything is Illuminated*, to name just some of the more visible authors. Same logic also governs Don DeLillo's reconstruction of Lee Harvey Oswald in *Libra* and J. Edgar Hoover in *Underworld*.

READING PRINT HYPERTEXTUALLY

At this point we can probably return to our initial question whether print can adapt to and assimilate the logic of hypertext, which would ensure its future. The established characteristics of electronic hypertext fiction, identified as essentially foreign to traditional literature, indeed seem to allow transfer to the printed book, provided that the latter is stripped of its elitist aura and treated for what it fundamentally is: an information generator. I hope to have shown that electronic literature specific merging of reader and author, author's loss of authority and control over the written, the blurring of textual boundaries and subsequent potential of literature to crucially interfere with surrounding non-literary environments are not only perfectly translatable to print theoretically, but can in fact already be identified in the American fiction of the last couple of decades.

To summarize as well as to illustrate the points made, I would like to wrap up this predominantly theoretical investigation into the hypertextual potential of print by a brief analysis of a randomly selected paragraph from a contemporary work of printed fiction. My selection of the work and the paragraph presented was guided chiefly by the density of artefacts of popular media culture – which, as I argued, have the same function as links in the electronic hypertext – in it. I decided for the following extract from Mark Leyner's *My Cousin, My Gastroenterologist* as it enables the illustration of a broad range of points both directly stated or implied on the previous pages of this study:

> Anyway, I got home at about 9 P.M. I popped a <u>Lean Cuisine</u> into the microwave and ate it in front of the TV. There was a <u>miniseries</u> on based on <u>James Michener's</u> <u>*Lincoln*</u> – the saga of men and women who built the <u>Lincoln Tunnel</u> (27).

The underlined words are the "links", points of connections between adjacent systems of reality. Media artefacts – notions already verified and as such part of hyperreality – define our understanding of the data yet unconfirmed. For example, our familiarity with the concept of Lean Cuisine crucially defines both the direction of our reading (the traditional "story") and our perception of the main protagonist and his actions. The more familiar we are with the concept of Lean Cuisine, the more stable and the more networked hyperreal system it presents to us, which enhances our

understanding and knowledge of the character and his actions. Connecting Lean Cuisine with a Nestlé range of prepared and packaged low calorie meals, prescribed in the Weight Watchers weight losing programme, and containing no preservatives or artificial flavours,[14] we perceive the main protagonist as somebody very conscious of his body, either trying to lose weight or taking care not to become overweight; that he is also very sensitive to advertising and brands, and that he is concerned about health and healthy lifestyle.

The "miniseries" node functions similarly – it depends on our acquaintance with the concept of and our personal experiences with that particular type of TV programme. Its potential, however, comes to full effect in connection with "James Michener's *Lincoln*" as the systems of connotations it triggers radically multiply. Before us is namely a demonstration of the very process of verifying and incorporating media-generated data within hyperreal systems. The name, of course, functions as a link if we are aware of the fact that there was a James Michener, namely, James Albert Michener, a Pulitzer Prize-Winning American novelist, who wrote mainly historical novels. On the whole, his work covered great collective achievements in (mostly American or America related) history. An average reader, most probably knowing Michener by his *Hawaii* trilogy or *The Tales of the South Pacific*, would process the information on "the saga of the men and women who built the Lincoln Tunnel" with regard to his or her existing knowledge on Michener's topics. As the systems seem compatible, especially when relying upon a notion that had also already been confirmed in our everyday hyperreality – that of the existence of the Lincoln Tunnel –, most readers would incorporate the fact that one of Michener's novels is titled *Lincoln* within their systems of hyperreality, and proceed to verifying the information on the existence of a miniseries based on the novel.

If, however, the reader is an expert on Michener, or, let us say, writing an article on remediation of hypertext in print, the act of verification of this new piece of information would be much more complex – and much more literally hypertextual – as it would involve confirmation of this information against systems external to the reality of Leyner's novel. In other words, one would consult an encyclopaedia or the internet or both to establish that the novel of that title was very probably never written by James Michener, which nevertheless still interferes with the existing systems of reader's hyperreality, especially if checking whether it was perhaps written by somebody else and what it was about.

It has to be emphasised, though, that the processes described above are more or less automated and a consequence of our general comprehension of and functioning within the mediagenic environments around us. They are implicit in our deciding on which brand of mobile phone to buy, what concerts to see and which diets to follow. It is – in short – how we create and reinvent ourselves and our environment according to the information received via various media. And this is where the greatest importance of hypertext lies: in the implicit non-linearity, rhizomatous structure and fluidity its logic is promoting, which also coincide with society and reality today. Contem-

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[14] This is how Lean Cuisine is advertised in the media, which corresponds to our hyperreal notions of it.

porary literature as the product as well as mirror of such society is, of course, hypertextual in the sense that it functions according to hypertextual logic regardless of which medium it is employing. That is why it is so utterly irrelevant – if not even counterproductive – to search for hypertext in the instances of the canonized literary tradition. *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, for example, might as well have been written in the form of a codex or on stone tablets, it would still be a "pinnacle of the English sentimental novel" (Kos 1986 159, my translation), even though "simultaneously already transcending all hitherto known forms of traditional novel" (*ibid.*).

To conclude: in a mediagenic society where media are the generators and the guarantee of reality, printed book is one of the media. Its function is the supplying of data which, according to Baudrillard's theory of the copy without the original,[15] contribute to the creation of hyperreality. This is the environment into which printed book has entered approximately a quarter of a century ago. Within such environment, printed literature has a future – even a very productive one considering its reality-forming potential – provided that both the reader-authors[16] as well as literary science finally abandon the dead-end streets of Cartesian nostalgia, and start searching for and exploring the ways in which literature can not only secure its own future but primarily ensure that the adjective "human" remains the essential – if only metaphorical – part of the neologisms of the future.

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[15] For a more detailed investigation into the relevance of Baudrillard's theoretical thought to the structuring of contemporary society as well as the actual embodiments of his theoretical presuppositions, see Krevel 2003 46-51.

[16] As individuals functioning within the paradigms of contemporary society that is what we are regardless whether we admit it or not.

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RE-READING NORTHROP FRYE: IMAGES OF CULTURE AND THE CANADIAN CONTEXT

Marcello Potocco

Abstract

Responding to a prevailing critique of Northrop Frye's studies of Canadian culture, the author of the paper combines Frye's Canadian essays with his general theory in order to demonstrate that Frye's use of the term imagination, similarly to Iser's notion of "imaginary", allows a differentiation of the social imaginary and the fictive. Frye has provided a background for treatment of the fictive as aesthetic structure and has employed the study of Canadian culture primarily as a specific tool to describe literature with a disturbed aesthetic structure.

INTRODUCTION & THE CONTEXT

In this paper I discuss Northrop Frye's theories in the light of the thorough going critique of mythopoetical method after the rise of Canadian anti-thematic criticism. In my opinion, these attacks were largely an attempt to earn symbolic capital, and consequently, the dominant position in the Canadian literary market.[1] During this process Frye's theory was too often reduced and simplified. But his practice has to be treated in a broader context. It may, for example, be interpreted within the newer notions of the imaginary and the social imaginary. This interpretation can also provide a link to more formal aspects of literary studies. Through this kind of interpretation I shall try to demonstrate that critique of Frye's method has not always been justified.

Although it was certainly aware of it, Canadian criticism somewhat neglected Frye's general theory, despite its international acclaim. Critics in Canada noted the success of the *Anatomy of Criticism* or of *The Great Code*; but there were few at-

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[1] Literary practices and practices of criticism are inevitably part of a "Bourdieuan" literary market which tends to homogenize the literary community and its communications. They may be interpreted as orthodox and heterodox utterances in the field of contesting critical identifications and interpretations whose value depends on their symbolic capital, as well as on the existent relations of power (Bourdieu 66-67, 71-76). Formalist and poststructuralist critique of Frye's theories signified a change in the Canadian literary market. This view is supported, for example, by Lecker's reading of Frank Davey's *Surviving the Paraphrase*. Davey's critique is shown as an unorthodox utterance which started the battle to overpower the dominating position of the thematic criticism. (Lecker, sec. III, sec. IV).

tempts to include it in the discussion of Frye's criticism of Canadian literature (Rajan 134; Cameron 114).[2] Frye's position was largely defined domestically by his "Canadian" essays. The literary field was dominated by his *Bush Garden,* by the *Conclusion* to the 1965 project of the Literary History, by his essay "On Canadian Poetry"*,* and by *The Educated Imagination*. Indeed, one significant reason for the neglect of his general theory lay in a failure to distinguish his practice and the closely related thematic criticism.

There was more than one reason for the amalgamation of these two aspects of mythosymbolic approach in Canada, but the principal reason was the dominant anti-American cultural nationalism of the 1960s (Brown, *Practice*, sec. II). Certainly, the problem of Canadian national identity has served to narrow significantly the understanding of Frye's theories, since literary production and the research of literature programmatically emphasized the problem of national identification.[3] Thematic studies have been clearly indebted to Frye's concepts of garrison mentality, 'evocation of stark terror' and, most of all, to the notions of a central unity in literature and its underlying national imagination. This is particularly evident in the early works of M. Atwood (*Survival*), J. Moss (*Patterns of Isolation in English Canadian Fiction*) and D.G. Jones (*Butterfly on Rock).* However, Frye's approach cannot be interpreted in the same manner as their efforts. The most obvious characteristic of thematic criticism in its relation to Frye is the definitiveness by which Frye's notions were adopted. Even though Frye wrote merely of the "provisionally called" garrison mentality (*Conclusion* 830) and although he only occasionally used the term "theme", both terms have become central notions of thematic criticism.

Even if the research was not necessarily thematic (Cameron 114), the uniqueness of Canadian identity became one of the leading aspects in literary research in the years 1972-84. Already in their early article (1976), Cameron and Dixon maintain that it is a debatable point as to whether Frye's remarks are responsible for the "critical anachronism of thematic criticism", and argue that some of his followers ignored "the liberal spirit" of Frye's general theory. It is in this context that we must read Cameron's later remark on the minimal influence of *Anatomy of Criticism* in the criticism of Canadian literature.

The first attacks aimed at nationally oriented criticism followed rather rapidly, in the years 1976-1978. But with a broadening of the methodological field, especially with the rise of poststructuralist approaches, it became clear that the temporary dominance of thematics in the 1970s had caused an inability to confront both thematic criticism more broadly and, particularly, Frye's general horizon. Russel Morton Brown

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[2] It should be noted that interest in Frye's general theory has increased to some degree after 1984 when a collection of essays on Frye *The Center and the Labyrinth* was issued. Another significant collection was issued in 1994, *The Legacy of Northrop Frye* (Alvin A. Lee and Robert D. Denham, ed., Univ. of Toronto Press, 1994). However, the response to this collection seems typical. While some reviewers claimed that it "will undoubtedly inspire much future scholarly investigation and critical argument" (see Russel Perkin), there was more or less no critical response to it. None of these attempts had sufficient impact to include Frye's general theory into the criticism of Canadian literature.

[3] To demonstrate the national preoccupation of literature and literary criticism, it suffices to observe the insisting comments on the "Canadian" character of Canadian literature in the 19th and in the 20th century (see, for example, Daymond and Monkman).

thus reasonably draws attention to Laurie Ricou's warning in 1978 against establishing an anti-thematic orthodoxy "from which no variation is allowed" (Brown, *Practice*, sec. II). There were few attempts to surpass this orthodoxy. Brown's own essays are one such attempt, as well as the articles of Laurie Ricou and, in the late 1980s, the writings of T.D. MacLulich (ibid.). Marginalisation of thematic criticism provoked attacks on Frye's "Canadian essays".[4] Elsewhere, it provoked a considerable ignorance of his broader mythosymbolic approach. In my view, neither of these developments was justified.[5] While the critique of thematic criticism, as well as of Frye's methodology, was far from being uniform, two distinct charges were arising:

1.) At the outset, thematic criticism was attacked by Frank Davey in 1976, and by Cameron and Dixon in 1977. Their main accusation was that such criticism focuses on the "social and historical setting", rather than on literature. Davey and Cameron each repeated their accusations in the 1980's and 1990's, and were followed by W.J. Keith and several others (Brown, *Practice*, sec.II). Since most of the thematic studies have actually dealt with the specific cultural material present in the literature, it is correct to say that they have implicitly become cultural studies (Cameron 111-12). However, cultural and sociological aspects of literary research have long been recognized as legitimate methods in the pluralism of literary research (Virk, sec.1, 22), and have been thoroughly popularized with the rise of Empirical Studies of Literature and with the growing influence of cultural studies. Frye's general theory, moreover, has never reduced literature to its cultural aspects without considering its structural dimensions. As I shall demonstrate, in his work these two aspects are intertwined in a complex and thoroughly modern way.

2.) With the rise of deconstructionist criticism, the urge to define a single fixed cultural identity was also attacked. Mostly it was discarded in favour of "un-fixed" notions of regionalism and ethnic literatures, as is evident, for example, in the works of R. Lecker, Alison Conway, Roy Miki and E. Mandel (Brown, *Practice*, sec.II). These views correspond to so called anti-essentialist tendencies in cultural studies which reject any fixed identity, including any environmentally based identity. Since environment ought to be regarded as a part of "un-fixed" social process and its discourses, one of the specific poststructuralist charges addressed to thematic criticism was the charge of environmental determinism – that is, of treating "the landscape as given" (Cameron 114).

Even though both charges might be applied to Atwood's, Jones's and in part to Moss's criticism, they may not be as easily directed to Frye. Frye's criticism cannot be thought outside his general theory which is not limited to dealing with culturally

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[4] See, for example, the critique of Frye's presumed essentialism in Pontuale's paper or in Sanfilippo's *Margaret Atwood, il Canada e gli Stati Uniti*.

[5] It is not possible to say that Frye was not dealt with. Nevertheless, J. Russel Perkins observes the difficulties in placing Frye within the context of Canadian culture: "Precisely because he remains such a dominant presence, historical analysis seems particularly overdetermined by ideological pressures in critical writing about Frye." (see Perkins). Yet, I find Frye's mythosimbolic approach very useful in cases of a literature which is dominated by the problem of national identification. Past Canadian and past Slovenian literatures are good examples of such national preoccupation: this was first observed by Mirko Jurak (see Jurak), and was further researched in my Ph.D. dissertation (Potocco, *Kulturna*). In both cases, Frye's theories were a valuable source for the research.

specific material. Frye focuses on the *general pattern* in the genesis of a specific literature, comparing its structure to the structure of myth, which is not necessarily the 'foundational myth' of a culture or of a specific country. This proto-structuralist orientation was acknowledged quite early (Brown, *Critic*, 180). Along with it, however, Frye's criticism is also grounded in the analysis of image. Imagination is viewed as the reflection of cultural values. Frye's main interest, accordingly, is the analysis of common symbolic structure of the imaginary. This does not, however, imply any fixed identity. The notion of imagination as a symbolic unity inevitably permeates his understanding of the Canadian imaginary and I shall demonstrate the complexity of this thought while focusing on the relation of art and criticism to society.

THE IMAGINARY

Although Frye's remark that the role of a critic should be "to translate literature into a continuous dialogue with society" would seem to confirm the notion that "all criticism is social criticism" (*Myth* 138), Frye treats cautiously any literary activity, including criticism, that seeks a direct transformation of its ideas into society or, conversely, of social 'voice' of ideas into the field of imagination. It is evident that he treats art as a constitutional element of a homogenized society, since it is his view that literature should "inform and reform the society" (*Myth* 305-06), but it is also evident that art does not need to be culturally ideological, for "in a fully mature literary tradition the writer enters into a structure of traditional stories and images", and the speaker becomes "a place where a verbal structure is taking its own shape" (*Conclusion* 835). I find these remarks very important, because they are closely related to Frye's system of metaphorical and descriptive language. While descriptive language is focused on reference outside its own structure (*Great* 46, 61-62), imagination is regarded precisely as the ability to enter into a metaphorical structure itself. It is regarded as something related not merely to literature or to the arts, but to the primary creativity of an individual as well as of society. In this context, literature, like mythology, does not exist to describe specific conditions, but to contain them in a manner that does not limit significations in the structure (*ibid.*; cf. also *Conclusion* 836). This, as we shall see, is the concept developed in more recent theoretical notions of the imaginary.

As paradoxical as it may seem in view of antiessentialist attacks, Frye's ideas most likely result from the conviction that society is a construct, a 'collection' of mental representations, rather like any identity. Cameron's claim that thematic criticism treats landscape as a given rather than as a social construction (cf. also Pontuale 41) is therefore only partly justified. Already in the famous *Conclusion*, Frye implicitly acknowledges that the foundational myth is essentially a social-subjective construction. It is true, however, that social construction stems from the existing historic or archaic structural stratum, which is understood as a verbal or imaginative structure. Frye, therefore, consistently regards society as a set of mental images based in established social models and patterns, and in so-called stock responses (*Stubborn* 7, 20). The stock responses, particularly, are shared through mass media, interpersonal con-

versation, textbooks and, possibly, through literature and literary criticism. This notion also permeates his treatment of the Canadian foundational myth. Being an instrument of mental production, art, like any other human experience, is caught in the relation between the society as a whole and the variety of its individual mental forms. It is a relation which Frye openly associates with the primitive function of *religio*: "of binding together a society with the acts and beliefs of a common concern" (*Stubborn* 35-37).

At this point, in particular, Frye's thought resembles the ideas of European theorists such as Cornelius Castoriadis or Wolfgang Iser. The resemblance is most obvious in the binding of the construction of society and of an individual to a previously existing structure. In all of these conceptions, the imaginary and the social imaginary become to some extent 'religious' bases; they become unifying principles which bind together individual representations. At the same time, art, science, scholarship, mythology and religion, as well as any other human experience, become parts of an integral society based on the imaginary. Castoriadis, in particular, describes the imaginary as a creative principle, which manifests itself in the society and defines its organization. In his view, any social act and any social existence is thought, described, and achieves its meaning only through a net of significations. The chief function in society is given to what Castoriadis calls central imaginary significations, such as God or nation. The central imaginary significations do not refer to any real or rational signified; instead, their 'referent' is produced precisely through the institution of the central imaginary signification and is at the same time manifested in individual representations of the signification. Thus, the central imaginary significations at once create objects of individual representations and become a regulator of possible imaginary meanings circulating within society (Castoriadis 140, 362).

Castoriadis's idea is interesting above all because he understands that the social imaginary may become manifest only through symbolic means. Herein lies a chance to understand another problem which is at least partly associated with Frye's theory. Even his general theory cannot be thought without considering the problematic relation between the social imaginary and ideology. It is clear that ideology is closely related to the fact that each society inevitably expands its own signifying structure with its own symbolic means. Thus, Claude Lefort was able to develop the idea of the social imaginary using the classic distinction between traditional and modern society, and arguing that the manifestation of the social imaginary in modern Western society is dominated by ideology and its structures of power (Lefort 281, 295-96).

It is nevertheless too limiting to confine ideology solely to capitalist society as Lefort does. Castoriadis himself understands that we are able to comprehend the social imaginary exclusively through the notions of our own culture. We are restricted to the framework of our own organising system, which is dominated by the 'logique ensembliste-identitaire': a logic which distinguishes, determines and posits in order to assemble, adjust and construct. In as far as it is based on the authority of logical-rational argumentation, this 'united and distinct' logic is in itself a unifying principle (Castoriadis 221-28, 257-68). But it has to be added that real domination of power is always also based in the institutional position of an argument. It is the institutional position of an utterance that enables a forced unification, since it enables, initiates and

preserves the mobilisation of signification by use of linguistic or symbolic logic (Thompson 129-32). Ideology is therefore based on rational-argumentative logic, which corresponds to Castoriadis's 'logique ensembliste-identitaire'. However, its unifying agency is enabled only through a traditional metaphysical view of the 'domination of the world', and a suppression of *ambivalence* which is a characteristic feature of the modern society (see Bauman; Debeljak).

The central question in this respect considers the state of literature and arts in the conceived system of the 'domination of the world' – to be more specific, a question as to the strength of their potential to become vehicles of homogenisation and ideological domination. It seems that the best possible way to begin to address this question is to understand the potential of the fictive component in the arts, since art is also rooted in the imaginary itself.

Castoriadis and Frye differ considerably on this point. While Castoriadis envisages the possibility of an imaginary which is not necessarily manifest through rational logic, Frye still perceives organisation and domination as the only possible human relation to the world. In the *Anatomy* he apparently presupposes the inability of an individual to grasp criticism as his object in its totality. In his conception Frye proceeds from the traditional view that the object is something which is, in advance, summoned to the individual's autonomous systematisation and comprehension. It seems that in this perspective even the 'verbal structure', which is a common centre of myth and literary shaping, is understood as something metaphysical (*Conclusion* 835-37). Therefore it is not surprising to come across the opinion that the arts, albeit by means of a creative dialogue, are also always subject to organising (*Stubborn* 16-17). Such a stance implies that all the instruments of mental production, including the arts, may become vehicles of ideological unification. Frye nevertheless distinguishes the arts from other bodies of knowledge (*Stubborn* 20), and this seems to be an important difference. Contrary to science, arts and scholarship should not only be able to grasp the total truth of the objects they lean on, but are to be left to shape themselves (*Stubborn* 51, 20). Through instituting form, the arts, instead of recreating it, participate in the shaping of reality as it is perceived. In considering some of Frye's remarks, we might expect to find the 'I-Thou' dialogue to be a basic principle of this participation.

The dialogical principle in the arts is in fact crucial in determining their role, since it implies a distinctive manifestation of the imaginary. Wolfgang Iser has shown that the imaginary is a potential activated from outside itself, which discloses itself differently according to its manifold activators, but which always unfolds itself as play (Iser 222-23). Social constructs, religion, individual imagination, reveries, and, finally, the fictive, are therefore merely its manifold manifestations. The fictive component — which is, of course, at the core of any art — is thus seen as one of the activators of the imaginary. Certainly, its orientation is significantly different in comparison with the social imaginary. The fictive component has "far less of pragmatic orientation", and since it is "a means of making the imaginary accessible to experience outside its pragmatic function", the fictive establishes a specific relation to material reality. In Iser's view, the particularity of this relation is precisely its dialogical character: the fictive is manifested as a 'doubling structure' (Iser 224-25).

90

Frye already recognises the duality of literary texts, a duality that is attributable to all the arts, although it is, in his view, primarily a linguistic duality. He treats descriptive language as principally centrifugal, and while descriptive language is primarily oriented to the reference outside the verbal structure, metaphorical language is above all centripetal. It is focused on the shaping of the structure itself, and it is particularly focused on the structural interaction of its constitutive elements (*Anatomy* 74-75, *Great* 46, 61-62). Proceeding from Frye's theory of modes and adjusting it to his theory of fictional narrative, Paul Riceour observes similar dualities, embodied primarily in a bipolar interweaving of the narrator's time/discourse and the time/discourse of literary personae (*Time* 98-99, 148-149). Both types of discourse are, however, enmeshed in a complex relation. The textual world, as formally closed as it may seem, is always also open to the world outside itself. It is constructed in the intersection of the textual world and the world of ordinary action (*Time* 100-101).

Frye first anticipated this textual duality in the *Anatomy of Criticism*. In the theory of modes he articulated the notions of 'internal' and 'external' fiction which correspond to the fictional and the thematic modes of literature. Perhaps it is too limiting to understand 'external' fiction exclusively in relation to thematic material and to the theme of a literary work. Nevertheless, it is obvious that by distinguishing heroes and their societies from the communication model of the author and reader, Frye implied a fundamental difference between the textual and the extratextual world (*Anatomy* 52). It is a difference that matches the idea of a centripetal and a centrifugal force at the level of the metaphor. Frye's own theory of symbols proves how both tendencies must be present in each literary structure, although they are related through a specific tension (*Anatomy* 73-75). Yet Ricoeur demonstrates convincingly that in this context the literary symbol becomes a 'hypothetical verbal structure' wherein the centripetal force prevails (*Time* 17-19): this distinguishes fiction from other narrative modes and, in fact, activates what Iser has called a 'doubling structure'.

The particular distinction of fictional narrative, in view of its dialogic character, therefore, lies in the specific relation between the textual and the extratextual world. It is important to note that when 'the world outside' is 'transformed' into fiction, it does not exist in its primary mode of being. In fiction, neither the textual nor the extratextual world is significant in itself: both worlds — as signifiers — are drawn in mutual readings through each other's eyes. The reader's attention is thus drawn to signs as signs, which cancels any preestablished correlation between signs. In short, they no longer refer to anything given, but become at best the signified of the other signifier. They become interwoven into circumreferentiality, activating the imaginary by inscribing the two coexisting discourses one in another. In this way a structure is enabled where "every word becomes dialogic, and every semantic field is doubled by another" (Iser 225-28).

Despite this specific concentration on the activation of the 'play' which puts the reading of both worlds under the sign of 'as if', the structure of fiction is never absolutely innovative. Frye properly observes that it is always to some degree determined by the conventions of literary shaping. In his own words, literature is dependent on the set of "huge containing conceptions which establish the literary societies". This means that it is preconditioned by the verbal structures from which it derives and

which Frye identifies as myths or, rather, *mythoi* (*Stubborn* 53; cf. also *Anatomy* 162). Not surprisingly, since they have each taken it over from Aristotle's *Poetics,* his conception of *mythos* is very similar to Ricoeur's latter notion of narrative: *mythos* is in both cases understood as a discursive organisation of narrative events. Following Ricoeur's thought, however, it is worth noting that in western society *mythos* may be manifested either as historical or as fictional narrative. I have shown that in the latter case its composition is a composition of a 'doubling structure', which means that any preconditioned structure is in itself subjected to the fictional play of 'decomposition' and 'composition'. In the historical narrative, on the other hand, the centrifugal force bases the narrative in the pragmatic orientation, validating its meaning almost exclusively against the grain of extratextual reality. Thus, the imaginary is activated in another type of play: as the social imaginary. As I have also argued, the social imaginary in modern western society is predominantly activated in the play of hierarchical positions; it is manifested in a structure of discourses subjected to the relations of power. Hence, its homogenising potential is usually ideological.[6] Having the same structural precondition, as Frye demonstrates, literature as a verbal structure may conversely exert an influence on the structure of *mythos* itself, either by changing it or by actively preserving the existing relations.

In the *Conclusion*, Frye describes the major part of pre-Centennial Canadian literature as one which validates its meaning against the grain of extratextual reality. He defines it as a literature which "heavily stressed the conceptual and argumentative use of language", and whose writers did not "naturally think metaphorically but descriptively" (836). We might argue that this kind of literature may have exerted an influence on the homogenising structure of the Canadian social imaginary, and that in the final consequence it may have become an element in the ideological relations of power. The possibility for such a 'passage' of the fictive to the social imaginary opens up at the point where literature, instead of activating a fictive dialogic play, directs the reader to seek identification within the signifiers of the 'real', extratextual world. Again in the *Conclusion*, Frye describes this type of literature as literature that encourages the reader "to remain within his habitual social responses" instead of prodding him into the autonomous imaginative world (838). Although in the paraphrased passage Frye speaks of Canadian "popular literature", this observation applies to any literature which refers to the extratextual world and destabilizes the doubling structure. I should add here, that when the centrifugal force in the structure becomes dominant, the fictive narrative turns into historical narrative and to a method of organising the meanings of a culture. Canadian fiction, therefore, may become a tool to confirm a specific cultural identity. More to the point, Frye evidently understands that this is not merely a typical feature of popular literature, but of any literature which destabilizes or fails to create the doubling structure. This is why he declares that literature should not describe specific (extratextual) details, singular themes and

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[6] For further investigation of the relation between social imaginary and the ideology, see my paper "Literatura, ideologija in imaginarno" (Literature, Ideology and Imaginary). In the paper I argue that while ideological relations do not occupy the social imaginary of the modern society as a whole, they do occupy the majority of the relations in the society, when power intervenes in order to fix the significations and to make them stable and unchangeable (Potocco, *Literatura* 46-49).

mythical stories, but should contain them in the adopted metaphorical structure. It should become "a place where a verbal structure is taking its own shape" (e.g. *Conclusion* 836).

On the one hand, of course, this is the point where he finds Canadian literature lacking. On the other hand, this is the point where he finds it most representative. He is aware that the imaginary inevitably manifests itself through 'verbal' structure, and that it is expressed through symbolic and narrative conventions. Through the Canadian case Frye actually tries to demonstrate the interconnections between the verbal structure as literary convention, the verbal structure as shaping principle of an individual literary work, and the verbal structure as the organizing principle of society. In the *Conclusion*, the critique of Canadian literature (if this could be considered as critique) originates from a clear understanding that literature should produce its own metaphorical, doubling structure, instead of belonging to a correspondent mythology produced by the society (842).

STRUCTURES AND CONVENTIONS

Frye's complex thought on imagination at one and the same time moved him into proto-structuralism and anticipated the kind of socio-anthropological thinking which was later clearly exemplified by Castoriadis and Iser. Since this thought was already present in the *Conclusion*, we may say that it infused his criticism of Canadian literature from the very start. If Frye's interest was thus not focused on the thematic material of a fully mature literature, the genesis of a foundational myth – the 'incompleteness' of Canadian literature – was for him a possible field in which to explore a social mythological structure. This means, in fact, that his interest in Canadian literature was precisely an interest in literature with a disturbed aesthetic structure (e.g. *ibid.* 821).

Of course, his thought implies neither that Canadian literature would remain in an incomplete phase, nor that the analysis of structure should remain concerned with this initial phase. In the critique of Frye's criticism this "detail" has often been overlooked, although it is a basic presumption of the *Conclusion*. "The conception of what is literary has to be greatly broadened for such literature," warns Frye, and thus "it is more significantly studied as a part of Canadian life than as a part of an autonomous world of literature" (822). It is obvious that such a conception of literary study is a useful tool only to explain why literature within a certain social context has not been able to produce 'mature' and non-imitative aesthetic forms. At best, such a conception may help us understand why literature has been used as an ideological apparatus – as one of the elements of power to uphold a unified cultural identity – instead of as a fictive manifestation of the imaginary.

I do not mean to suggest that Frye was interested in researching the ideological function of Canadian literature. By understanding this presumption, however, many of Frye's apparent inconsistencies become less contradictory. Failing to appreciate this is, I think, one of the reasons notions such as that of the 'Canadian North', the 'evocation of stark terror' or the 'garrison mentality', have so often been disputed.

Their rebuttal as critical tools implies at least two problematical stances. The first of these is one that does not allow for cultural criticism as a heuristic tool, albeit limited, which applies specifically to analysis of literature as social mythology. By disallowing this, this stance dismisses an instrument for the analysis of literatures that remain predominantly in the domain of the social imaginary instead of being able to activate the fictive. In fact, this stance implies a doubt as to whether there has been any literature in Canada that was predominantly in the domain of social imaginary. The second of these problematical stances is one which fails to take into consideration Frye's own epistemological distance in regard to these notions *as conventions*: as sets of stock responses which primarily function as homogenisation tools, even as ideological impulses. This stance may be readily demonstrated in regard to the charge, often addressed to Frye's criticism, of environmental determinism.

In his early article, R.M. Brown has shown that even Atwood's "victim positions" were a kind of grammar, "important in that it does not direct our attention to {...} the raw material of environment {...} but to the structures given that experience" (*Critic* 180). The fact that nature, "wilderness" or "northern frontier" were given as conventions cannot be ignored. They were attributed to the opposition between the reality of the encountered land and inherited European conceptions, or even between the new land and the old language (Briscoe-Thompson; cf. McGregor etc.). It would, therefore, be wrong to conceive of this opposition as materially determined, in the sense of 'environmental determinism', since it was manifest from very early on *as* convention. It was rooted in many different stock responses, including the loyalist imaginative response of trauma and injustice (Duffy 13-18) and the puritan identification with the Israelite's exodus (McGregor 276-77).

The notion of "wilderness" as convention is present as early as in Frye's *Conclusion*. In this famous essay he warns that "the mystique of Canadianism" was so full of wilderness because the Confederation came too suddenly after the pioneer period to create further stock responses for cultural identification (826). Frye, of course, traces other conventions that shaped Canadian imagination and literature: e.g, the view of Indians, who "like the rest of the country, were seen as nineteenth-century literary conventions" (836). His comments on cultural colonialism, with its two sources of England and USA respectively, indicate a further pole in the register of stock responses. Along with constant traces of imperialist logic, one of the main sources of these patterns and responses was clearly, as C.D. Mazoff has shown, the logic of economic progressivism and mercantilism.

Nevertheless, one of the most interesting critiques of Frye's presumed determinism was Leon Surette's charge in the essay on topocentrism two decades ago. Surette argued that Canadian literature, if it had been rooted in different topography alone, would have been severed from European culture and tradition, unable to invent new forms or to renew in a fruitful way the old 'European' aesthetic models. But I find his assertion simplified, since it does not take into account the fact that topography, as part of the material stratum, is only one of the layers on which the imaginary leans. The narrative structure – or rather, the narrative precondition of the cultural myth – is indeed established upon this layer. Literature as a fictive manifestation of the imaginary, even though it is rooted basically in the same structural precondition as

myth, may, however, take the cultural myth as its source, or as its target, rather than as its condition. In both cases, the imaginary manifests itself only through convention, or as breaking of convention. Therefore it is not necessary to place these two discourses in opposition, as it is hardly necessary to place in opposition the 'new' culture and the 'old' tradition, in particular, the new topography and the aesthetic models or the conventions taken from the "old" European tradition.

Frye clearly states that by form he does not mean external form, but an internal shaping principle, i.e. the wholeness of a structure (*Bush* 175-76). Especially in literature, formal models and conventions may therefore be taken over from elsewhere; however, they may only be transformed by adopting the same inherent structure of the *mythos* into which they enter. As I have shown, in fictive discourse this 'structure' is further reshuffled and reshaped in a play of decomposition and (re)composition. The refusal of the possibility that the European or British traditions would inform the verbal structure of the 'Canadian myth' could thus merely indicate that the British tradition was not able to function as a general organizing principle of the society – as the central imaginary significance, to use Castoriadis's phrasing. It does not mean, however, that singular formal models and conventions in culture or in fictive discourse would be unable to function in different structural preconditions that inform a different specific literature.

It is in this context that we must read, for example, Frye's remark on the proto-form and the proto-sources of Canadian literature (*Conclusion* 835; cf. Hopwood 20). Inscribed in these proto-sources is the superior-inferior conflict between European and indigenous traditions, which is often believed to be the main area sustaining a verbal structure of the Canadian cultural myth (New 18-23). Considering this inevitable presence of the European tradition, it is in fact impossible to expect that Canadian literature would not adopt European aesthetic models. Nevertheless, it would be equally impossible to have expected these models to be used in a non-imitative way, unless they were adopted into its own 'verbal structure'. As long as Canadian literature accepted these forms without adapting them to its own preconditioned structure (whether this structure existed or not), it was bound to use them not only in an imitative way, but also as a means of sheer thematic description. Literary endeavours were limited to reference to extratextual reality, for without 'entering' into the structure of traditional stories and images, as Frye terms it, a fictional work is not able to use it as a precondition to be activated in an interplay between the fictive and the imaginary.

If we accept these notions, it is easy to see that records and journals of the first explorers may be the proto-source of Canadian literature only as a set or a register of models, patterns and stock responses, rather than as a direct source of any literary structure. This also applies to the oral tradition of the indigenous people, the Jesuit Relations, or to the texts of the sisters Parr Trail. Canadian literature and Canadian imagination could be structured only as sets of conventions which were construed and re-construed, interpreted and re-interpreted, which became intertwined etc. As constructions they were far from being unchangeable: they are, on the contrary, unstable identities. Even for the garrison mentality Frye claims that... "as the centre of Canadian life moves from the fortress to the metropolis, the garrison mentality changes corrrespondingly" (*Conclusion* 834). Frye was obviously aware of the mutability of

the imagination which was later explicited in Castoriadis's notion of the imaginary. For Castoriadis, the imaginary is always open to change; it is subject to transformation precisely because it also creates its own *eidos*. Frye's "imagination" might be more rigid, but it is still not fixed or in any way stable.

CONCLUSION

It is therefore clear that Frye's interest in Canadian imagination is rooted in his belief that Canadian literature was for a long time predominantly unable to use conventions as mere preconditions for the activation of fictive play. Frye's structural interest was in researching the resemblances between the typical structure of Canadian literature and the structure of Canadian social mythology. It was primarily an interest in similar manifestations of the imaginary. Indeed, in his *Conclusion* Frye argues that there exists "such a thing as an imaginative continuum", and that "writers are conditioned in their attitudes by their predecessors, or by the cultural climate of their predecessors" (849). However, by doing so he obviously does not argue for a fixed, cemented and uniform cultural unity. He is aware that as a set of conventions and codes even this particular social-historical manifestation of the imaginary is open to changes and to indeterminancy. It is, in other words, a "cultural generalisation", and as such it is only one of the heuristic tools.

Despite the fact that, as a heuristic tool, it is only temporizing fiction (Brown, *Practice*, sec. III), this is not enough to dismiss it. Every language is the abuse of language, argues Castoriadis; still, it is needed exactly because it is univocal sufficiently as to usage. Although identifications may not be fixed notions, we need unifying concepts to be able to live in a meaningful world of significations. As I have tried to demonstrate, Frye was aware of both tendencies and it is through this awareness that we must read his criticism of Canadian literature, as well as of Canadian society.

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KULTURKONFLIKTE ALS MACHTKONFLIKTE AM BEISPIEL SPÄTMITTELALTERLICHER REISEBERICHTE

Marija Javor Briški

Abstract

Vor dem Hintergrund der Kreuzzüge, die im Laufe der Zeit sowohl bei den Christen als auch Muslimen immer mehr von weltlichen Faktoren beeinflusst wurden, soll anhand von Hans Schiltbergers *Reisebuch* und Bernhards von Breidenbach Bericht über die Fahrt ins Heilige Land untersucht werden, inwiefern die existentielle Bedrohtheit des Autors oder Erzählers die Darstellung des ‚Anderen' beeinflusst, welche Rolle die Zweckgebundenheit des Textes in einer konkreten historischen Gebrauchssituation dabei spielt und welche Abbildungsstrategien bei der Vermittlung des ‚Fremden' benutzt werden. Die in diesem Rahmen nur skizzenhafte Analyse des ‚Anderen' oder ‚Fremden' ist auf die Wahrnehmung und Darstellung der Muslime und des Islam fokussiert.

Dass der Kontakt zwischen fremden Kulturen konfliktreich sein kann, davon zeugen bekanntlich vor allem solche Beziehungen, bei denen die Kulturträger politisch und religiös verfeindeten Mächten angehören.[1] Zu solchen Gegenparteien gehörten im Mittelalter u. a. die Muslime und die Christen, deren Begegnungen im Zeichen der Kreuzzüge standen. Sie wurden wohl, wie Aziz Atiya (1964: 19) schreibt, „auf beiden Seiten als ein Krieg des Glaubens und der Glaubensüberzeugung begonnen". Doch geriet der ‚heilige Krieg' im Laufe der Zeit immer mehr „unter den Einfluß zahlreicher politischer, militärischer und wirtschaftlicher, also weltlicher Faktoren" (Atiya 1964: 142). Das Besorgnis erregende Vordringen der osmanischen Türken auf europäischem Boden im 14. Jahrhundert (Morrall 1985: 155, Melville 1997: 79) bewirkte infolge vermehrter Propagandaschriften ein Erstarken der Kreuzzugsidee im Abendland (Atiya 1964: 91). Nach dem großen Desaster, das die Kreuzzugsritter 1396 in der Schlacht bei Nikopolis erlitten hatten, wurden die Stimmen, die zum Kampf gegen die türkische Herrschaft aufriefen, angesichts der geringen Erfolgsaussichten zwar leiser, aber von einem gänzlichen Verstummen der Befürworter kriegerischer Auseinandersetzungen, die die Expansionsbestrebungen der Osmanen und den Machtbereich des Islam eindämmen sollten, kann keine Rede sein (Atiya 1964: 100f.). Einer der späteren lautstärksten Propagandisten des sogenannten heiligen Krieges war Papst Pius II. (1458-

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[1] Vgl. Osterhammel 2001: 224: „Kulturkontakt ist kaum von den harten Realitäten des Machtkonflikts, in den er in aller Regel eingebettet ist, zu isolieren."

1464), der Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts die europäischen Monarchen aufrief, gemeinsam gegen die türkische Gefahr zu rüsten (Atiya 1964: 106, Morrall 1985: 159). Für einen Feldzug gegen die Türken warben u. a., wenn auch ohne Erfolg, die Päpste Innozenz VIII. (1484-1492) und Leo X. (1513-1521) sowie der ‚letzte Ritter', Kaiser Maximilian I. (1493-1519) (Atiya 1964: 106f.).

Vor diesem historischen Hintergrund soll im Folgenden anhand zweier, gewöhnlich als Reiseliteratur[2] klassifizierter Werke aus dem Spätmittelalter untersucht werden, inwiefern die existentielle Bedrohtheit des Autors oder Erzählers die Darstellung des ‚Anderen' beeinflusst[3], welche Rolle die Zweckgebundenheit des Textes in einer konkreten historischen Gebrauchssituation (Zrenner 1981: 14, Wolf 1989: 85) dabei spielt und welche Abbildungsstrategien (Deeg 1992) bei der Vermittlung des ‚Fremden' benutzt werden. Die in diesem Rahmen nur skizzenhafte Analyse des ‚Anderen' oder ‚Fremden' ist auf die Wahrnehmung und Darstellung der Muslime und des Islam fokussiert. Beim ersten Text handelt es sich um Hans Schiltbergers *Reisebuch*, beim zweiten hingegen um Bernhards von Breidenbach „*werck der fart vber mer zu dē heiligen grab vnſers herren ihesu cristi gen Jerusalem*"[4].

Hans Schiltberger, dessen Lebensweg im Wesentlichen aus seinem *Reisebuch* zu erschließen ist, stammt aus einem altbayrischen Adelsgeschlecht und folgte im Alter von sechzehn Jahren vermutlich aus wirtschaftlichen Gründen dem Aufruf König Sigismunds von Ungarn zum Kreuzzug gegen die Türken. Nach der verheerenden Niederlage bei Nikopolis geriet er in türkische, später in tartarische Gefangenschaft und verbrachte 31 Jahre in der Heidenschaft. Im Jahre 1427 kehrte er nach einer Flucht in seine Heimat zurück und trat in die Dienste Herzog Albrechts III., der vermutlich auch den Münchner Arzt Matheus Brätzl beauftragte, einen Codex mit Schiltbergers Werk und anderen verschiedenen Reiseberichten zusammenzustellen. (Langmantel 1885: 160ff., Wolf 1989: 105f., Wolf 1992: 37f., Deeg 1992: 179, Schiewer 1992: 160ff.)

Es wäre falsch, Schiltbergers *Reisebuch* eindeutig der Reiseliteratur zuzuordnen. Es ist vielmehr ein heterogenes Gebilde verschiedener Textsorten, das man in zwei größere Abschnitte gliedern kann. Der erste Teil (Kap. 1-30) besteht aus einem chronikalischen Bericht über die historischen Ereignisse unter der Herrschaft Bajasids I. und Timurs sowie Schiltbergers späterer Herren. Diese zum Teil aus anderen Quellen (Schiltberger 1885: 9, Anm. 3) entlehnten chronikalischen Nachrichten umrahmen und durchbrechen autobiographische Erzählungen über die Teilnahme am Kreuzzug, die Gefangennahme, seinen missglückten Fluchtversuch und seine Flucht nach Konstantinopel. Der zweite Teil (Kap. 31-67), der den Darstellungskonventionen von Pilgerführern und Reiseberichten eher entspicht, ist eine Kompilation verschiedener Quellen, insbesondere der *Voyages* Jeans de Mandeville. In einem stereotypen Bericht spricht Schiltberger rückblickend über die Völker und Länder, die er als Gefangener kennenlernte. Er befasst sich mit religionsgeschichtlichen, geographischen, historiographischen, literarischen, naturkundlichen und anderen Themen. Kennzeichnend für

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[2] Zu ihrem hybriden Charakter siehe unten.
[3] Zur Erzählerperspektive vgl. Schiewer 1992: 162.
[4] So lautet der Titel seines Werks in der Vorrede auf f. 7ʳ.

diesen ‚enzyklopädischen' (Wolf 1991: 199) Abschnitt, der mit Schiltbergers Heimkehr nach Bayern abschließt, ist der ständige Wechsel zwischen der Ich-Form, die das Berichtete als Selbsterlebtes präsentiert, und der sachlich-distanzierten Beschreibung.[5]

Wie oben angekündigt, werde ich mich in meiner abrisshaften Untersuchung dem Bild der Mohammedaner und des Islam widmen. Angesichts des offensichtlich feindseligen ersten Kontaktes mit den osmanischen Gegnern und seines ‚unfreiwilligen' Aufenthaltes unter den Heiden erscheint es seltsam, dass Schiltberger im autobiographischen und chronikalischen Teil über die Schlacht, seine heidnischen Herren und ihre Gewalttaten unkommentiert[6] aus einer enthobenen Position berichtet, ohne jegliche Rachegefühle zu äußern. Die historiographischen ‚Fakten' sprechen für sich, und obwohl Schiltberger als Militärsklave an vielen Unternehmungen[7] teilgenommen haben muss, verschweigt er seine Rolle in den türkischen und tartarischen Kriegshandlungen. Viele Indizien, wie seine Beförderung vom einfachen Fußsoldaten zum Berittenen und seine detailreichen Kenntnisse islamischer Konversionsrituale (Schiltberger 1885: 93f.), sprechen dafür, dass er seinen Glauben verleugnet hat (Schiewer 1992: 169, Reichert 2001: 132). Ein Glaubensübertritt erscheint um so wahrscheinlicher, als Schiltberger selbst an einer Stelle erwähnt, ein Herzogssohn, dessen Land Bajasid erobert hat, „*kerett sich zu haydenischem glauben, darumb das man in leben ließ*" (9, 10f.). Wie dieser Besiegte mag auch Schiltberger gehandelt haben, um sein Leben zu retten. So zählt ihn auch Folker Reichert (2001: 132) zu den „kulturellen Grenzgängern und Überläufern", die „[t]eils aus Notwendigkeit, teils aus Anziehung [...] einen Modus vivendi in einer zunächst feindlichen, dann aber zunehmend vertrauten Umgebung [suchten und fanden]."[8] In seiner Position als Kämmerer Herzog Albrechts III. war es in der Tat pragmatischer, dass er die heiklen Abschnitte seines Lebens nicht offen legte, denn Renegaten hatten in der christlichen Gesellschaft bekanntlich einen üblen Leumund.

Bei der Beschreibung der Heiden verzichtet Schiltberger nicht nur auf Diffamierungen, er erwähnt sogar auch ihre positiven Seiten, wie den Umstand, dass in den acht Spitälern der damaligen türkischen Hauptstadt Bursa alle armen Leute aufgenommen werden, ungeachtet ihrer Konfession (53), woraus der Leser auf ihre hier zu Tage tretende Barmherzigkeit schließen kann, die die kulturelle Grenze überschreitet. Im Zusammenhang mit seinem missglückten Fluchtversuch führt Schiltberger sogar einen „Beweis osmanischen Ehrgefühls und Gerechtigkeitssinns" (Melville 1997: 91) an.

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[5] Zur Struktur von Schiltbergers *Reisebuch* vgl. Wolf 1989: 105f., Schiewer 1992: 165ff. – Zu Unrecht nennt Melville (1997: 90) Schiltbergers Text einen „augenfällig subjektiven Erlebnisbericht".

[6] Wie Khattab (1982: 204) feststellt, gibt es in Schiltbergers Werk über seine abenteuerliche Reise nur „wenig persönliche Äußerungen".

[7] Er bekundet seine Teilnahme mit Formulierungen, wie 19, 31; 22, 13: „*pei/in dem zug was ich auch*"; 37, 27: „*do cham ich selb V zu im und zugen mitt im in die grossen Thartaria*"; 42, 7: „*do ich pei was*". Die Beteiligung Schiltbergers an einigen geschilderten Begebenheiten ist allerdings nicht möglich, weil sie vor seiner Zeit liegen, vgl. z. B. Schiltberger 1885: 9ff.: „*Bajasid erobert Karaman. (1392)*", 12f.: „*Bajasid vertreibt den beherrscher von Siwas aus dem gebiet von Marsvani. (1395)*", 14f.: „*Bajasid erobert Dschanik. (1393)*".

[8] Eine Assimilation vermutet Ritter (1993: 191) auch bei Balthasar Sturmer, der als deutscher Sklave die Eroberung von Tunis im Jahr 1535 mit eigenen Augen erlebt.

Die Kapitel 49 bis 59 (84-97) widmen sich der Religionsgeschichte, sie handeln u. a. von Mohammeds Leben und Wirken, den Religionsvorschriften, dem Fastengebot und den Moralgesetzen des Islam sowie dem mohammedanischen Urteil über die Christen. Von einer Polemik gegen Mohammed, wie sie Stefan Deeg (1992: 179) Schiltberger in seiner Biographie des Religionsstifters unterstellt, kann jedoch keine Rede sein. Das wird um so deutlicher, wenn man sie mit der Darstellung Bernhards von Breidenbach[9] konfrontiert. Schiltberger mag im Vergleich zur Schilderung einer Episode aus Mohammeds Leben, wie sie in muslimischen Quellen dargeboten wird, zwar einige Details[10] zugefügt haben, die der Leser der mittelalterlichen Tradition zufolge negativ auslegen kann, aber ob ein bewusster Angriff auf den Propheten von Schiltberger intendiert war, ist fraglich. Der Verfasser könnte die besagten Details vielmehr aus einer Vorlage kritiklos übernommen haben. Eine Polemik stünde auch im Widerspruch zu der ansonsten eher sachlichen Beschreibung mohammedanischer Riten und Bräuche, die sich jeglicher negativer Wertung entziehen.

Kennzeichnend für Schiltbergers Vermittlung des Islam, der Mohammedaner und ihrer Sichtweisen ist die Übernahme der ‚fremden' Perspektive, die sich in Formulierungen wie „*als ich gehört han von den haiden*" (84, 17) oder „*das han ich nur von den haiden vernommen*" (95, 1f.) kundtut. Es wäre falsch zu behaupten, dass für Schiltbergers Darstellung das Christentum die maßgebende Folie sei[11]. Wenn Schiltberger zum besseren Verständnis der Sachlage als neutralen Vergleich Deutungsmuster des Christentums heranzieht, dann geschieht dies in erster Linie um des besseren Verständnisses der fremden Religion willen und nicht aufgrund eines christlichen Superioritätsbewusstseins oder einer gezielten Herabsetzung des Islam und seiner Bräuche. In diesem Zusammenhang möchte ich zwei Beispiele aus der Beschreibung islamischer Religionsvorschriften anführen, der rituellen Waschung und der Begehung des Freitags:

> *[...] und wann ainer mitt seinem leyb sündt, so tar er nicht in den tempell gen piß er sich überal an dem leyb wescht; und das thun sie in ainer solchen maynung, <u>sam wir uns peichten</u>, wann der haiden maynt wann er sich wasch, so sey er <u>als reyn als ein Christ</u>, der sich mit andacht und mitt rechter reu peicht ainem priester; [...]* (86, 31-33 – 87, 1-3)[12]

> *Es ist auch zu mercken, das sie den freytag feyern <u>als wir den suntag</u> [...]* (87, 31f.)[13]

Nach Jürgen Osterhammel (2001: 60) könnte man diese Art von Vergleich als ‚symmetrischen Vergleich' bezeichnen, der ‚gerechter' ist als der ‚asymmetrische

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[9] Siehe unten.

[10] Die mittellose Herkunft des Propheten soll auf seine geistige Armut hinweisen, die schwarze Wolke soll ein „drohendes Vorzeichen der blutrünstigen Gewaltherrschaft des Islam und der Unterdrückung des Christentums" bedeuten, die Bezugsetzung von Mohammeds tausendjähriger Herrschaft zur Apk. 20, 7-10 soll auf seine Verbindung zu Satan anspielen (Deeg 1992: 182).

[11] Das behauptet Deeg (1992, 182) hinsichtlich Mohammeds Biographie.

[12] Hervorhebungen von der Verf.

[13] Hervorhebungen von der Verf.

Vergleich'; denn „er zielt auf die gleichmäßige Erfassung beider Fälle, von denen keiner logisch oder normativ privilegiert wird."

Im Vergleich zur generell positiven Darstellung der Mohammedaner und ihrer ethischen Grundsätze dringt in Schiltbergers *Reisebericht* an manchen Stellen sogar christliche Sittenkritik (Schiewer 1992: 169) durch. So wird beispielsweise anhand des Bartscherens das islamische Demutsgebot der Hoffart der Christen gegenübergestellt. Christen und Heiden bilden hier im Sinne von Reinhart Koselleck „asymmetrische Gegenbegriffe"[14], wobei sich entgegen der spätmittelalterlichen Tradition die Heiden in „wertender Absicht" über die Christen erheben und nicht umgekehrt. Allerdings distanziert sich hier der Autor in gewisser Hinsicht von der Aussage über die moralische Unterlegenheit der Christen, indem er die Kritik in den Mund der Heiden legt:

> *„Das thun die Cristen und dynen iren frauen domitt und ist ein grosse widerwärtigkaitt an den Cristen, das sie die gestalt vercheren, da sie Gott inn beschaffen hat."* (91, 16-19)

Schiltbergers neutrale, wenn nicht gar positive Darstellung der Muslime und ihrer Religion lässt sich nicht nur mit seiner mutmaßlichen Assimilation an die fremde Kultur erklären, die ihn vor einer existentiellen Bedrohung durch die ‚Heiden' bewahrte. Ein anderer wichtiger Aspekt, den man bei der Konstruktion des Fremdenbildes beachten sollte, ist auch die Funktion des Werkes in einem konkreten Gebrauchszusammenhang (Wolf 1991: 207, 214). Wie oben angedeutet, war die Sammelhandschrift, in der Schiltbergers *Reisebuch* zu finden ist, für die Rezeption am herzoglichen Hof Albrechts III. gedacht, der u. a. vor allem an Sachinformationen über fremde Völker und Länder interessiert war (Wolf 1989: 106, Wolf 1992, 38). Schiltbergers Bericht sollte vornehmlich der Belehrung und der Unterhaltung dienen und nicht als Hetzkampagne gegen die Heiden fungieren.

Einen ganz anderen Zweck verfolgte indes das militante Werk von Breidenbachs Pilgerfahrt ins Heilige Land, zu dessen weiter Verbreitung zweifellos die Illustrationen des Utrechter Malers Erhard Reuwich beitrugen.[15] Der aus einem oberhessischen Adelsgeschlecht stammende Bernhard von Breidenbach, Kämmerer und späterer Dekan des Mainzer Doms, (Falk 1879: 48, Ganz-Blättler 1990, 78) begann seine Reise, die der üblichen Wallfahrtsroute folgte, im April 1483 in Begleitung des Grafen Johannes von Solms und des Ritters Philipp von Bicken. Im Januar 1484 kehrte er, allerdings ohne den Grafen, der in Ägypten der Ruhr zum Opfer gefallen war, nach Venedig zurück (Weinmayer 1982: 166ff.).

Bernhard von Breidenbach gilt nicht als alleiniger Autor der Schrift. Seiner Selbstbenennung als „*auctor principalis*" in der lateinischen Version kann man entnehmen, dass noch andere Verfasser am Entstehen des Werkes beteiligt waren. Felix Fabri nennt in seinem Bericht den Mainzer Theologieprofessor und Dominikanermönch Martin Roth aus Pforzheim, der wenn nicht als Verfasser, dann zumindest als Bearbeiter einiger historisch-theologischer Kapitel und dreier rhetorisch

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[14] Zit. n. Münkler / Ladwig 1997: 18.

[15] Der Aufstellung von Falk (1879: 104f.) zufolge erschienen in der Zeit von 1486 bis 1522 16 Editionen in sieben Sprachen. – Zur Beliebtheit und weiten Verbreitung des Werkes vgl. u. a. auch Moritz (1970: 70), Khattab (1982: 35f.) u. Ganz-Blättler (1990: 79).

gefeilter Klagen angesehen werden kann.[16] Dem Usus mittelalterlicher Pilgerschriften gemäß, enthält das vorliegende Buch nur wenige Angaben über die persönlichen Erlebnisse des Ich-Erzählers oder eigene Beobachtungen. Bei der Schilderung der fremden Völker und Länder wird vielmehr auf die theologische und zum Teil literarische Tradition zurückgegriffen. Es ist vor allem die Bibel, die als unantastbare Deutungsfolie bei der Beschreibung der heiligen Stätten verwendet wurde (Simon 1989: 175). Andere Quellen, die dem Werk zu Grunde liegen, sind vornehmlich die Schriften kirchlicher Autoritäten und Historiographen. Zu nennen wären u. a. Isidor von Sevilla, Burchardus de Monte Sion, Vincent de Beauvais, Jacques de Vitry, Hugues de Fleury, Petrus Alphonsus und Bartholomaeus von Luca. Nicht wenigen Passagen diente als Vorlage das Werk des Franziskaners Paul Walther von Guglingen, der zusammen mit Felix Fabri und Bernhard von Breidenbach von Jerusalem zum Katharinenkloster auf dem Sinai reiste und mit ihnen in die Heimat zurückkehrte (Moritz 1970: 81ff., Ganz-Blättler 1990: 78f.).

Wie bei Schiltbergers Reisebericht, so handelt es sich auch beim vorliegenden Buch, das aus zwei Teilen besteht, um eine ‚hybride Konstruktion' verschiedener literarischer Formen, „nämlich die des Städtelobs, des Itinerars, des Pilgerführers, des gerichtlichen Disputs, der Predigt, [...] der Historiographie und des Reisetagebuchs" (Zrenner 1981: 60). Nach einer Widmung (f. 2ʳ-4ʳ) an Breidenbachs Dienstherrn, den Mainzer Erzbischof Berthold von Henneberg, der als Gönner und Auftraggeber (Wolf 1989: 96, Wolf 1992: 35) der Schrift betrachtet wird, folgen das Inhaltsverzeichnis (f. 4ʳ-6ʳ) und das von Breidenbach wohl selbst verfasste Vorwort (f. 7ʳ-10ᵛ). Nach dem eigentlichen Pilgerbericht nach Jerusalem (f. 11ʳ-45ʳ) stehen Kapitel mit geographischer Thematik (f. 45ʳ-67ᵛ), denen sich ein Bericht über die „*sytten gewonheyten vñ yrtūmen*" (f. 67ᵛ) der Einwohner des Heiligen Landes (f. 67ᵛ-106ʳ) und drei Klagen (f. 106ʳ-113ʳ) anschließen. Der erste Teil endet mit einer Vision Karls des Kahlen (f. 113ʳ-114ᵛ). Der zweite Teil umfasst u. a. eine Vorrede (f. 117ʳ-121ʳ), den Bericht über die Reise von Jerusalem zum Katharinenkloster und die Rückfahrt über Ägypten nach Venedig (f. 121ʳ-148ᵛ), eine Liste mit den Inseln von Venedig nach Rhodos (f. 149ʳ-149ᵛ) und ein arabisch-deutsches Wörterverzeichnis (f. 150ʳ-150ᵛ). Der Anhang enthält ein Vorwort (f. 151ʳ), das die christlichen Herrscher zum Widerstand gegen die türkische Expansion ermahnt, und drei Berichte über den Verlust Konstantinopels (f.151ʳ-153ᵛ), Nigroponts (f. 154ʳ-156ʳ) und Otrantos (f. 163ᵛ-164ʳ), die das Ausmaß der Türkengefahr im Mittelmeer illustrieren sollen. Die Schilderung der erfolgreichen Abwehr der Eindringlinge auf Rhodos (f. 156ᵛ-163ᵛ) soll dagegen die Christenheit zum Kampf ermutigen (Zrenner 1981: 117, Wolf 1989, 96f.).

Eine der schon im Vorwort des ersten Teils formulierten Intentionen des Werks ist die Befreiung des Heiligen Landes (Wolf 1989: 95):

> *Zů jungſt begere ich eyns gůthertzigen leſers • vnd bitte den allmechtigen got daz er allen ſynē waren glaubigen nit allein dē weg zů diſen landen öffenner mach ſunder auch ynen groſſer lieb vnd begird zů den ſelben yngyße • da mitt ſye ettwan wyder vmb vnder gewalt vnd gebiet der*

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[16] Zur Autorschaft vgl. u. a. Moritz (1970: 87) u. Weinmayer (1982: 168ff.).

criſtenheit kommē • yme gott zů lob vnd zů eer allem criſtenlichem volck Amen • (f. 10ᵛ)

Wie sich diese Zielsetzung auf das im Werk präsentierte Bild des Islam und seiner Anhänger auswirkte, möchte ich im Folgenden skizzieren. Die für einen Macht-konflikt typische Ausgangsbasis bei der Beschreibung des Gegners ist, wie allgemein bekannt, die Dichotomisierung (Osterhammel 2001: 61). Bei der Gegenüberstellung von Christentum vs. Islam wird die Überlegenheit des christlichen Glaubens[17] von vornherein als gegeben angesehen, er gilt als unantastbare Wahrheit, der gegenüber sich andere Religionen nur als verurteilungswürdige Irrtümer erweisen können. In der Vorrede zu den Sitten und Gebräuchen im Heiligen Land wird die moralische Superiorität klar zum Ausdruck gebracht:

> *Zů lobe vnd ere* vnſerem *eynigen waren criſtenlichen glauben* vnd der heiligen gemeynen Rŏmſchen kyrchen • welche *on mackel vnd runtzel* eyn ſchone ſponſa oder brutt yrem criſto dem *waren* brutkemmer getrulichen belybet vereyniget • [...] • Aber *zů ſchande vnd laſter* der *vngleubigen* hoffertigen vnnd *verſtopften ſarracen* die deß *falſchen* vñ *verfluchten machometi vngottlich* vnd *ytel geſatz* ja *fabel* nachuolgende • (f. 68ʳ)[18]

Um die vermeintliche Überlegenheit des Christentums zu demonstrieren, bedient sich der Autor der sog. ‚invertierenden' Darstellung des Islam, der, vermischt mit dem jüdischen Glauben,[19] als Abspaltung oder Derivat des Christentums erscheint und dadurch automatisch als eine verfälschte Variante der Offenbarung betrachtet wird.[20] Gert Melville (1997: 83) spricht in solchen Fällen von einer „ideellen Hegemonisierung", die u. a. das Gefühl der Überlegenheit affirmiert.

Im ‚asymmetrischen Vergleich' werden die christlichen Gebote nicht nur als moralisch überlegen präsentiert, die islamischen Religionsvorschriften werden zusätzlich noch verzerrt. Als Beispiel sei die Bedeutung des Freitags für die Moslem erwähnt, der in Anspielung auf die Unterstellung der Lustbegierde mit dem ‚Tag der Venus' in Zusammenhang gebracht wird:

> *[Mohammed] auch gebotten hatt den ſynen daz ſie den tag veneris den wir frytag nēnen ſolten fyren vnd eren zů ewigen zyten als dan die ſarraceni noch halten eben als wir den ſontag •* (f. 76ʳ)

Der Autor geizt nicht mit abfälligen Urteilen über den Islam und seine Anhänger. An kaum einer Stelle wird Mohammed nicht mit einem abschätzigen Namen etikettiert. Voller Hass sind insbesondere die Schilderungen der Türken, „*die der rŏmſchen kirchen*

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[17] Die Überlegenheit des Christentums äußert sich auch im Brief Pius' II. an den türkischen Sultan Mechmed II. Vgl. Morrall 1985: 155f.

[18] Hervorhebungen von der Verf.

[19] Bernhard von Breidenbach 1486: f. 69ᵛ: „[...]doch lyſet man auch daz er [...] offt vnd dick mit jůden vñ criſten gewandelet • vil von dem alten vñ nuwen teſtament von ynen habe gelernet • vnd dar zů ein groſſer zauberer ſy geweſen •" Vgl. auch f. 71ᵛ.

[20] Vgl. Deeg 1992: 175f.: Inversion im Sinne von "Abwandlung oder Verkehrung des Eigenen" u. Melville 1997: 83.

vnd den crißen luthen ſo offt vñ dick groſſen ſchaden zů fůgen" (f. 78ʳ). Die Bedrohung durch die ‚Fremden' führt zu einer Abwehrreaktion (Münkler/Ladwig 1997: 26, Zrenner 1981: 136, 146, Palm 1982: 171), die sich in der Anhäufung von Invektiven und Mängeln des Eindringlings manifestiert. Diese hat die Funktion ‚Feindbilder' zu schaffen (Deeg 1992: 174), die zweierlei bezwecken: zum einen die Einigung (Münkler/ Ladwig 1997: 17) der einander bekämpfenden Christen (f. 112ᵛ), zum anderen die Rechtfertigung eines neuen Kreuzzugs (Wolf 1992: 35):

> *Welchem allem nach ich all criſtgleubig menſchen bytte vnd vermane durch das ſyegſam crutz criſti das edel zeychen vnſer erlöſung • daz ſie wyder ſollich ſchwere vynd gottes vnd alles gottes dienſtß vnd criſtenlicher erſamikeyt • ſich ſelber wollen wappenen • beſunder mit ynbrunſtiger liebe deß glaubens • criſtenliche fryheit vnnd heilikeyt zů beſchyrmen vñ zů behalten • Darvmb erſtlich vñ anfenglich hyn legende alle zwytracht • krieg • vnfryd vnd vneynikeyt vmb criſtus willen ye eyner dem andern nachlaſſende als auch criſtus vns allen hatt nachgelaſſen vnd thut noch teglich damitt wir vereynet vnd deßhalb ſtercker gemacht den vnſeligen turcken ja ſathanā mitſampt aller ſyner macht vnder vnſer fuß mögen bringen ja vertretten •* (f. 153ᵛ)

Diese Intention fügt sich auch in den Erwartungshorizont des Rezipientenkreises. Der Mainzer Erzbischof Berthold von Henneberg, dem das Werk gewidmet ist, setzte sich engagiert für die Einheit des Reiches ein, und Kaiser Maximilian I. (1493-1519), der wohl auch zur Leserschaft[21] dieses repräsentativen Werkes gehörte, war einer der späten Verfechter des Kreuzzuggedankens (Atiya 1964: 107, Wolf 1989: 96f., Wolf 1992: 35).

Ich komme nun zum Schluss meiner Ausführungen. Ob das erstellte Bild des ‚Fremden' den ‚wahren' Sachverhalt mitteilt, ist nicht von Bedeutung. Wichtig ist vielmehr, ob die Darstellung den Funktionen des Textes und den Rezeptionserwartungen in einem konkreten historischen Kontext entspricht. Einen beträchtlichen Einfluss auf die Vermittlung der fremden Kultur haben, wie man den behandelten Werken entnehmen kann, insbesondere die Machtkonstellationen zwischen den Trägern der ‚eigenen' und denen der ‚fremden' Kultur. Toleranz gegenüber dem ‚Anderen' erscheint im wesentlichen nur dann möglich, wenn das Vordringen des ‚Fremden' den eigenen Herrschaftsbereich nicht beeinträchtigt oder wenn, wie bei Hans Schiltberger, eine Assimilation an die fremde Kultur erfolgt ist. Der Kulturkonflikt ist letztlich nichts anderes als ein Machtkonflikt.

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[21] 1486 fuhr Bernhard von Breidenbach mit dem Kurfürsten, Erzbischof Berthold von Henneberg, nach Aachen, wo Maximilian zum römischen König gewählt wurde. Vgl. Strachan 1975: 25.

QUELLEN UND FORSCHUNGSLITERATUR

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VÖLKER UND RELIGIONEN IM ROMAN *DIE VERLORENE ERDE* VON ALFRED BRUST

Sigita Barniškienė

Zusammenfassung

Der erste Roman Alfred Brusts *Die verlorene Erde* erschien 1926 und für diesen Roman erhielt der Autor 1929 den Kleist- Preis. Der ostpreußische Schriftsteller Brust (1891 – 1934) wählt den Handlungsraum zwischen Königsberg, Grodno und Wilna, zu beiden Seiten der deutsch-litauischen Grenze. Die handelnden Personen sind Nachkommen der Altpruzzen. Auch der jüdische Glaube und die mystisierten Gestalten von Juden spielen im Roman eine entscheidende Rolle. Brust will dem Leser den Gedanken näherbringen, dass die moralische Erneuerung mit dem Streben des Menschen zu Gott mit Hilfe einer oder einiger Religionen zusammenhängt.

1. ALFRED BRUST – EIN EXPRESSIONISTISCHER AUTOR AUS OSTPREUßEN

Der Expressionismus wird als Kunstrichtung bezeichnet, die von 1910 bis 1923 anhielt, sich „gegen die Wirklichkeitsnachbildung des Naturalismus, des überzogenen Schönheitsideals des Impressionismus bzw. der Neuromantik und der Poesie des L'art pour l'art im Symbolismus abgrenzte" (Zirbs 1998: 129).

Alfred Brust (geb. 1891 in Insterburg – gest. 1934 in Königsberg) wird in der deutschen Literaturgeschichte zusammen mit Paul Zech, Walther Heymann als expressionistischer Schriftsteller bezeichnet. Vor allem in seinen Dramen findet man expressionistische Züge: „Alfred Brust (...) stand in der immer wieder zum Schwärmertum tendierenden Tradition ostpreußischen Gottsuchertums. Sie ließ ihn in seinen Dichtungen Ausdrucksformen verwenden, die dem expressionistischen Drama eigentümlich sind: der Dichter wird zum Prediger, die Bühne zur Kanzel" (Motekat 1977: 359). Brust predigte in seinen Dramen Erlösung der Menschheit durch die Abkehr von der zivilisierten bürgerlichen lasterhaften Gesellschaft, durch die Hinwendung zum primitiven Leben in der Eintracht mit der Natur (*Heiligung*), durch die freiwillige Wahl der Armut, Kontemplation, Selbstopferung (*Der Tag des Zorns, Der ewige Mensch),* durch die schicksalhafte, alle Konventionen und Schranken durchbrechende Liebe (*Das Spiel Christa vom Schmerz der Schönheit des Weibes, Der singende Fisch*) und schließlich auch durch die Überbrückung und den Zusammenhang zwischen den Kulturen und Religionen (*Die Schlacht der Heilande, Ostrom*).

Simone Dannenfeld, die einen Überblick über die Ideen des dramatischen Werks von Brust gemacht hat, hebt im Besonderen die Mischung von Religionen bei Brust hervor:

> Besonderes Gewicht erfahren die Bergpredigt und die Apokalypse des Johannes, was wiederum die chiliastische Orientierung auf ein apokalyptisches Weltende hin unterstreicht, die im Expressionismus nicht selten war. Brust verwendet liturgische Wendungen und Gesänge und stellt habitualisierte Formulierungen und Handlungsweisen unterschiedlichster christlicher Kirchen dar, zu denen u. a. die römisch-katholische, die russisch-orthodoxe, aber auch kleine pietistische Glaubensgemeinschaften gehören. Einen weiteren Schwerpunkt bilden die ursprünglichen Naturreligionen Osteuropas, denen sich Brust besonders verbunden fühlte, aber auch islamische und buddhistische Motive bzw. Verbindungen zu Friedrich Nietzsches „Zarathustra‚‚ sind angedeutet (Dannenfeld 2001: 185).

Es ist zu vermuten, dass die Problematik, die das dramatische Werk Brusts geprägt hat, sich auch in seinen späteren epischen Werken niedergeschlagen hat. Der Schriftsteller hat sich selbst nicht als einen echten Expressionisten gesehen und wollte keiner literarischen Strömung zugerechnet werden. In seinem einzigen Gedichtband *Ich bin* (1929) findet man folgende Zeilen:

> Ich bin nicht der, den alle meinen.
> Ich bin ganz anders als wir sind.
> Ich scheine nirgend durchzuscheinen.
> Es kann mir nichts vom Auge weinen,
> Und dennoch wein' ich wie der Wind (*Ich bin*, 7).

In einem Brief an Hugo von Hofmannsthal vom 26.12.1926 beklagt sich Brust darüber, dass obwohl die Uraufführung seines Dramas *Tolkening* in Berlin ein großer Erfolg gewesen ist, die Kritiker sein Werk weder verstehen noch richtig einschätzen konnten:

> Die Uraufführung vor mehr als zwei Jahren war bei mangelhaftester Darstellung ein ungewöhnlicher Berliner Publikumserfolg mit 18 Vorhängen am Schluß! Aber es geschah, daß die Berliner Presse, die mich in den Expressionistentopf geworfen hatte, und nun nicht aus noch ein wußte, mir jede dichterische Begabung absprach, den Erfolg einstimmig verschwieg und meine Person mit Ausdrücken belegte, die jeder Beschreibung spotten (*Hofmannsthal-Blätter*, 64).

Nachdem Brust viele Dramen geschrieben hatte, die auf den Bühnen Deutschlands, Österreichs, Lettlands aufgeführt wurden, wendete er sich den Prosaarbeiten zu. Nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg, während dessen er als Zensor beim Buchprüfungsamt in Ober-Ost in Bialystok, Kaunas und Riga tätig gewesen war, blieb er 1918 – 1919 als Delegierter im Soldatenrat in Riga, von 1919 bis 1923 lebte er in Heydekrug als freier Schriftsteller, von 1923 bis 1932 – in Cranz auf der Kurischen Nehrung. Brust hatte eine große

Familie zu ernähren, was ihm immer schwerfiel, besonders nachdem er 1928 an Lungentuberkulose erkrankt war (Denkler 1971: 299). Von den Prosaarbeiten erwartete Brust einen größeren materiellen Nutzen, deswegen widmete er sich von 1923 an der epischen Gattung: bereits 1923 wurde sein Geschichtenband *Himmelstraßen* herausgegeben, 1926 erscheint sein erster Roman *Die verlorene Erde,* 1928 die Geschichte *Jutt und Jula,* 1930 der Roman *Festliche Ehe,* 1931 Erzählungen *Der Lächler von Dunnersholm,* 1933 der Roman *Eisbrand.*

Für seinen ersten Roman *Die verlorene Erde* erhielt Brust 1929 den Kleist-Preis. Der Roman vereint in sich viele Ideen, Motive, die aus dem dramatischen Werk Brusts zum Teil transferiert worden sind. Die ostpreußische Heimat des Schriftstellers und die Erlöserfigur prägen das ganze Romangeschehen. Der Schriftsteller selbst hat die Wirkung seines ersten Romans folgenderweise beschrieben:

> Und nun brachte Elster in seinem Verlag meinen ersten Roman heraus. Das Erstaunen ist groß Selbst die Antisemiten haben einen entscheidenden Stoß bekommen, den man überall durchfühlt. Ostpreußen ist erneuert, trotzdem hier noch keine 20 Exemplare verkauft sind (*Hofmansthal-Blätter*, 64).

Die Aufgabe dieses Artikels ist, nicht nur den Ideengehalt des Romans zu charakterisieren, sondern vor allem das Thema des Zusammenlebens der Völker und der verschiedenen Religionen Ostpreußens zu erschließen. Dabei versuche ich, mich auf das Prinzip des Vergleichs der fiktiven Romanwelt mit den kulturhistorischen Quellen zu stützen.

2. DIE JÜDISCHE LINIE IM ROMAN

Der Protagonist des Romans Graf Sauß Dagda, der auf Dagdakehmen bei Memel wohnt, ist seiner Herkunft nach ein Pruzze. Der Autor charakterisiert die Nachkommen der Pruzzen als besonders heftige Menschen, deren Charaktere ausgeprägt gut oder schlecht sind, deren Leben zwischen zwei Extremen schwanken:

> Und die Geschichte weist bedeutsamste Geister auf, die zeit ihres irdischen Wandelns kalt oder heiß waren, Himmel oder Hölle vertraten. Des lauen Durchschnitts hatten sie sich nie zu erfreuen (*Die verlorene Erde*, 7).

Solch einer sei auch Graf Sauß Dagda gewesen: er war sauf- und rauflustig, manchmal gewalttätig, manchmal großmütig und hatte etwas Dämonisches in sich. Nach solch einer Charakteristik der Hauptfigur des Romans stellt Brust eine Gegenfigur des Juden Chaim Asisohn vor. Er ist ein Kleinhändler, ernährt eine Frau und fünf Kinder, aber er lehnt es ab, Mann oder Vater zu sein:

> ... und aus der Milde seines Herzens heraus und weil er gerade in dieser Ortschaft wohnen müsse, sorge er für die Nahrung und moralische Stütze der Kleinen. Und es soll rührend gewesen sein, anzusehen, wenn Chaim Asisohn mit dem schmerzlichen Gesicht seines Volkes am Freitag vor

Sonnenuntergang seiner Behausung zugeeilt sei, wo ihn der gedeckte und erleuchtete Tisch erwartet habe. Er brach das Brot und sprach die guten Bitten. Er wußte in den alten Büchern Bescheid. Aber er soll doch auch das Neue Testament besessen und gekannt haben. – (*Die verlorene Erde*, 10).

In dieser Charakteristik des jüdischen Händlers gibt es etwas Geheimnisvolles – dass er nur für die Familie sorgt, ohne Vater und Mann zu sein. Als prägnanteste Charakterzüge werden seine Milde, moralische Reinheit und Gottesfurcht, ausgedrückt in dem pflichtbewussten Feiern des Sabbaths, genannt. Im Vergleich zu Sauß Dagda ist Chaim Asisohn eine höchst moralische und harmonische Person. Der Autor macht eine Bemerkung über die Zweckmäßigkeit der Erwähnung des jüdischen Händlers, die als eine Vorausdeutung zu verstehen ist: „- und das wird erst am Ende unserer Geschichte Sinn bekommen" (*Die verlorene Erde*, 9).

In der Tat spielt der Jude Asisohn in der Entwicklung der Fabel und im Ideengehalt des Romans eine sehr wichtige Rolle. Gleich nach der Vorstellung dieser gegensätzlichen handelnden Personen erzählt Brust eine Geschichte, die von ihrem Konflikt besonderer Art handelt, die geistige Umwandlung des Grafen beeinflusst und auf die geheimnisvollen mystischen Eigenschaften des Juden Asisohn hindeutet. Man kann das Wesen dieser Geschichte folgenderweise wiedergeben: Sauß Dagda kehrte von einer Zecherei betrunken auf seinem Ross durch den Wald nach Hause zurück und traf am Kreuz, das zum Andenken einiger von Wölfen zerrissenen Schulkinder errichtet worden war, Chaim Asisohn. Der Graf empfand eine tiefe Abneigung gegen die Juden und damals hat er aus Wut mit der Peitsche auf das Kruzifix eingehauen. Chaim Asisohn hat den Grafen zur Mäßigung ermahnt und das Kreuz des Segens über ihn geschlagen. Seit dieser Zeit schämte sich Graf Sauß Dagda und versuchte, dem Juden auszuweichen, was ihm schwer fiel, weil der Jude überall in der Gegend seine Waren herumtrug. Sauß Dagda hasste den Juden und hat sich eines Tages an ihm grausam gerächt: er hat den Juden überfallen und seinen Schädel mit einer Säure eingerieben, so dass die Kopfhaut geschält wurde. Seit diesem Tag war Chaim Asisohn verschwunden. Doch er taucht im Roman noch mehrmals unter einem anderen Namen auf und wird zum Beschützer der Familie des Grafen Dagda, der nach diesen Schandtaten eine positive geistige Umwandlung durchmacht. Ein Bauer erzählt auf dem Sterbebett dem Grafen, dass er Asisohn nach zehn Jahren im Wald getroffen habe. Er habe eine farbige karierte Perücke getragen und Folgendes ausgesagt:

Mein Leben ist lang. Viel zu lang ist mein Leben. Ich sehe den Grafen und sehe sein Kind wieder (*Die verlorene Erde*, 14).

Das klingt seltsam, weil Graf Dagda zu dieser Zeit noch keine Frau und keine Kinder hatte. An dieser Stelle lässt der Autor den Leser begreifen, dass der Jude eine mystische Gestalt ist.

Henry Kuritz, der das Schaffen Brusts in seiner Magisterarbeit eingehend analysiert hat, bemerkt, dass Brust mit den Legenden des Baalschem und mit den anderen Erzählungen der Chassiden von Martin Buber (1878-1965) bekannt gewesen

ist und sie in seinen Werken mit der Genehmigung des Autors gebraucht hat (Kuritz 1998: 15). Der Chassidismus ist die Lehre einer ostjüdischen Sekte, die gegen die Mitte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts entstand. Der Stifter dieser Sekte ist der Rabbi Israel ben Elieser, der Baalschem, Meister des Gottesnamens, genannt wurde und etwa 1700 – 1760 in Podolien und Wolhynien gelebt hat (Buber 1955: 7). Er wurde von seinen Schülern für den Heiligen gehalten, für den Messias, der die Welt erlösen wird. Baalschem hat eine große Kluft zwischen Gott und Welt gesehen und strebte in seiner Lehre danach, die Sphäre des Heiligen zu erweitern, damit die ganze Welt geheiligt wird. Das Böse existiere nicht, weil es kraftlos ist, die menschlichen Sünden sind Ausdruck des Guten, denn auch in den Sünden des Menschen äußert sich die Schechina – die Gottespräsenz. Jeder Gedanke, jedes Wort und jede Tat können heilig werden, wenn sie durch die Kawwana – die gute Intention – geheiligt werden (Sodeika 1998: 55). Über die Kawwana wird Folgendes ausgesagt:

> Und dies ist der Sinn und die Bestimmung der Kawwana: daß es dem Menschen gegeben ist, die Gefallenen zu heben und die Gefangenen zu befreien. Nicht bloß warten, nicht bloß ausschauen: wirken kann der Mensch an der Erlösung der Welt. Das eben ist Kawwana: das Mysterium der Seele, die darauf gerichtet ist, die Welt zu erlösen (Buber 1955: 49).

Die Idee der Erlösung der sündhaften und bösen, deswegen auch der verlorenen Erde, hat Brust aus dem Chassidismus in seinen Roman transponiert. Nach diesem Prinzip der Heiligung und der Erlösung handeln hier alle Figuren, vor allem aber der mystische Jude Chaim Asisohn. Er segnet seinen Peiniger – den Grafen Dagda gleich nach seiner Schandtat, und infolgedessen erfährt der Letztere einen inneren Wandel, studiert Hebräisch, den Talmud und andere Bücher, so dass er am Ende des Romans zum jüdischen Glauben übergetreten ist, an einem jüdischen Fest in Wilna teilnimmt und tödlich verletzt auf den Armen von Asius (so wird jetzt Chaim Asisohn genannt) stirbt. Über den Asius wird der Gedanke geäußert, dass er möglicherweise die Verkörperung der Seele von Baalschem, des wundertätigen Zaddiks, ist:

> Wer war Asius? Wer konnte es sagen? Wer konnte es wissen? Die einen rieten, es sei Elija, die andern meinten, es sei der Baalschemtow, dessen Seele von Zeit zu Zeit menschliche Gestalt annehme und sich auf den vorbereitenden Spuren des endlichen messias bewege, seine unbewußten Schritte zu schützen und zu lenken (*Die verlorene Erde*, 307).

Der Jude Asius, oder Asser, beeinflusst im großen Maße auch das Leben des Sohns von Sauß Dagda Elnis. Elnis bedeutet auf Litauisch *der Hirsch*, und dieser Name hat wahrscheinlich einen symbolischen Sinn – Elnis ist der Nachkomme der Pruzzen und fühlt in sich eine besondere Bestimmung Gottes, König oder Erlöser der Menschheit zu sein. Über das Verhältnis von Brust zu dem altpreußischen heidnischen Glauben hat der Literaturwissenschaftler Josef Nadler die Meinung geäußert, dass der Schriftsteller an die Wiedergeburt der altpruzzischen Macht geglaubt habe, sich selbst einen Heiden genannt und die Naturreligion gepredigt habe. Im Hirsch soll er die Spuren der alten Heimat gesehen haben (Šešplaukis – Tyruolis 1995: 183).

Elnis ist der gute und edle Sohn von Sauß Dagda und seiner dämonischen Frau Hussa, der zweite Sohn Pupill ist grausam, böse und hasst vom Grunde seines Herzens seinen Bruder, weil beide auf eigene Weise Birute, die Tochter des Gutsverwalters Schomp, lieben. Pupill wird eifersüchtig, als er das Spiegelchen von Birute an der Kette um den Hals seines Bruders bemerkt und den Pfeil aus dem Bogen auf seinen Bruder schießt. Der Pfeil trifft auf die Oberlippe von Elnis, der mit dem blutenden Munde die Geschichte von Kain und Abel erzählt und dann den Bösewicht Pupill verflucht. Später ermordet er Pupill, als dieser dabei ist, Birute zu vergewaltigen. Da der Sarg des scheinbar verstorbenen Grafen sich leer erweist, legt man Pupill dorthin. Lorenz Jäger schätzt die Geschehnisse im Roman Brusts folgenderweise ein:

> Die Lektüre ist in hohem Maße spannend: Brust hat hier alle Register der Schauerromantik gezogen und mit grellen Effekten nicht gegeizt; ein Scheintoter und ein leerer Sarg, Eulenruf auf einem nächtlichen Friedhof, ein vergifteter Dolch, eine Flucht aus dem Kloster und ein südamerikanischer Sklavenhalter geben das bewegte Beiwerk ab (*Jäger* 1991/1992: 55-56).

Birute flieht von Zuhause, und Elnis tritt eine Pilgerreise nach Osten an, um Birute zu suchen. Unterwegs nach Wilna treffen die Wanderer (mit Elnis wandert auch der deutsche Gärtner Kunde und Birutes Mutter Malvine) den Juden Asser, der aus Tiflis nach Wilna zu Fuß geht. Asser scheint alles von Elnis zu wissen, er weiß auch im Voraus, was mit ihm in einem Bauernhaus geschieht, und zwar dass der Wirt ihn hinauswerfen wird. Nachdem dies geschehen ist und der polnisch schreiende Bauer ins Gesicht Assers gespieen hat, umarmt Elnis den beleidigten Juden und küsst ihn auf den Mund. Asser schlägt Elnis vor, dem Bauern zu fluchen, und da Elnis solches Verhalten nicht christlich findet, belehrt Asser den Jüngling mit folgender jüdischer Weisheit:

> Wenn du deinen Feind lieben kannst, dann laß es dabei bewenden. Aber tue es nicht! Liebe ihn nicht! Denn du wirst feurige Kohlen auf sein Haupt legen. Und das Feuer wird seinen Leib vernichten! Du sollst deine Feinde lieben können! Aber du sollst ihnen immer ein bißchen böse sein, damit es ihnen nicht zu schlecht ergeht und du nicht schuldig wirst an ihrem Verderben (*Die verlorene Erde*, 302-303).

Asser wird zum seelischen Berater und Beschützer von Elnis. Sie führen Gespräche, die sehr an chassidische Lehre und Legenden erinnern, wie z. B. folgende Aussage Assers über die Notwendigkeit des Wanderns:

> Der Jude nickte. „Die Gerechten müssen unstet und flüchtig sein, sagte Rabbi Nachman von Bratzlaw, weil es vertriebene Seelen gibt, die nur dadurch emporsteigen können,‚‚ Er wandte sich Kunde und Frau Malvine zu und fuhr fort: „Wenn ein Gerechter sich wehrt und nicht wandern will, wird er unstet und flüchtig in seinem Hause (*Die verlorene Erde*, 308).

Über die Unstetigkeit und Flüchtigkeit der Abgeschiedenen ist auch die Rede in der chassidischen Lehre über die Hitlahawut – die Inbrunst der Ekstase:

> Doch gibt es tiefer Abgeschiedene, deren Hitlahawut in alledem noch nicht erfüllt ist. Die werden „unstet und flüchtig‚. Sie gehen in die „Verbannung‚‚ um „das Exil der Schechina zu tragen‚. Es ist eine Urvorstellung der Kabbala, daß die Schechina, die „einwohnende‚ Gegenwart Gottes, verbannt durch die Unendlichkeit irrt, von ihrem „Herrn‚ getrennt, und daß sie erst in der Stunde der Erlösung sich mit ihm wieder vereinigen wird. So wandern diese Ekstatiker über die Erde, in den stummen Fernen des Gottes-Exils weilend, Genossen des heiligen Allgeschehens. Der dergestalt Abgelöste ist Gottes Freund, „wie ein Fremdling eines andern Fremdlings Freund ist, ihrer Fremdheit auf Erden wegen.‚ Ihm widerfahren Augenblicke, in denen er die Schechina im Menschenbild schaut, von Angesicht zu Angesicht, wie jener Zaddik sie im Heiligen Lande sah‚, in der Gestalt einer Frau, die über den Gemahl ihrer Jugend weint und klagt (Buber 1955: 27).

Man kann annehmen, dass Elnis in Birute seine Schechina sieht und nach ihr mit größter Inbrunst strebt, wenn auch auf dem Wege zu ihr viele Hindernisse erscheinen: Birute wird von Siphor, dem Sohn des tatarischen Fürsten Tartarki, zur Frau begehrt und verfolgt, so dass sie genötigt ist, ihn zu erdolchen. Sie findet Zuflucht in der katholischen Kirche, aber sie ist gelähmt und sinkt in eine Trance. So finden sie Elnis, Kunde und ihre Mutter Malvine in Wilna, wo sie auf dem Platze vor der Menge mit ihren Krücken wie mit einem Geigenbogen spielt. Die Segnung Assers lässt Birute erwachen, sie kann wieder laufen, sie schleudert ihre Krücken weg und die eine trifft tödlich Kunde, der auch Rivale von Elnis bei der Werbung um Birute gewesen ist. Auf dem Wege zur Vereinigung mit Birute hat noch ein ernstes Hindernis gestanden – die fünfzehnjährige Tochter eines Rabbis, Chassida, die Elnis liebgewonnen hatte, was aus seinem langen Brief an sie ersichtlich ist. Der Brief stellt ein empfindsames, zartes Liebesbekenntnis und einen Abschiedsbrief gleichzeitig dar, denn er endet mit den Worten: „Leb wohl denn, Chassida! Ich wandere!" (*Die verlorene Erde*, 360).

Der Jude Asser regelt auch diese Herzensangelegenheit – er warnt Elnis vor einem eventuellen falschen Schritt :

> Welches Schicksal willst du bedrängen? Willst du eingehen zu Chassida? Erröte nicht! Aber sie ist nicht von deiner Rasse. Erinnere dich ihrer oftmals und bleibe bei deinem Volk ... (*Die verlorene Erde*, 337).

Der Jude Asser hat einen so großen Einfluss auf die geistige Entwicklung von Elnis, dass der Jüngling an diesen Tagen in Wilna sein ganzes Leben durchdenkt, seine Sünde als Brudermörder, seine Liebe zu Birute, seine höhere Bestimmung, geheimer König zu sein, sich klar vorstellt und sich sein Verhältnis zur jüdischen und zur katholischen Religion vergegenwärtigt. „In seinem Leben strömten alle Religionen durcheinander " – bemerkt der Autor über Elnis (*Die verlorene Erde*, 321).

Am Ende des Romans empfangen Elnis und Birute den Segen von dem Juden Asser, der die Hände der jungen Leute ineinander legt und folgende Worte ausspricht:

Die Erde ist verloren! Aber der Herr der Welt sammelt die, so ihn erkennen! Lebt, blüht, wachst, gedeiht zur Ernte! Was kümmert's uns, wohin wir sausen!! (*Die verlorene Erde*, 373).

Nicht nur die mystische Figur des Asius oder Asser spielt im Roman bei der Schilderung des jüdischen Lebens eine wichtige Rolle. Eine viel realere Person ist der Pflegesohn von Asius – Ossip Asisohn, der sich Oskar nennt. Zuerst erscheint er als Student der Medizin, von ihm wird gesagt, dass er Liebling der Professoren war, Blut und Leichen sehen konnte, „obschon er sich für innere und seelische Leiden lebhafter interessierte" (*Die verlorene Erde*, 104).

Ein zweites Mal taucht Asisohn schon als Professor im Schloss des Grafen auf, als der sich auf dem vermeintlichen Sterbelager befindet. Er lenkt selbst das Auto, kümmert sich um den Grafen, ist sehr aktiv und betulich: *er war ein ungewöhnlich motorischer Vertreter seiner Rasse (Die verlorene Erde*, 200). Auf den jüdischen Glauben achtet Ossip Asisohn nicht sehr viel, da er nach dem angeblichen Tod des Grafen um die Hand der Dienerin des Grafen Grita wirbt, Geheimrat zu werden und sich taufen zu lassen verspricht *(Die verlorene Erde,* 213).

Dass es solche „modernen„ Juden in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts gab, zeugen Forschungen der Historiker. Verena Dohrn behauptet über die jüdischen Ärzte in Litauen Folgendes:

Die ersten modernen Juden in Wilna und Kowno – wie im gesamten Zarenreich – waren Ärzte und Kaufleute. Seit Beginn der zarischen Ära im osteuropäischen Judentum wurden jüdische Ärzte offiziell anerkannt bzw. in den Staatsdienst übernommen. (...) In Wilna war (1908) knapp die Hälfte der gesamten Ärzteschaft (45 von 102) und fast alle Zahnärzte (49 von 57) Juden. Es waren Ärzte, die die Abkehr vom traditionellen Judentum vorlebten (Dohrn 2004: 98-99).

Im Roman *Die verlorene Erde* werden auch Karaiten, eine türkische Gemeinschaft, die den Talmud verwarf und nur das Alte Testament gelten ließ, in Trakai, in der Nähe von Wilna erwähnt. Die Pilger – Elnis, Malvine, Kunde und der Jude Asser – werden von den Karaiten an der Wasserburg vorbei im Boot gefahren:

Sie fuhren an einer Insel vorbei, darauf eine verlorene Burg stand. Und es war, als ob die Manen der Helden, die hier einst gelebt und gestritten, hart auf der Grenze zum Diesseits um ein zerstürztes Reich trauernd sich bewegten. Zuweilen wurde ihre Nähe so lastend, daß die Bootsinsassen schweratmend, tiefgebeugt, stumm auf den schmalen Bänken saßen (*Die verlorene Erde*, 307).

In den historischen Werken zur Geschichte Litauens findet man eine Erklärung, warum die Karaiten von dem Großfürsten Vytautas nach Litauen gebracht wurden – als Soldaten haben sie die Burgen des Fürsten bewachen sollen. Andere Gemeinschaftsmitglieder haben Handel, Gemüseanbau, Handwerk (besonders Spinnen) getrieben. Sie hatten das Recht, ihren Glauben frei zu bekennen (Gudavičius: 1999, 366). Eine zahlreiche türkische Gemeinschaft in Litauen bildeten die Tataren, die

auch im 14. Jahrhundert nach Litauen gekommen sind, als die Grenzen Litauens in Richtung Russland erweitert wurden, wo die Tataren herrschten (ebenda, 364).

Eine tatarische Familie des Fürsten Jussup Tartarki wird im Roman von Brust auch sehr einprägsam dargestellt. Birute findet in dieser Familie Zuflucht und wird als Erzieherin der Fürstenkinder angestellt. Der reiche Khan hat ein Gut, das „einige Tage südlich von Wilna lag„ (Die verlorene Erde, 241), und eine faule, fette Frau, die „alljährlich ein Fürstenkind in die Wiege legte„ (ebenda, 243).

Die islamische Religion spielt für den Fürsten eine große Rolle: er hat eine Moschee, wo er beten kann, ihn besucht auch manchmal der Molla aus Wilna. Jussup Tartarki trinkt Kaffee, raucht eine Wasserpfeife und blickt durch das Fenster, das in Richtung nach Mekka liegt. Eine geheimnisvolle spannende Szene, in der der zu Besuch weilende türkische Derwisch einen Talisman für den Fürstensohn Siphor aus dem Metall zu gießen versucht, gibt Anlass, folgende Worte über den Islam ind den Mund des Derwisches zu legen:

> Allah erschuf alle Dinge und beschützt sie. Die Schlüssel von Himmel und Erden sind in seiner Hand, und alle, so an Allahs Zeichen Zweifel hegen – sind auf der verlorenen Erde! (*Die verlorene Erde*, 267).

Das Leitmotiv der verlorenen Erde wiederholt sich im Roman mehrmals. Warum gerade die litauische Erde an der Memel als verloren für Brust galt, erklärt er in einer Passage über die Religionen, die in Litauen vertreten sind. Das Verlorensein bedeutet für den Autor nicht die Ausweglosigkeit, sondern eine Hoffnung: die verlorene gequälte Erde erzeugt die Hoffnung auf das Kommen des Erlösers, des Messias, des Gesalbten Gottes, wovon das folgende Zitat zeugt:

> Dies war das Land, in dem der Messias erwartet wurde! Denn nirgend auf Erden brachen die Wogen der religiösen Verschiedenheiten so stark und deutlich wie hier aneinander. Nirgend auf Erden wurde in den einzelnen Bekenntnissen so *heftig* geglaubt und gebetet wie hier! Und all diese Bitten fielen in den Boden des Landes, flossen ins Wasser, das sie zum Niemen, zur Memel hinabtrug, sie heiligend mit dem unaussprechbaren Geheimnis kommender Zeiten. Es war das Land, das mit gläubigsten Bitten ekstatischer Konfessionen gedüngte Land, das Elnis nächtens, wenn er so dicht am Busen der Erde ruhte, tief und schmerzlich aufseufzen hörte. Es erschauerte vor der Möglichkeit einer Ankunft eines gesalbten Königs auf diesen Fluren (*Die verlorene Erde*, 240).

Brust zählt fünf Konfessionen auf, die zum Teil auch mit den Nationalitäten, die in Wilna Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts vertreten waren, im Zusammenhang stehen. Judaismus, Katholiken, Mohamedaner, russische Orthodoxe, lutherische Protestanten. Dass es zwischen den Nationalitäten und verschiedenen Konfessionen manchmal heftige Auseinandersetzungen und Beleidigungen gab, bezeugt das Beispiel mit Sauß Dagda. Man erfährt beim Lesen, dass er nicht nur den Juden Asisohn mißhandelt, sondern auch den tatarischen Fürsten gepeitscht und „Tatarenschwein„ genannt hat (*Die verlorene Erde,* 253).

Wir haben das jüdische Leben und die handelnden Figuren der Juden im Roman analysiert, den Einfluss des Chassidismus auf den Ideengehalt des Werks gezeigt, auch manche historische Tatsachen mit den Schilderungen im Roman verglichen. Karaiten und Tataren werden in einigen Episoden des breit angelegten Romangeschehens ebenfalls dargestellt. Unterschiedliche Nationalitäten leben auf der verlorenen Erde und warten auf den Erlöser, der möglicherweise der Pruzze Elnis sein wird.

3. BALTEN UND DEUTSCHE IM ROMAN

Wir haben schon erwähnt, dass die meisten Protagonisten des Romans ihre altpruzzische Herkunft aufweisen können. Wenn z. B. Birute auch einen litauischen Namen trägt, gilt sie für den tatarischen Fürsten als deutsche Erzieherin. Andererseits ist der Großvater ihrer Mutter Malvine wahrscheinlich ein Pruzze gewesen. Auf diese Weise ist es manchmal schwer, die Nationalität des Protagonisten genau zu bestimmen. Balten und Deutsche betrachten wir als die zweite Hälfte „der Bevölkerung„ des Romans. Wenn für das Judentum die chassidische Lehre charakteristisch ist, werden Balten und Deutsche durch die Reste des heidnischen Glaubens, der ihre Schicksale prägte, gekennzeichnet. So erfährt Michael Schomp, der Verwalter des Gutes von Sauß Dagda, dass seine Mutter eine Ragana, d. h. Zauberin oder Hexe gewesen sein soll. Ragana ist ein litauisches Wort, das auch heute gebraucht wird. Die Etymologie des Wortes wird entweder durch das Verb *regëti (sehen)*, daher Hellseherin oder durch das Substantiv *ragas (Horn)*, daher ein Wesen, das mit dem „gehörnten„, d. h. abnehmendem oder zunehmendem Mond verbunden ist, erklärt (Dundulienë 1990: 140). Michael Schomp hat ein Hinkebein, weil er von seiner Mutter gleich nach der Geburt auf der Schwelle des Schweinestalls verlassen wurde und die Ratten ihm die Zehen des rechten Füßchens abgefressen haben. Sein Vater, der Großknecht, war kurz nach seiner Hochzeit ertrunken, die Mutter aber wurde im Erlenbruch vom Stier zerstampft aufgefunden, so dass Michael als Waisenkind auf dem Gut aufgewachsen und Verwalter des Guts geworden ist. Über seine Mutter wusste Schomp wenig, weil die Leute es vermieden, ihm das zu erzählen, woran sie glaubten: dass eine Ragana in seiner Mutter verkörpert gewesen ist. Davon erzählt ihm Sauß Dagda und beide erleben auf der Erlenweide eine schauerliche Erscheinung eines geheimnisvollen riesigen Vogels, der als die Seele der Ragana, d. h. seiner zerstampften Mutter, von Michael Schomp gedeutet wird:

> Da vorn aus dem Erlenbusch trat eine Gestalt hervor, anzusehen wie ein Vogel in übermenschlicher Größe. Und der Vogel bestand aus einer großen Flamme, die in einem schmerzlichen Rot glühte, verzehrend glühte, aber nur glühte und durchaus nicht leuchtete. Und es geschah, daß dieser Vogel hüpfte, hüpfte und die glühenden Flügel breitete. Und ein pfeifendes, sehr rasches Wittwittwittwittwitt erfüllte den ganzen Raum unter den blassen Sternen; so wie wenn unzählige Vögel auffliegen, klang es, nur mußten dann ihre Schwingen aus dünnen Weidenruten statt aus Federn sein. Das verzehrende Glühen aber entfaltete sich und schien eins zu werden mit dem roten Frühlicht, das aus Norden violette Strahlen über den Himmel warf (*Die verlorene Erde*, 26).

Über die Verwandtschaft der Ragana mit dem mythischen Urvogel schreibt auch die litauische Archäologin und Ethnologin Marija Gimbutienė. Sie bemerkt, dass die Nähe dieser mythischen Figuren sich in der Fähigkeit, zu fliegen wie ein Vogel oder durch die Luft auf einem Stock oder auf einem Baumstumpf (als Symbol der toten Natur) zu sausen, sich äußert (Gimbutienė 2002: 55).

Der Ragana ist auch eine andere handelnde Person – Hussa von Engelstein – ähnlich, obwohl sie vom Schriftsteller mit diesem Namen nicht genannt wird. Das ist eine dämonische Frau, die sehr viel Übel anstiftet: nach dem Tode ihres Vaters Baron von Engelstein kommt sie von der Ostseeküste, aus dem Samland zu dem Grafen Sauß Dagda, wird seine Ehefrau, und dann beginnen seltsame Ereignisse: Frau Hussa hänselt den Verwalter Schomp und fasst Hass gegen ihn, später merkt sie, dass die Pfeiler im Schweinestall einzustürzen drohen und sagt das niemandem, so dass der Schweinestall zusammenstürzt und dreißig Schweine tötet.

Hussa hasst nicht nur Schomp, sondern auch seine Frau Malvine. Sie beobachtet mit ihrem blauen und braunen Auge die in der Memel badende Malvine, stößt einen gellenden Schrei aus, so dass Malvine ihr Kind im Schoße hüpfen spürt und ungemein erschrickt. Malvine wird durch Hexerei und Verzauberung Hussas krank: Hussa quält sie, indem sie ein Bild Malvines auf einen Schusterleisten, vom Schäfer Jusseit geerbt, anheftet und es mit den Nadeln durchsticht. Infolgedessen bekommt Malvine einen eiternden Ausschlag auf dem Gesicht und heftige Schmerzen. Und nur Graf Dagda rettet sie vor Verlust des Augenlichts, weil er den Schusterleisten im Zimmer Hussas findet und ihn mit dem angebundenen Stein ins Memelwasser wirft. Diese Begebenheit erinnert an den Wudu – aus Westafrika stammenden magisch-religiösen Geheimkult. Aber das ist noch nicht die letzte böse Zauberei Hussas. Sie steckt das Verwalterhaus in Brand und tanzt dabei nackt in ihrem Zimmer hinter geöffneten Fenstern. Und wieder ist es Graf Sauß Dagda, der alles wieder gutmacht – er reitet das Feuer aus. Über diese Fähigkeit der Grafen Dagda wird Folgendes berichtet:

> Denn die Grafen Dagda hatten seit je die Feuersbrünste der ganzen Umgebung zu Wasser geritten. Sein Großvater noch war es gewesen, der das Zigeunerdorf gerettet hatte, weshalb seine Besitzung zu allen Zeiten von diesen Nomaden unbehelligt geblieben war. Sein Vater hatte niemals Gelegenheit, diese vererbte Gabe zu erproben. Und nun er? Es war doch kein Märchen, konnte kein Märchen sein; denn in der Chronik stand es geschrieben, daß die Grafen Dagda das Feuer ausreiten konnten. Und den Kindern wurde das in der Provinz auf der Schulbank beigebracht (*Die verlorene Erde*, 112).

Henry Kuritz verweist in seiner Magisterarbeit auf die ostpreußische Sage *Die Feuersbrunst von Labiau* als eine mögliche Vorlage für Brusts Beschreibung des Feuerausreitens im Roman *Die verlorene Erde* (Kuritz 1998: 35). Aber wir haben festgestellt, dass es auch eine litauische Sage gibt, die die gleiche Eigenschaft beschreibt. Diese Sage heißt *Das abgeführte Feuer (Nuvesta ugnis)* und berichtet von dem Gutsverwalter in Vilkyškiai, im Bezirk Tilsit, der dreimal um das entstandene Feuer geritten, über den Fluss gesprengt ist und das Feuer mit sich gezogen hat. So habe er das Wohnhaus vor Feuersbrunst gerettet (*Laumių dovanos* 1979: 280).

Nicht nur baltische Sagen und Bräuche haben Brust als Vorlagen gedient, sondern auch reale Personen, wie z. B. der litauische Theosoph und Schriftsteller Wilhelm Storost –Vydűnas, der Lehrer von Brust in Tilsit, der im Roman unter dem Namen Perkuhn (so heißt der litauische Donnergott) auftaucht. Diese Tatsache bestätigt auch Henry Kuritz, indem er sich auf die persönlichen Briefe Brusts an Kemp stützt (Kuritz 1998: 37). Sowohl Vydűnas als auch Brust strebten nach der inneren Vergeistigung und Erneuerung des Menschen, aber ihre Lebensauffassungen waren unterschiedlich. Auch im Roman *Die verlorene Erde* kommt Elnis als Schüler in eine Stadt zu Herrn Perkuhn, von seinem Vater Sauß Dagda geschickt. Vieles erscheint ihm im Hause des Ehepaars Perkuhn fremd und merkwürdig: Herr Perkuhn mit langem, bis auf die Schultern niederfallendem Haar, strenge vegetarische Essgewohnheiten, hartes Lager mit einem starren Kissen, der Dauerlauf mit dem Lehrer durch die Stadt, der am Hause Fräulein Perles endete. Dort plauderte Herr Perkuhn mit dem Fräulein über erhabene Dinge in verschiedenen Sprachen, was Elnis erstaunte. Aber noch mehr musste er staunen, als er hörte, "daß eines Tages Herr Perkuhn seiner Frau erklärte, er würde jetzt nur noch Unterhosen und Strümpfe tragen, die Fräulein Perle sechsunddreißig Stunden an ihrem bloßen Leibe gehabt hätte*"* (*Die verlorene Erde*, 145). Der anschließende Kommentar des Autors klingt ironisch:

> Elnis war in dieser Folgezeit nicht imstande die Gefühle des seltsamen Heiligen nachzuempfinden. Dessen Gesicht war selig versonnen, und seine Augen schwärmten übermäßig umher und sahen die Dinge nicht, darauf sie fielen (ebenda).

Diese Geschichte mit Herrn Perkuhn endet tragikomisch: nach dem Begräbnis seiner Ehefrau schlagen ihn die Menschen auf dem Friedhof mit Stöcken, die Fenster des Fräuleins Perle werden eingeschmissen, Herr Perkuhn wird wahnsinnig, deswegen muss Elnis ihn verlassen und wegziehen. Der Autor verspottet Herrn Perkuhn nicht, sein Spott gilt eher dem lutherischen Oberpriester, der am Grabe der Frau Perkuhn mit einer dröhnenden Stimme eine belehrende Rede an Herrn Perkuhn hält, in der er den „tiefsinnigen„ Gedanken äußert:

> (...) wür wollen auch nicht, solange wir ürdisch sind, hinaufklettern, wo wür nichts zu suchen haben (denn sonst wären wür ja dort) – wür wollen ein wahrhaftiges Leben führen und uns der Gnade freuen, wenn sie uns zuteil wird (*Die verlorene Erde*, 155).

Wenn Elnis auch zu einem ähnlichen Schluss kommt – „Es wäre besser gewesen für Herrn Perkuhn auf dieser erdenen Ebene fertig zu werden. Die anderen Ebenen kommen rechtzeitig von selber nach" (*Die verlorene Erde*, 158), aber er ist gleichzeitig davon überzeugt, dass das Weltbild seines Lehrers unendlich und gewaltig ist: „Der Lehrer hatte die Umrisse eines gewaltigen Weltbildes in seine Seele gesenkt" (*Die verlorene Erde*, 157).

Das Bild von Perkuhn ist eines der pruzzisch-litauischen Gestalten im Roman. Die Bedeutung des Namens Perkuhn ist auch bemerkenswert – „der Donner„ oder „der Donnergott„, der Litauer. Litauische Figuren und Namen erscheinen episodenhaft im ganzen Roman, wie z. B. der betrunkene Holzfäller Rimkus, den Graf Sauß Dagda

vor dem Erfrieren im Wald rettet und damit seine geistige Umwandlung zum Guten beweist. Die Familie von Rimkus wird mit folgenden Worten charakterisiert:

> Seine Frau ging mit dem zwölften Kinde schwanger. Und alle Kinder lebten. Da gab es keine bürgerlichen Ehevergnügen mit Mutterzäpfchen und Abwehrspritze und sanftem Löffel. Die Kinder und Sorgen kamen von Gott. Er gab das Brot, wenn's auch schmal war und trocken und hin und wieder gab er auch einen Schnaps dazu – wenn es kalt oder nicht mehr auszuhalten war. Nein! Dieser Mann war kein Säufer! Dieser Mann nicht! Er selber, der Graf Sauß Dagda, er war ein ganzer und großer Säufer gewesen. Aber das war nun vorbei. Und er hatte diesem Menschen und Erdenbruder im Alltag zu helfen mit seiner sonntäglichen Einsicht und Kraft (Die verlorene Erde, 32).

Litauische Flößer werden einige Male im Roman erwähnt, auch die Tatsache wird hervorgehoben, dass sie Musikinstrumente bei sich führen und litauische Volkstänze mögen. (vgl. *Die verlorene Erde,* 283). Ein uralter preußischer Litauer – der Ururgroßvater von Malvine wird mit einigen Strichen dargestellt: er ist 120 Jahre alt, wohnt bei Swenzjany hinter Wilna in einer großen Familie, die aus siebenunddreißig Menschen besteht, und kritisiert die Jüngeren, dass sie nicht einmal litauisch zu reden verstehen (*Die verlorene Erde,* 36). Er prahlt damit, noch pruzzisch zu können und in Paris, Wien und Moskau gewesen zu sein. Technische Mittel gefallen ihm gar nicht, er sieht im technischen Fortschritt eine Gefahr*: „*Fremd untereinander macht die Menschen der Bahnzug und die Mobile ...*"* (*Die verlorene Erde*, 36).

Die Idee der Kritik an der Zivilisation und den sich entwickelnden entfremdenden Wirtschaftsbeziehungen in der westlichen Gesellschaft wird auch in Brusts Dramen ausgedrückt, wie z. B. im Stück *Heiligung: Ein Zeitwendespiel* (1920). Hier wird Litauen als unzivilisiertes, entlegenes Land dargestellt, in dem aber eine andere, eine neue, naturnahe und richtigere Lebensweise zu verwirklichen ist. *Der Zeitwendemensch* Szameit, ein Litauer, von den deutschen Städten in die Heimat zurückgekehrt, versucht, ein inniges, erdennahes Leben zu leben. Sein Grundsatz lautet: „es ist nur nötig, daß irgendwo irgendjemand neu lebt! Wenn es das Richtige ist, geht es von selbst über die Erde" (*Dramen*, 26).

4. ABSCHLUSSBEMERKUNGEN

Dass das Gefühl im Leben des Menschen und in der Kunst ausschlaggebend ist, ist eine der wichtigsten Thesen des Expressionismus. Aber nach der Meinung von Paul Fechter ist der deutsche literarische Expressionismus schwer zu definieren, weil er, im Unterschied zu dem malerischen Expressionismus, wenige Namen von Autoren hinterlassen hat. Unter den von P. Fechter erwähnten expressionistischen Schriftstellern – Reinhold Sorge, August Stramm, Carl Hauptmann, Carl Sternheim, Georg Kaiser - findet man den Namen von Alfred Brust nicht (Fechter 1932: 795 – 798). Die erwähnten Expressionisten zeichneten sich dadurch aus, dass sie, nach der Meinung Fechters, nicht den Mut hatten, mit den literarischen Traditionen zu brechen:

> (…) sie behielten Formen und Begriffe und alle Kunstreize der Früheren
> bei, steigerten sie sogar noch und blieben so der Bildung untertan statt
> dem Leben. Sie schrien nach dem Schrei – in sauberen Versen; sie
> proklamierten das Chaos in reinlich dünnen Dramen. Sie schwitzten vor
> Angst um das Gefühl – und hatten nur Worte: die Literatur siegte auf
> der ganzen Linie (Fechter 1932: 795).

Ein anderes Bild bieten Dramen und Prosawerke von Brust – er achtet wenig auf die Literaturtraditionen und ausgefeilte Form, das Wesentliche ist für ihn, seine Lebensauffassung (die antibürgerlich und innovativ ist und auf dem Gefühl basiert) in seinen literarischen Werken wiederzugeben.

Vor diesem Hintergrund versteht man klarer auch das Streben von Brust, im Roman *Die verlorene Erde* unterschiedliche Nationalitäten – Pruzzen, Litauer, Deutsche, Tataren und Juden – im litauischen Lebensraum zusammenzuführen und in den handelnden Figuren unterschiedliche Lebensweisen zu schildern.

Das baltisch-pruzzische Element durchdringt den Roman nicht aus ethnologischen oder politischen Gründen, es geht Brust darum, vor allem in den Figuren von Sauß Dagda und Elnis die Möglichkeit des neuen unkonventionellen Innenlebens zu zeigen. Die chassidische Lehre der Juden ist in diesem Zusammenhang auch sehr wichtig – die religiöse Konzentration auf die Menschenseele und Moral ist ein Gegensatz zum Bösen, Grausamen, Satanischen, das im Menschen lebt und gedeiht (vgl. die Gestalten der Mutter von Schomp, von Hussa, Pupill und anderen).

Da wir versucht haben, die Quellen der brustschen Ideen zu verfolgen, können wir nicht umhin, auch die Schriften von Vydűnas zu erwähnen. Wenn Brust auch in dem Bild von Herrn Perkuhn seinen Lehrer kritisiert, hat er manche Gedanken von ihm erstaunlich präzise übernommen. Das betrifft unseres Erachtens die Charakteristiken der Nationalitäten. Im Buch *Sieben hundert Jahre deutsch-litauischer Beziehungen* beschreibt Vydűnas den nationalen deutschen Charakter als von „Wunsch- und Begehrungsleben" sehr stark geprägt (Vydűnas 1982: 105), indem der Litauer sich mehr auf die „Innenzustände, die Innerlichkeit" konzentriere (ebenda, 108). Den Juden wird von Vydűnas die Rolle der Religion-und Kulturträger zugesprochen:

> So erhält die abendländische Kultur besonders in Deutschland fortgesetzt
> neue Anregungen aus dem Judentum. Diese werden auch mehr oder
> weniger bewußt angenommen (ebenda, 111).

Diese Zeilen erinnern sehr an die Gedanken Sauß Dagdas im Roman *Die verlorene Erde*:

> Was ist denn ein Deutscher? Es gibt Sachsen und Bajuwaren, Friesen,
> Wenden, Pommern und gotische Reste, Franken und Tschechen und
> Polen, Litauer, Holländer, Zigeuner, Juden und Pruzzen. Die Russen
> nicht zu vergessen. Sie alle kommen in Deutschland vor, einzeln und in
> großer Gemeinschaft! Sie nennen sich alle Deutsche und bilden zusammen
> die deutsche Schicksalsgemeinschaft. Und ein jedes Blut kommt in dieser
> Gemeinschaft zu einer besonderen Geltung. Auch ich als Pruzze bekenne

122

mich heißen Herzens zu dieser Gemeinschaft. Wir Deutschen treten das Erbe des Judentums an, das sich seiner Erfüllung entgegenneigt. Wir haben die Sendung uns über die Erde zu zerstreuen. Und die deutsche Diaspora wird das Heil der Menschheit sein! (*Die verlorene Erde*, 79).

Man kann schlussfolgern, dass die Überlegungen von Vydūnas über nationale Charaktere durch Brust viel breiter und vielseitiger entwickelt wurden und in den vielen handelnden Personen des Romans ihre Veranschaulichung gefunden haben. Das schriftstellerische Talent von Brust hat aus den Ideen gewaltige Menschenschicksale geprägt, die die Leser noch lange beschäftigen und emotionell sowie intellektuell bewegen werden.

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H. P. LOVECRAFT ET L'ŒUVRE DE MICHEL HOUELLEBECQ. HYPOTHÈSES POUR UNE ÉTUDE GÉNÉTIQUE

Florence Gacoin-Marks

Synopsis

Le présent article expose les résultats d'une lecture attentive de la monographie que Michel Houellebecq, écrivain français contemporain, a consacrée à H. P. Lovecraft. La présentation que Houellebecq propose de l'écrivain américain est un précieux document permettant de formuler des hypothèses concernant le rôle joué par Lovecraft dans la genèse des œuvres de l'écrivain français.

Avec la multiplication des traductions, des médias et autres médiateurs culturels, les études concernant la genèse des œuvres littéraires contemporaines sont devenues sinon impossibles, du moins aléatoires et de moins en moins démontrables à partir de données objectives (rapports de faits). Font figure d'exceptions les cas – assez rares – où un écrivain contemporain exprime ouvertement son intérêt, voire son admiration pour un auteur déterminé et fournit au public le détail de ses lectures et ses réflexions les concernant.

Michel Houellebecq, écrivain français né en 1956, nous offre un excellent exemple de ce cas de figure. Admirateur déclaré de l'écrivain américain Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937), il consacre à ce dernier une courte monographie intitulée *H. P. Lovecraft. Contre le monde, contre la vie*. Dans la préface à l'édition de 1999 (réimprimée en 2006), Houellebecq précise avoir été familiarisé avec les « grands textes » de l'écrivain de récits fantastiques dès l'âge de seize ans et avoir entamé dès 1988 la rédaction de son petit « essai » publié en 1991, soit un peu avant la parution de ses premières œuvres,[1] ce qui accroît la valeur de ce document en tant que témoignage sur les idées littéraires de l'écrivain français. Dans la préface de 1999, Houellebecq (2006 : 6) précise : « Avec le recul, il me semble que j'ai écrit ce livre comme une sorte de premier roman. Un roman à un seul personnage (H. P. Lovecraft lui-même) ; un roman avec cette contrainte que tous les faits relatés, tous les textes cités devaient être exacts ; mais tout de même, une sorte de roman ». C'est assez dire que, pour lui, le côté strictement factuel est de second ordre.[2] Son « essai » est avant tout le récit

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[1] Le premier recueil de poèmes de Michel Houellebecq, *La Poursuite du bonheur*, est paru en 1992 et son premier roman, *L'Extension du domaine de la lutte*, en 1994.

[2] Jean-François Patricola (2005 : 117-122) accuse Houellebecq de plagiat, remarquant à juste titre que les éléments factuels et même certaines assertions de la monographie proviennent directement des

d'une découverte et l'exposition d'une lecture. Le lecteur de Lovecraft un peu spécial qu'est Houellebecq cherche avant tout à comprendre les raisons de sa propre fascination. Ce faisant, il souligne les traits de l'écrivain américain dont il se sent proche, allant même parfois jusqu'à s'identifier à lui, ce qui confère à son texte non plus le ton d'une monographie sur un auteur, mais celui d'un manifeste littéraire précédent la parution des premières œuvres.[3]

Une lecture attentive de *H. P. Lovecraft. Contre le monde, contre la vie* permet d'ores et déjà d'identifier deux grands axes d'influence de l'écrivain américain sur Houellebecq.

Le premier axe procède de la personnalité de Lovecraft telle que la perçoit l'écrivain français et de son attitude supposée par rapport au monde contemporain. Comme l'explique Houellebecq, cette dernière joue un rôle crucial dans la production littéraire de l'Américain du fait qu'elle se reflète sur un plan fictionnel et allégorique dans la destinée de ses personnages. De même que Lovecraft se sentait malheureux, pris au piège d'une ville démesurée et tentaculaire (New-York), le personnage lovecraftien est tout entier assailli par des phénomènes et des êtres surnaturels qui font basculer sa vie dans l'horreur. Dans le cadre d'un récit non fantastique, le personnage de *L'Extension du domaine de la lutte* est également un homme malheureux pour qui le monde contemporain n'est qu'une source de souffrances insurmontables. Son regard – retransmis dans un récit à la première personne – est celui d'un homme lucide, torturé par le monde dans lequel il vit. Certes, le monde a changé :

> Le capitalisme libéral a étendu son emprise sur les consciences ; marchant de pair avec lui sont advenus le mercantilisme, la publicité, le culte absurde et ricanant de l'efficacité économique, l'appétit exclusif et immodéré pour les richesses matérielles. Pire encore, le libéralisme s'est étendu du domaine économique au domaine sexuel. Toutes les fictions sentimentales en volé en éclats. La pureté, la chasteté, la fidélité, la décence sont devenues des stigmates ridicules. La valeur d'un être se mesure aujourd'hui par son efficacité économique et son potentiel érotique, les deux choses que Lovecraft détestait le plus fort (Houellebecq 2006 : 144).

L'auteur l'indique clairement : c'est l'organisation même de la société, focalisée autour de l'argent et du sexe, qui est désormais source de tous les maux, mais la souffrance, elle, l'angoisse de l'homme face au monde qui le tyrannise et le tétanise, est toujours la même : « Il est assez curieux que parmi les nombreux disciples de Lovecraft aucun n'ait été frappé par ce simple fait : l'évolution du monde moderne a rendu encore plus présentes, encore plus *vivantes* les phobies lovecraftiennes » (Houellebecq 2006 : 145). En tant qu'admirateur de Lovecraft, l'écrivain français semble

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contributions inclues dans le numéro spécial Lovecraft des Cahiers de l'Herne paru en 1969 et réimprimé en 1984 (voir bibliographie). Effectivement, les reprises sont nettes, les données biographiques approximatives, les citations sans références précises et la bibliographie incomplète. Il est clair que l'objectif premier de Houellebecq n'est pas biographique ou historique. Ce fait, qui remet sérieusement en question l'honnêteté intellectuelle de l'écrivain, ne diminue en rien la valeur de document du texte sur Lovecraft. Il faudra seulement identifier avec soin les reprises et les envisager comme telles.

[3] C'est le cas notamment du début de l'essai qui commence ainsi : « La vie est douloureuse et décevante. Inutile, par conséquent, d'écrire de nouveaux romans réalistes » (Houellebecq 2006 : 13). Propos de Houellebecq ou opinion de Lovecraft retranscrite en discours indirect libre ? Rien dans cette première page, entièrement écrite dans ce style, ne nous permet pas de trancher.

126

avoir en quelque sorte pris la relève en faisant de la question de l'homme profondément malheureux dans la société qui lui est contemporaine le centre de toute sa création littéraire.[4] À cet égard, les deux personnages les plus lovecraftiens de Houellebecq sont probablement les héros de *L'Extension du domaine de la lutte* et de *La Possibilité d'une île*. Ici Houellebecq n'est pas tant influencé par l'œuvre de Lovecraft que par sa personnalité à laquelle il consacre la plus grande partie de son « essai ».[5]

Le second axe – non plus individuel mais général, presque cosmique – concerne la conception pessimiste du monde et de l'humanité, la manière d'envisager l'avenir au niveau planétaire. Ce pessimisme repose sur une vision des choses matérialiste à l'extrême que Houellebecq résume ainsi : « L'univers n'est qu'un furtif arrangement de particules élémentaires. Une figure de transition vers le chaos. Qui finira par l'emporter. La race humaine disparaîtra. [...] Tout disparaîtra. Et les actions humaines sont aussi libres et dénuées de sens que les libres mouvements des particules élémentaires. Le bien, le mal, la morale, les sentiments ? Pures fictions victoriennes » (2006 : 18). C'est ce même regard « clinique » que l'écrivain français adopte dans son œuvre, tout particulièrement dans son second roman, *Les Particules élémentaires*, dont le titre et le contenu semble presque annoncés dans cette citation résumant la vision lovecraftienne du monde. Le corollaire du matérialisme est l'importance accordée à la science en tant que seul domaine de l'activité humaine susceptible d'appréhender l'univers. Houellebecq (2006 : 81-89) s'attarde longuement sur l'omniprésence de la science dans l'œuvre de Lovecraft. Considérée par les commentateurs et chercheurs américains comme un moyen d'accroître la crédibilité des personnages, facteur important de la mise en confiance du lecteur de récits fantastiques,[6] la science est, selon Houellebecq, dotée d'un rôle qui dépasse largement ce côté purement technique : « Les sciences, dans leur effort gigantesque de description *objective* du réel, lui fourniront cet outil de démultiplication visionnaire dont il a besoin. HPL, en effet, vise à une épouvante objective. Une épouvante déliée de toute connotation psychologique ou humaine » (2006 : 88). La science participe bien de l'interprétation matérialiste et pessimiste du monde que nous retrouvons également chez Houellebecq. Selon lui, l'humanité, telle que nous la connaissons aujourd'hui, est condamnée à disparaître, remplacée, grâce à la science, par une race supérieure. La sexualité, source non pas

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[4] Dans son ouvrage, Jean-François Patricola explique l'omniprésence chez Houellebecq du sexe et de l'argent, comme une réaction à l'œuvre de Lovecraft où ces éléments thématiques sont totalement absents. Dans ce cas, il s'agirait d'une sorte d'influence négative. Toutefois, cette interprétation réductrice simplifie à l'extrême le rôle particulier (structurateur) que revêtent la sexualité et l'argent dans l'univers houellebecquien.

[5] Nous avons volontairement laissé de côté la question délicate du racisme, cruciale pour la compréhension de l'œuvre de Lovecraft dans la mesure où c'est précisément la peur et la haine à l'égard des autres races ressenties par l'écrivain qui sont les moteurs de certains de ses récits d'horreur. Bien qu'intéressant Houellebecq comme trait de la personnalité de Lovecraft, le racisme n'est pas au centre de sa conception du monde. Nous trouvons, par exemple, une trace de haine raciale dans le chapitre 10 de *L'Extension du domaine de la lutte*, lorsque l'un des personnages, malheureux en amour et en quelque sorte exclu d'office de la lutte (sexuelle, bien entendu), sent monter sa haine à l'égard du métis qui a conquis instantanément la jeune fille sur laquelle il avait jeté son dévolu. Furieux, il envisage même de tuer son rival. Cette scène semble bien confirmer que c'est la personnalité de Lovecraft plus que son œuvre qui a joué un rôle important dans la genèse du premier roman de Houellebecq.

[6] Voir notamment ce qu'écrit à ce sujet Robert Bloch (1982 : 1921), l'un des admirateurs et continuateurs de Lovecraft.

de vie mais de dégénérescence pour Lovecraft (Lord 2004 : 1), origine des maux de l'homme moderne pour Houellebecq, disparaîtra, elle aussi.[7] Notons que cette prise de position philosophique s'accompagne d'une intrusion généralisée du vocabulaire scientifique dans l'écriture romanesque (particulièrement nette dans *Les Particules élémentaires*). L'étude comparée des œuvres de Lovecraft et Houellebecq inclura donc nécessairement une analyse stylistique portant sur l'utilisation du vocabulaire scientifique par les deux écrivains.

Avant toute confrontation des œuvres littéraires des deux auteurs, nous pouvons d'ores et déjà distinguer deux grands axes d'influence de H. P. Lovecraft sur Michel Houellebecq. Par ailleurs, nous pouvons ajouter que, de manière générale, Lovecraft a provoqué chez le jeune Houellebecq une ouverture d'esprit, une évasion par rapport aux idées généralement admises par la société contemporaine et aux tabous qu'elle a instaurés (notamment à la suite de la seconde guerre mondiale), l'appréhension d'un esprit qui, ultra-conservateur à son époque, apparaît aujourd'hui étranger à toutes normes sociales. C'est ce qui lui fait écrire : « Paradoxalement, le personnage de Lovecraft fascine en partie parce que son système de valeurs est entièrement opposé au nôtre » (Houellebecq 2006 : 28). Ce type de dépaysement ne peut que préparer un terrain favorable à une création littéraire originale, mais aussi controversée et difficilement classable sur le plan idéologique.

Considéré par l'auteur lui-même comme une sorte de premier roman, le court « essai » de Michel Houellebecq consacré à H. P. Lovecraft nous renseigne donc autant sur l'œuvre passée de l'auteur américain que sur l'œuvre future de l'écrivain français. Fait intéressant : ce dernier indique clairement ce qui l'a influencé dans le titre même du livre : la position de Lovecraft face à (et non pas dans) la société qui lui est contemporaine (« contre le monde ») et sa vision pessimiste concernant l'avenir de l'humanité (« contre la vie »). Ce petit ouvrage semble donc bien avoir la valeur d'un programme littéraire annonciateur de l'œuvre à venir. Pour vérifier et compléter les hypothèses de travail formulées à partir de ce précieux document, nous devons maintenant confronter les œuvres littéraires des deux auteurs. C'est sur la base de cette confrontation que nous pourrons ensuite définir les modalités exactes du rôle joué par Lovecraft dans la genèse de l'œuvre de Houellebecq.[8]

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[7] Dans ce contexte, on comprend que Houellebecq se soit rapproché des scientistes qui prétendent lui proposer la réalisation concrète de ses prévisions (le premier clonage humain).

[8] Dans son étude, Houellebecq (2006 : 5, 30-31) semble indiquer qu'il n'a pas eu recours aux textes originaux. Cela signifie que nous utiliserons pour notre étude les traductions françaises parues à partir des années cinquante jusqu'aux trois volumes publiés en 1991 chez Robert Laffont dans la collection « Bouquins ». La liste détaillée des traductions est disponible sur le site internet des « Bibliographies de l'imaginaire » (BDFI) à la page http://www.bdfi.net/auteurs/l/lovecraft_howard_p.htm.

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L'ENVERS ET L'ENDROIT DE LA POÉSIE CLAUDELIENNE

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Résumé

L'étude se propose comme objectif de répondre aux questions du substrat de la philosophie thomiste dans l'oeuvre poétique de Paul Claudel. En fait, l'influence de l'Aquinate sur Claudel est prépondérante: elle concerne surtout l'instrumentalisation ontologique de sa poésie qui desormais se déroule sous le signe (linguistique) de l'être. Les instruments majeurs de la pensée scolastique (l'équivocité, l'univocité, l'analogie) sont à l'oeuvre dans la parole claudélienne la déterminant au plus profond, meme au point dont l'exégèse moderne ne pouvait pas s'en apercevoir.

Même les textes les plus tardifs témoignent de l'engagement de Paul Claudel, bien plus profond qu'on ne pourrait le penser, dans cette réalité homogène et lumineuse qu'est la pensée thomiste. Depuis le temps de sa lecture assidue des *Sommes théologiques* jusqu'à l'œuvre exégétique, on perçoit partout cette pulsation, parfois directe, parfois contenue à l'état latent, qui fait le propre de cette intelligence limpide et transmet l'essentiel de la pensée du Maître angélique.

En fait, chez Claudel, la rencontre du thomisme est postérieure aux influences littéraires, surtout à celle qu'a exercée A. Rimbaud[1]. Elle se situe dans la période de son mandat en Chine, ce qui permet, comme nous allons le constater par la suite, une « scolarisation » du substrat oriental (*La Connaissance de l'Est* et *Cinq Phrases pour Eventail*). Le thomisme claudélien repose sur la lecture de la *Somme théologique*, de la *Somme contre les Gentils* et (peut-être)[2] des *Questions disputées*[3]. Claudel y a été initié

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[1] Nous reprenons ici un rapprochement — que nous trouvons, en fait, heureux — reliant la conversion, l'événement majeur dans la vie de Claudel, au gothique, tout cela à travers l'enseignement de l'*Aquinate* : « *Ainsi un article de saint Thomas portant à sa cime suspendu tout cet ensemble d'arguments affilés qui répondent de tous côtés aux objections. Et je n'ai pas parlé des profonds arrières, de cette abside à triple étage, de cette sangle, de cette ceinture de muscles qui bande et qui érige vers le ciel ce puissant corps fait de conscience, de croix et d'interjections* ». (*Pr.*, p. 311). Ici, l'idée de l'ordre structurel, qui domine les *Sommes,* se trouve renforcée par une heureuse comparaison avec l'art des ogives, dont le principe se fonde sur l'assimilation des tensions qui règnent dans la construction d'un bâtiment, ce qui rapproche ces deux événements complémentaires et cruciaux dans la vie de Claudel : sa conversion (dans la cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris) et son instruction thomiste, philosophique et doctrinaire.

[2] Comme Claudel ne s'exprime aucunement à ce sujet, toute conjecture reste invérifiable. *Cf.* aussi la lettre à l'abbé Friche, *cf. infra*.

[3] *Cf.* : « *Claudel a lu saint Thomas* (*La* Somme théologique, *la* Somme contre les Gentils *et les* Questiones disputatae, *au moins — ce qui n'est déjà pas mal — et il n'y a aucune raison sérieuse de remettre en cause l'aveu de ces lectures*) », *in* : Millet-Gérard (1999 : 16-17).

par son confesseur, M. Villiaume, en 1892. D'après ce qu'il évoque dans la fameuse lettre à Ernest Friche[4], il lui a été conseillé de s'attaquer directement aux textes originaux, sans recourir auparavant aux manuels. Il lisait les textes en prenant des notes, perdues dans l'incendie provoqué par le tremblement de terre de 1932. Ces lectures lui ont ainsi permis de se constituer une base solide lui offrant l'accès aux connaissances scolastiques. Elles l'ont marqué au plus profond de lui-même.

Au premier plan, le thomisme claudélien peut se comprendre comme une rupture, un adieu à d'autres philosophies, au kantisme[5] et au cartésianisme[6] notamment. Au terme de son évolution, le thomisme claudélien est la mise en évidence d'une nouvelle pensée que Claudel adoptera, à partir de ce moment, à jamais. Ce n'est qu'avec cet éclairage qu'on peut saisir en profondeur le sens de ces paroles exclusivistes :

> *Sur les ruines de son roman prétentieux (de Descartes) et de tous ceux qui s'y sont superposés, se rétablit la grande Vérité indestructible dont saint Thomas a été l'exposant lumineux et que formule le verset johannique : mon père opère et moi aussi, J'opère jusqu'à ce jour[7].*

Elles prennent encore plus de force dans cet extrait de son Journal :

> *Ma formation religieuse doctrinale commencée par la lecture de la Métaphysique d'Aristote se termine avec celle des deux Sommes que j'annote d'un bout à l'autre (livres brûlés en 1932)[8].*

Claudel était pleinement conscient de son thomisme et, comme s'il avait lui-même examiné tous les aspects de sa pensée poétique, il en fit l'aveu à Ernest Friche, dégageant l'essentiel de cette unité indivisible qu'est sa poésie, livrant une confession immédiate à celui qui avait conseillé sa plume et guidé ses puissants efforts. L'importance capitale de ce document nous oblige à le citer *in extenso*. Ce qui surprend en premier lieu, c'est le jugement désapprobateur porté par Claudel sur celui qui fut le premier analyste de son thomisme et ne se serait pas suffisamment acquitté de sa tâche. D'après Claudel, E. Friche n'a pas décelé le *corpus* organique de toutes les références thomistes que le poète était censé avoir placées dans l'œuvre.

> *Je suis étonné, en effet, que vous n'ayez pas plus retrouvé de références extrinsèques à l'influence que saint Thomas d'Aquin a eue sur moi et qui a été en effet considérable, bien que postérieure aux influences purement littéraires[9].*

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[4] « Lettre à l'abbé Friche du 5 février 1928 », citée dans : Friche (1943 : 155).

[5] Cf. : « *J'avais lu antérieurement avec un plaisir infini les premiers livres de la* Métaphysique *d'Aristote qui m'avaient définitivement débarbouillé du kantisme que mon professeur de Louis-le-Grand, Bourdeau (peint et calomnié par Barrès) avait, malgré ma profonde répugnance, essayé de m'inculquer* », « Lettre à l'abbé Friche du 5 février 1928 », citée dans : Friche (1943 : 155).

[6] Nous ne pouvons ici qu'aborder une assertion répandue, mais pourtant trop hâtive, pour ne pas dire erronée : Rimbaud aurait libéré Claudel du scepticisme positiviste en lui ayant ouvert la porte de l'au-delà. C'est la relation Claudel-Descartes qui rend une pareille conjecture illogique. Descartes, symbole du primat des sciences naturelles ainsi que des mathématiques, était le philosophe que Claudel avait en horreur ; Claudel ne concevait pas d'autre solution que de se libérer de Descartes.

[7] *Pr*, p. 984.

[8] *J2*, p. 644.

[9] *In* : Friche (1943 : 155).

Après avoir formulé ce reproche, il met au jour la double emprise que Thomas a eue sur lui. Le mal insidieux des premiers ascendants, qu'il devait subir, se dissout, l'intelligent conseil de son confesseur lui ouvrant l'accès à l'harmonie universelle, reposant elle-même sur cette force principale qu'est l'intelligence. Ainsi la lecture des *Sommes*, corroborée par une expérience de la foi, avivée en cette période, le guide vers l'exploration de l'être. « *La création artistique* » surgira « *comme une seconde et transcendantale Création superposée à la première* », les termes de l'être, de la Création et de l'univers revêtant une équivocité sans pareille, l'équivocité thomiste. Ainsi :

> *J'appris le langage scolastique comme on apprend l'anglais, par l'usage, et au bout de cent pages, je pouvais suivre facilement cette pensée d'ailleurs merveilleusement limpide. Seuls les commentaires d'ailleurs assez sobres, placés au bas des pages me paraissaient obscurs. J'ai ainsi lu et annoté les deux sommes, terminant ma lecture avant mon retour en France (1899). Ça a été une merveilleuse nourriture et un merveilleux entraînement pour mon esprit, non seulement au point de vue philosophique mais au point de vue artistique. L'intelligence ne joue pas le rôle essentiel dans la création artistique (aucune création ne se fait avec la tête), mais elle joue un rôle maïeutique et illuminateur immense, et dans ce rôle rien ne pouvait m'être plus utile que les trois principes que saint Thomas m'avait appris a appliqué partout : définir, distinguer, déduire. J'avais appris aussi à apprécier l'immense valeur pour la raison elle-même des principes inébranlables que la foi nous fournit et qui sont comme une seconde et transcendantale Création superposés à la première. Ces leçons m'ont transformé et se sont incorporées à toute mon activité créatrice. Vous avez donc parfaitement raison de m'appeler un poète thomiste car les principes thomistes sont mêlés à chacun des mouvements de ma vie artistique[10].*

Pourtant, cette assertion pose au préalable deux problèmes essentiels. Le premier consiste à bien cerner les éléments de cette écriture vorace, à replacer le terme le plus général dont Claudel s'est jamais servi, « *la passion de l'univers* »[11], dans le juste contexte de ses référents mytho-ontologiques. Là, nous sommes confrontés respectivement et de façon inévitable au problème de l'être. La question de l'être est de fait primordiale chez Claudel, l'être coïncidant avec ce qui s'appelle l'« univers ». L'« univers » regroupant tout ce que nos sens peuvent percevoir, conjointement à ce qui est tellement ténu ou si éloigné qu'il nous est imperceptible, l'être est avant tout sa qualité, se faisant et le faisant exister.

Nous saisissons le mot « être » dans toute l'ampleur de son équivocité linguistique, telle qu'elle est définie du plus haut de la « chaire » :

> *Le mot être peut s'entendre soit comme un verbe, soit comme un nom. Pris comme verbe, il signifie le fait même qu'une chose soit ; pris comme nom, il signifie "un être", c'est-à-dire l'une quelconque des choses dont on dit qu'elles sont[12].*

L'être est à l'origine de cette force de « sphérisation » qui fait l'« écran » poétique de Claudel, élevant son écriture jusqu'au plan final de tout ce qui existe.

Claudel évite de parler de l'être. En tant que poète et métaphysicien il ne veut pas mettre au jour ce qui mérite d'être laissé dans l'ombre du mystère. Pourtant, quelques

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[10] *Ibid*.
[11] *PO*, p. 679.
[12] Gilson (1981 : 13-14).

formules rayonnantes nous permettent de discerner *in nuce* l'intérêt que le poète assigne à cette notion. Nous avons alors le rare bonheur de saisir, d'un coup, la manière dont Claudel articule ce terme non en ce qu'il a d'existentiel, mais en ce qu'il a d'attributif, remplaçant ainsi le simple didactisme cataphatique par l'apophase. Là s'embusque le premier grief que nous formulons contre l'exégèse superficielle, faisant de Claudel un rhéteur « positif », à l'engouement démesuré, quasi pénétré de mérites. Sur ce point, le poète est en fait criblé de reproches qui pourtant n'atteignent qu'un fantôme ! Un Claudel fat et creux n'apparaît que par l'élimination spontanée de ce double enjeu que présuppose toute la phénoménologie poétique, celle de notre poète en premier plan. L'être de Claudel est majestueux en ce qu'il a de nu et d'ob-nu-bilé. C'est à cela que se réfère la fécondité de sa parole poétique :

> *L'être est un : l'Être est immobile (je parle grossièrement, obligé d'employer des négations pour exprimer l'essence même de l'Acte ; la chose qui est, est mouvement. L'Être est un) ; la chose qui est répète unité en multipliant sa présence. Être est infini, n'étant fini que par lui-même[13].*

Or être apo-cataphatique, c'est l'essentiel des « *principes thomistes* », de tout ce qui est : « *On aurait peine à concevoir une ontologie plus pleinement et plus consciencieusement existentielle que celle de saint Thomas d'Aquin* »[14]. La conception de l'être intervenant dans ce qu'il y a de plus profond et de plus réel, jusqu'à ce qu'il n'y ait plus rien qui ne lui soit soustrait, se suspend jusqu'à la dernière syllabe des écrits de Thomas. Il nous est très difficile d'en pressentir la portée exacte, puisqu'elle est la détermination aussi ultime qu'impénétrable de la métaphysique thomiste : « *La notion de l'être est si fondamentale et même première dans la pensée de S. Thomas qu'on la retrouve à toutes les pages de la* Somme théologique »[15].

L'être étant la suprême réalité de l'univers, Claudel ne l'identifiera pas à l'être suprême ou à celui qui est suprêmement être dans ce qui est, c'est-à-dire à Dieu : Claudel exprime succinctement cette identification, en faisant dépendre le fait de notre existence : « *Qui ne croit plus en Dieu ne croit plus en l'être, et qui hait l'être hait sa propre existence.*

Seigneur, Je vous ai trouvé »[16].

Il ne tarde pas non plus à s'engager dans cet effort intense qui s'appelle l'élaboration intelligible des phénomènes majeurs de l'être, c'est-à-dire de Dieu, les premiers s'offrant à sa pensée comme le plus précieux matériel poétique. Il n'y a pas de sûreté possible dans ce présage où la tendance du poète se meut, face au « *speculum in aenigmate* ». Ébloui par la splendeur de cette cime sublime et majestueuse, il ne peut que postuler l'identité ontologique, que les êtres entretiennent à travers le temps avec sa Source. Il « regarde » les choses, l'univers lui raconte l'ineffable accord omniprésent :

> *Je regarde toute chose, et voyez tous que je n'en suis pas l'esclave, mais le domina-teur.*

[13] *Art poétique*, p. 302.
[14] Gilson (1947 : 52).
[15] *Somme théologique*, t. 1, Cerf, Paris ; Nicolas Marie-Joseph, chapitre « Vocabulaire de la Somme théologique », p. 102.
[16] *PO*, p. 254.

> *Toute chose*
> *subit moins qu'elle n'impose, forçant que l'on s'arrange d'elle, tout être nouveau*
> *une victoire sur les êtres qui étaient déjà !*
> *Et vous qui êtes l'être parfait, vous n'avez pas empêché que je ne sois aussi !*
> *Vous voyez cet homme que je fais et cet être que je prends en vous.*
> *mon Dieu, mon être soupire vers le vôtre ! Délivrez-moi de moi-même ! Délivrez*
> *l'être de la condition !*
> *Je suis libre, délivrez-moi de la liberté !*
> *Je vois bien des manières de ne pas être, mais il n'y a qu'une manière seule*
> *Être, qui est d'être en vous, qui est vous-même ! L'eau*[17].

En vertu de son expérience intime, il décline cette « *condition* », le mystère de notre existence, que nous prenons en Dieu. C'est l'éternité toujours créatrice :

> *Tout être comme il est un*
> *ouvrage de l'Eternité, c'est ainsi qu'il en est l'expression.*
> *Elle est présente et toutes choses lui sont présentes et se passent en elle*[18].

Être « présent » équivaut à être en acte, être actuel. La première épithète de l'être est son actualité. En touchant au cœur même de l'ontologie de Thomas, nous pénétrons aussi au plus profond du secret de l'ontologie de Paul Claudel :

> *C'est ici que nous touchons au cœur même de l'ontologie de Saint Thomas. Elle appelle nécessairement Dieu, c'est-à-dire un Acte pur d'exister. Être dont l'Essence est d'exister, ou si l'on veut l'existence à l'état pur, absolu, total, l'Actualité absolue comprenant en elle toute actualité, mais sans potentialité, ni limite, ni aucune sorte de multiplicité*[19].

L'être est actuel. Nous intitulons notre thèse d'après ce qu'il y a d'essentiel chez Thomas et chez Claudel : ainsi nous apposons au titre *L'Inspiration thomiste dans l'œuvre poétique de Paul Claudel* le seul sous-titre logique : *Paul Claudel et l'actualité de l'être*. Comme « *la philosophie scolastique est une interprétation quasi grammaticale du réel* »[20], le côté linguistique jouera le rôle principal dans l'explication de sa poésie. Nous pourrions même, étant donné certaines restrictions, parler de la linguistique de l'être dans cette poésie. Notre thèse prend pour pivot central le problème de l'analogie distributive, mais surtout négative puisqu'elle parle de l'être. Il va de soi que l'analogie est un terme central de l'ontologie thomiste.

Nous appréhendons le thomisme claudélien dans toute son ampleur et dans toute sa pertinence. Claudel était avant tout un poète thomiste, et nous nous donnons pour tâche d'en démontrer la pertinence dans sa parole poétique, à partir de l'aveu qu'il en fait. Claudel reprochait à E. Frische de n'avoir pas été assez exhaustif dans ses observations. En nous acquittant de cette dette ancienne, nous nous confrontons à l'état de l'exégèse qui est, en dernière analyse, peu reluisant. La mise en évidence de cet état de fait est sans appel : « *La critique littéraire a plutôt eu tendance*, *depuis la*

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[17] *PO*, pp. 238-239.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 241.
[19] *Somme théologique*, p. 38.
[20] Paul Claudel, dans la préface de : Jacques Rivière, *À la trace de Dieu*, p. 10, in « Positions et Propositions », Gallimard, Paris, 1934.

mort de Claudel à minimiser son "thomisme" »[21]. Les raisons apparentes de cette méprise sont au nombre de deux. La première, qui semble moins vérifiable, mais demeure pourtant certaine, est la suivante. Nous la présentons, sans la commenter :

> *On peut même risquer l'hypothèse qu'il (Claudel) se l'était, par certains côtés, tellement appropriée, que justement il ne la distinguait plus de la sienne propre – ce qui explique que sur des points de détail il ait pu en minimiser l'influence. C'est d'un point de vue global, semble-t-il, que celle-ci doit être envisagée. C'est pourquoi aussi il paraît indispensable de distinguer (pour la privilégier) l'influence de saint Thomas de celle d'Aristote[22].*

La seconde, plus néfaste, concerne le fait que la civilisation occidentale a gommé de façon efficace le fond chrétien de sa métaphysique. Elle a oblitéré ce qu'il fallait de toute évidence laisser transparaître dans toute sa nudité. En effaçant la mémoire de l'être, elle a effacé les principaux linéaments d'une ontologie qui lui semblait jusqu'alors indispensable. C'était l'ontologie thomiste, connue pour sa capacité à assimiler l'intelligence et l'être, le monde et la foi. C'est pour cette raison que face à ce qui allait progressivement devenir le paganisme du XXe siècle[23], Léon XIII a rédigé l'encyclique *Aeterni patris* où il invite la pensée chrétienne à s'appuyer sur l'enseignement thomiste. Il fallait ressusciter Thomas, pour le salut de l'Église, en premier lieu :

> *C'est en effet que la pensée scolastique était morte, et bien morte, au XIXe siècle, de la mauvaise réputation que lui avait valu quasiment quatre siècles d'héritage de disputes théologiques et de lecture de seconde main. Comme l'écrit, d'une formule lapidaire qui résume la situation, L. Foucher, "le thomisme ne subsistait que dans les couvents et en Espagne" : autant dire qu'il était absent, sous sa forme authentique, non seulement de l'enseignement universitaire et a fortiori des lectures du public cultivé, mais même de la formation du clergé séculier.*

Il le fallait bien pour le salut de la chrétienté et de l'Occident, en second lieu, puisque, « *face au paganisme dont il ne s'agissait pas de négliger la culture* »[24], l'Église se trouvait en état continuel de persécution qui était – et qui est, hélas ! – bien plus fatal que ne le vivait « *la primitive Église* »[25]. L'unité de l'être étant perdue, il n'est pas surprenant que Jean-Paul II, à un siècle de distance, appelle au renouveau de la philosophie chrétienne, mieux, à celle de ses origines, en invitant le public chrétien à se tourner vers cette synthèse qu'est la pensée de Thomas, à lutter ainsi contre le plus grand mal des temps modernes, l'épiphanie artificielle. Les paroles concluant le paragraphe sur Thomas sont simples, pourtant pleines de ferveur prophétique : « *Précisément parce qu'il* (Thomas) *cherchait la vérité sans réserve, il sut, dans son réalisme, en reconnaître l'objectivité. Sa philosophie est vraiment celle de l'être et*

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[21] Millet-Gérard (1999 : 4e de couverture).
[22] Millet-Gérard (1999 : 17).
[23] « *La parution de ce livre peut être considérée comme devant faire date, en raison de l'origine soixante-huitarde non feinte de son auteur, de sa qualité d'éditeur, de la sévère distance qu'il prend avec le dogme de la permissivité et surtout, car l'essentiel est là, du rappel de nombreuses vérités. Parmi celles-ci : le paganisme antique pratique l'idolâtrie de la virilité et l'exaltation du vice, pour le plus grand malheur de ses victimes* » ; Dumont (2000 : 23).
[24] Millet-Gérard (1999 : 54).
[25] *Ibid.*

non du simple apparaître »[26]. Ainsi, sur le fond de l'être, Jean-Paul II serre évidemment la main à son précurseur, saluant son intuition parfaite.

Malheureusement, le projet de restauration d'une authentique philosophie chrétienne n'a pas porté ses fruits. Ainsi, face au creuset de la civilisation, où des scories inutiles menacent l'identité originaire de l'Occident, cette ontologie, stricte mais ouverte et toujours vivante, connaissait et connaît encore un sort injuste : considérée comme la pensée d'avant-garde chrétienne, elle est reléguée et persiflée en même temps que sa Mère, Une et Sainte.

L'exégèse moderne de Claudel est marquée par cette attitude, par cet oubli tragique de Dieu. Elle a tout fait pour effacer, par l'usure progressive de l'esprit « soixante-huitard », l'essentiel des structures poétiques claudéliennes, celle de l'être en étant la première cible. Nous n'allons – car il s'agit d'une introduction – signaler que trois attitudes également très évocatrices, pour voir à quel point ces analyses, à la fois impétueuses et sinistres, ont déformé le langage de Claudel, en l'écartant de son origine. Tout ce qui bat apparemment son plein, martelant ainsi à la démesure les rythmes intimes du poète, se brise sur l'écueil de cette simplicité, fine et infinie, que confère l'être thomiste à toute syllabe de cette majestueuse écriture.

Nous n'allons pas aborder *in extenso* l'exemple de l'exégèse de Gilbert Gadoffre, qui plaide pour une analogie non analogique, faisant converger l'esprit des pères Tao avec l'inspiration de Thomas, tout cela à travers Mallarmé. Le fruit délicieux d'une pareille « prise de conscience » ne tarde pas à paraître. Il se présente sous la forme de l'idée que le « *royaume de l'analogie* » se trouve à l'endroit où la métaphysique vit en concubinage avec l'humour. Ainsi, « *l'œuvre de Tchoang-tseu est le royaume d'analogie. Les thèses métaphysiques y font bon ménage avec l'humour dévastateur* »[27]. Mais la récolte est loin d'être achevée. Le dogmatisme anti-thomiste et anticlaudélien, en fait creux et aveugle, fait définir à Gadoffre l'analogie comme quelque chose où le signifiant et le signifié ne peuvent s'étreindre dans un rapport réel. Il prouve par là que la sémiotique subtile de l'analogie claudélienne reste pour lui hors d'atteinte, puisque, après avoir souligné que chez Tchoang-tseu « *entre les deux termes de l'analogie le rapport n'est pas toujours établi* », il propose cette « analogie » non analogique comme le point final des recherches de Claudel sur cette expérience poétique cruciale. Plein de surprise, « gêné », mais pas « séduit », on lit :

> *On devine les sentiments de Claudel devant un texte de ce genre. Il y trouvait le contre-pied de l'enseignement de ses maîtres du Lycée Louis-le-Grand, et la démonstration par la marche d'une logique moins étrangère à un poète que celle de l'Occident. La Chine était ainsi associée aux justifications divines et humaines de l'analogie, elle permettait de hausser à la dignité philosophique les attitudes mentales que ses maîtres à penser considéraient comme des accessoires d'artistes. L'existence même de la langue et de la logique chinoise vengeaient le poète et le mystique de l'arrogance des géomètres. La voie était ouverte. Dans l'esprit de ce jeune exilé, rétif au rationalisme du XIXᵉ siècle, à la fois séduit et gêné par Saint Thomas, il suffisait*

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[26] Lettre encyclique *Fides et Ratio* du souverain pontife Jean-Paul II, aux évêques de l'Église catholique sur les rapports entre la foi et la raison, Jean-Paul II (1998) ; *cf.* surtout le chapitre « La constante nouveauté de la pensée de saint Thomas d'Aquin », Jean-Paul II (1998 : 68).

[27] Gilbert Gadoffre, « Les trois sources de l'analogie claudélienne » (*French Studies*, XIII, 1959 : 144).

d'établir un réseau d'équivalences entre le symbolisme littéraire, la symbolique judéo-chrétienne et l'analogie chinoise pour justifier l'un par l'autre Mallarmé, saint Bonaventure et lui-même.[28]

La seconde attitude, également significative, se propose d'épuiser la vertu interne de la poésie claudélienne, sans aucunement tenir compte de son icône autonyme. Elle est, il est vrai, féconde sur certains points ; mais elle comporte essentiellement quelque chose d'insuffisant. Ainsi le discours objectif sur la poésie de Claudel doit nécessairement s'affranchir de ses instrumentalisations, si plausibles qu'elles paraissent. Il s'agit du fameux schéma de l'« être » tel qu'il a été élaboré par Michel Plourde[29]. Au moyen des combinaisons alpha-numériques, l'auteur tend à saisir l'immense éparpillement de la poésie claudélienne en quelques définitions, appuyées par des dessins. Loin d'être infrangible, cette « architecture » a pourtant une valeur didactique, une valeur de représentation. Néanmoins, en ce qui concerne l'articulation de l'ensemble ontologique, elle reste parfaitement impuissante.

Nous en relatons l'élaboration telle qu'elle nous a été confiée par l'auteur lui-même :

A – Désignation : le sommet du cône est l'Alpha, le commencement, le Père qui engendre tout (Abba). C'est le point de départ du mouvement "aller". C'est aussi le point final du mouvement de "retour", le "récipient suprême de l'Oméga", "Sigè ou l'abîme" (on sait que Sigè veut dire Silence). C'est l'Être, la Source, le Nombre incréé, nécessaire et un. Processus : Dieu immobile se contemple en silence dans son Verbe. Cette expression de soi, qui est le Logos, et qui se confond avec le silence éternel, n'en est pas moins le rythme premier. De ce point de départ sortiront d'autres rythmes (dont la parole) – Noter que tous les rythmes créés ne trouveront leur explication et leur accord que s'ils sont constamment ramenés au sommet de l'angle A, au centre du compas où tout se mesure et se "comprend"[30].

Il est vrai que le schéma de l'être est celui que nous adoptons et que l'être siégeant en haut est ce « sacrement suprême » que Paul Claudel cherche à reproduire. Il faut de même remarquer quelques faits incontestables, dont nous ne doutons point. Ils concernent les thèses allant à l'encontre de la logique communément admise, et pourtant, loin de heurter le bon sens de l'exégèse, ces antinomies sont à la fois vraies et fausses. Plourde a donc raison de constater que Dieu est immobile, mais aussi qu'il est source de toute mobilité. Il est incréé, et pourtant, il est aussi source de tout créé. Il est un, et pourtant il est source de tout multiple. Finalement, tout revient à lui, après s'être détaché, ne serait-ce qu'une fois, de son sein. Mais le problème se pose lorsque nous pénétrons davantage dans le système de Michel Plourde. Cette vision s'avère alors trop étroite, naïve et surtout trop accommodée aux esprits consciencieusement simplistes. Le problème essentiel concerne le « cône ». Concevoir Dieu sous la forme d'une figure géométrique dont les génératrices passent par le point fixe, qu'Il est, présuppose que l'apothème l'écarte trop du reste. Finalement son être ne pourrait coïncider avec l'être du créé, puisqu'il en serait infiniment distinct. Ce qui ne pourrait pas être vrai. Nous écrivons l'être toujours avec une minuscule pour supprimer la

[28] *Ibid.*
[29] Plourde (1970 : 366).
[30] Plourde (1970 : 356).

différence ontologique qu'appelle le schéma de Plourde. L'être de Dieu pourrait ne pas être distinct de l'être du monde, bien que la raison humaine diffère essentiellement du point où elle peut définir le mode de cette différence. Pour cette raison, il vaudrait mieux aplanir, réduire le cône à une dimension unique, à celle de la ligne. Alors on ne le représenterait qu'à la dimension où il fonctionne réellement. L'agir de Dieu est uni-dimensionnel. L'être actuel est présent par son être et en son être dans les moments minimes de la création, dans tout ce qui est. Il n'est pas supérieur à la création, il lui est intérieur : « *semper intimior* ». L'actualité de l'être appelle de droit l'idée d'une « intervention » perpétuelle et momentanée de Dieu. Nous citons dans notre thèse un certain nombre d'extraits de Thomas qui étayent cette approche.

Pourtant, le schéma, étant pris dans le sens d'une seule et unique dimension, est parfaitement conforme au postulat de la philosophie thomiste. Nous le démontrons dans notre thèse. Mais c'est là précisément que surgit la plus grande erreur de Plourde. Il n'évoque nulle part Thomas ou sa philosophie : on ne trouve de référence ni dans la bibliographie[31] ni dans le texte central. Thomas est par conséquent absent de l'index des noms propres[32].

Ayant donné à Dieu tous les attributs thomistes, ayant simplifié le schéma ontologique thomiste, l'auteur ne cite nulle part la principale philosophie de l'être et son auteur. La méprise de Plourde, loin d'être unique, caractérise ainsi un état d'esprit dans l'exégèse claudélienne. Notre thèse se propose sincèrement de remédier à cette lacune.

La troisième erreur consiste à prendre l'être dans le sens strict de la définition gilsonienne et à en faire la preuve du non-thomisme chez Claudel. Nous citons le passage relatif à la matière :

> *Claudel a un usage du verbe être, au sens d'exister, dérivé directement du discours scolastique. La première occurrence réfère à l'exister nature, qui n'est pas par rapport à l'exister divin. Aussi, même employé comme copule dans un jugement d'attribution, le verbe être conserve sa valeur d'acte qui permet de saisir l'exister. "Être c'est n'être pas une chose, c'est être empêché de l'être, soit par une opposition matérielle soit par le besoin qu'elle a de moi comme tel". La négation – d'un étant à un étant, d'un étant à l'être – intervient donc comme un instrument logique lui-même redevable à une ontologie qui différencie la créature et le créateur[33].*

Prendre l'être au sens de l'exister implique le dernier dédoublement possible, celui de l'ultime réalité existante. Comme Gilson, l'auteur lui-même confesse avoir de la « *peine à concevoir une ontologie plus pleinement et plus consciencieusement existentielle que celle de saint Thomas d'Aquin* », puisqu'elle seule pénètre dans ce for intérieur intime des choses où elles sont en tant que telles.

La seule objection qu'on puisse faire à l'extrait cité, c'est que la négation, par sa définition même ne peut être un instrument logique : c'est une instrumentalisation ontologique, sombrant dans l'ineffabilité du « *quadam confusione* » de la connaissance thomiste.

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[31] Plourde (1970 : 363-369).
[32] Plourde (1970 : 385-388).
[33] Alexandre (1997).

Pourtant, l'auteur fait même un pas en avant ; présentant le thomisme de l'être de façon à compromettre son authenticité, et même l'authenticité de son interprétation, puisque les éléments qu'il veut thomistes ne le sont pas :

> *L'acte d'exister traduit directement l'esse thomiste, et désigne l'acte d'être qui pose tout objet hors du néant. L'existence est de ce fait ce qu'il y a de plus parfait. En Dieu seul, l'existence et l'essence sont identiques. Subsister désigne cet état parfait d'être par soi, Ipsum per se subsistens. L'univers est donc défini négativement par rapport à cette existence pure ou cette subsistance : à elle seule, la variation étymologique sur résistance et assistance reflète une démarche par voie de négation propre au thomisme et reprise par Claudel. Le calembour (naître/n'être) et l'étymologie (nature et naître) sont dans cet autre exemple encore associés au principe de connaissance de Dieu par voie de négation énoncée par saint Thomas dans la Summa contra Gentiles (I, 4) pour dire la soumission de la créature au temps par opposition à l'être éternel qui ne naît ni ne finit[34].*

Dans la *Summa contra Gentiles* (I, 4), Thomas parle du contraire. Il admet le double chemin de la connaissance de l'être, positif et négatif, en accordant, paradoxalement, une certaine priorité à la manière positive de connaître :

« *Duplici igitur veritate divinorum intelligibilium existente, una ad quam rationis inquisitio pertingere potest, altera quae omne ingenium humanae rationis excedit, utraque convenienter divinitus homini credenda proponitur* ». Et Thomas termine par ce qui pourrait s'appeler une glorification de la raison chrétienne située aux écoutes de la Parole seule intelligible :

> *Salubriter ergo divina providit clementia ut ea etiam quae ratio investigare potest, fide tenenda praeciperet : ut sic omnes de facili possent divinae cognitionis participes esse, et absque dubitatione et errore.*
> *Hinc est quod Ephes. IV dicitur : "Iam non ambuletis sicut et gentes ambulant in vanitate sensus sui, tenebris obscuratum habentes intellectum". Et Isaiae LIV : "Ponam (…) universos filios tuos doctos a Domino"[35].*

Si Dieu exerce une attraction disproportionnée sur la raison humaine, la laissant dans l'ombre du non-connaissable, Thomas exprime dans le passage cité quelque chose qui pourrait être le contraire. La raison ramène les âmes à Dieu, après qu'elles furent laissées dans la pénombre des religions polythéistes. C'est pour cela que l'enjeu des termes cités par Didier Alexandre ne peut entrer dans le cadre thomiste, du moins dans le sens que lui donne l'auteur.

Un thomisme exagéré, docte en ce qui concerne la maîtrise apparente du vocabulaire de l'être – l'auteur cite volontiers tout l'arsenal logique de l'ontologie thomiste – s'avère finalement être un anti-thomisme. Et les conclusions que l'auteur tire de ses analyses sont malheureusement encore plus rapides et irréfléchies. Dans ce qui pourrait s'appeler la synthèse de l'article, on est fort surpris par une argumentation s'appuyant sur des préjugés émis par l'exégèse anti-thomiste, sans les approfondir. Le résultat en est la collision de la vérité de l'être claudélien et du verbiage d'un enjouement artificiel, imbus et confiant, sûr de sa supériorité. Ce verbiage détourne profondément

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[34] *Ibid.*
[35] *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, 4.

la grande œuvre de l'être qu'est la poésie de Claudel, en particulier sa base exclusive, l'*Art poétique*, sans laquelle la parole poétique de Claudel n'existerait pas, mieux, ne serait pas, dans toute l'ampleur de la définition gilsonienne. Ainsi, jouant sur la paronomase de la « littéralité » ou de la « latéralité », l'auteur se demande :

> *Mais cet apport est-il doctrinal ? La critique claudélienne a émis bien de réserves. Selon Gilbert Gadoffre, l'influence de saint Thomas fléchit après le séjour de Fou-tcheou, donc vers 1904 : quant à Pierre Brunel, il estime que l'"on accorde trop d'importance aux sources thomistes de l'Art poétique". On peut se référer à Sertillanges, comme Jacques Houriez, ou à Etienne Gilson, comme Maurice de Gandillac, pour comparer la pensée de Claudel et celle de saint Thomas, et montrer quelles divergences existent d'un système à l'autre. En fait les difficultés sont bien réelles, et dues en partie à la difficulté rencontrée par Claudel face au texte de saint Thomas. Il suffit de se reporter aux mémoires improvisés pour mesurer l'écart d'une pensée à l'autre : en effet, Claudel qui traite de la connaissance, reconnaît ne pas avoir suivi l'enseignement thomiste sur la question.*

Ce qui n'est résolument pas vrai. Dans ses *Mémoires improvisés,* Claudel dit à propos de la connaissance et de l'être :

> *Ceci étant admis, cet être-là se trouve dans un milieu extérieur avec lequel il doit entrer en relation. Eh bien, je dis que ces relations avec l'extérieur ne sont pas l'ouvrage d'une seule faculté, qu'elles sont l'ouvrage de l'être lui-même. C'est l'être lui-même qui par une espèce de contact, un peu comme ce que les physiologistes remarquent chez les amibes, est en relation avec les différents objets au milieu desquels il se trouve et en tire un profit ou, selon le mot habituellement employé, une connaissance. C'est par une espèce de projection de son être qu'il entre en contact avec les différents objets et qu'il en tire le profit.*
> *Étant donné ce principe, j'en déduis plusieurs conséquences.*

Claudel décrit le fonctionnement du corps humain comme un « canon » de l'être. L'homme n'est pas un être, mais il est quelque chose comme la « maison de l'être », celle-ci l'abritant définitivement. Claudel insiste sur le fait que la notion métaphysique de l'être (en l'homme) doit être recouverte par sa fonction ontologique. Il s'agit alors d'une citadelle fermée sur elle-même où cette horizontalité monocorde, s'étendant à la ronde, ne peut être dépassée qu'au risque de compromettre les articulations fondamentales de l'homme, parmi lesquelles la sensation et surtout la connaissance. Loin de masquer astucieusement cette dépendance ontologique, Claudel s'obstine à la souligner avec un effort plus que visible. Face au déracinement du milieu ontologique qui altérerait irrémédiablement les processus cognitifs, Claudel redoute que l'intégralité de l'être humain ne soit rompue, pervertie pour dégénérer à jamais. Claudel ne saurait trop insister sur l'unité ontologique de la connaissance ; il définit volontiers, contre Houriez, Gandillac, Gadoffre et les autres, son élément le plus important, c'est-à-dire la vibration, comme intrinsèquement liée à l'être. Nonobstant les apparences contraires, ne voulant receler d'aucune manière ses assertions, Claudel met en rapport vital la connaissance et la vibration – en s'appuyant sur l'image du violon et de la corde – réaffirmant ce symbolisme vigoureux par l'idée de l'être continuellement en vibration, en œuvre, s'arrogeant ainsi ce qu'il y de plus précieux

chez lui et chez Thomas, c'est-à-dire la « *creatio continua* ». C'est vraiment se méprendre sur l'essentiel de la poétique claudélienne que de ne pas se rendre compte de cet immense effort du poète cherchant à définir les origines de sa théorie et de sa parole, et le faisant de façon admirablement simple :

> *La connaissance est, pourrait-on dire, afférente. Je crois, au contraire, que l'être est continuellement en état de vibration, qu'il peut être comparé à un violon dont la corde est mise en mouvement par l'archet et que la note – c'est-à-dire la connaissance – résulte d'une modification de ce courant continuel qui va du centre à la circonférence.*[36]

L'auteur de *L'Art poétique de Paul Claudel* : *Une poétique thomiste* ?, empêtré dans l'évident « pessimisme » exégétique, est impuissant devant le texte. Après avoir nié Paul Claudel, ce Paul Claudel qui mettait lui-même la connaissance en rapport avec l'être, il s'empare d'Etienne Gilson pour démontrer l'anti-thomisme de Claudel ; alors même qu'Etienne Gilson a postulé l'identité de l'être et de l'existence ; une identité que l'auteur accepte, l'incluant dès le départ dans son article.

Ainsi, loin de saisir la balle au bond, cette analyse en arrive à des conclusions graves, touchant au sujet bien autrement délicat de la latéralité ou littéralité de l'être, dans les supports structurels de la théorie poétique de Claudel. Il va sans dire que le primat de la « latéralité » a été bruyamment remis à l'honneur par la plupart des critiques dont se réclame l'auteur de *L'Art poétique de Paul Claudel*. Ce « *mythe* » qui se rallie au nouvel ordre séculier de l'exégèse, est illégitime. La profonde déférence dont il manque vis-à-vis de la littéralité de l'être , est – à vrai dire – incompréhensible. Elle méconnaît le fait qu'il s'agit d'une intertextualisation onto-méthodologique, les deux notions étant inséparables et complémentaires. Ainsi, cette critique s'atrophie de l'intérieur, s'affaiblissant par la consomption graduelle que lui impose sa fuite devant la vérité. Bref, elle aboutit à des constats très rudes, se confrontant de force à l'ordre objectif de l'être et surtout à la pensée même de Claudel.

> *Ce qu'il y a d'admirable dans saint Thomas, c'est qu'il ne donne pas une idée une fois pour toutes de la réalité telle qu'il la conçoit, mais qu'il ouvre des perspectives magnifiques sur tous les points. Il n'y a pas de lecture plus excitante et plus nourricière que saint Thomas à ce point de vue-là ; de tous les côtés il vous ouvre des horizons et c'est l'un de ces horizons que j'ai développés dans ce livre, et qui est le résultat de la longue fréquentation que j'ai eue avec ce grand penseur pendant cinq ans.*

On pourrait très difficilement imaginer que la « *latéralité* » ne soit pas la « *littéralité* » « *des perspectives magnifiques* » que Thomas offre « *sur tous les points* ». Il s'agit de préférence systématisée qui fait considérer l'objectivité de l'être dans la plénitude suprême de tous les « *horizons* ». Or, l'horizon, c'est le « côté », et la latéralité, c'est la littéralité.

En employant le terme « latéral »[37], Claudel voulait simplement renforcer la pertinence de l'attitude thomiste, dont l'approche est avant tout multiforme. Cette ontologie spéculative comprend *lato sensu* le franchissement à travers tous les aspects

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[36] *Ibid.*
[37] *Cf.* : « *s'engager dans une voie non pas opposée, mais latérale* », *Mémoires improvisés*, p. 233.

de la révélation divine, que lui assure le langage triomphal de l'être, ceci signifiant que il s'agit d'une poésie largement inspirée par l'enseignement du Docteur angélique.

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EL REALISMO DE LA NOVELA ESPAÑOLA

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Abstract

El objeto de estudio del presente trabajo es el análisis del realismo que se manifiesta en la novela española desde sus inicios medievales hasta la actualidad. La pregunta de partida teórica ha sido: ¿por qué la novela española ha ofrecido a la literatura universal sus mejores ejemplos cuando se ha vestido de traje realista? Ya en sus orígenes la ficción narrativa española solía unir elementos cultos y populares, lo real y lo irreal tiñiéndose constantemente de los distintos matices del realismo. El artículo intenta puntualizar algunos parámetros históricos y literarios y dar ciertas respuestas adecuadas, recorriendo generalmente la historia de la novela española y destacando algunos momentos decisivos en su desarrollo - la novela del Siglo de Oro, el *Quijote* y sobre todo la novela de la posguerra del siglo XX.

1. INTRODUCCIÓN – REFLEXIONES GENERALES

Toda novela se mueve entre lo real y lo ficticio. Si es cierto que la literatura crea una realidad, que no es un apéndice de la realidad que la vivimos, no lo es menos que la realidad novelesca ha reproducido siempre con más o menos fidelidad la realidad del mundo.

¿Cuál es la relación entre la realidad y la ficción?, o mejor dicho, ¿qué parte de ficción hay en la realidad, y qué parte de realidad hay en la ficción? Calderón de la Barca dice en la escena XIX de la Jornada segunda de *La vida es sueño*:

> ¿Qué es la vida? Un frenesí.
> ¿Qué es la vida? Una ilusión,
> una sombra, una ficción,
> y el mayor bien es pequeño,
> que toda la vida es sueño
> y los sueños, sueños son. (VV 2182-2187)

Porque la palabra "ficción" significaba tradicionalmente en español "mentira", "simulación", sólo más tarde empezó a relacionarse con "invención imaginativa", con " novela" o con "género novelístico".

¿De dónde nace la novela como texto de ficción escrita? Antes de que se constituyera la literatura narrativa escrita se habían acumulado los tesoros de las

145

literaturas orales: leyendas donde se mezclan animales, hombres cotidianos, fuerzas de la naturaleza, dioses, narraciones de grandes batallas guerreras, ciclos de cantares de gesta destinados a ser cantados, etc. Remontándonos más lejos, los libros sagrados de la India, la Biblia, las vidas de los sabios o de los santos, los cuentos árabes de *Las mil y una noches* pueden ser considerados como los antecedentes de la novela. Los folcloristas rusos han estudiado las estructuras de estos cuentos y todas las transformaciones que puede sufrir un simple motivo inicial, una situación con dos o tres personajes implicados a partir de la cual nacen multitud de variantes. Mircea Eliade ha demostrado que la literatura oral – en sus formas narrativas – se confunde en su origen con la religión. La noción del mito ha evolucionado y ha llegado a ser sinónimo de ficción o creación fabuladora que conserva como punto de partida, sin embargo, una realidad vivida. La literatura oral narrativa constituye, entonces, una inmensa memoria de la humanidad, recoge tradiciones y creencias, asegura el recuerdo de hechos notables y el culto a los héroes o a los dioses, fija lo verdadero y fabrica lo maravilloso.

La novela como género literario ha experimentado grandes altibajos en su rica y larga historia. Al principio, a lo largo de muchos siglos, sólo los ricos podían permitirse el lujo de tener acceso a los manuscritos. ¿Quién, entonces, pudo leer textos de ficción escrita y quién tuvo ese placer hasta el siglo XIX? Los nobles, los burgueses y sobre todo sus mujeres, ya que a los hombres les seducían mucho más la caza, el libertinaje, los negocios o el alcohol. Solamente con la revolución industrial del siglo XIX y el ascenso de la burguesía como clase dominante, la novela logra establecerse como literatura elevada y culta.

Se ha recalcado a menudo la necesidad de evasión que anima al lector, quien, buscando enfrentarse a la agresión del mundo cotidiano, lo sustituye por un mundo ficticio que no es necesariamente bello y atractivo, sino, ante todo, coherente. La novela crea al mismo tiempo la soledad y permite salir de ella; el lector puede vivir las vidas posibles que le niegan su condición social, su época, sus insuficiencias personales o el azar. El arte de la novela es un arte de la comunicación y no un arte del conocimiento.

En la actualidad la novela no se escapó al fenómeno de la masificación. Los tirajes elevados, el número de títulos nuevos cada año y la fidelidad de un público considerable a pesar de la competencia de los medios audiovisuales y electrónicos, testimonian de la vitalidad de la novela. Sin embargo no le han faltado condenas literarias ni morales – los historiadores de la literatura destacan su agonía y anuncian su muerte definitiva desde hace más de cien años. Pero el público lector sigue dándole reconocimiento y sitio en la vida cotidiana.

Al final del siglo XX y en la primera década del siglo XXI la literatura en general y la novela en particular están constituidas por un haz de fuerzas dinámicas, de materiales que no existen en estado puro y que actúan los unos sobre los otros. Ya Borges (1966: 90-91) entiende la novela moderna como "un juego de vigilancias, ecos y afinidades, ... un orbe autónomo de corroboraciones, de presagios". En el ámbito cultural posmoderno han desaparecido los conceptos intelectuales unívocos y estáticos, por eso la novela debe ser producto de la compleja realidad pluridimensional.

2. BREVE HISTORIA DE LA NOVELA ESPAÑOLA

Ya en sus orígenes la ficción narrativa española solía unir elementos cultos y populares, lo real y lo irreal vistiéndose constantemente de los distintos matices del realismo.

Distintos son los géneros de novelas que atraen al público de los siglos XV, XVI y XVII: la novela caballeresca (*Libro del caballero Zifar* como la primera novela caballeresca española escrita ya en torno a 1300 y atribuida a un canónigo de Toledo, Ferrand Martínez) que alcanza su auge con *Amadís de Gaula* (1508) de Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo; la novela sentimental (la primera es *Siervo libre de amor* de Juan Rodríguez del Padrón en 1439); la novela morisca (*La historia del Abencerraje* de 1551) que se afianza con *Las guerras civiles de Granada* de Ginés Pérez de Hita en 1595; la novela pastoril que tiene su modelo arquetípico en *Los siete libros de la Diana* (1559) de Jorge de Montemayor; y la novela picaresca que inicia su historia con *Lazarillo de Tormes* en 1554, pero no se constituye como verdadero género hasta 1599 con *Guzmán de Alfarache* de Mateo Alemán.

Todos los géneros narrativos mencionados se basaban en las historias irreales, pero eran a la vez reflejos de épocas pretéritas y representación de los tiempos contemporáneos. La variedad de enfoques y la mezcla de rutina e invención les permitió diversificar su temática ajustándola a la realidad contemporánea. Los lectores pudieron observar la imagen de un mundo heroico, ilusorio, ficticio y a la vez real, cotidiano y próximo de aquel en que vivían. La posibilidad de refugiarse en la ficción para escapar del vivir mediocre cotidiano bien es conocida a Cervantes que, uniendo la variedad de enfoques entre la ficción realista y la idealista en una simbiosis latente, engendró su *Ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*, la primera novela moderna de la literatura occidental. El genio creador de Cervantes ha sido reconocido tan universalmente que Ortega y Gasset (1983: 398), al principio del siglo XX, ha podido declarar: "toda novela contiene al *Quijote* en su interior como una marca de aguas, como todo poema épico contiene la *Ilíada*, como el hueso de un fruto".

A partir del *Quijote* la novela española no ha sido otra cosa que una pálida sombra del reflejo de la novela de Cervantes, que algunas veces ha brillado más, otras menos. Podemos estar de acuerdo con la opinión de Lionel Trilling (1961: 209) que considera que hasta la actualidad ninguna novela haya superado al *Quijote*:

> En cualquier género puede ocurrir que el primer gran ejemplo contenga todo el potencial del género. Se ha dicho que toda la filosofía es una nota a pie de página a Platón. Puede afirmarse que toda la ficción en prosa es una variación del tema de *Don Quijote*.

La idea de poder imitar al *Quijote* después de su publicación parece tarea imposible y absurda. La historia literaria, considera Juan Benet (Sobejano, 2003: 133), no ha hecho más que alejar el modelo de Cervantes hasta hacerlo inalcanzable. Lo único que los autores españoles posteriores, sobre todo los de los siglos XIX y XX – Larra, Galdós, Azorín, Pío Baroja, Unamuno, Valle-Inclán, Martín-Santos, Juan Goytisolo y muchos otros – han podido hacer ha sido analizar, adaptar o comentar una o varias lecciones que Cervantes nos ha dejado sobre el mundo o sobre el arte narrativo.

Con el realismo decimonónico la novela española ha intentado recuperar sus glorias pasadas del Siglos de Oro; varios autores realistas y naturalistas intentan materializar el pensamiento de la revolución industrial buscando sus historias en la vida cotidiana de la clase burguesa. Entre ellos destacan sobre todo Benito Pérez Galdós y Leopoldo Alas Clarín. Después de la novela testimonial naturalista, la reacción abre paso a la novela idealista, simbolista.

El principio del siglo XX o la Edad de Plata en la literatura española es más favorable al ensayo, a la poesía y al teatro y menos a la novela que busca su identidad en las raíces experimentales del *Quijote* (por ejemplo, Miguel de Unamuno con *Niebla*).

3. LA NOVELA ESPAÑOLA DE LA POSGUERRA

Después de la Guerra Civil reaparece, aunque jamás ha desaparecido por completo, el realismo tradicional de la novela española que está presente desde sus inicios épicos medievales. Se confirma en nuestro caso la tesis formalista de Chklovski que la nueva forma no aparece para expresar un nuevo contenido, sino para reemplazar a la forma antigua que ha perdido ya su carácter estético. (Sobejano, 2003: 20)

José Ortega piensa que en el realismo de la novela española de posguerra se pueden distinguir dos corrientes: en la primera se incluyen aquellos escritores que conocieron la guerra (Gironella, Delibes, Cela, Laforet, etc.) y cuyas obras se caracterizan en general por el testimonio documental o por la velada crítica impuesta por la censura o el conformismo del autor; la segunda corriente o la generación del medio siglo representan autores que en el drama de la Guerra Civil no participaron y que empiezan a publicar a partir de 1950. A este grupo distingue una mayor objetividad crítica, debida al alejamiento cronológico de la guerra.

Gonzalo Sobejano (2003: 13-20) considera que en el nuevo realismo de la posguerra española pueden señalarse tres direcciones que se manifiestan en la novela: la novela existencial cuyo tema es la existencia del hombre contemporáneo; la novela social que trata el vivir de la colectividad en conflictos; y la novela estructural o dialéctica que intenta criticar a fondo las estructuras tradicionales, desmitificándolas y depurándolas. ...

La primera dirección predomina en los narradores que se dieron a conocer en los años cuarenta, años de infradesarrollo. La segunda dirección predomina en los narradores que se dieron a conocer en los años cincuenta, años de desarrollo incipiente. La tercera dirección predomina en los narradores que se han dado a conocer en los años sesenta, años de expansión económica y cierta liberalización ideológica y cultural.

La novela española de las primeras décadas de la posguerra sufre de la discontinuidad típica de la novela moderna. En el siglo XIX la novela expresaba la omnipotencia y el individualismo del autor que en el siglo XX se convierte en la literatura sin autor, resultado de los cambios científicos, sociales y culturales. La relatividad del tiempo y del espacio se manifiestan en la novela como desorden, o mejor dicho, un orden que no es el sucesivo y causal de la naturaleza y de la historia, sino:

donde se juntan las lejanías y se apartan las proximidades; donde el pasado, presente y futuro experimentan retardaciones, simultaneidades y anticipaciones; donde el sujeto puede multiplicarse y la multitud queda unificada en un haz subjetivo; donde pueden revelarse innúmeras perspectivas, emerger y sumergirse los más variados pensamientos e intuiciones, y albergarse las voces más diversas, los estilos más diferentes. (Sobejano, 2003: 21)

Mirando en particular el desarrollo de la novela española de posguerra, todos los cambios mencionados ocurren muy despacio, paso a paso, y siempre como testimonio de un pálido reflejo de la cotidiana y dolorosa realidad.

3.1. Los años cuarenta

Después de la Guerra Civil española, sobre todo por las razones políticas (también la censura[1]) difícilmente podría surgir en la España de la inmediata posguerra una novela que no fuese de la tradición realista española. El aislamiento cultural mantiene entonces a la novelística española al margen de la renovación novelesca que en Europa y América llevan a cabo los grandes maestros de la narrativa mundial como M. Proust, A. Gide, F. Kafka, T. Mann, J. Joyce, A. Huxley, W. Woolf, W. Faulkner y otros más.

Al terminar la Segunda Guerra Mundial, había seguido la expulsión de España de las Naciones Unidas, la retirada de embajadores y el bloqueo diplomático y económico de España por parte de las potencias occidentales (1946). Desde los finales de los años treinta hasta los finales de los cuarenta se pierde en el ámbito cultural español toda una generación de autores, se trata en realidad de una "amputación cultural" (Neuschäfer, 1994: 10): unos fueron brutalmente asesinados (más por la parte franquista, menos por la parte republicana), otros murieron durante la huida o inmediatamente después del final de la guerra, terceros fueron empujados a un penoso exilio que los obligó a refugiarse en el silencio literario. Después de la Guerra Civil tenía que crecer una nueva generación creadora. Ésta se levanta bastante rápido a pesar del hecho de que durante años los autores tenían que temer una represión violenta. No es casual que fuese la novela la primera en la renovación de un lenguaje literario propio; un poco más tarde le siguieron el teatro y el cine.

Ya en 1942 Camilo José Cela empieza a renovar de verdad los caminos novelescos con el tremendismo (que él lo entiende como sanguinaria caricatura de la realidad) y con la novela *La familia de Pascual Duarte* – la violencia omnipresente vista desde la prespectiva del individuo, de la familia y de la sociedad, que busca la evasión hacia el crimen y la locura, todo dentro de un realismo extremo. Otras novelas de la época también tienen como temas alienación, soledad, escepticismo: Carmen Laforet, *Nada* (1944), Miguel Delibes, *La sombra del ciprés es alargada* (1947), *Aún es de día* (1949), *El camino* (1950) etc.

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[1] Hans-Jörg Neuschäfer (1994: 10) utiliza el término el "discurso de la censura".

3.2. Los años cincuenta

En la década de los cincuenta comienza el proceso de normalización de las relaciones diplomáticas entre España y las potencias occidentales y los frutos de esta política de apertura del régimen no se hicieron esperar. En los años cincuenta España aspiraba, por tanto, a salir del aislamiento en el que se encontraba después de una larga y hambrienta posguerra.

Santos Sanz Villanueva (1972: 43-44) ha reducido las múltiples razones, por las cuales asistimos por esos años a un cambio en la narrativa, a las sigueintes más importantes: salida de España del aislamiento internacional; mayor libertad y flexibilidad de la censura; descubrimiento de la novela extranjera (la novela neorrealista italiana, la novela norteamericana, el "nouveau roman" francés); progresiva temática social (el tema de la Guerra Civil va perdinedo importancia, ahora los jóvenes novelistas han tomado conciencia de la realidad que los envuelve y se dedican a describir lo que ven, de este modo el realismo objetivo se ha impuesto como una necesidad de expresión); política editoral más abierta y más certámenes literarios (Nadal, Planeta...)

En aquellos años del medio siglo se estaba preparando un auténtico renacimiento de la cultura española, sumida en una profunda somnolencia desde hacía ya más de diez años. Quizá fuera en el terreno de la narrativa donde se estaban produciendo los cambios más importantes. El medio siglo había traído aires de auténtica renovación en la novela española. En 1950 publicó Camilo José Cela la novela *La Colmena*, que, al introducir el personaje colectivo, el uso de la técnica cinematográfica en la novela y el empleo de un lenguaje coloquial basado en el argot madrileño, revolucionó los principios mismos de la narrativa española. Si estamos de acuerdo con los principios de Lucien Goldmann que define la novela moderna con el individuo problemático, desaparición del individuo en beneficio de la realidad colectiva y ausencia del sujeto, podemos constatar que *La colmena* decididamente ha abierto camino hacia el realismo social.

Pero la obra de Cela no se puede considerar como un fenómeno aislado. Basta recordar que en aquel mismo año publicó Miguel Delibes su primera novela realmente innovadora *El camino* y que poco después Luis Romero ganó el Premio Nadal con *La Noria*, otra novela de técnica innovadora y amplio impacto social. La narrativa de toda una década, el llamado realismo social o neorrealismo se estaba poniendo en marcha en aquellos momentos y habría de dar muchos frutos muy importantes.

Casi obsesivamente los jóvenes novelistas, entre el recuerdo de una guerra civil en la que no participaron y un incierto futuro político, intentan estudiar, analizar, describir y explicarse a sí mismos la situación actual de su país, su estructura social, las consecuencias de la guerra, etc. Se adhieren, consciente o inconscientemente, a una literatura testimonial, comprometida, realista.

3.3. Los años sesenta

Nuevas circunstancias de la década de los sesenta han transformado la vida económica y social del país que sigue su proceso de apertura al mundo extranjero a todos los niveles de la vida pública. En el campo creador el artista español se siente

alejado del compromiso testimonial y vuelve a comprender que el arte tiene sus propias sutiles normas.

La novelística española ha entrado nuevemente por los caminos del arte verdadero y ya no por los de la historia social. La novela se aprovecha ahora de las innovaciones formales de la novela europea y americana, en todas partes dominada por un espíritu de experimentación y cambio. La mejor novelística española de la década de los sesenta se enriquece con toda clase de experimentos formales y expresivos, un espíritu abierto a los nuevos modos de narrar, una concepción dinámica del arte de novelas, una mayor riqueza de puntos de vista y formas de expresión. La aceptación de una posición intelectual ante la novela ha dado entrada a la metafísica, al deseo de transcender, de universalizarse, de elevarse sobre la anécdota, sin abandonarla, pero haciéndola más honda, más relevante, más profundamente interpretada.

Tanto la postura intelectualista como la inquietud metafísica han capacitado al novelista para acercarse al problema de España sobre una base de libertad y justicia. Se trata de la búsqueda de los nuevos valores y de la desmitificación de los valores tradicionales. Novela total, inquietante, que no abandona su compromiso con la problemática de la sociedad de su tiempo.

Nuevas ideas demandan nuevas formas de expresión. Los novelistas de aquella época han dado enorme importancia al tratamiento del lenguaje, a la realización lingüística que representa el punto culminante de su verdadera misión cradora. El lenguaje que había servido hasta ahora para ocultar o mentir, debe ser destruido y purificado por el creador literario, que ha de ser no sólo un verdadero cultor de la lengua sino un experimentador y un renovador de su instrumento de expresión.

El momento clave de la narrativa española de posguerra es la aparición de la novela *Tiempo de silencio* de Luis Martín-Santos en 1962. La mayoría de los críticos concuerda en denominación de la tendencia iniciada por él como realismo dialéctico. La novela estructural o dialéctica (también dos novelas publicadas en 1966 - *Señas de identidad* de Juan Goytisolo y *Cinco horas con Mario* de Miguel Delibes) trata de identificar el contexto social desde un punto de vista global. La nueva dirección puede resumirse en un propósito básico: la desmitificación total de "España sagrada", un examen de la conciencia nacional.

Tiempo de silencio de Luis Martín-Santos es la obra que mejor resume la España de la posguerra, porque en ella se funden de manera especial y sintética los temas tópicos. La novela destaca a un protagonista individual, muy confuso e impotente, cuyo destino le obliga a un recorrido general de la sociedad que concluye en un fracaso total. *Tiempo de silencio* es la novela que, semejante a otras novelas claves del pasado, abre nuevas perspectivas en la concepción temática y en la técnica estructural del arte narrativo. El realismo de Martín-Santos trasciende las situaciones concretas, las explica. Porque ya no cabía la mera presentación de la realidad, sino habría que explicarla. Como opina Martínez Cachero (1985: 250), se trata de una novela de cambio y, también, de cierre y apertura. De cierre, porque representa el último gran texto de la novela social y, a la vez, de apertura porque significa la superación del mismo. La novela vuelve su mirada crítica hacia la tradición literaria española para analizarla y al mismo tiempo para integrarse en su continuidad.

3.4. Los años setenta

La Ley de Prensa e Imprenta (1966) suponía la desaparición teórica del sistema de censura de libros, aunque su verdadera realización no se cumplió hasta después del final del régimen franquista, lo que no ocurriría hasta 1977.

Los años setenta son dominados por el experimentalismo que surgía como consecuencia del proceso de reflexión de los novelistas acerca de los principios básicos, formales y estructurales de la ficción. El narrador parece cumplir en simultáneo las funciones de creador y de crítico. Consciente de su escritura, el autor intenta aplicar los recursos técnicos y se concentra en una reflexión sobre aspectos teóricos de la novela. En lo que se refiere al argumento, los hechos suelen presentarse cronológicamente desordenados y carentes de lógica, sin principio ni desenlace. La novela se convierte en juegos metaficcionales, textos que refieren a sí mismos; las frases se agrupan en largos fragmentos ininterrumpidos e inconexos. La subversión lógica y espacio-temporal del discurso reclama la atención del lector sobre el mismo discurso. Los autores de esta década son, entre otros, Juan Goytisolo, Camilo José Cela, Miguel Delibes, Juan Benet, Alfonso Grosso.

3.5. Los años ochenta y noventa

La reacción en contra de la complejidad experimental no se hizo esperar; se reacciona contra la inutilidad de la reacción verbal como fin, y la dificultad que tales obras presentan al lector común. Los narradores se dan cuenta de que el experimentalismo se ha convertido en un camino estéril y sin salida.

 Al retroceso de la novela experimental se vincula el regreso a una concepción más tradicional del relato, en la que hay que atrapar la atención del lector con la historia narrada, con la acción de la historia. La vuelta a la novela de acción fue una reacción en contra del insoportable experimentalismo.

A partir de los años ochenta la narrativa regresa hacia las raíces de las que brotó y subraya que su arte consiste en saber contar, o sea, destaca el recorrido que ha realizado el género a través de los siglos (realismo renovado).

Una de las características principales de la narrativa española de las últimas décadas es la pluralidad de tendencias, de acuerdo con el código postmodernista: se escriben la novela fantástica, la novela histórica, la poemática, la metaficcional, la autobiográfica o de memorias, la novela testimonio o crónica o reportaje, etc. A la multitud de tendencias en la novela corresponde la multitud de autores que, unos más otros menos, deben someterse a las exigencias económicas del mercado.

John Barth (1986: 93) señala que la novela posmodernista tendría que: ser capaz de superar las contradicciones entre realismo e idealismo; ser capaz de superar las contradicciones entre literatura pura y literatura comprometida; ser capaz de superar las contradicciones entre narrativa de élite y narrativa de masas; abrirse a un público amplio; salvar la distancia entre la crítica académica y la periodística. Y podemos afirmar que la novela española del final del siglo XX ha sabido aprovecharse del código

postmodernista. En esa nueva biblioteca, como diría Borges, se ha formado un canon literario global del que brotan versiones locales e individuales.

Con tanta proliferación de temas y formas muchos críticos temen que la novela española corra el riesgo de la blandura, de lo demasiado *light*. Sin embargo, desde la perspectiva general, la última narrativa española ha sabido abrir huellas estéticas duraderas o "encender una lumbre que el viento del tiempo, a pesar de su furia, no sabe apagar". (Sobejano, 2003: 188)

Entre la variedad novelesca actual y siguiendo los própositos destacados por J. Barth, el llamado costumbrismo policíaco o novela criminal aparece en los años noventa como la única corriente que lleva a cabo la función de ser la crónica del tiempo presente, una vez extinguido el realismo social. La novela policíaca española se revela como algo más que una novela de entretenimiento, es una forma válida de referir la realidad contemporánea. Los autores como Eduardo Mendoza, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán[2] o Antonio Muñoz Molina, entre muchos más, han tratado de dar una respuesta adecuada a las particulares condiciones sociales y culturales de la época y a la problemática moral que dichas condiciones plantean. En sus novelas policíacas se ven reflejados los problemas de la sociedad contemporánea, las cotradicciones del sistema y del individuo. No es casualidad que muchos de los autores que escriben la novela criminal hayan sido anteriormente periodistas o reporteros, buenos conocedores de la realidad contemporánea que luego la denuncian en sus obras de ficción.

La novela policíaca ha encontrado un definitivo eco en la sociedad española actual en un momento de cambio, de ciertos conflictos sociales y valores particulares. La novela policíaca responde directamente a problemas existentes que el público lector, relativamente amplio, puede reconocer y trascender. La popularidad de esta novela en la última década responde a la necesidad colectiva de ajustarse a la nueva realidad con todas sus ambigüedades y confusiones de la época.

4. EL SIGLO XXI

La cultura actual carece de una dirección principal o parámetros generales, igualmente la ficción escrita. Los mismos procesos ocurren en el acto de la recepción, en la lectura. Ya no existen recetas unidimensionales de interpretación. El concepto tradicional de lectura está en crisis porque ha cambiado (ha cambiado también la escritura) y exige otras formas de recepción por parte del lector. El receptor pasivo tiene que convertirse en "cómplice" activo del proceso literario. La ficción actual exige del lector una lectura más compleja o, mejor dicho, una recepción pluridireccional.

La posmodernidad literaria ha dejado por detrás los horizontes receptores unidimensionales. Sin embargo, la posmodernidad ha dejado abierta la posibilidad de búsqueda de nuevos principios epistémicos, más abiertos y flexibles, que nos permitan tanto crear como entender nuevos modos de realización estética. Gonzalo Navajas (2002: 58) define el fenómeno de modo siguiente:

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[2] Fueron pioneros en la posguerra Manuel Vázquez Montalbán con *Tatuaje* (1974), novela iniciadora de la posteriormente célebre saga del detective Carvalho, y Eduardo Mendoza con *La verdad sobre el caso Savolta* (1975).

En este fin de siglo y de principio inminente de un milenio nos hemos quedado a la intemperie epistémica y estética, en una Babel multifacética y tautológica, en contraste con el orden taxonómico previo en el que el mundo se percibía más nítidamente en departamentos bien delimitados. Un nuevo período temporal conlleva necesariamente la necesidad de hallar nuevas categorías definidoras que sean compatibles con los nuevos signos culturales y con los métodos de aproximación a ellos.

En los últimos años los textos de ficción escrita se han ubicado en el marco transtemporal y multidireccional. La novela tiene que ser conectada con otros procedimientos estéticos – con el cine, con la cibercultura, con lo visual, con lo gestual. "La primacía aislacionista de la palabra escrita ha concluido. Se ha inaugurado una fase nueva más intercomunicativa", añade Navajas (2002: 56) y concluye de modo optimista: "Por su capacidad de sincretizar pasado y presente y estructurar lo canónico en nuevas configuraciones que la legitiman para la actualidad, la narración escrita ha sabido reposicionarse y reubicarse para la episteme actual". (2002: 89)

Y parece que las direcciones actuales de la novela española seguirán el camino realista salpicado de idealismo, mezcla afortunada que hasta ahora tantos excelentes frutos ha ofrecido al dulce placer del lector.

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THE PRAGMATIC FUNCTION OF INTONATION IN ENGLISH AND SLOVENE

Smiljana Komar

Abstract

The article examines the pragmatic role of intonation whose prime function is to enable the hearer to make inferences from the utterance's context in order to enrich the interpretation. Intonation does not alter the sense of lexical items. Instead it provides the hearer with an opportunity to choose between different interpretations at the lexico-syntactic level. The intonation systems of different European languages exhibit quite a large number of similarities regarding the pragmatic role of intonation. The analysis of the communicative functions of tone, key and termination in English and Slovene was an attempt to prove the hypothesis of natural, iconic meanings of intonation.

A DISCOURSAL APPROACH TO THE ANALYSIS OF INTONATION

Since the seventies discourse has become a key focus of linguistic research. Consequently, phonologists researching intonation have switched their interest from mere description of pitch contours of individual clauses and sentences to larger chunks of speech. They have tried to establish the function of different prosodic features in the development of spoken interaction, their influence upon the speaker/hearer convergence and the context of interaction. In other words, phonologists were no longer interested in the emotional, attitudinal and grammatical functions of prosodic features but rather in how they contribute to the ever-changing nature of spoken discourse and its understanding.

In the British linguistic tradition a discourse analysis school was established in Birmingham. Starting with discourse analysis of teacher/pupil interaction in a classroom situation John Sinclair and Malcolm Coulthard (1975) developed an interactional model applicable to any spoken interaction. The analysis of discourse functions of different prosodic features was carried out by David Brazil and resulted in an intonation model different from previous ones (Crystal, O'Connor & Arnold, Halliday) in that it related communicative meanings and values to tones, keys and pitch sequences valid in all occurrences of these prosodic features (Brazil, 1985).

In his work on discourse intonation, Brazil (1985) has proposed that certain relationships exist between tone units which are manifested by means of different prosodic elements, such as the choice of tone, key and termination.

The choice of tone marks the discoursal function of the whole unit. Thus, for example, a fall marks the information as new, whereas a fall-rise marks the matter as old, shared or already negotiated.

In Brazil's intonation model key is "any prominent syllable which precedes the tonic syllable in its tone unit as an onset syllable" (Brazil, 1985:23). There are three levels of key: high, mid and low. The choice of key puts the tone unit in a special relationship with the previous one. Thus high key expresses contrast, mid key expresses a simple additive relation, while the low key expresses existential equivalence.

Termination is associated with the last prominent syllable in a tone unit. It is a particular pitch level at which tones are realized. The choice of termination mainly restricts the use of key in the following tone unit.

The discoursal functions of tone, key and termination are mainly to enhance lexical and grammatical cohesion and to achieve coherence in speech.

THE DISADVANTAGES OF THE TRADITIONAL MODEL OF SLOVENE SENTENCE INTONATION

The traditional model of Slovene sentence intonation was developed by Jože Toporišic (1984) on the basis of the analysis of the reading of literary texts. Thus his model is not a description of spontaneous speech but rather a prescription of an ideal sentence intonation which can nowadays only be heard on stage or in carefully prepared texts read by professional readers. The application of the model to the analysis of spontaneous speech must necessarily reveal several prosodic features which the model could have accounted for had it been developed on the analysis of spontaneous speech.

Furthermore, the model mainly deals with the description of pitch movements in individual clauses or sentences, emphasizing the influence of word intonation, i.e. the tonemic accent, upon the pitch contour of a clause or a sentence. Consequently, Toporišic distinguishes among different types of pitch contours typical of statements, commands and questions, thus giving preference to the grammatical function of intonation above all other functions.

Having developed the intonation model well before discourse analyses came into full swing, Toporišic does not grant prosodic features any functions they might play in the development of a spoken interaction or how they influence the speaker/hearer relationship. He marginally admits that intonation may have emotional and attitudinal functions mainly expressed in the change of key, tempo and timbre.

THE REASONS FOR THE APPLICATION OF BRAZIL'S MODEL TO SLOVENE SPOKEN CORPUS

The Slovene intonation model as developed by Toporišic is the only valid intonation model which has not been publicly challenged yet. As a matter of fact, phono-

logical and prosodic research has stagnated. It has been only due to the Slovene-English contrastive analysis that some prosodic research has been carried out lately.

The existing Slovene intonation model and Brazil's communicative approach to the analysis of prosodic features are incompatible both in the structure of tone units, as well as in the meanings associated to different prosodic features. The purpose of my analysis was to find out how the prosodic features of tone, key and termination influence the meaning and the communicative value of utterances and how they contribute to the cohesion of the message both in English and in Slovene. Thus only one of the models had to be used for the analysis of both languages. I chose Brazil's intonation model and applied it to the analysis of a Slovene spoken corpus consisting of interviews, sport broadcasts and news readings.

THE DISCOURSAL MEANINGS OF TONES IN ENGLISH AND SLOVENE

ENGLISH

The various descriptions of intonation have attributed varying meanings to different pitch movements: grammatical (Halliday, 1967), attitudinal and emotional (O'Connor, Arnold, 1973), or discoursal (Brazil, 1985). Descriptions of the meanings of tones in English vary according to their local or abstract nature. The attitudinal approach is said to exhibit local meanings of tones when they are used in different types of sentence. A description which seeks the common factor in all the uses of a particular tone is said to be an abstract one. Such is Brazil's (1985) discoursal approach to intonation, in which he tries to define how different prosodic features (i.e. tone, key, termination) affect the communicative value of an utterance. Discoursal meanings of different tones deal with concepts like shared knowledge of a speaker and listener(s) and the desire of a speaker to dominate, while key and termination express the expectations that a speaker has about the addressee's reply.

Brazil distinguishes between two basic, unmarked tones, the fall and the fall-rise. The former is proclaiming, the latter referring. The term referring means that the fall-rise marks the matter of the tone as part of the shared, already negotiated, common ground occupied by the participants in an on-going interaction. The fall, in contrast, presents the matter as new, i.e. not yet part of the common ground, hence the term proclaiming.

In addition to the two unmarked tones, there are also two marked ones, the proclaiming rise-fall and the referring rise, which are used exclusively to express dominance in spoken interactions. Dominance can either refer to the social roles that the speakers exhibit, or, more commonly, to the control of the discourse that is held by one participant (often the current speaker) who can expect to be allowed to proceed uninterrupted to the end of the turn. It has to be pointed out that the dominant speaker can choose between the unmarked (non-dominant) and marked (dominant) tones. There are, however, types of discourse where the listeners expect the speakers to behave according to their dominant roles (e.g. doctor-patient, judge-witness, teacher-pupil interactions).

According to Brazil, the level tone does not exhibit any interactive nature. It is a tone which occurs normally in "ritualized or precoded speech" (Brazil, 1995:244). In spontaneous speech, the level tone is frequently used when speakers need time to plan ahead. To distinguish it from the discourse that is speaker-hearer-sensitive, Brazil calls this kind of performance "oblique discourse" (Brazil, 1995:244).

SLOVENE

In Slovene sentence intonation Toporišič distinguishes three main pitch movements that are realized on the nuclear syllable: the falling, the rising and the level. There are variations of these pitch contours which depend on the word intonation as well as on the type of clause or sentence.

The analysis of Slovene spoken corpus has shown that the use of the falling, rising or level tones is similar to their use in English. It has been proved that the fall in Slovene is also used with reference to information which is new, whereas the rise is often used anaphorically, i.e. referring back to information which has already been introduced. The use of the level tone is practically the same as in English, namely, to express hesitation.

Although Toporišič does not recognize the fall-rise, the analysis has shown a significant occurrence of the fall-rise in Slovene. The use of the fall-rise tone is on the increase mainly in TV news and sport broadcasts.

The analysis of the actual realization of the fall-rise tone in a tone unit has shown that the tone has three possible realizations:
-   it can be realized within one polysyllabic word:

     Vozil ni mogoče premakniti zato, ker so to večinoma kolesna vozila, **/v ↘↗ bojih/** *pa so pnevmatike prerešetane …*
-   it can be realized within one phrase:

     Andrej ima zelo **/↘ netipično po↗ škodbo** *kolena;*
-   it can be realized as a split fall-rise, i.e. the falling part is realized at the beginning of the tone unit, whereas the rising part comes towards the end of it:

     /Če pro↘ daja britanskega blaga v Slo↗ veniji / *nima prav dolge tradicije*

Contrary to Received Pronunciation, the realization of the fall-rise within one polysyllabic word is very rare in Slovene and can be regarded more as an exception than a rule. The other two realizations are much more frequent and exhibit some typical patterns of occurrence.

The fall-rise in phrases usually occurs in nominal phrases with the pre-modifier being either an adjective, a pronoun or a numeral. The pre-modifier takes the falling pitch movement, whereas the head word takes the rising. The communicative value of such a fall-rise is twofold: the falling part introduces new information and the rising part highlights something which is already known to the speakers but is important for a complete transfer of the message.

The split fall-rise is not realized within one phrase, thus it is possible to regard such tone units as units with two nuclei. In Slovene these units fall into four major groups according to the distribution of the falling and the rising parts within the tone unit. Thus we distinguish the following groups:

1) ↘ on the negative adverb or a pronoun … ↗ on the last lexical item
  Škoda je, da danes na startu **↘ *ni Andreja* ↗ *Miklavca***

2) ↘ on a lexical verb … ↗ on a noun or a pronoun
  Bi nam lahko najprej čisto na kratko strnil, kaj se je od včeraj, / ko je ministrski svet
  po↘*trdil svoja pogajalska izho*↗*dišča*

3) ↘ on an adverb … ↗ on the last lexical item
  in za spoznanje **↘*manj ostro tudi* ↗*Češko***

4) ↘ on a noun … ↗ on a noun.
  Morda se bodo razglabljanja / o **po↘*menu obiska velškega* ↗*princa* /**
  še nadaljevala.

When the tone is not realized within a single phrase, then the rising part simply indicates the syntactical and semantical non-finality, whereas the falling part carries the main message. Thus the discoursal function of the split fall-rise is to inform the listener and not to make reference to something which is already shared or old information.

THE DISCOURSAL MEANINGS OF KEY AND TERMINATION IN ENGLISH AND SLOVENE

In his work on discourse intonation, Brazil (1985) has also proposed that certain relationships exist between tone units. These are manifested by means of prosodic features which he has called key and termination. If tones exhibit certain pitch movements, then key and termination refer to the pitch level of the first (i.e. key) and the last (i.e. termination) pitch prominent syllables. Both, key and termination, can be realized at three different pitch levels: high, mid or low.

The communicative value of the high key is to present the matter expressed in the tone unit as being contrary to the expectations of the hearer. The low key, on the other hand, presents the matter as something which follows naturally from the previous matters and is in agreement with the hearer's expectations. The mid key expresses no special expectations on the part of the hearer, its function being only to add one piece of information to the other.

The pitch level of the last prominent syllable, i.e. the nucleus, is called termination. Its communicative function is to signal the speaker's expectations with regard to the key of the following intonation unit. In other words, high termination anticipates high key, whereas mid termination anticipates mid key. Low termination does not set up any expectations regarding the key of the following tone unit.

The only existing description of the Slovene sentence intonation could not be used for the analysis of discourse functions of key and termination in Slovene. Toporišič claims that Slovene speakers mainly use mid key. The choice of high or low key is restricted to emotionally marked utterances or when speaking to small children or animals. Hence a similar attempt to apply Brazil's intonation model to the recorded data of spoken Slovene was made.

I analysed two interviews with senior Slovene politicians. The purpose of the auditory analysis was to establish:

1) a possible number of keys and terminations;
2) possible combinations of key and termination;
3) communicative and discoursal functions of keys and terminations within one turn, as well as between the turns.

Since most of the turns of the two interviewees were relatively long and covered several topics and subtopics, I also observed the way speakers used prosodic features of key and termination to mark new subtopics, expand information or explain their points of view.

KEY AND TERMINATION IN THE ANALYSED DATA

The auditory analysis of the Slovene data has shown that in Slovene, too, we may distinguish between three pitch levels of the first accented syllable in the pre-tonic segment (high, mid and low key), as well as three pitch levels of the tonic syllable (high, mid and low termination).

I separately analysed:

- key and termination within one tone unit,
- termination and key between two turns, and
- key in the beginning of a new pitch sequence.

KEY AND TERMINATION WITHIN ONE TONE UNIT

There are restrictions governing the combination of key and termination within one tone unit. The following combinations of key and termination are possible in the Slovene language:

1. High key + high termination
   Meaning:
   - contrast
     Tako kot bi lahko človek domneval, če bi opazoval samo zunanje slovensko dogajanje, potem se ustvarja vtis, da Slovenija postaja Avgijev hlev korupcije, nesolidnosti, kriminala, podkupljivosti. //↗ 'Jaz mislim, da tako ↗ni, ↗//ker potem je razumljivo pričakovanje ljudi, da tako kot je bil očiščen Avgijev hlev, da se bo tudi tu pojavil heroj, ki bo to storil.

- repetition of shared information

Kar zadeva moje deponirane knjižice sem že dostikrat odgovoril in odgovarjam še enkrat: /↑ jaz 'nisem ni↗koli deponiral knjižice, ↑/nisem o tem govoril.

- emphasising the importance of the event/decision

Ampak jaz vidim racionalno jedro in domet te razprave, ki ni samo razprava v vladi, ampak je postala naša splošna razprava zdaj,/ ↑ da se o'krepi zavest o po↘membnosti ↑/

2. High key + mid termination

Although the difference in meaning between the tone units with high key + high termination and those with high key + mid termination is not essential, it has to be mentioned since it is by far the most frequent combination of key and termination in the Slovene corpus.

Meaning:

- contrast; mid termination enables a wider range of choices regarding the key of the following tone unit; a less declarative and condescending attitude to the addressee.

Torej s to splošno oceno se ne strinjam. //↑ 'Mi ↘ smo država v pre↗hodu. //Veliko stvari moramo narediti v kratkem času ...

3. Mid key + high termination

Typical of this combination is the rising tone with high termination. This restricts the choice of key in the next tone unit which can thus only begin with either a mid or a high key.

Meaning:

- the high key announces that the next tone unit will be either in contrast or will provide detailed explanation of facts, depending on the key of the next tone unit.

*Jaz sem enkrat že v razgovoru z vami dejal, **/jaz za no'beno pometanje pod preproge↗nisem:** ↑ /'mislim, da imajo drža↗vljani / pra↘vico zvedeti resnico o vseh vprašanjih,ki jih te afere odpirajo.*

4. Mid key + mid termination

Meaning:

- the mid termination does not restrict the choice of key in the following tone unit; it is most frequently used to explain one's point of view

*... dostikrat sem zadnje dneve slišal vprašanje, kdaj sem in kako sem bil obveščen, da je orožje na mariborskem letališču. Iz časopisja. //**Šele kas↗neje,/ko je Mi'nistrstvo za notranje za↘deve /pro↘silo,/če bi krimina'listi lahko dobili vpo↘gled vpreiskovalnih dejanjih,/ki so jih opravljali,/v dokumen↘tacijo,/**...*

5. Mid key + low termination

The low termination is almost always realised within a falling tone. The combination is typical of final tone units and marks the end of a pitch se-

quence. This means that the next tone unit, which is also the beginning of a new pitch sequence, can begin in any key.

> *Kot pravite je vlada razpravljanje, odločanje /***o tem aktu'alnem problemu odlo**↘***žila.* ↓ //'Torej se ga ne izo↗giba, ↑/ampak je ocenila, da lahko koristneje o njem presodi čez teden dni.*

6. Low key + mid termination
   Meaning:
   - the low key expresses existential equivalence with the previous tone unit, whereas the mid termination announces that the message is not complete.
     > *Ampak jaz vidim racionalno jedro in domet te razprave,/ki* ↘*ni samo razprava v vladi,/*↓ ***'ampak je postala naša*** ↗***splošna razprava /***↘ *zdaj,/da se okrepi zavest o pomembnosti neodvisnosti sodišč kot eden temeljev pravne države in demokratične parlamentarne ureditve.*

7. Low key + low termination
   Meaning:
   - expresses existential equivalence with the previous tone unit and marks the end of a pitch sequence; used in appositions.
     > *Za jutri dopoldan se bo tukaj oglasil predsednik Predsedstva Republike Slovenije,/*↓ ***go'spod Milan*** ↘***Kučan.*** ↓ //
   - inserted clauses or phrases which meaningfully complement or explain the previous clause or phrase
     > *Pri tem je seveda poseben problem SOVA,/*↓ ***o'ziroma nekdanji*** ↗***VIS,*** ↓ */ki ga praktično ni in s tem je,/*↓ ***'to si upam tr***↗***diti,*** ↓ */v tem trenutku slovenska država protiobveščevalno praktično nezaščitena.*

TERMINATION AND KEY BETWEEN TWO TURNS

Cohesion between two turns is established by means of the termination which ends one turn and the key which begins the next turn. The pitch contour of Slovene sentence intonation is gradually descending and is generally not in favour of the so-called pitch jumps and pitch slumps which are quite typical of English intonation. Thus the function of the termination in the Slovene language is mainly to restrict the choice of key in the next tone unit. Hence there should never be more than one level difference between the termination and the key of two successive tone units. The exception is low termination, which can be followed by any key.

The analysis of interviews has shown how different terminations ending the reporters' questions influenced the interviewees' choice of key.

Table 1. Termination and key between turns.

TERMINATION (reporter)		KEY (interviewees)	
level	*number*	*level*	*number*
high(↑)	8	high (↑)	6
		mid (→)	2
mid (→)	13	high (↑)	3
		mid (→)	9
		low (↓)	1
low (↓)	5	high (↑)	2
		mid (→)	3
		low (↓)	-

Table 1 shows a relatively high degree of agreement in the level of termination and key. The discoursal meanings of different combinations of termination and key are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The agreement of key and termination between questions and answers.

QUESTION		ANSWER	
Termination	*Meaning*	*Key*	*Meaning*
high (↑)	to challenge the speaker	high (↑)	contradicts
		mid (→)	agrees, explains
mid (→)	a 'neutral' question	high (↑)	contradicts
		mid (→)	explains, adds, agrees
		low (↓)	disagrees
low (↓)	ends a pitch sequence	high (↑)	contradicts
		mid (→)	explains, adds

If the communicative function of high termination in questions is to challenge the speaker by restricting the choice of the initial key in the answer, then it is possible to conclude that both interviewees in the data accepted the challenge and answered six times with high key, thus contradicting the interviewers' opinions. Only twice did they answer in mid key, thus accepting the interviewers' points of view, adding necessary explanation or expanding the idea.

Mid termination, which allows all three keys, was used with the so-called 'neutral' questions, i.e. questions which were not accompanied by the interviewers' opinions, and merely asked for information or clarification. Hence the prevailing number of mid keys in the interviewees' responses.

Since the communicative value of low termination is merely to end a pitch sequence, and as such does not restrict the interviewees, they could start their responses in any of the three keys available.

KEY IN THE BEGINNING OF A NEW PITCH SEQUENCE

Phonological paragraphing is a feature which divides spoken discourse into units similar to written paragraphs. Brazil has observed that speakers use pitch to form units larger than one word group. These units are characterised by the overlapping of syntactically and semantically complete units with low falling tones. This usually signals that the speaker has completed his thought as well as his turn and expects somebody else to continue or he himself intends to introduce a different topic or subtopic. Brazil called a series of tone units where the last one ends with low termination a pitch sequence. The key which begins the next pitch sequence puts the whole sequence in a relationship with the previous pitch sequence. Thus hearers can establish coherent links between two successive pitch sequences, whereby the key plays the role of the anaphoric reference.

1.   High Key
    Meaning:
    - introduces a new topic or subtopic

    Ja vedno poslanci pač odločajo, velikokrat sicer po svojih nagibih, ne tako koordinirano, kot se včasih zdi. Tudi koaliciji se velikokrat očita ravno to, da pač ne deluje ravno koordinirano in usklajeno. // ↑ Kar se tiče 'zakona o pranju de ↗narja, ↑ // bi rad poudaril, da ge je v postopek, v proceduro parlamentu, Državnemu zboru, poslala vlada.

    - puts the second pitch sequence in a contrastive relationship with the previous pitch sequence.

    Skratka ocene, zunanje ocene, so pozitivne in bistveno odstopajo od tega, kar pravite, da opozicija trdi. ↓ // ↑ 'Vendar opo ➔zicija ↑/že po naravi vedno kritizira. Najbrž bi se začudli, če bi naenkrat zagledali opozicijsko stranko, ki, ki hvali vladne rezultate, vladni program. Tega najbrž ni nikjer v svetu.↓ // ↑ 'Dejstva pa ↗so, ↑ /da se vsi gospodarski pokazatelji v zadnjem času popravljajo, ...

2. Mid key
    Meaning:
    - explaining and providing new information, opinions, etc.

    ↑ Člani sveta, kakorkoli bo sestavljen, moj predlog je, da bi to bilo pri vladi in da mu načeljuje predsednik vlade, morajo člane nacionalnega sveta obveščati o vseh relevantnih podatkih, do katerih pridejo in stvar

164

tega sveta, tega organa je, da potem to službo usmerja in da tudi pove, katere informacije smatra on za relevantne, katere pojave je treba spremljati in s katerimi stvarmi se ni potrebno ukvarjati.↓ *//'**Itak pa ostanejo** / zdaj po naravi te službe to samo stvari, ki so povezane z obveščevalnim in protiobveščevalnim delovanjem*↓.*//*

3. Low key
   Meaning:
   - expresses existential equivalence between the two pitch sequences

No such examples were found in the analysed corpus.

CONCLUSION

The pragmatic function of intonation is to enable the hearer to make inferences from the utterance's context to enrich the interpretation without altering the sense of lexical items. At the same time it provides the hearer with a number of different interpretations at the lexico-syntactic level.

The purpose of the contrastive analysis of the discoursal functions of tone, key and termination in English and Slovene has proved that there are quite a large number of similarities between the languages. It has also proved that Slovene speakers make use of the fall-rise pitch movement and that its use is on the increase in public speech mainly in media and politics.

In Slovene the fall-rise pitch movement is basically a stylistic device which speakers use for two different purposes. First, the tone enables them to convey two things at the same time: they introduce new information (the fall) and point to the semantic and syntactical non-finality (the rise). Second, the fall-rise enables them to emphasize the semantic link which exists between the head word and its pre-modifier.

Comparing the occurrence of the fall-rise in Slovene and English, we find out that in Slovene the tone cannot occur in final tone units or questions, whereas in English this is frequently the case. In addition, the discourse functions of the tone in Slovene and English are completely different: in English the tone expresses reference to common ground that exists between the speaker and the listener; in Slovene it is primarily a proclaiming tone whose communicative function is to expand the common ground with new information.

Considering these differences it would be difficult to assume that the fall-rise tone in Slovene has been borrowed from the English language. Its recent appearance in Croatian (Ivas, 1996) in similar contexts as in Slovene underlines the tone's stylistic character.

The analysis of discoursal meanings of key and termination in the Slovene language has shown that their prime function is to establish cohesive as well as coherent links between a series of tone units. The discoursal functions of key and termination were analysed both within one turn, as well as between turns.

It can be concluded that there are seven combinations of key and termination in Slovene. High key can combine only with high or mid termination, mid key with any

termination, whereas low key combines with either mid or low termination. The discoursal function of key is to establish the anaphoric cohesive link with the previous tone unit. Coherence between the two tone units is established by expressing contrast, addition or existential equivalence by means of high, mid and low key, respectively. The same discoursal functions of key are found between larger units, i.e. pitch sequences.

The discoursal function of termination in Slovene is to restrict the choice of key in the next tone unit which can be exploited in interviews to an important extent. The data show that the interviewers are aware of this possibility to control and influence the interviewees in their answers.

In their responses to questions, the interviewees use high key to express contrastive meaning, to clarify and emphasise their points of view, to repeat and explain misunderstood statements and to avoid further misunderstandings or doubt about the felicity of the message

They use mid key to explain and enumerate facts, viewpoints or reasons for decisions.

The low key is most frequently used to express existential equivalence and as such is usually found in appositions, inserted phrases or clauses and words or phrases with an 'empty' meaning which serve as fillers.

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SUMMARIES IN SLOVENE – POVZETKI V SLOVENŠČINI

UDK 821.111.09-93-344 Rowling J. K.

Brigita Pavšič

KNJIŽNA SERIJA *HARRY POTTER* – TRIVIALNA ALI NE?

Harry Potter J. K. Rowlingove je v središču pozornosti že vse od izdaje prve knjige. Kritiki so se dotaknili vseh možnih aspektov te serije, med drugim tudi vprašanja, ali gre za trivialno ali za kvalitetno literarno delo. Mnenja segajo vse od izredno negativnih pa do pohvalnih. Avtorica članka poskuša s primerjavo s še eno popularno otroško serijo *Pet Prijateljev* Enid Blytonove prikazati, v kolikšni meri so lastnosti trivialne literature v *Harryju Potterju* prisotne in kam ga skupek teh lastnosti posledično uvršča.

UDK 821.111(73)-1 Dickinson E. 7.03=163.6:81'255.4

Jerneja Petrič

NAJZGODNEJŠI PREVOD PESMI EMILY DICKINSON V SLOVENŠČINO

Pričujoča študija govori o malo znanih in verjetno prvih prevodih nekaterih pesmi ameriške pesnice Emily Dickinson v slovenski jezik. Prevodi so delo slovenskega Američana Vatra (Vatroslava) Grilla (1899-1976), ki je v ZDA prišel kot otrok leta 1913, bil dolga leta urednik clevelandske *Enakopravnosti* in še nekaterih drugih izseljenskih publikacij, sicer pa je bil po poklicu pravnik. Po upokojitvi se je ljubiteljsko bavil s poezijo in med drugim prevedel 19 pesmi Emily Dickinson. Prvotno so bile vse vključene v prek 1,000 strani dolg rokopis njegovih memoarov. Slednjega sem kot urednica precej skrčila in vanj vključila Grillov prevod šestih pesmi Emily Dickinson. Knjiga je skupaj s pesmimi izšla 1979 pod naslovom *Med dvema svetovoma*. Preostale pesmi so še vedno v rokopisu. Prvi del študije tako govori o prevodih poezije Emily Dickinson izpod peresa Marta Ogna, Aleša Debeljaka, Ive Svetina in Miklavža Komelja.

V drugem delu pa analiziram dva Grillova prevoda Emily Dickinson in ju vzporejam s prevodom Marta Ogna.

Igor Divjak

SODOBNA AMERIŠKA POEZIJA V SLOVENSKI KRITIKI IN PREVODIH: 1945 - 2005

Analiza slovenske recepcije ameriške poezije, napisane v obdobju po 2. svetovni vojni, se osredotoča na slovenski kritiški in prevajalski odziv na predstavnike najpomembnejših skupin avtonomne poezije - formalističnih in konfesionalnih pesnikov, poezije odprte forme - beatnikov, pesnikov z univerze Black Mountain in predstavnikov newyorške pesniške šole - ter tudi na odziv na tiste pesnike, ki jih ne moremo umestiti v nobeno od omenjenih skupin, a so vseeno pomembno zaznamovali sodobno ameriško poezijo.

V Sloveniji so najbolj odmevala dela beatniških pesnikov in predstavnikov newyorške pesniške šole, medtem ko je bilo kritiško in prevajalsko zanimanje za druge povojne ameriške pesnike skromnejše. V članku avtor raziskuje, kakšni so družbenozgodovinski, duhovnozgodovinski in estetski razlogi za tako različen sprejem sodobnih ameriških pesniških smeri.

Monika Kavalir

KLAVNICA PET KURTA VONNEGUTA: POGLED FUNKCIJSKE SLOVNICE

Članek analizira stil *Klavnice pet* Kurta Vonneguta s pomočjo Hallidayeve sistemske funkcijske slovnice. Cilj članka je ugotoviti, kako se skozi jezikovno zgradbo vzpostavlja skoraj otipljivi občutek fatalizma in preprostosti ter kako avtor z jezikovnimi sredstvi uresničuje svojstveni koncept časa. V prvem delu je predstavljena teoretična podlaga slovnične analize, ki se nadaljuje s prepletanjem slovnične in literarne analize. Predstavitvi avtorja in dela sledi analiza enega od poglavij, kjer se skozi vpogled v slovnično kompleksnost in tematsko zgradbo povedi razkriva prispevek jezika k interpretaciji glavnih tem romana. Čeprav prikazana analiza ni in ne more biti zadostna, se izkaže, da Vonnegutovo izrecno ubesedenje nekaterih ključnih poudarkov niti ne bi bilo potrebno, saj jih dovolj živo posreduje že jezik.

Miha Vrčko

ROMAN PHILIPA ROTHA *THE HUMAN STAIN* IN UNIČENJE AMERIŠKEGA SNA

Pričujoči članek razčlenjuje pojem ameriškega sna v romanu Philipa Rotha z naslovom *The Human Stain*. Zgodba govori o Colemanu Silku, črncu izjemno svetle polti, ki se vse življenje predstavlja, da je Žid. Silk globoko verjame v ameriški sen in njegova posamezna načela kot so trdo delo, egalitarizem, svoboda, individualizem in načelo samoniklosti. Še več, protagonist pooseblja ta načela, saj se neprestano trudi, da bi po njih živel. Zdi se, da bi zaradi tega Silk moral živeti dolgo in srečno življenje ali vsaj biti deležen hvale in slave po svoji smrti. Vendar do tega ne pride – sen se ne uresniči. Ker vrednote, v katere Silk tako globoko verjame in jih uteleša, predstavljajo najboljše, kar lahko Amerika ponudi, se zdi, da so s Silkovo nasilno smrtjo te vrednote ne samo spodkopane, ampak tudi da je celotni koncept ameriškega sna simbolično poteptan. Povrhu vsega Silka umori vietnamski veteran, ki – ironično – trpi za posledicami še enega načela sna: načela Jasne Usode, t.j. prepričanja, da je Bog izbral Ameriko, da po svetu širi svobodo in demokracijo. Tako lahko razčlembo ameriškega sna v obravnavanem delu razumemo kot oster in jedek napad nanj.

Danica Čerče

PRIMERJALNO BRANJE DEL JOHNA STEINBECKA IN FRANKA HARDYJA

Kljub geografski oddaljenosti in različnosti literarnih tradicij so med ameriškim Nobelovim nagrajencem Johnom Steinbeckom in avstralskim pripovednikom Frankom Hardyjem številne podobnosti. Motil bi se, kdor bi na osnovi dejstva, da je Hardy svoj prvi roman izdal šele leta 1950, ko je bil Steinbeck že uveljavljen pisatelj s celo vrsto uspešnic, domneval, da se je Hardy opiral le na Steinbeckove zglede. Nedvomno pa to dejstvo izključuje nasprotno smer literarnih vplivov. Hardyjevi ustvarjalni impulzi in steinbeckovski odmev so bili najbrž posledica Hardyjevega strastnega branja, potem ko je spoznal, kako zahteven je prehod od kratkih zgodb (kjer se je še posebej odlikoval) do romana, kot je pisatelj priznal v *The Hard Way: The Story Behind "Power Without Glory*" (109). S Steinbeckovimi deli se je Hardy imel priložnost spoznati na svojih številnih potovanjih v nekdanjo Sovjetsko zvezo v obdobju med 1951 in 1969. Ob pozornem branju Hardyjevih del, med njimi romana *But the Dead Are Many* (1975), zgodb o Billyju Borkerju, zbranih v *The Yarns of Billy Borker* (1965) in v *The Great Australian Lover and Other Stories* (1967) in še zlasti romana *Power Without Glory*

(1950), se nam namreč razkrijejo številne podobnosti s Steinbeckovo prozo. Prvi del članka podaja najznačilnejše vzporednice v pripovednem načinu obeh avtorjev z gledišča sloga pisanja, pripovedne tehnike in tematske izbire in jih osvetljuje v kontekstu širšega socialnega in kulturnega okolja. Drugi del primerja pisateljevi najpopularnejši deli, Steinbeckovo mojstrovino *The Grapes of Wrath* (*Grozdi jeze*) in Hardyjev roman *Power Without Glory* (*Moč brez slave*).

Mojca Krevel

REMEDIACIJA REMEDIACIJE:
TISK V DOBI HIPERTEKSTA

Članek se tematsko umešča med razprave o usodi tiskane literature in zlasti proze v dobi, ko večina komunikacije na daljavo poteka prek elektronskega – hipertekstnega – medija. Avtorica izhaja iz predpostavke, da s širjenjem računalniškega hiperteksta v družbeno sfero hipertekst ni več zgolj tehnika pisanja oziroma urejevalni princip, ampak postane osnovna paradigma obstoja in delovanja postmodernih družb. Tiskana knjiga ima tako po avtoričinem mnenju prihodnost le, če se lahko prilagodi logiki hiperteksta. V ta namen v članku najprej izpostavi tiste lastnosti obstoječe elektronske hiperfikcije, ki se najbolj odmikajo od tradicionalnega pojmovanja književnosti, jih nato prevede v tiskan medij in dobljene hipoteze preverja na izbranih primerih tiskane ameriške proze zadnjih dvajsetih let. Prispevek tako raziskuje načine, na katere je tisk lahko hiperteksten, ugotavlja, ali in kako se slednji udejanjajo v praksi, ter skuša s tem prispevati k vpogledu v prihodnost književnosti v dobi, ki je ni več moč razumeti z novoveškimi paradigmami.

Marcello Potocco

ZNOVA O NORTHROPU FRYEJU, PODOBE KULTURE V KONTEKSTU
KANADSKEGA KRITIŠTVA

Izhajajoč iz razlike med spisi Northropa Fryeja in t.i. tematskim kritištvom (Atwood, Jones) ter upoštevajoč Fryejevo splošno teorijo avtor članka relativizira očitke, namenjene Fryejevim t.i. kanadskim spisom. Pokaže namreč, da Frye skupne kulture ni pojmoval kot fiksno, marveč kot spremenljivo družbeno in individualno konstrukcijo, ki sicer ima svojo kontinuiteto in deluje kot homogenizacijski mehanizem. S tem se Frye približa kasnejšim teorijam imaginarnega pri C. Castoriadisu in W. Iserju. V Fryejevi obravnavi imaginacije je jasna ločitev med vidikom, ki ga Iser po-

imenuje kot družbeno imaginarno, Ricoeur pa kot historično narativo, ter vidikom, ki ga Iser poimenuje kot fiktivno. Ricouer pa se celo specifično naslanja na Fryejeve strukturalne izsledke, ko govori o fiktivni pripovedi. Analiza imaginacije in kulture je tudi ob obravnavi kanadske literature pri Fryeju le orodje za analizo estetsko nedovršene literature, ne pa kanadske literature na sploh. V tem kontekstu pa se Frye ukvarja s konvencijsko izgradnjo kulturne identitete in njenega zrcaljenja v literaturi.

Marija Javor Briški

KULTURNI KONFLIKTI KOT KONFLIKTI MOČI NA PRIMERU POZNOSREDNJEVEŠKIH POTOPISOV

Upoštevajoč križarske vojne, na katere so sčasoma tako na krščanski kot na islamski strani vplivali posvetni faktorji, članek obravnava dva potopisa iz poznega srednjega veka: *Reisebuch* Hansa Schiltbergerja in *Poročilo o potovanju v Sveto deželo*, ki ga je napisal Bernhard von Breidenbach. Sestavek pojasnjuje, v kolikšni meri eksistencialna ogroženost avtorja oziroma pripovedovalca vpliva na prikaz ,drugega', kakšno vlogo igra namenskost besedila v konkretni zgodovinski uporabni situaciji in katerih prikazovalnih strategij se avtor poslužuje pri posredovanju ,tujega'. Analiza ,drugega' ali ,tujega' se osredotoči na zaznavanje in prikazovanje muslimanov in islamske vere.

Sigita Barniškienė

LJUDSTVA IN VERSTVA V ROMANU *IZGUBLJENA ZEMLJA* ALFREDA BRUSTA

Prvi roman Alfreda Brusta *Izgubljena zemlja* je izšel leta 1926, leta 1929 je avtor zanj prejel Kleistovo nagrado. Vzhodno pruski pisatelj, ki je živel od 1891 do 1934, je v tem romanu izbral kot prostor dogajanja ozemlje med Kaliningradom, Grodnom in Vilno, na obeh straneh nemško litvanske meje. Protagonisti so potomci starih Prusov. Tudi židovska vera in mistificirani liki Židov igrajo v romanu ključno vlogo. Brust želi bralcu približati prepričanje, da je moralna obnova povezana s stremljenjem človeka k Bogu preko ene ali več ver.

Florence Gacoin-Marks

HIPOTEZE O VLOGI H. P. LOVECRAFTA V NASTAJANJU LITERARNEGA OPUSA MICHELA HOUELLEBECQA

Avtorica pričujoče razprave se ukvarja z monografijo z naslovom *H. P. Lovecraft. Proti svetu, proti življenju*, ki jo je leta 1991 sodobni francoski pisatelj Michel Houellebecq posvetil ameriškemu pisatelju H. P. Lovecraftu. Na podlagi tega zgodnjega dokumenta, ki ga avtor sam označi kot nekakšen »prvi roman«, lahko že pred primerjalno analizo literarnih del obeh avtorjev opazimo dva poglavitna elementa, pri katerih je Lovecraft vplival na Houellebecqa: njegova osebnost, zlasti boleč in odklonilen odnos do sodobne družbe, ter njegovo pesimistično gledanje na človeštvo, ki je v osrčju njegovega literarnega ustvarjanja. Ko nam predstavlja H. P. Lovecrafta, nam Houellebecq torej toliko pove o delih priljubljenega avtorja kot o lastnem, še nastajajočem literarnem opusu. V tem smislu lahko imamo njegov »esej« za nekakšen literarni program.

Boštjan Marko Turk

CLAUDELOVA POEZIJA: TA IN ONA STRAN

Študija se posveča razdelavi vpliva filozofije Tomaža Akvinskega na francoskega pesnika Paula Claudela. Pri tem se uvodoma ukvarja s prvinskim srečanjem Claudela s tomistično filozofijo, ki se mu je razodela kot filozofija biti, sposobna odgovarjati na temeljni izziv Claudelove poezije, to je na celokupnost interpetacije tega, kar imenujemo univerzum. Strast do vesolja, kot celokupnosti bivajočega je tista, ki bo od tega srečanja naprej določila Claudelovo poezijo kot poezijo aktualitete biti. V nadaljevanju se študija posveča razdelavi partikularnih vidikov tega vpliva, tudi z lingvističnega stališča. V sintezi pa odgovarja na recepcijo tega vpliva v sodobni literarni kritiki. Tu opozarja na nekolikanj poenostavljene teze o lateralnosti in literalnosti biti, ki jih je oblikoval tomistični filozof Gilson, del kritike pa sprejel brez ustrezne teoretične podlage, ki bi omogočila pravilno aplikacijo tega aparata na Claudelovo pesniško delo. Tu opozarja tudi na nujni odvod bivanjske teorije na področje gnoseologije, znamenite Claudelove teze o spoznavanju, ki je eti-gnoseološko razumljiva zgolj znotraj romanskih jezikov, pa še to, če je le pravilno ovrednotena. Na koncu študija poskuša vzpostaviti tisti okvir, znotraj katerega bi bil tomistični vpliv na Claudelovo pesniško delo.

Branka Kalenić Ramšak

REALIZEM ŠPANSKEGA ROMANA

Pričujoči članek analizira realizem španskega romana, ki se v njem periodično izpostavlja dejansko že od srednjeveških začetkov dalje. Izhodiščno teoretično vprašanje je bilo – zakaj je daljša pripovedna zvrst v španski književnosti izdelala svoje vrhunce prav v povezavi z realizmom? Tako v svojih literarnih zametkih kot pozneje v zgodovini je španski roman, vedno obarvan z značilnostmi realizma, povezoval realizem in idealizem, realnost in irealnost, umetniško visoke in izrazno ljudske elemente. Te značilnosti se kažejo že v 14. in 15. stoletju, kulminirajo s Cervantesovim *Don Kihotom*, nekoliko poniknejo v 18. stoletju, ponovno privrejo na dan v času realizma oz. naturalizma ter se razbohotijo v 20. stoletju. Članek skuša skozi kratko predstavitev zgodovine španskega romana – od Zlatega veka, preko Cervantesa, do 20. in začetkov 21. stoletja – izpostaviti določene zgodovinske in literarne parametre, ki so španski roman zaznamovali kot realistični roman.

Smiljana Komar

PRAGMATIČNA FUNKCIJA INTONACIJE V ANGLEŠČINI IN SLOVENŠČINI

Članek obravnava pragmatično vlogo intonacije, katere glavna funkcija je, da poslušalcu omogoča iz sobesedila sklepati o pomenu izrečenega ter tako obogatiti njegovo interpretacijo. Intonacija ne spreminja pomena leksikalnih enot, ampak poslušalcu omogoča, da izbira med različnimi interpretacijami na nivoju besedišča in skladnje. Intonacijski sistemi različnih evropskih jezikov izražajo precej podobnosti s stališča pragmatične vloge intonacije. Analiza sporočilnih vrednosti tonov, registrov in tonskih zaključkov v angleščini in slovenščini predstavlja poskus potrditi hipotezo o univerzalnih pomenih intonacije.